

September 29-October 5, 2021

Doctrine and Covenants 109–110

“IT IS THY HOUSE, A PLACE OF THY HOLINESS”

Summary:

Doctrine and Covenants 109. Prayer offered at the dedication of the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, March 27, 1836. According to the Prophet’s written statement, this prayer was given to him by revelation.

1–5, The Kirtland Temple was built as a place for the Son of Man to visit;

6–21, It is to be a house of prayer, fasting, faith, learning, glory, and order, and a house of God;

22–33, May the unrepentant who oppose the Lord’s people be confounded;

34–42, May the Saints go forth in power to gather the righteous to Zion; 43–53, May the Saints be delivered from the terrible things to be poured out upon the wicked in the last days;

54–58, May nations and peoples and churches be prepared for the gospel;

59–67, May the Jews, the Lamanites, and all Israel be redeemed;

68–80, May the Saints be crowned with glory and honor and gain eternal salvation.

Doctrine and Covenants 110. Visions manifested to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery in the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, April 3, 1836. The occasion was that of a Sabbath day meeting. Joseph Smith’s history states: “In the afternoon, I assisted the other Presidents in distributing the Lord’s Supper to the Church, receiving it from the Twelve, whose privilege it was to officiate at the sacred desk this day. After having performed this service to my brethren, I retired to the pulpit, the veils being dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer. After rising from prayer, the following vision was opened to both of us.”

1–10, The Lord Jehovah appears in glory and accepts the Kirtland Temple as His house;

11–12, Moses and Elias each appear and commit their keys and dispensations;

13–16, Elijah returns and commits the keys of his dispensation as promised by Malachi.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What did the ancient temples look like?

Our present-day concept of Temple buildings is

unprecedented. Before the first Israelite temple was built, the entire encampment of Israel was a “city temple” (apparently it will be that way again when the Lord returns to Jerusalem). “In pre-Temple times, in the desert, the whole encampment was considered to be in a state of sanctity, and hence anyone who was *tameh* (unclean) was forced to go outside the marked boundaries and was forbidden to return until he had completed the purification ritual. With the destruction of the Temple, such sanctions ceased to

apply. Nevertheless, the maintenance of ritual impurity has remained an essential aspect of Jewish life. Thus, because all Jews are now assumed to be ritually impure, they are even today forbidden to enter the Temple area in Jerusalem.”

(*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

What state of mind and body must I be to enter the House of the Lord?”

The call to go to the temple includes the phrase, “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.” (**Psalm 24-1-3**) Since the Jews feel they don’t have a temple, they have used the meal table as a substitute “altar.” It is appropriate to wash hands before every prayer at the beginning and ending of each meal. That is why kosher hotels have a basin and naturally flowing water

at the entrances of each dining room. There are large cups in public restrooms and other public fountains (like the Western Wall) so a Jew can fill the cup and then let the water flow naturally over his hands before he prays.

How is a Temple also a “House of the Lord?”

The Lord’s house is where “His glory and honor dwells.” (**Psalm 26:8**). The ark holding the *Torah* scroll is a reminder of the ark in the temple that held the tablets—the word of the Lord. Once, as I was leading my guests to the Western (Wailing) Wall, I observed a young *Bar Mitzvah* lad anxious to open the ark to retrieve the scroll so he could get on with his presentation to the congregation. His grandfather stopped him and said, “Inside represents the essence and the presence of the Lord. Be polite; first you knock, then pull the curtain aside and then you take the scroll.”

How is light used in the Temple?

As David wrote the Psalm indicating that the Lord is his light (**Psalm 27:1**), he must have known that the ark contained a special *menorah*, a light with seven candles or wicks. That symbol is now the official seal of the State of Israel. It is an artful chiasmus; the first and the last candles or lights are connected at the base. Likewise, the second and sixth, and third and fifth are connected and the center light is the main light. Could that have represented the Lord? After all, He should be the center of our attention.

What are the meanings of rooms in the House of the Lord?

The center of the Lord’s house was completely curtained because of its sacredness, a courtyard where we could converse with the Lord. As mentioned previously, the Children of Israel lived in a “camp” that was divided into three sections; the people (twelve tribes;

Rueben, Simeon, Judah, Asher, Dan, Gad, Naphtali, Issachar, Zebulon, Joseph [Ephraim and Manasseh], and Benjamin), the Levites in their midst, and in the center, the Lord’s presence – the tabernacle with the ark of the covenant. We long for the time when we can return to “dwell in thy courts” (**Psalm 65:4**), and be shielded, safe from the imbalance of the world around us. (**Psalm 84**).

Which Israelite family oversaw the Temple locations?

A pattern that is interesting is that the first Israelite temple in the land of Israel was in the hands of the tribe of Ephraim.

“Situated in the mountains of central *Erez* (land of) Israel, Shiloh was in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim and housed the ‘temporary sanctuary’ or Tabernacle containing the Ark of the Law.”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The latest temples outside the land of Israel are now in the hands of Ephraim, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The destiny of Joseph and Judah is that they will eventually come together to build the temple in Jerusalem. There is a Jewish tradition that the Messiah’s return will reflect either the date or event of the destruction of the First and Second Temples. Joseph Smith’s mission was to restore temple worship. Eventually, the “Lord will suddenly come to his Temple.” (**Malachi 3:1**)

How was the place of the Jerusalem temple chosen?

Abraham brought his son to the Mount *Moriah* (Hebrew: ‘Taught of the Lord’), which was later to become the place of the Temple, to offer Isaac as a human sacrifice. Human sacrifice is precisely the trouble that Abraham was spared in the Ur of Chaldees. It was a profound lesson in opposition, a chiasmus. Jewish tradition states that Isaac was in his early thirties when he was to be sacrificed. The “trouble” was spared when God provided

instruction that a “lamb” was to be offered as a sacrifice. Abraham and Isaac found an “alternative sacrifice,” a ram in the thicket, and it was offered as a substitute for Isaac. Later, other animals, first born and unblemished, were brought to the same place where the Temple now stood. They were offered on the north of the altar. **(Leviticus 1:11)** In some cases they were “blessed” with the sins (troubles) of the people in attendance. In one case, a goat would “escape” out the Gate Beautiful (also Gate of Forgiveness and Gate of Mercy). **(Leviticus 16:8–10)** It would be tied with a red ribbon and let out into the wilderness to die on its own (carrying the sins of the people), the scapegoat. These are substitutes for the Savior, who would sacrifice His life on the north end of Mount Moriah.

What future event would be connected to the Temple Mount?

Isaiah portrays the same principle when he describes the “glory” that is fastened in a “sure place.” It is glorious that we can bring our troubles (sins) to the Lord, at his house, and leave with greater blessings than we ever imagined. “And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the

LORD hath spoken it.” **(Isaiah 22:21-25)** In Jerusalem, there have been thousands of nails pounded into the old Western (Wailing) Wall, a remnant of the last known Jewish Temple. They remind us of a practice the Jews had until just about a hundred years ago. They would “nail their sins in a sure place” and then get on with life. A glorious thought: going to the Temple for worthy members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints not only blesses the ancestors whose vicarious work is being done, as well as those who are serving them. It is the Lord's house, where virtuous people meet, renew their souls, and remind themselves of the name they have taken upon themselves and that their sins are removed by His atonement.

How are events connected to calendar dates and seasons?

Most major events in scriptural history centered around certain commemorative seasons. The dedication of the Kirtland temple culminated with the remarkable visits of Elijah and Moses at Passover which is the first full moon after the first day of spring. In context to this lesson we repeat that the Jews are still waiting for the prophets Moses and Elijah to return. Two seats are traditionally and historically reserved for them in every synagogue. At one of the early meetings of the “Bnai Shalom” group (Jewish/Mormon cultural group founded by early Jewish converts to the Church, Harry Glick, Daniel Rona, Albert Ostroff and Jerome Horowitz), the late Apostle LeGrand Richards once remarked that he saw two beautifully decorated chairs fastened to the wall of a synagogue he was visiting. Knowingly, he asked the Rabbi, “What are those two chairs for?” The reply came quickly that they were being kept for Elijah and Moses. Elder Richards, seizing the moment and using his wonderful sense of humor said, “Get ‘em down, they’ve already been here!”

What Spring and Fall Jewish holidays have “Holy Convocations?”

By commandment, meeting together to remember the deliverance of Israel and anticipate its future deliverance are *Pesach* (Passover) in the Spring and *Sukkoth* (Booths or tabernacles) in the Fall. The sequel to Passover, the festival of Sukkoth, which happens at the first full moon after the first day of the autumn equinox, commemorates among other things, the dedication of Solomon's Temple. “*Sukkoth* (Hebrew for ‘booths’ or ‘tabernacles’), [is] a seven-day festival beginning on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei, which falls in September or October. (In the Diaspora an extra eighth day is celebrated.) One of its main observances is living temporarily in huts, called *Sukkoth*, resembling those in which the Children of Israel dwelt during their forty years in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt. “This autumn festival was the last of the three ‘pilgrim’ festivals connected with the farming year. From all corners of the Land of Israel throngs of pilgrims used to make their way up to Jerusalem carrying the gaily decorated baskets of fruit and grain which they brought to the Temple as a thanksgiving offering. At the gates of the city the townsfolk greeted them with music. The pilgrims then ascended the broad marble staircase that led from the City of David to the summit of the Temple Mount, where they would present their offerings to the Priests. “This holiday was also the occasion for the consecration of the Temple built by Solomon and every seventh year on Sukkoth, the Torah was read by the king before the assembled people. In his vision of the end of days, the prophet Zechariah foretells that all the nations of the world will assemble for the festival of Sukkoth in Jerusalem to worship God.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Where does the term “festival” come from?

The word “festival” comes from feasting on the sacrificial emblems that came from the temple. Also, a festive meal is always a part of a Jewish wedding, in part a connection to the temple. “With the destruction of the Second Temple sacrifices were no longer made. It was then said: ‘Now that there is no altar, a man's table . . . and prayer takes the place of the sacrifices.’ “The *Talmud* describes in detail the various modes of conduct to be observed at meals. For example, persons should engage in a discussion of *Torah* during the meal so that they will be ‘as though they had eaten at the table of God.’ Furthermore, the table is regarded as a substitute for the altar in the Temple, and therefore, it must be treated with reverence. Before any meal, the hands must be washed pronouncing the appropriate blessing over the washing, after which bread is eaten. The meal is concluded with the Grace after Meals. “. . . (a) benediction (after meals), called *Boneh Yerushalayim* . . . asks God to have mercy on Israel and to restore the Temple and the Kingdom of David. It includes a plea that He may always sustain and support Israel.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What reminders are there that there will be “latter-day temples?”

Remember, the Dead Sea “Temple Scroll” described a temple to be built in “latter days.” The Essenes believed that they were in the latter days and referred to themselves as “Saints.” The dimensions of the Temple they planned were similar to the dimensions described by Ezekiel. However, the outer dimension was so large, it seems to include the entire walled city of Jerusalem. “That temples and temple ordinances are essential to the (true) faith is well established in the Bible. Malachi predicted the coming of the Lord suddenly to his temple, in the day of

vengeance, in the latter times, as a refiner and purifier. Ezekiel predicted the building of a temple in Jerusalem which will be used for ordinance work after the gathering of Israel from their long dispersion and when they are cleansed from their transgressions. John the Revelator saw the day when, after the earth is sanctified and celestialized, the presence of the Father and the Son in the New Jerusalem would take the place of the temple, for the whole city, due to their presence, would become a temple."

(Doctrines of Salvation Joseph Fielding Smith Vol.2, Pg. 244)

How do small stones on Jewish graves remind me of latter-day temple expectations?

Stones or rocks are still placed on Jewish

graves as reminders of the stone-built temple and an innate desire to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Apparently, it was and will be made with stone – and the Rock of Salvation will come to that temple. The prayer at the grave has a fervent plea to rebuild the Temple. Our homes can become the "temple" model of the Lord's house. Entertainment brought in by various "vicarious" means may challenge us today as it did in the past. On the other hand, our homes may just be the model to prepare us daily to live with Him, in His house and in His city. Also mentioned previously is the expectation that the entire city of Jerusalem will become the "City of the Lord." May our feet "stand within thy gates." (Psalm 122:2, 134:1)