



Prepare for the House of the Lord



Temple Ordinances and the Covenant Path

"The temple lies at the center of strengthening our faith and spiritual fortitude because the Savior and His doctrine are the very heart of the temple. Everything taught in the temple, through instruction and through the Spirit, increases our understanding of Jesus Christ. His essential ordinances bind us to Him through sacred priesthood covenants. Then, as we keep our covenants, He endows us with His healing, strengthening power¹

Receiving temple ordinances and keeping covenants is a vital part of your commitment to follow Jesus Christ. It also helps you prepare to someday return and live with Him and our Heavenly Father. You can do much to make

¹ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/10/47nelson?lang=eng>

sure you are ready. Studying the gospel of Jesus Christ and applying those teachings in your life should be included. Keeping the covenants you have already made is key to your temple readiness.

Jesus taught, “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”² The *gate* we enter is baptism and the *way* we follow is His gospel. Baptism is the first ordinance of the gospel and a needed step along the covenant path back to God.

Other ordinances will also guide you along the way. These include receiving the Holy Ghost, being ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood (for men), receiving the temple endowment, and being sealed in the temple. These sacred priesthood ordinances lead to the greatest blessings our Heavenly Father offers His children—the joy of living with Him and our families after this earthly life.

You may feel unsure or even overwhelmed as you prepare for the temple. Before your first visit, it is normal to wonder what the temple ceremonies will be like. Some things will be new to you, but much of what happens in the temple should feel very familiar because it all centers on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You do not need to know or remember everything when you go to the temple. Temple workers are always there to help you. These volunteers are loving and kind. They are there to help you feel welcome and comfortable in the house of the Lord.

Because you have been baptized, you already know some things about ordinances and covenants. You know that they have symbolic and spiritual meanings. For example, you learned that baptism symbolizes a cleansing and rebirth. You dressed in white and entered the water. A priesthood holder raised his arm and spoke the words of the ordinance. You were then buried (immersed) in the water and arose as a new person. You were clean and pure and ready to live your life as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. After you were baptized, you received the gift of the Holy Ghost as hands were laid upon your head.

When you were baptized, you made a covenant with God. You promised that you were willing to take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ, always remember Him, keep His commandments, and serve Him to the end. As a

² Matthew 7:14

member of His Church, you symbolically renew your baptismal covenant and all other covenants when you receive the sacrament.

Temple ordinances follow a similar pattern. You will dress in white, be taught about God's plan, and participate in ceremonies that are sacred and symbolic. You will also be promised blessings as you covenant to follow the teachings and example of Jesus Christ.

Remember that everything in the temple points us to the Savior and our Heavenly Father. Everything is meant to uplift and inspire.

Clean Hands and a Pure Heart

In the book of Psalms, we are asked, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart."³ The *hill* of the Lord is His temple. Two qualities are mentioned to enter—clean hands and a pure heart.

Speaking about this passage, Elder David A. Bednar said: "Let me suggest that hands are made clean through the process of putting off the natural man and by overcoming sin and the evil influences in our lives through the Savior's Atonement. Hearts are purified as we receive His strengthening power to do good and become better. All of our worthy desires and good works, as necessary as they are, can never produce clean hands and a pure heart. It is the Atonement of Jesus Christ that provides both a *cleansing and redeeming power* that helps us to overcome sin and a *sanctifying and strengthening power* that helps us to become better than we ever could by relying only upon our own strength. The infinite Atonement is for both the sinner and for the saint in each of us"⁴

As you prepare for the temple, you will visit with your bishop. You will also meet with your stake president, if you are receiving your endowment or being sealed. They will each conduct a temple recommend interview.⁵ You will be able to share your thoughts and feelings with them, and they will offer inspired counsel. As you answer their questions, you will also affirm that you have "clean hands and a pure heart." In other words, you will state that you are worthy and willing to enter the temple, participate in sacred ordinances, and keep your covenants.

³ Psalm 24:3–4

⁴ "Clean Hands and a Pure Heart," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 82

⁵ <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/october-2019-general-conference-temple-recommend#questions>

Sacred Covenants Are Personal and Powerful

As you progress along the covenant path to the temple, you will start to appreciate the blessings of sacred covenants in your life even more. Here are some things to consider about the importance of covenants:

1. Covenants deepen your relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

A covenant is often defined as a sacred promise between God and His children. While this definition is accurate, it is not complete. A covenant is more than a contract. It is a personal commitment that defines and deepens our relationship with God. Covenants form a sacred bond between God and His children. They renew our spirits, change our hearts, and help us become united with Him. As you are faithful to your covenants, your devotion to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ will increase. Your feelings of gratitude will increase. Your ability to love and serve others will grow. And the blessings promised in the temple will flow into your life.

2. Covenants help you focus on things that matter most.

During your life, you will face choices that require your time, your energy, and your resources. Many good choices will compete with other worthwhile ones. How do you choose?

President Dallin H. Oaks taught: “Just because something is *good* is not a sufficient reason for doing it. ... Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives. ... Some uses of individual and family time are better, and others are best. We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best because they develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthen our families.”⁶

Through covenants, God helps us understand principles, practices, and promises that He knows are best for us. We can gain more insight on priorities and make wiser choices when we focus first on those sacred commitments we have made with God.

3. Temple ordinances and covenants bless you and others.

⁶ “Good, Better, Best,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2007, 104, 107

When you receive your endowment or are sealed to your spouse or family, you will leave the temple with promises from the Lord directly to you. Not just promises made to some ancient prophet or people, but promises made to you. You should seek to understand them and their meaning in your life.

After you have received ordinances for yourself, you can return to the temple to receive ordinances on behalf of others who have died. You have a special responsibility to seek out your ancestors and ensure that they receive temple ordinances. Your service will bless their lives and remind you of your own promises and blessings.

Strive to Remember and Return

As you prepare to take part in temple ordinances, remember that God is your Eternal Father and Jesus Christ is your Redeemer. They know you personally. They love you completely. As you keep your covenants, you will be blessed in this life and the next.

Can you remember a time when you felt very close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ? Those feelings will grow in the temple. The temple is set apart from the distractions, stresses, and negative influences of life. In this holy place, you are reminded that you and your loved ones are here on earth for a grand and noble purpose. You will find greater peace, comfort, guidance, and hope.

You will also find that the blessings of the temple will enter your heart and lift your soul. Return to the temple as often as you can. As you do, you will understand more about the love God and Jesus Christ have for you and all people. Even after you leave the temple, the Holy Ghost will continue to teach you. He will remind you of what you experienced, what you felt, and how you can live as God wants.

As you prepare for the temple, remember that God wants you close to Him. He has provided His temple as a special place to draw nearer to Him. Your eternal joy is also His joy. He gave us the blessings of the temple to lead us back to Him. Ask for His help as you prepare and share your journey with Him. He will guide you. He will inspire you. And He will help you along the way.

Prepare for the Blessings of the Temple⁷

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



Each temple is symbolic of our faith in God and an evidence of our faith in life after death. The temple is the object of every activity, every lesson, every progressive step in the Church.

As temples are prepared for the people, the people need to prepare themselves for the temple

Inscribed on each temple are the words “holiness to the Lord.” That statement designates both the temple and its purposes as holy. Those who enter the temple are also to bear the attribute of holiness. As temples are prepared for the people, the people need to prepare themselves for the temple.

A temple differs from other houses of worship. Unlike chapels, the temple is closed on the Sabbath so that people can attend church and be with their families

⁷ <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2010/10/prepare-for-the-blessings-of-the-temple?lang=eng#note1>

on that hallowed day. Temples are open for sacred work on other days of the week. A temple is literally the house of the Lord, reserved for ordinances of eternal significance. Those ordinances include baptisms, marriages, endowments, and sealings.

Each temple is symbolic of our faith in God and an evidence of our faith in life after death. The temple is the object of every activity, every lesson, every progressive step in the Church. All of our efforts in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead lead to the holy temple. Ordinances of the temple are absolutely crucial. We cannot return to God's glory without them.

Each temple ordinance is an act of solemn promising

In the temple we receive an endowment, which is, literally speaking, a gift. We need to understand the spiritual significance of it and the importance of keeping the sacred covenants and obligations we make in receiving this gift. Each "temple ordinance is not just a ritual to go through, it is an act of solemn promising."

The temple endowment was given by revelation. Thus, it is best understood by revelation, vigorously sought with a pure heart. President Brigham Young explained that "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."

Obedience to the sacred covenants made in temples qualifies us for eternal life

In each temple the sealing authority of the priesthood is exercised. President Gordon B. Hinckley explained that "no king, no president of a nation, no official of any entity in the world of which we are a part has any authority over matters beyond the grave. Everyone is helpless before the reach of death, but the humblest, good, righteous high priest who has received the sealing authority may bind in the heavens that which is bound on the earth."

Just as priesthood is eternal—without beginning or end—so is the authority of that priesthood. Consequently, the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood also transcend time. The first revelation given by the angel Moroni to the Prophet

Joseph Smith referred to this priesthood authority. In later instructions to the Prophet regarding the temple, the Lord said:

“Let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

“For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times.” We are living in that dispensation. Temples, ordinances, covenants, endowments, and sealings have been restored, precisely as prophesied. Ordinances of the temple provide for reconciliation with the Lord and seal families together forever. Obedience to the sacred covenants made in temples qualifies us for eternal life—the greatest gift of God to man.

Anyone who is willing to prepare well may enter the temple

Because a temple is sacred, the Lord asks that it be protected from desecration. Anyone may enter who is willing to prepare well for that privilege. The concept of preparation prevails in other fields of endeavor. I remember when I was but a young boy, I told my parents I wanted to attend the university. They said I could, but only if I worked hard in preliminary schooling and met all the requirements for admission to the university. Similarly, we must qualify for admission to the temple. We prepare physically, intellectually, and spiritually. Eligibility is determined individually for each person applying for a recommend.

Those who hold keys of priesthood authority and responsibility help us prepare by conducting temple recommend interviews. These leaders care for us and help us determine if we are ready to attend the temple. They also love the Lord and ensure “that no unclean thing shall be permitted to come into [His] house.” Thus, these interviews are conducted in a spirit of accountability.

How do you prepare for a temple recommend? You may consult with your bishopric, as well as your parents, family, stake presidency, teacher, or quorum adviser. The requirements are simple. Succinctly stated, an individual is required to keep the commandments of Him whose house it is. He has set the standards. We enter the temple as His guests.

The Lord would be pleased if every adult member would be worthy of—and carry—a current temple recommend. “Interviews ... for temple recommends, with [members of your bishopric and members of your stake presidency] are

precious experiences. And, in a way, they could be considered meaningful ‘dress rehearsals’ for that grand colloquy when you will stand before the Great Judge.”

Prepare physically to go to the temple

Now, with a temple recommend in hand, you are ready for additional preparation. You prepare physically by dressing properly to go to the temple. It is not a place for casual attire. Latter-day prophets have emphasized self-respect for our physical bodies. That respect should be observed especially by those who would enter a holy temple.

In the temple, all are dressed in spotless white. “The symbolic purity of white likewise reminds us that God is to have a pure people.” Age, nationality, language—even position in the Church—are of secondary significance. I have attended many endowment sessions when the President of the Church participated. Every man in the room was accorded the same high regard that was extended to the President. All sit side by side and are considered equal in the eyes of the Lord. Through a democracy of dress, temple attendance reminds us that “God is no respecter of persons.”

Brides and grooms enter the temple to be married for time and all eternity. In the temple, brides wear dresses that are white, long sleeved, modest in design and fabric, and free of elaborate ornamentation. Men do not wear tuxedos or formal wear. President Boyd K. Packer, now President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “It is pleasing to the Lord when we bathe our bodies and put on clean clothing, however inexpensive the clothing may be. We should dress in such a way that we might comfortably attend a sacrament meeting or a gathering that is proper and dignified.”

Speaking of temple attire, mothers and grandmothers can exert a great influence for good among their children and grandchildren. As their skill and circumstances permit, they can provide tangible motivation for their family. A mother’s gift of a hand-embroidered handkerchief or other article of temple clothing can be a powerful incentive for a loving child or grandchild to cherish.

The temple garment symbolizes continuing commitment

The wearing of the temple garment bears great symbolic significance and represents a continuing commitment. Just as the Savior gave us an example of

His ability to endure to the end, wearing the garment is one way we demonstrate enduring faith in Him and in His eternal covenants with us.

The First Presidency prepared a letter to the Church on this subject. They wrote:

“Practices frequently observed among the members of the Church suggest that some members do not fully understand the covenant they make in the temple to wear the garment in accordance with the spirit of the holy endowment.

“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. ... 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.”

Prepare mentally and spiritually to go to the temple

In addition to physical preparation, we need to be prepared mentally and spiritually. Because the ordinances and covenants of the temple are sacred, we are under absolute obligation not to discuss outside the temple that which occurs in the temple. Sacred matters deserve sacred consideration.

In this house of learning, we are taught in the Lord’s way. His ways are not our ways. We should not be surprised if teaching techniques differ from those employed in educational pursuits more familiar to us. Temple ordinances and covenants have been an integral part of the gospel since the days of Adam and

Eve. Anciently, symbols were used to teach profound truths, and this method of instruction is used in the temple today.

It is necessary, therefore, that we ponder the symbols presented in the temple and see the mighty realities for which each symbol stands. “The temple ordinances are so imbued with symbolic meaning as to provide a lifetime of productive contemplation and learning.” The teachings of the temple are beautifully simple and simply beautiful. They are understood by those who have had little opportunity for education, yet they can excite the intellect of the highly educated.

I recommend that members going to the temple for the first time read entries in the Bible Dictionary that are related to the temple, such as “Anoint,” “Covenant,” “Sacrifices,” and “Temple.” One may also wish to read Exodus, chapters 26–29, and Leviticus, chapter 8. The Old Testament, as well as the books of Moses and Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price, underscores the antiquity of temple work and the enduring nature of its ordinances.

Keeping a covenant with God is both protective and enabling

There are two concepts we especially need to keep in mind as we prepare for the temple. The first is *covenant*. We need to remember that a covenant is a promise. A covenant made with God should be regarded not as restrictive but as protective. Covenants with Him protect us from danger.

This concept is not new. If our water supply is of questionable quality, for example, we filter the water. Similarly, divine covenants shield us from harm. When we choose to deny ourselves of all ungodliness,²⁰ we lose nothing of value and gain glory known only to those who obtain eternal life. Keeping a temple covenant is not constraining but enabling. It elevates us beyond limits of our own perspective and power. It is like the difference between plodding through a muddy field and soaring through the skies in a supersonic jet. Keeping a covenant with God is both protective and enabling.

The second concept to stress in our mental preparation is *Atonement*. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is the central act of all human history. It is the core of the plan of salvation. Without the infinite Atonement, all mankind would be irretrievably lost. Temple ordinances and covenants teach of the redeeming power of the Atonement.

Eternal life is available to us through our obedience to covenants made in the temple

Service in the temple brings blessings to us in this life as well as in eternity. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that “temple work is not an escape from the world but a reinforcing of our need to better the world while preparing ourselves for another and far better world. Thus, being in the Lord’s house can help us to be different from the world in order to make more difference in the world.”

If we are true and faithful in this life, we may obtain eternal life. Immortality is to live forever. Eternal life means more than simply being immortal. Eternal life is to gain exaltation in the highest heaven and live in the family unit. God declared that His grand mission statement—“my work and my glory”—is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”²² His gift of immortality is unconditional—a free gift of salvation to all humankind. The possibility of eternal life—even exaltation—is available to us through our obedience to covenants made and ordinances received in holy temples of God.

The blessings of the temple become most meaningful when our loved ones are taken in death from our family circles. To know that our period of separation is but temporary provides peace that passes ordinary understanding.²³ President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote, “Through the power of this priesthood which Elijah bestowed, husband and wife may be sealed, or married for eternity; children may be sealed to their parents for eternity; thus the family is made eternal, and death does not separate the members.” Blessed with eternal sealings, we can face death as a necessary component of God’s great plan of happiness.

The eternal perspective we receive in the temple gives us strength to endure the trials of life

An eternal perspective helps us maintain complete fidelity to the covenants we make. President Packer emphasized that “ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into [God’s] presence. To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality.”

Ordinances of the temple relate not only to our eternal glory but also to that of our departed ancestors. “For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation, ... they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without

our dead be made perfect.”²⁷ Service in their behalf provides an opportunity for our continuing temple worship, selflessly rendered as a vicarious work patterned after that of the Lord as He wrought the Atonement to bless all who would ever live.

One day we will surely meet our Maker and stand before Him at the bar of judgment. Scripture teaches us that “the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.” The Lord Himself will determine whether we have been true to the covenants we made with Him in the temple and thus merit the glorious blessings He has promised those who keep their covenants.

This perspective gives us strength to endure the trials of life. President Packer stated, “The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of our Heavenly Father.”

Each temple stands as a symbol of our membership in the Church, as a sign of our faith in life after death, and as a stepping-stone to eternal glory for us and our family. I pray that each member of the Church will prepare for the marvelous blessings of the temple.

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Mothers and grandmothers can exert a great influence for good among their children and grandchildren regarding proper temple attire.

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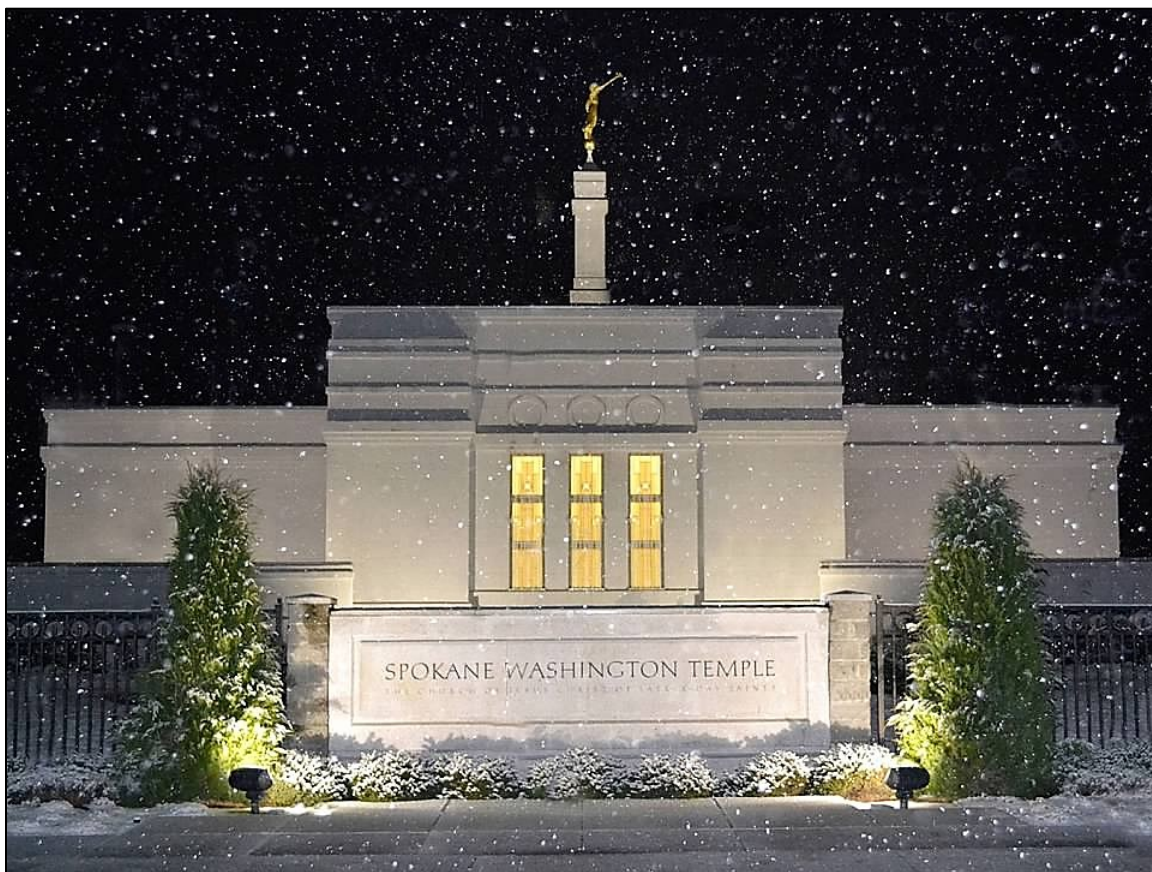
"Through the power of [the] priesthood ... , husband and wife may be sealed, or married for eternity; children may be sealed to their parents for eternity; thus the family is made eternal." —President Joseph Fielding Smith

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The Lord Jesus Christ Will Come Again⁸

By President Russell M. Nelson

President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Now is the time for you and for me to prepare for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

My dear brothers and sisters, do you see what is happening right before our eyes? I pray that we will not miss the majesty of this moment! The Lord is indeed hastening His work.

Why are we building temples at such an unprecedented pace? Why? Because the Lord has instructed us to do so. The blessings of the temple help to gather Israel on both sides of the veil. These blessings also help to prepare a people who will help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord!

⁸ October 2024 general conference, excerpts

As the prophet Isaiah prophesied, and as memorialized in Handel's *Messiah*, when Jesus Christ returns, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

In that day "the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Jesus Christ will govern from both old Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem "built upon the American continent." From these two centers, He will direct the affairs of His Church.

In that day the Lord will be known as "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." Those who are with Him will be "called, and chosen, and faithful."

Brothers and sisters, now is the time for you and for me to prepare for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Now is the time for us to make our discipleship our highest priority. In a world filled with dizzying distractions, how can we do this?

Regular worship in the temple will help us. In the house of the Lord, we focus on Jesus Christ. We learn of Him. We make covenants to follow Him. We come to know Him. As we keep our temple covenants, we gain greater access to the Lord's strengthening power. In the temple, we receive protection from the buffetings of the world. We experience the pure love of Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father in great abundance! We feel peace and spiritual reassurance, in contrast to the turbulence of the world.

Here is my promise to you: Every sincere seeker of Jesus Christ will find Him in the temple. You will feel His mercy. You will find answers to your most vexing questions. You will better comprehend the joy of His gospel.

I have learned that the most crucial question we each must answer is this: To whom or to what will I give my life?

My decision to follow Jesus Christ is the most important decision I have ever made. ...Please listen to this promise of Jesus Christ to you: "I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up."

There is no limit to the Savior's capacity to help you. His incomprehensible suffering in Gethsemane and on Calvary was for you! His infinite Atonement is for you! I urge you to devote time each week—for the rest of your life—to increase your understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

...My dear brothers and sisters, in a coming day, Jesus Christ will return to the earth as the millennial Messiah. So today I call upon you to rededicate your lives to Jesus Christ. I call upon you to help gather scattered Israel and to prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. I call upon you to talk of Christ, testify of Christ, have faith in Christ, and rejoice in Christ! Come unto Christ and "offer your whole [soul]" to Him. This is the secret to a life of joy!

The best is yet to come, my dear brothers and sisters, because the Savior is coming again! The best is yet to come because the Lord is hastening His work. The best is yet to come as we fully turn our hearts and our lives to Jesus Christ.

I bear my solemn witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I am His disciple. I am honored to be His servant. At His Second Coming, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." That day will be filled with joy for the righteous!

Through the power of the sacred priesthood keys I hold, I declare this truth to you and to all the world! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.