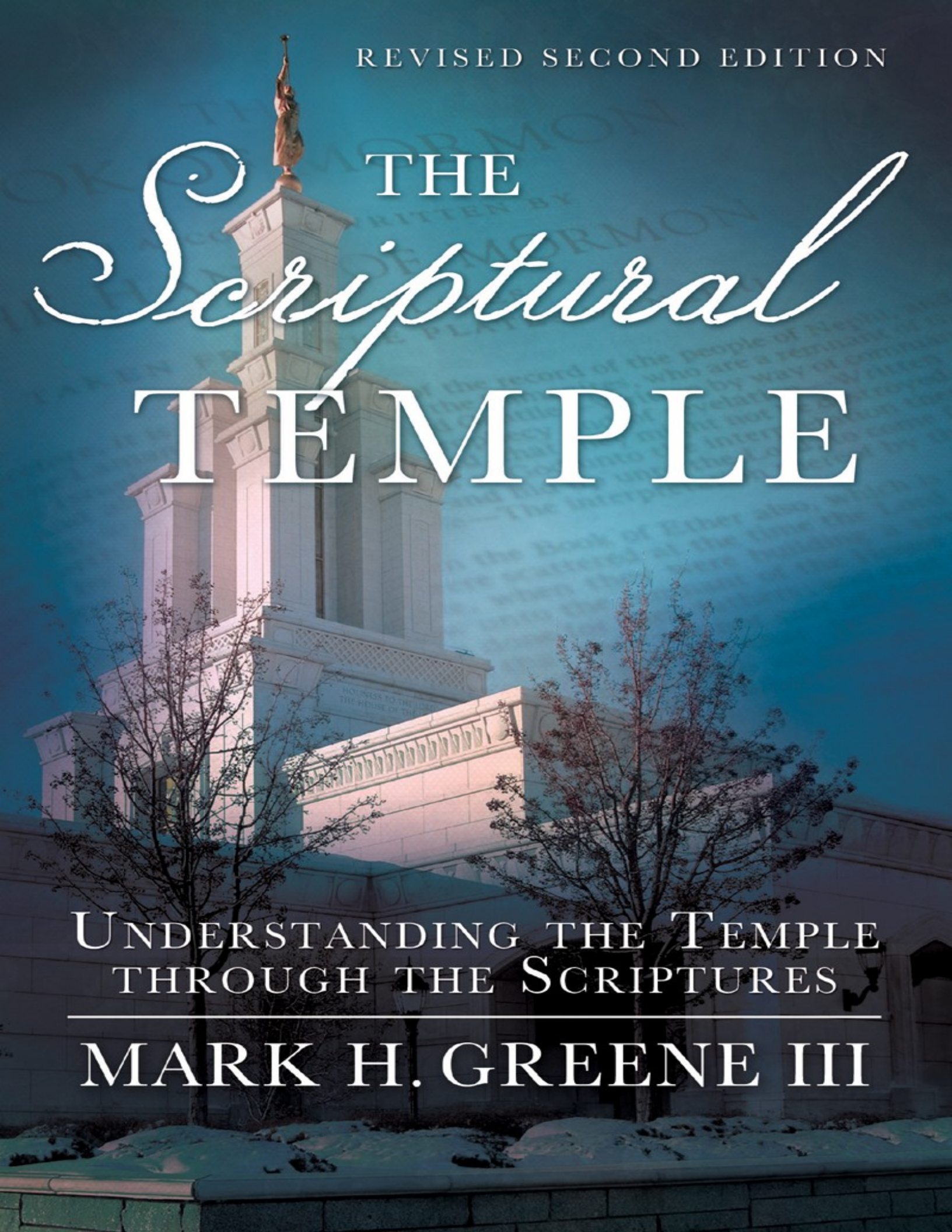


REVISED SECOND EDITION



THE
Scriptural
TEMPLE

UNDERSTANDING THE TEMPLE
THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES

MARK H. GREENE III

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Horizon Publishers
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Springville, Utah

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Introduction

When I finished the first edition, I had a strong impression to read the scriptures again. This I have done, adding much to the writing of the first addition. This new material has confirmed my impression in the first addition that *The Scriptural Temple* keeps expanding. I hope new expansions will develop in the minds and lives of those who understand that the power of love generated as a temple endowment will always be the great message of Mount Zion. This is what the tree of life found in Lehi's dream and the temple is all about. Understanding the power of love is what goes on forever.

At the end of the introduction to the first addition, I expressed a hope for a bond of joy with the reader. However, for the most part the reaction to this book has been silence. I can only speculate what this means. Perhaps the book is not known or widely read. Perhaps the whole subject of temple worship is not of interest to most people. Perhaps the first edition was difficult to read and understand. I do admit in the second addition that reading and understanding this book is like climbing a mountain, step by step, requiring effort. However, the view at the top and the understanding gained from the climb is worth the effort. Looking up to the mountain from the valley will not give the glorious perspective from the peak. This

book is not a casual weekend read. It is like the scriptures in requiring searching. There is some repetition of scripture and ideas in this book but usually with a new perspective and with the hope that repetition will reinforce meaning. This is a method used by the Lord in revealing scripture.

I have discovered that the scriptures can stimulate thought that can reveal great knowledge if the reader will search the scriptures. To me the means connecting repeated words and phrases in the scriptural text and then searching with study and prayer until the meanings God intends to convey are found. For example the words *seed*, *god*, and *receive* and the phrases *one flesh*, *great and last promise*, *cast off*, or *cut off* are repeated enough to draw attention to layered or deeper meanings. Because *The Scriptural Temple* is a book drawn from the scriptures whose burden it is to reveal the temple, I have tried to associate these repeated words and phrases to draw messages and meaning about temple worship. Once we understand the importance of Christ's Atonement in our lives we see that He leads us to the temple to fully partake of His atoning power.

While I have made the effort to write this book and take responsibility for its content, I testify that it came by the power of prophecy and revelation in my own life. Some of the ideas of this book may be purely mine and even incorrect. However, every time I read this book, I feel an overwhelming assurance of its truthfulness. I feel inspired, wanting to know more. I feel the power of the Lord's love in its pages. It is my desire to share this assurance and feeling with the reader.

The Temple Paradigm

The intent of this book is to bear witness of a great view from a mountain top. The view is an understanding in my mind and heart of scriptural messages about the temple mountain. This view has changed my life. I hope it will change your life too. As you understand the mysteries and feel the love of God while climbing the scriptural temple mountain, you will learn to worship in the house of the Lord.

Those That Forget My Holy Mountain

My expanding view of the temple began a few years ago with a calling to the stake high council that included the assignment to teach a temple preparation class. I was obliged to learn about a subject that had been of occasional interest to me, but largely ignored. I was surprised when I reviewed our stake's statistics of those holding a current temple recommend with those having received their own endowment. I found that only $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of our stake's members who had received their own endowment had current temple recommends, and that number may even have been better than Churchwide figures.

How many new members actually receive their own endowment? What happens between the first endowment and subsequent temple recommend

interviews? Why are there so many temple dropouts? While I was not a part of this “dropout” group, I was part of a larger, nonreported group in the Church that I will call temple inactives. Isaiah described temple dropouts and inactives as those “that forget my holy mountain” (Isaiah 65:11).

At a temple recommend interview, the stake president asked me when I last attended the temple. I told him it had been the prior month, but I didn’t respond with conviction. In fact, I felt so guilty that I had to return and confess to him that it had been a whole year since I had really attended the temple. I knew that he was not asking me about temple attendance for a family wedding, but rather temple service for my own salvation and for that of the departed. I was so occupied with my profession and other secular matters that temple endowment attendance had been excluded from my calendar for a whole year. However, the real reason for being a temple inactive was not the typical excuses of a busy life, but rather I did not fully understand that Moroni atop the temple was blowing his trumpet for me. I did not hear his call (see Isaiah 65:12).

Few Comprehend the Full Meaning of the Temple Endowment

My first temple experience was in Los Angeles. I was eight years old, and the Los Angeles California Temple had just been completed. My parents invited me to go to the dedication. I remember walking into a magnificent room and sitting on an aisle seat. Soon, a procession of men dressed in white entered. One was tall, with white wavy hair. He was such an impressively divine figure that I could have imagined it was God Himself. My mother whispered to me that the prophet David O. McKay had just passed by.

Years later I read an interesting statement concerning President McKay’s visit to the Los Angeles California Temple dedication. While addressing member leaders before the dedication, he told about his niece who regarded her initiation into a sorority superior in effect and meaning to her endowment in the temple. Then he said:

Brothers and Sisters, she was disappointed in the temple. Brothers and sisters, I was disappointed in the temple, and so were you. There are few, even temple workers, who comprehend the full meaning and power of the temple endowment. *Seen for what it is, it is the step-by-step ascent into the Eternal presence. If our young people could but glimpse it, it would be the most powerful spiritual motivation of their lives!*[1]

When I read this statement by President McKay, I became uncomfortably aware that the temple had not been the most powerful spiritual motivation in my life. I did not comprehend the temple endowment as the step-by-step ascent into the presence of God. Why not? My parents attended the temple. I was taught to be worthy to go to the temple and certainly to be married in the temple. But little was said about temple worship, either at home or at Church. I had a notion that it was mysterious and secret. Even after first going to the temple, I didn't fully comprehend its significance, and I considered it more as a church annex for specialized work. My state of temple inactivity may have come in part from President Benson's observation that "because of [the temple's] sacredness we are sometimes reluctant to say anything about the temple to our children and grandchildren. As a consequence, many do not develop a real desire to go to the temple, or when they go there, they do so without much background to prepare them for the obligations and covenants they enter into." [2]

I am grateful that the Lord has blessed me over the past few years with a new paradigm. This paradigm is a great change in my frame of reference toward understanding the temple. In this paradigm I have increased insight and find greater personal meaning for the temple. I hope to explain this new frame of reference by revealing the temple paradigm found throughout the scriptures.

The Term *Scriptural Temple* as Used in This Book

The term *scriptural temple* in this book refers to scriptural verses that directly or indirectly reveal true temple worship, "expounding the mysteries thereof out of the scriptures" (D&C 71:1). This term may intrigue many

and cause them to ask where temple worship is found in the scriptures. Perhaps too many are looking for references to the sacred ritual while missing the profound temple teachings of the scriptural temple.

The temple is a marvelous template for scripture study because if we enhance what we learn inside temple walls with the rich temple teachings of the scriptures, temple worship will have great and glorious meaning in our lives. The scriptural temple will help us understand important concepts of true temple worship, such as growing up in the Lord, the bond of perfectness, and many other important temple concepts and principles.

This book is a broad synthesis of scriptural relationships and messages designed to create a temple paradigm in the image of a mountain and our ascent of this mountain. However, it is not a comprehensive scriptural temple. I have discovered that the scriptural temple keeps expanding as we are taught by the Holy Spirit. Many verses of the scriptural temple are quoted in this book. In addition, references are made to many more. Reading and understanding this book will require personal effort as needed in climbing a mountain. The view at the summit from “eyes of our understanding” (D&C 110:1) will be worth the effort. It is recommended that this book be read with a pondering and prayerful heart and with the scriptures in hand.

By constructing a temple paradigm from the perspective of the scriptures, I bear testimony that the temple will become central in our lives and our most powerful spiritual motivation.

A Whale of a Tale and Its Message

If understanding the temple is so important, why isn't it revealed more fully in the scriptures? Previously, I rarely saw the temple reflected in the scriptures. Now the scriptures and the temple come to life in the scriptural temple. A major burden of the scriptures is to reveal the temple^[3] and to “show us concerning the buildings of the temple” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 24:2).

For example, I have been told and read the story of Jonah many times. It was at first a curiosity, a whale of a tale, like the story of Pinocchio. But

then it took on believable significance as a sign of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. When the Savior was challenged by the scribes and Pharisees to produce a sign from heaven, He made reference to “the sign of prophet Jonas” (see Matthew 12:39–40; 16:4; Luke 11:29–30), as a sign of His own Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Probably fearing for his life, Jonah thought he deserved better after receiving his mission call to the hostile Assyrian city of Nineveh. He foolishly thought he could flee from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish. En route, a tempest threatened the lives of those aboard. Jonah identified himself as the possible cause of the peril and then volunteered to be thrown overboard to save the others.

Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.

So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging. (Jonah 1:14–15)

These verses imply the Atonement with reference to mercy, innocent blood, and the voluntary sacrifice of Jonah to save others from the raging demands of justice.

Jonah was swallowed by a “great fish” (a whale) and taken to the depths of the sea where he “prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish’s belly ... the belly of hell” (Jonah 2:1–2). Can the Lord hear our cries from the belly of hell? From the depths of the sea? Yes! Oh, yes, He can, “for these things are not hid from the Lord” (Moses 5:39). Thus, we should all pray to the Lord in the depths of our despair, in our most miserable conditions.

Can we run or hide from the Lord? Like Jonah, Adam and Eve learned that Satan will try to convince us that we can, but the Lord will find us wherever we go, even in the belly of hell (see Amos 9:3; Deuteronomy 30:4).

In the story of Jonah and the whale, we see a reflection of Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden of Eden. To be swallowed by a whale and cast

out of the sight of the Lord is a description of the depth of the Fall. After his fall into the belly of the whale, it was the thought of the Lord's temple that sustained Jonah. "I am cast out of thy sight; *yet I will look again toward thy holy temple*" (Jonah 2:4; emphasis added).

It's this key verse that first alerted me to the temple significance of the book of Jonah. Adam and Eve did the same thing, looking back to the garden, which represented the temple, for direction from the Lord.

And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence.

And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. (Moses 5:4–5)

What happened to Adam and Eve happens to us. Because of the Fall, we are cast out of the presence of the Lord. We must look towards the garden, the Lord's temple, and hear His voice to receive His commandments, that we may find the way to return to His presence.

For Jonah, the memory of the Lord was in His holy temple. He hallowed the memory of being in the presence of the Lord or being in His holy temple. What a contrast to Jonah's current surroundings!

Through his memory, Jonah was teaching us that Christ didn't die just to save sinners from physical death, but to draw all sinners to Him to elevate them from the belly of hell to His level. Justification before God is not just a matter of acquittal from guilt and sin. To dwell in God's presence also requires sanctification or a mighty change in our fallen nature where we have no more weakness or desire for sin. This change is required to pass a future divine judgment.^[4] The repentant sinner needs to be set free from sin to stand righteously in the presence of the Lord. "And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted

up upon the cross, *that I might draw all men unto me*” (3 Nephi 27:14; emphasis added; see also John 12:32).

Being able to dwell in the presence of the Lord is true deliverance from the Fall. I see in the account of Jonah a broad, glorious metaphor, a whole series of comparisons between Jonah’s experience and various facets of the plan of salvation. As in the case of Adam and Eve, transgression facilitated yielding again to Satan and the compulsion to “hide themselves from the presence of the Lord” (Moses 4:14). As Jonah discovered, even in the belly of hell you cannot hide yourself from the Lord.

There are many other metaphors and parallels between the story of Jonah and Christ’s sacrifice. As Christ was pressed under the weight of the Atonement (as Jonah was pressed under the weight of the sea) and the Father withdrew, He cried unto the Father that he not drink the bitter cup and that He not be forsaken (just as Jonah cried to the Lord). Yet Christ’s sacrifice was out of love for his Father and for us. Thus, He obediently kept His vow to complete the Atonement as Jonah kept his vow to go to Nineveh.

Because of this obedience (because of Jonah’s desired obedience to his temple vows), the Father delivered His beloved Son to His celestial presence on His right hand (Jonah was delivered to dry ground, a celestial place compared to the belly of hell).

The Lord can take each of us from the belly of hell to His celestial realm if we are obedient to Him.

The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: *yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.* (Jonah 2:5–6; emphasis added)

This description of the increasing depth (bottoms), the pressure (bars), the darkness (weeds) is vivid. Jonah was on the verge of drowning. These verses are symbolic of our great fall, the depth of corruption in this life.

Jonah knew that only one person could save him and bring him up from corruption. That person was his Savior.

Do we sense our impending drowning in this world of carnal security? If we find ourselves in the belly of hell do we deserve better? Do we forsake our own mercy because of “lying vanities” (see Jonah 2:8)? Do we realize there is only one person who can save us? Jonah would have rejoiced at the words of Jacob: “My soul delighteth in proving unto my people that save Christ should come all men must perish” (2 Nephi 11:6).

When all hope was apparently gone, Jonah remembered the Lord in the temple: “When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple (Jonah 2:7; emphasis added).

This verse is similar to a verse in King David’s song of thanksgiving:

In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and *he did hear my voice out of his temple*, and my cry did enter into his ears. (2 Samuel 22:7; Psalm 18:6; emphasis added)

I wonder if I would have thought of the temple if I were in David’s or Jonah’s condition. Yet, am I not also in the belly of hell like David and Jonah? (See Acts 2:27, 31)

To be delivered from the belly of hell, we must have faith unto life and salvation. This requires sacrifice with real intent (thanksgiving) in covenants (vows) (see Jonah 2:9), sacrificing all things to the Lord as Joseph Smith taught: “Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the *faith necessary unto life and salvation.*” [5]

We must keep our covenants (vows) through strict obedience to the Lord. We must be willing to sacrifice anything for this obedience. Strict obedience to God is our work (see D&C 11:20). We must have hope that the Lord’s grace is sufficient for our rescue (salvation is of the Lord; see Jonah 2:9). No wonder Jonah thought of the temple and his vows. The way of salvation is paved with repentance, sacrifice, obedience, hope in Christ, and covenants with Him. All of these are important temple teachings.

And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. (Jonah 2:10; see also Exodus 15:19)

As miraculous as this seems, we should have confidence and expectation that the Lord can do something just as miraculous, if not more so, for us:

But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men; for behold, *he hath all power* unto the fulfilling of all his words. And thus it is. Amen. (1 Nephi 9:6; emphasis added)

Jonah's rescue was symbolic of the power of the Resurrection and of exaltation. Do we see ourselves resurrected and perfected because of the power, work, and glory of the Lord (see Alma 5:15)? I can imagine that Jonah used words and feelings similar to Nephi's psalm (see 2 Nephi 4:16–35) after being “encompassed about” but “preserved upon the water of the great deep” and then becoming a successful missionary to the Assyrians.

For years, I had not noticed the reference to the temple in this whale story. Now, with my new temple paradigm, this story has become not only an important witness for the Savior but one of the most glorious accounts of temple deliverance in all of scripture.

I realized, as I studied and read, that *the temple was central to Jonah* in his peril, even in his sin. Why wasn't the temple central in my life? Why wasn't it the most powerful spiritual motivation in my life? Why had I not seen the temple in the scriptures?

The Fall, the Plan of Redemption, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the celestial potential of man, the power and grace of Christ all taught in this whale of a tale are central temple doctrines. The story of Jonah teaches us that the temple should be the center of our lives, even in the moment of our greatest tribulations, because it represents the presence of the Lord and teaches us the process of true deliverance from the Fall, including our personal falls.

The Mighty Change: The Great Paradigm Shift of the Gospel

Prior to recognizing the temple message in the scriptures, I had become intrigued with the Book of Mormon doctrine of “the mighty change,” as taught by King Benjamin and the prophet Alma:

And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou has spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. (Mosiah 5:2)

And now behold, I ask of you my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts? (Alma 5:14)

I wondered seriously if any of us really do change except by the modifications of time and experience. Does our basic nature change, our hearts, our countenance? What does it mean to be spiritually born of God? How does one change from a state of “evil continually” to “good continually” (see Moroni 7:12–13)? “Good” is a definite term in the scriptural temple. Its source (see Genesis 1:3–4; James 1:17; Moses 2:4, 12, 18, 25, 31; Mosiah 4:12; Alma 32:35; Moroni 7:24; 10:25; D&C 11:12;) and actions (see Moroni 10:6; D&C 11:12; 21:7; 35:12) are clearly defined. Good comes from those that are good (see Abraham 3:23) and the plan that is good (see Abraham 4:21). In this plan we are “agents unto [ourselves]. And inasmuch as [we] do good, [we] shall in nowise lose [our] reward” (D&C 58:28). “Fear not to do good ... [for] if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward” (D&C 6:33). What does God see as “very good” (Genesis 1:31; Moses 2:31; compare Abraham 4:31) in our lives today?

The mighty change seems to be something quite separate from the changes imposed by the natural process of mortality. It is, according to

King Benjamin and Alma, a change of heart. King Benjamin further said that this change of heart requires putting off the natural man, acquiring the qualities of a child, and becoming a Saint through the Atonement (see Mosiah 3:19). I call this mighty change of heart *the great paradigm shift of the gospel*. Alma, the converted son of Alma, testified of this great shift in his own life and witnessed it in the lives of those he taught, calling it a “great check” (Alma 15:17). He said further that all mankind must make this shift to be born of God:

For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters. (Mosiah 27:24–25; see also Moses 6:59)

The major events of life (birth, family, schooling, marriage, children, profession, aging) reflect the seven acts on the stage of life as described in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*.^[6] If “all the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players,” then as Hugh Nibley asked: “if all this is so, which is the real you?”^[7] Discovering “the real you” is centered in our agency or our ability to choose. Regardless of any external forces upon us, our unique identity is linked to responsibility for our own choices. The fundamental nature of each living soul is a “light of truth” that “can act for itself” (see D&C 93:29–30). Therefore, we have the potential to act out our true selves.

We have the power to be true to the truth within us. This truth is illuminated and enhanced by obedience to God because “no man receiveth a fulness [of truth] unless he keepeth his commandments” (see D&C 93:26–28). C. S. Lewis embraced the ultimate choice of obedience so clearly when he said:

There are only two kinds of people in the end: Those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, in the end, “Thy will be done.”[8]

For “it shall be unto thee according to [thy] desire” (Moses 5:23). One who said to the Lord “Thy will be done” through his beliefs and actions was Deitrich Bonhoffer, a Lutheran minister imprisoned and executed by the Third Reich of Germany. A few days before his execution and impending liberation by the allied forces, he wrote the following verses:

Who am I? They often tell me
I stepped from my cell's confinement
calmly, cheerfully, firmly,
like a Squire from his country house.

Who am I? They often tell me
I used to speak to my warders
freely and friendly and clearly,
as though it were mine to command.

Who am I? They also tell me
I bore the days of misfortune
equably, smilingly, proudly,
like one accustomed to win.

Am I then really that which other men tell of?

Or am I only what I myself know of myself?

Restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage, struggling for
breath, as though hands were compressing my throat,
yearning for colours, for flowers, for the voices of birds,
thirsting for words of kindness, for neighbourliness,
tossing in expectation of great events,
powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance,
weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,
faint, and ready to say farewell to it all.

Who am I? This or the Other?

Am I one person today and tomorrow another?

Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others
and before myself a contemptible weebegone weakling?
Or is something within me still like a beaten army
fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?
Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.
Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am thine! [9]

In spite of successfully acting out the major scenes of our lives, with their attendant rewards, trials, and teachings, there remains a nagging variation of Deitrich Bonhoffer's question: "Am I true to my real self or am I just acting?" In the end, will we feel that we were just acting and God knows it? Perhaps this is the feeling that we have when we contemplate the declaration of Amulek: "this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God" (Alma 34:32). What does it take to prepare to meet God? What labors are to be done for this preparation? Have I not prepared by acting out the major scenes of my life in acquiring knowledge, developing talents and character, and even striving to keep the commandments of God?

Yes, all of these are part of the labors and preparation to meet God because learning to choose correctly between good and evil and act accordingly in these major events of our lives is preparation in discovering who we are and what we can become. However, Amulek had a more profound preparation and discovery in mind. It is the discovery of "the real you" by preparing for a mighty change "that your hearts might be prepared" (D&C 58:6). He even implied the nature of this mighty change when he referred to a witness in the heart (see Alma 34:30–31). The mighty change is the core, the crux, of the gospel of Jesus Christ because it requires Christ and His Atonement to happen for us individually. It is the great paradigm shift of the gospel, the mighty change of heart. The Apostle Paul and Alma the Younger taught that it is a literal change in our nature:

For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. (2 Corinthians 4:15–16)

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. (Mosiah 27:26)

I found myself wondering like Enos, “Lord, how is it done?” The answer Enos received is so simple yet profound: “Because of thy faith in Christ” (Enos 1:7–8). The answer is that we must choose Christ.

Faith in Christ leads to repentance, which is obedience to the words of Christ. This obedience leads to the gifts of the Spirit which bring the mighty change of heart (see Helaman 15:7). Therefore, in this life we have the choice of either a mortal suffering relieved through repentance and faith in Christ now, or else procrastinating repentance until we die and must suffer spiritually in spirit prison with weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth (see D&C 19:45; Moses 1:22). This is why Amulek said, “I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end” (Alma 34:33).

As a missionary, I saw a mighty change in some of my investigators, and certainly in myself. Most missionaries experience the same, and they testify that faith and obedience in Christ is the power behind this mighty change. Stephen, my missionary son in Korea, discovered this truth as expressed in one of his letters: “I often wondered why missionaries had that special spirit about them. I always just thought it came with the calling but I don’t know if that’s the case anymore. Sure it comes with the calling somewhat but it’s due to the strict rules that the missionary abides by.” *The only reason that this mighty change does not continue in our lives is that we do not continue to seek and follow the Lord with the same missionary conviction and obedience, having faith that He can change us mightily and permanently.*

When I find myself crossing the straight and narrow path I get a glimpse of what I really want and hope to be. But alas, “O wretched man that I am!” (Romans 7:24; 2 Nephi 4:17). We have only one hope to acquire this divine nature, this mighty change of heart in becoming a new creature. This hope comes through faith in Christ who promises to make weak things

strong unto us according to our faith and His grace (see Ether 12:27). For the power of Christ to work in my life, I must be meek enough to seek Him, and draw near to Him as He draws near to me (see D&C 88:63). I “return” or draw near to Christ when I keep His commandments. Then He will “return” or draw near to me (see 3 Nephi 24:78). In this returning the stage is set for the great and last promise of the temple.

While I believe the mighty change to be a true doctrine of the gospel, I had difficulty seeing it consistently taking place within me in this life until I connected the great paradigm shift of the gospel with my changing paradigm of temple worship through the scriptural temple. I truly believe, as I will explain in detail, the mighty change of heart—the change from an unbelieving hard heart to a pure heart—is the pinnacle of the temple paradigm. It is the highest peak of Mount Zion, the Temple Mount, that we can climb in this life. It is the pure heart that is needed in preparation to meet God. This preparation, the mighty change of heart, is possible in this life by the power of the Atonement manifest through the ordinances and covenants of the fulness of the gospel starting with the ordinance and covenant of baptism. As Joseph Smith stated, “being born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances.”^[10]

Truman Madsen placed our most important spiritual rebirth or change in the ordinances and covenants of the temple when he said, “The birth [mighty change] that climaxes all rebirths is in the House of the Lord. The perfecting of His work (D&C 76:106) is the perfecting of His people. Are any perfected? Only those who are ‘made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.’ ”^[11]

The *scriptural temple* teaches that to “be in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17) requires the full priesthood of God through the ordinances and covenants of the temple. By the power of His full priesthood and love, “all things shall become new” (D&C 101:25) even the “renewing of our bodies” that makes a “new creature” both physically and spiritually (see D&C 84:32–33). He can even take a hard heart, soften it, and make it pure.

Moroni’s Heralding Call to Commune with God

In a memorable lecture on temple worship, the apostle John A. Widstoe said the following:

There is at present an unusual increased interest in temple activity. Our temples are crowded. The last time I attended the Salt Lake Temple I was a member of the third company. One started early in the morning, one late in the forenoon, and my company started about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. It was about 6 p.m. before we had completed the day's work. The number of temples is also increasing. The Hawaiian temple has only recently been dedicated; the Cardston temple is being rushed to completion, the Arizona temple is being planned and numerous communities in the Church are anxiously waiting and praying for the time that they may have temples. There is a renewed spirit in behalf of temple work, not because people are wealthier than they were before, nor because temples are more accessible, but because the time has come for more temple work to be done. The spirit is abroad among the people, and those who are honest in heart and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, are willing to give their time and means more liberally in behalf of temple work.[\[12\]](#)

This is an interesting statement, especially in context of what is happening to temple activity in the Church today. If Elder Widstoe were alive now, I believe he would declare another era of “unusual increased interest in temple activity.”

Elder Widstoe mentioned a few new temples. He would be overwhelmed with the ambitious temple construction today. Yet this construction is an expression of renewed temple desire and understanding of the Saints. President Hinckley's announcement of the smaller “stake” temples during the October 1997 general conference[\[13\]](#) as well as the plans to build many more of these temples announced in subsequent general conferences, is fulfillment of prophecy:

For it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for your dead. (D&C 124:36)

Perhaps with prescience, Samuel Francis Smith wrote the phrase: “I love thy rocks and rills, Thy woods and templed hills” in his famous anthem “My Country, ’Tis of Thee.”^[14] While the description of his country was the eastern United States, we are literally seeing hills templed not only in the entire United States but throughout the world.

The expansion of temple construction and worship throughout the world is also a significant part of the fulfillment of the supplication of Joseph Smith in his Kirtland temple dedicatory prayer: “That the kingdom, which thou hast set up without hands, may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth” (D&C 109:72).

Last January, I decided to attend the Bountiful Utah Temple one Friday evening. I traveled the few miles from Salt Lake and climbed the gently winding streets of the foothills of Bountiful. My eyes and thoughts were naturally lifted above to the elegant white house of the Lord.

As I entered the parking lot, it was evident that either there was a very large wedding or many other members had decided to visit the Bountiful Utah Temple this particular Friday. I could not find a parking place either in the parking lot above or under cover. I had to park on the street. I intended to go on the six o’clock session, but I became concerned about this start time when I couldn’t find a vacant locker. Before entering the chapel, I was directed to an overflow area already full of waiting people. It was obvious that I was in for a long evening.

The six o’clock session did not start until eight o’clock. The temple workers had never seen such attendance at the temple. Explanations could have been the cleaning closure of the Salt Lake temple or simply the fulfillment of New Year’s resolutions. Regardless of the reason, it was an impressive experience to be in the temple so full of worshippers that it could scarcely accommodate them. How wonderful if every weekend could draw such crowds to the temple as we all look with great anticipation for the work-week to end.

Truly, the time has come “for more temple work to be done,” not only in construction, but in understanding, worship, and practice in our daily lives.

It is time for the temple to become the center of our lives to teach us the way of salvation.

Moroni's trumpet call from atop the temple should not be "an uncertain sound" (1 Corinthians 14:8) in our ears. It is time we hear Moroni as a "voice like a trumpet" (Isaiah 58:1), even "a trumpet talking with [us]" saying, "come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter" (Revelation 4:1).

Similar to the two silver trumpets used to call the camps of Israel to assemble at the door of the tabernacle (see Numbers 10:2–3), Moroni's trumpet calls us to come to the mountain of the Lord. Surely, one golden trumpet is worth two silver trumpets. Therefore,

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: ... for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. (Joel 2:1)

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish ... and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount. (Isaiah 27:13)

President Thomas S. Monson once said that

The Moroni statue which appears on the top of several of our temples is a reminder to us all that God is concerned for all His people throughout the world, and communicates with them wherever they may be.[\[15\]](#)

In response to Moroni's heralding call to commune with God, and to increased desire to understand temple worship, I would like to take a journey through the scriptural temple. Throughout the scriptures the Lord weaves a clear temple message. The word of God teaches us how and why we should center our lives in the temple. It beckons us to climb Mount Zion, the spiritual mountain of the Lord's house, to see the great view of God's kingdom. The ensign from which "bloweth a trumpet" (see Isaiah 18:3) is the temple that the Lord lifted up upon the mountains to all

inhabitants of the earth. “For, verily, the sound must go forth from this place into all the world” (see D&C 58:57, 64). For “he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37).

Moroni’s calling trump reaches the dwellers on the earth not in musical notes, but with the “sound of rejoicing, as with the voice of a trump” (D&C 29:4) in “the sound of the gospel” (D&C 84:114). This sound is in the words of the everlasting gospel revealing the scriptural temple:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6–7; see D&C 133:36–39)

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