

We are the Temple

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Architectural temples, high mountains, and Native American vision quest sites are all *sacred places* where man attempts to connect with God. With them we seek to receive Him, His Spirit and gifts (Mor. 10:30). For many cultures, such an event was and is sought in *sacred place* and *time*. The ancient covenant people of the Bible went to the temple to commune with God at three of the seven Biblical Holy Days (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles). It is believed King Benjamin of the Book of Mormon gathered his people to instruct them at Tabernacles. He desired that they be “*born again*” in Christ (the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, necessary to enter heaven, see Alma 5:49; 7:14; John 3:5), and that they might be “*brought to heaven*,” and “*sealed His*” (a “*sealing*” to God, see Mos. 5:15). This is the most important “*sealing*” -in scripture – a sealing to Jesus Christ, the Father of our Salvation (in His atonement and resurrection).

We Are the Temple In reality, we – our bodies, are the temple of God, if we make it a sacred place where His Spirit may be with us. We are to become a God in our temple. The architectural temple is a symbol of us; we are not a symbol of the temple. We are meant to be holy and become a house of god. We are meant to become as God is.

In the ancient world many sought God in sacred settings, including architectural temples, doing so near one of the two equinoxes, each a “New Year” in antiquity (in the Bible the spring equinox was the sacred New Year of the *priest*, whereas the fall equinox was the civil New Year of the *king*).

The most important requirement to be one with God is not the *setting* nor the *timing*, however, but our desire for communion with Him and our purity. King David knew how to **praise** and **worship** God with **gratitude** and his **whole, purified heart**. Many do not understand the power of this pattern in opening the heavens. David repented and put *the first and great commandment* to work for him. It is *to love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength* (see Mat. 22:38, the second is like unto it, to love one another). Abraham, Jacob, and others found God too. Jacob sought God diligently in faith and repentance at the mountain setting of Peniel (meaning “face of God”). These men and others sought for and prepared for such events. They heeded the Lord’s invitation to “**repent and come unto me.**” It is a literal invitation to enter His holy presence. We must be clean and prepared to do so. The most important trait is great desire along with real love for God.

Receiving God, His influence, power, or gifts - in any place and time, is the real “**endowment of power from on high**” God promised His covenant people in scripture – their covenant being part of faith in Christ, repentance, and baptism in water. We see evidence of God’s promise of a **gift** or “**endowment of power from on high**” – the Holy Ghost – in a second baptism, by *fire and the Holy Ghost* - in four settings and books of scripture. Each was an *event of empowerment*. We see it (1) at Sinai in the Old Testament 50 days after the Israelites left slavery in Egypt, (2) on the Day of Pentecost in the New Testament before the great missionary effort went forth, (3) at the Temple at Bountiful in the Book of Mormon, where so many were “born again” in Christ, and (4) at the Kirtland Temple Dedication in the Doctrine and Covenants, again in preparation for a great missionary effort to the world. In each case, the people sought God and prepared for Him. They knew that they were to have *clean hands* (actions) and *pure hearts* (intent) if they were to receive God and His gifts. The gifts of prophecy, tongues, visions, etc., were poured out upon the people. They were “signs” following the believers (see Article of Faith 7).

Architectural temples offer symbolic ordinances that point to the real thing, inner transformation that occurs within our physical bodies, the temple of our spirit. The architectural temple is a school for teaching us how to literally ascend to God. They are symbolic of our own bodies as temples. This is one reason why it is important to care for our bodies in all ways, as taught us in D&C 84 and Daniel 1:12-21. The ordinances presented in architectural temples do not exalt man, but they can teach how we may become exalted, something that God alone does. Those in and outside the church who have not received the temple endowment are not going to be kept from the Lord who loves them. Those who have received the endowment may be aided by its teachings, but in their greater knowledge, and with the associated traditions tied to them, some have greater difficulty in coming up to the Lord. To be received by God we must be pure in heart and charitable. If we do not have this love, it matters not what ordinances we have participated in.

God himself fulfills the promises tied to the endowment in His time and way, if we seek His face, repent, and become pure in heart. God's fulfillment of His promises to us, takes place within our own bodies - the temple for our spirit. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that we receive the transforming events in our body-temple. The baptism of fire and Holy Ghost is such a personal, purging, purifying event, taking place within us.

The Israelites were invited into the Lord's presence without a temple at the natural mountain of Sinai. They rejected the Lord's invitation there (see D&C 84:23-26; JST Ex. 34-12; Hebrews 3 and 4). God did not require the Israelites to first build a temple before they were invited to receive Him personally and the fullness of His glory there (see D&C 84:24). It was not until *after they rejected* Him and His fullness there, that they were cursed for their disobedience. It was then later that they were commanded to go and build a temple, a school for teaching them how to return to Him. All He required of them was to be obedient, by way of His higher law and commandments. The early Latter-day Saints did the same thing, rejecting God's personal presence, a gift requiring them to live the higher law known as the Law of Consecration, a law of love.

Having a temple can be both a curse and a blessing, when the people are commanded to build a temple in His name. The Kirtland and Nauvoo Temples were such temples. If the Saints did not do the things God commanded them to do, including to repent, and finish the later Nauvoo Temple in His time and way, He said they would be cursed (see D&C 124). Even if they did finish it, if they did not become of one heart and one mind, they would be cursed, rejected with their dead. This is exactly what occurred, a fulfillment of His words.

The Lord is merciful. Even though the Saints rejected the fullness offered them at Kirtland. He gave them a second chance at Nauvoo. Like the Israelites at Sinai, the Saints also lost the higher law and priesthood, and eventually their leader too (Moses and Joseph Smith respectively, see D&C 124:28; 113:8; 3 Ne 16:10). A second chance sacrifice was prepared for them later, which was the building of the Nauvoo Temple, to prepare them to receive again that which was lost (the fullness, D&C 124:28), as a result of their vanity, sin, unbelief (D&C 84:55).

The greater things, *the fullness* of God's law, priesthood, and presence, were taken from the Saints because they failed to keep His commandments and live His higher laws, laws pertaining to a Celestial Order of things in the Law of Consecration. The Saints hardened their hearts against the Lord at Nauvoo and Joseph was taken. The Lord continues to offer His presence to us individually. He will yet again offer more collectively in the future.

The temple and its ordinances do not save us. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ does. He is "**the way, the truth and the life.**" There is no other way. He employs **no servant** at the gate to heaven. No man comes to Father except through Him as our Mediator and Redeemer. We are to experience and enter His presence in this life and there be empowered by Him to serve with the gifts of the Spirit and with power and authority. This is why the disciples of Christ in the New Testament and those gathered at Kirtland were both told to "*tarry*" before going out on their missions, that they might be much more effective servants of the Lord. They were not just to be commissioned, but empowered by Him – with authority and power, one of the most important sources of power being the Holy Ghost, obtained in the baptism of fire experience. It is there that we become sanctified, our sins remitted. We are then through the gate and onto the path to eternal life, and receiving God.

The temple is a useful teaching tool for receiving Him and His best gifts (see Mor. 10:30). Temples are not required to approach God, however. Many good people in and outside of traditional Christian faiths experience God and His best gifts without a temple. This is because scripture tells us that **we are the temple of God and His Spirit**. We are to abide in the Holy Spirit, in Christ, and in the Father, and they **in** us. **We are to be one**. We can then be a fruitful branch, bearing "fruit meet for the Father's kingdom" (D&C 84:58), as we are connected to the "**true vine**" Jesus Christ, our mentor and Savior. We must seek **Him** with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. He and the Father can be with us. We can receive daily revelation from them. We need only heed His invitation to "**repent and come unto me**" (D&C 10:67; 2 Ne. 28:32; Alma 5:33-4). This is the simple five-word definition He gives us for what he calls my *doctrine, my gospel, and my church* in scripture.

In-Dwelling Scriptures

In **Revelation 21**, the vision of the Holy City New Jerusalem coming out of heaven to the earth, we read, “And I saw **no temple** therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb *are the temple of it*” (Rev. 21:22).

Luke 17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is “**within**” you.

John 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. **

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide “**with**” you forever;

17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth “**with**” you, and shall be “**in**” you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come “**to**” you.

20 At that day ye shall know that I *am* “**in**” my Father, and ye “**in**” me, and I “**in**” you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself “**to**” him.

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come “**unto**” him, and make our abode “**with**” him.

John 15:4 Abide “**in**” me, and I “**in**” you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide “**in**” the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide “**in**” me.

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth “**in**” me, and I “**in**” him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Acts 7:48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not **in** temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell “**in**” you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth “**in**” you.

1 Cor 3:16-17 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth **in** you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

1 Cor 6:19 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* “**in**” you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God “**in**” your body, and “**in**” your spirit, which are God’s.

2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell “**in**” them, and walk “**in**” *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people

2 Cor 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be “**in**” the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is “**in**” you, except ye be reprobates?

Eph 3:17 That Christ may dwell **in** your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ “**in**” you, the hope of glory:

2 Tim 1:14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth **in** us.

1 John 2:23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

24 Let that therefore abide “**in**” you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain “**in**” you, ye also shall continue “**in**” the Son, and “**in**” the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life.

26 These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth “**in**” you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide “**in**” him.

1 **John 3:24** And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth “**in**” him, and he “**in**” him. And hereby we know that he abideth “**in**” us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 **John 4:12** No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth **in** us, and his love is perfected **in** us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell **in** him, and he **in** us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth **in** him, and he **in** God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth **in** love dwelleth **in** God, and God **in** him.

2 **Nephi 4:12** And it came to pass after my father, Lehi, had spoken unto all his household, according to the feelings of his heart and the Spirit of the Lord which was **in** him, he waxed old. And it came to pass that he died, and was buried.

Words of Mormon 1:7 And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is “**in**” me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he worketh “**in**” me to do according to his will.

Alma 16:17 That they might not be hardened against the word, that they might not be unbelieving, . . . but that they might receive the word with joy, and as a branch be grafted “**into**” the true vine, that they might enter “**into**” the rest of the Lord their God.

Alma 33:23 And now, my brethren, I desire that ye shall plant this word “**in**” your hearts, and as it beginneth to swell even so nourish it by your faith. And behold, it will become a tree, springing up “**in**” you unto everlasting life. And then may God grant unto you that your burdens may be light, through the joy of his Son. And even all this can ye do if ye will.

Alma 34:36 And this I know, because the Lord hath said he dwelleth not “**in**” unholy temples, but “**in**” the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell; yea, and he has also said that the righteous shall sit down in his kingdom, *to go no more out*; but their garments should be made white through the blood of the Lamb.

Helaman 4:24 And they saw that they had become weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and that the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell **in** unholy temples—

3 **Nephi 19:23, 29** And now Father, I pray unto thee for them . . . that I may be “**in**” them as thou, Father, art “**in**” me, that we may be one . . . Father, I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified “**in**” me, that I may be “**in**” them as thou, Father, art “**in**” me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified “**in**” them.

Ether 12:41 And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide “**in**” you forever.

Moroni 10:32 Come unto Christ and be perfected “**in**” Him.

D&C 8:2 Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell **in** your heart.

D&C 88:49 The light shineth **in** darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not; nevertheless, the day shall come when you shall comprehend even God, being quickened **in** him and **by** him.

50 Then shall ye know that ye have seen me, that I am, and **that I am the true light that is in you, and that you are in me; otherwise ye could not abound.**

66 Behold, that which you hear is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness—in the wilderness, because you cannot see him—my voice, because my voice is Spirit; my Spirit is truth; truth abideth and hath no end; and if it be **in** you it shall abound.

D&C 93:35 The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple.

Baptism of Fire and the Holy Ghost – references in the Book of Mormon

<i>Traits - Signs</i>	<i>Hel. 5</i>	<i>2 Ne. 31-32</i>	<i>Alma 5</i>	<i>Alma 18 /19</i>	<i>Alma 36</i>	<i>3 Ne. 17 / 19</i>	<i>Mosiah 5</i>
Faith in Christ	41, 47	13	4-7, 15	41	17, 18	8	8, 10 (4:5, 20)
Repent, Cry for Mercy	29, 32	11	32-34, 49-52	41	18	2	
Heavens Open	48	15		/34, 48	22	24 / 14	
<i>See God</i>				/13	22	25 / 15	
Spirit Sent Down	45	12, 15, 18		/ 6	24	/ 13, 20	3
<i>Quickening</i>							
Fire Present	44, 45	13, 14		/43-45	24 /14		
Angels Minister	39, 48			/34, 48	24 /15		
Joyful Praise	44, 45	13	26	/14, 30, 33	20, 21, 22, 28	17, 18	3
<i>(see also Alma 5:26-34)</i>							
Gift of Tongues	45	13, 14		/30, 45	13, 14	/ 24	3
Fall Down - Submission				42 /15, 16	7, 11		(4:1) 1
Reborn, Sins Remitted	50, 51	17	12-14, 19	/51	5, 23	/ 33	2, 7, 15
<i>Heart purified, gifted with charity</i> (see Mor. 7:48)							

The baptism of fire *and* the Holy Ghost is a necessary *event*, marking the point at which we are *reborn* in Christ. Without it we cannot see nor enter heaven (see Alma 5:49; 7:14; John 3:5). We must come to Him in *humility* and *submission*, that we might be made clean – a *new creature*. We arrive there via the *process* of developing greater faith in Christ and repenting. It begins with full submission. In the fiery baptism our *sins are remitted*, burned away like dross. With it, we have no more desire to sin. We become fully converted to Christ as our Savior. This normally happens to adults, when we finally have great desire to change, marked by real humility and sincere repentance. It is God who does this (see 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; 2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; JST Mat. 3:38; JST Luke 3:16; JST John 1:28). To be “born again” we must seek the Lord and His *mercy* with *all our hearts*. The Lord tells us that to be *born again* - in Him - and receive the saving power of the Atonement, we must have a **broken heart** and a **contrite spirit** (3 Ne. 9:20). Having a broken heart is to be humble, teachable, and fully submissive – like a little child. To be contrite is to be fully and continually repentant. When we finally experience this *rebirth*, Christ then gives us an important, necessary gift to guide us further on the pathway back into His presence - the gift of the Holy Ghost (2 Ne. 32:3-6). The end of this straight and narrow way is to receive Him as our Second Comforter, the fruit on Lehi’s Tree of Life. It is part of the doctrine of Christ.