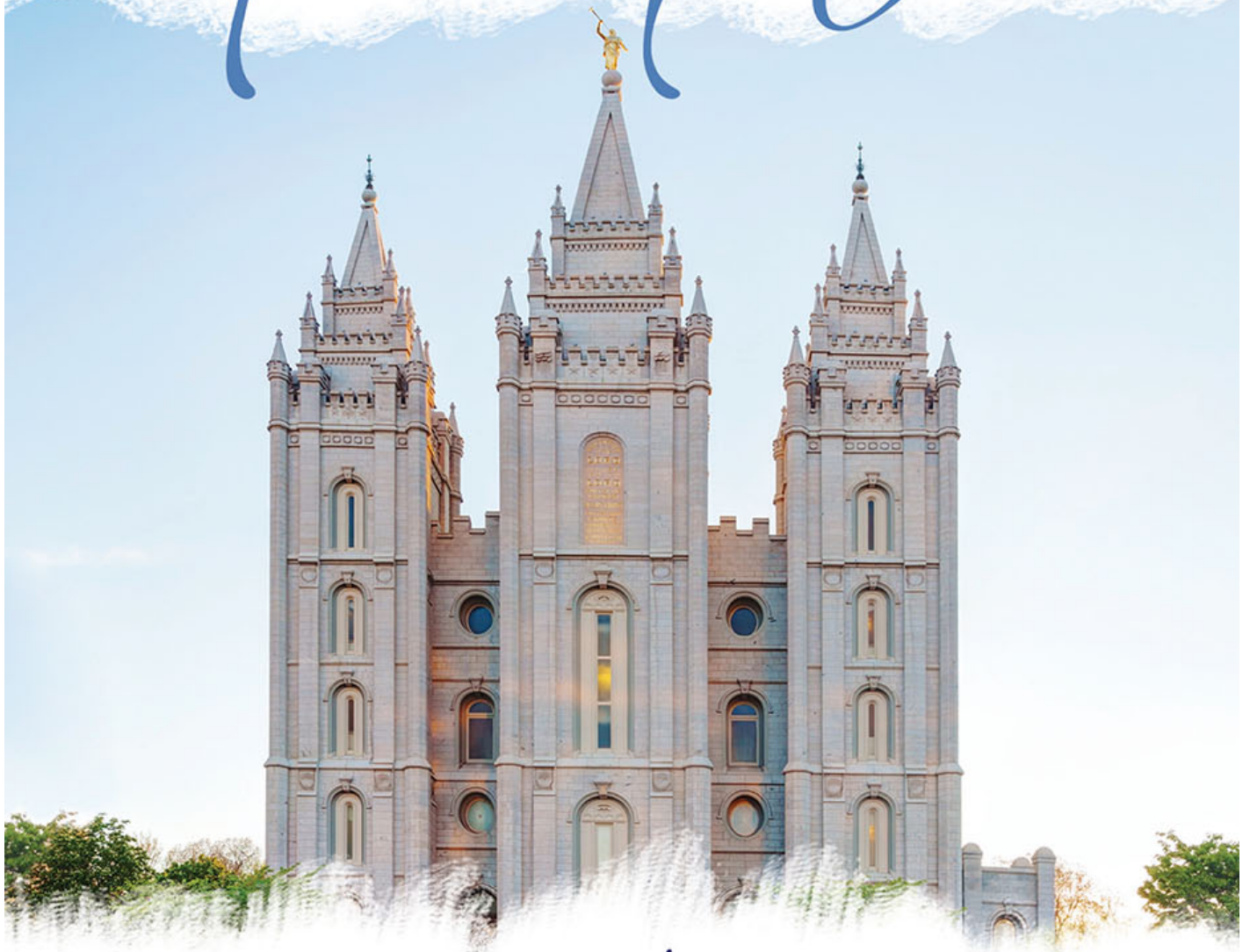


the

SALT LAKE

Temple



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

SUSAN EASTON BLACK

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To my illustrious ancestors

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CHAPTER 1

A TEMPLE IN THE MOUNTAINS

Who were the first Latter-day Saints to set foot on Temple Square?

Near what is today the border of Wyoming, Brigham Young contracted mountain fever. On July 12, 1847, while still 116 miles from the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham asked Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow to move forward with an advanced party rather than wait for him to recuperate. Ten days later, on July 21, Elder Pratt and Elder Snow set up camp a short distance from what is today Temple Square. Another party headed by Willard Richards and George A. Smith reached the valley on July 22 and joined their encampment. Pioneers in the encampment were the first to set foot on Temple Square.

When seeing the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847, did Brigham Young speak of a future temple to be built in the mountains?

Upon seeing the valley, Brigham said, “This is the right place. Drive on.”² He later added details to his expression:

I ascended and crossed over the Big Mountain, when on its summit I directed Elder Woodruff, who had kindly tendered me the use of his carriage, to turn the same half way round so that I could have a view of a portion of Salt Lake valley. The spirit of light rested upon me and hovered over the valley, and I felt that there the Saints would find protection and safety.⁴

Wilford Woodruff, who was in the carriage with Brigham on July 24, wrote of discussing with his prophetic leader a future temple:

We came in full view of the great valley or basin [of] the Salt Lake and land of promise held in reserve by the hand of God for a resting place for the Saints upon which a portion of the Zion of GOD will be built. . . . Our hearts were surely made glad . . . to gaze upon a valley of such vast extent entirely surrounded with a perfect chain of everlasting hills . . . Thoughts of pleasing meditation ran in rapid succession through our minds while we contemplated that not many years that the house of GOD would stand upon the top of the Mountains while the valleys would be converted into orchard, vineyard, gardings, & fields by the inhabitants of Zion & the Standard be unfurled for the nations to gather there.⁵

When Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff spoke of a temple in the mountains, had Brigham been sustained as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

Brigham Young was sustained as President of the Church on December 27, 1847, in Kaneshville, Iowa. At the time that he and Wilford Woodruff were discussing a future temple to be built in the mountains, Brigham was the Apostolic President of the Church.

The next day being Sunday, July 25, 1847, was building a temple in the mountains a topic of their worship service?

On the Sabbath, July 25, 1847, religious services were held in the forenoon and afternoon in the encampment near Temple Square. According to Thomas Bullock, clerk of the services, "Elder G[eorge] A. Smith preached about the House of the Lord being established on the tops of the Mountains." It is assumed that Elder Smith took for his text the words of Isaiah:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in

How does a temple differ from other places of worship?

Temples are not public places of worship like meetinghouses or tabernacles. The word *temple*, from the Latin *Templum* and the Hebrew *Beth Elohim*, means “House of the Lord”—a sacred enclosure dedicated and sanctified to God.⁷

In holy temples, faithful Latter-day Saints receive instructions and ordinances necessary for them to return to the presence of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. In those holy temples, the Lord reveals “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.”⁸

What is the main purpose of temples?

Elder David A. Bednar said, “Everything in the temple points us to our Savior, Jesus Christ.”⁹ In the temple, Latter-day Saints learn that the greatest blessings in life and eternity are possible only through Jesus Christ and His infinite Atonement and glorious Resurrection.

Was the doctrine of gathering Israel a necessary precursor to building a temple in the mountains?

Of the doctrine of gathering, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “All that the prophets have written, from the days of righteous Abel, down to the last man that has left any testimony on record for our consideration, in speaking of the salvation of Israel in the last days, goes directly to show that it consists in the work of the gathering.”¹⁰ One purpose for gathering the elect from the four corners of the earth is to “build unto the Lord a house whereby he could reveal

unto his people the ordinances of his house and the glories of his kingdom, and teach the people the way of Salvation.”¹¹

Where was the first gathering place in this dispensation for the house of Israel?

The first gathering place in this dispensation was Kirtland, Ohio. So great was the initial gathering, one journalist predicted the whole world would soon be living in Kirtland. Although the prediction was far-fetched, available housing in Kirtland was soon filled with converts anxious to learn more of the Restoration message. Other gathering places included Far West, Quincy, Nauvoo, Council Bluffs, and the Salt Lake Valley.

3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 146.
4. Elden J. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young 1846–1847* (Elden J. Watson, 1971), 564.
5. *Wilford Woodruff Journal* (January 1, 1847–December 31, 1853), 84, in *Wilford Woodruff Papers*.
6. Isaiah 2:2–3.
7. James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord: A Study of Holy Sanctuaries, Ancient and Modern* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1912), 25.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 124:40.
9. David A. Bednar, “Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing,” General Conference, April 2019.
10. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Deseret News Press, 1951), 83.
11. History, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843], 1572, in *Joseph Smith Papers*.

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