

MAY 4–5, 2012:
REFLECTIONS ON THE 170TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
RESTORATION OF THE ENDOWMENT



Weather vane of the Nauvoo Temple, placed atop the temple on January 30, 1846

The drawing pictured above was made by William Weeks, principal architect of the Nauvoo Temple. It depicts the weather vane that was to adorn the top of the temple as seen in vision by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Even though Brother Joseph dictated the details of the pattern, the upper structure of the temple was not sufficiently complete until a year-and-a-half after the Prophet's martyrdom. Finally, on Jan. 30, 1846, the resulting fixture was reverently set in place atop the temple. Ten days later, however, on Feb. 8, 1846, this exterior artifact of the Prophet's visions of the temple symbolically watched over the Saints as they were forced to leave Nauvoo. That day, the administration of temple ordinances was suspended until the Saints found "a place in the West where none would come to hurt or make afraid."

BEGINNINGS: 1823–1836

In 1823, when the angel Moroni cited scriptures to Joseph during those first in-depth training sessions, the temple was a key topic. One passage comes from Malachi, ch. 3: "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple . . . and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in right-

eousness" (vv. 1, 3). By a later visit from Moroni, not only was the Prophet taught of the clothing worn in sacred places before the coming of Jesus Christ (pictured above and below), he was being prepared for the day nearly nineteen years after his first instructions when he would introduce the *Enduement* clothing (Luke 24:49) and ordinances for the first time on 4–5 May 1842. That night in 1823, the Prophet was *trained by temple scriptures*, and five-and-a-half years later, he was *ordained* by another angel, John the Baptist, to introduce this sacred clothing (D&C 13). The Lord took further steps towards fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. In 1836, seven years after the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, even though the Endowment ordinances of the Kirtland Temple, including their associate spiritual manifestations, were rich, beautiful, and powerful, very few were then ready to receive any further instructions. Yes, though some in vision even saw angels dressed in these robes hovering over the top of the Kirtland temple, yet it was beyond the faith of many that men and women could be sealed in celestial marriage for time and all eternity. In fact, the keys for these temple blessings were not conferred until *after* Joseph adminis-

tered the Kirtland Temple ordinances (cf. D&C 110: 7–10 [Endowment *already* given], with vv. 11–16 [conferral of keys for three levels of priesthood blessings]).

NAUVOO RESTORATION: 1839–1844

Having exercised the keys he received in the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet later wrote from Liberty Jail and gave the Saints hints of the intense priesthood instructions he had received in the interim. His glorious foreshadowing of the temple blessings of the future Nauvoo Temple are recorded in the sublime language of D&C 121:26–46. Three levels of blessings would be offered. (1) By the keys of Moses, not only would the Endowment be extended to include the instructions we receive today, but as in earth's beginning, women also would be endowed. (2) By the keys of Elias, sealings in marriage for time and all eternity were first performed (5 Apr. 1841). (3) By the keys of Elijah, not only would the Fulness of the Priesthood be conferred for the first time in this dispensation (D&C 124:28; JS Diary, 28 Sep. 43), but by these keys all essential ordinances of exaltation could be, by proxy, offered to our faithful, kindred dead for their acceptance (Baptisms for the dead were first performed on 15 Aug. 1840 in the Mississippi river).



Moses Calls Aaron to the Ministry, by Harry Anderson, © IRI

Moses, by revelation, introduced the temple ordinances after the order of Aaron that would prevail until the death of the Lord Jesus Christ which ended this form of Sacrifice (3 Nephi 9:19–22; 15:2–10)

**SHARE AND PREPARE THE YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN OF YOUR FAMILY FOR THEIR ENDOWMENT
AS URGED BY PRESIDENTS EZRA TAFT BENSON AND HOWARD W. HUNTER**

- President Ezra Taft Benson expressed his hope that parents would do more to help prepare their children for their future temple blessings. In his classic article, “What I Hope You Would Teach Your Children About the Temple,” he said the following:

- “I am grateful to the Lord that my temple memories extend back—even to young boyhood. I remember so well, as a little boy, coming in from the field and approaching the old farm house in Whitney, Idaho. I could hear my mother singing ‘Have I Done Any Good in the World Today?’ (*Hymns*, no. 58.)

I can still see her in my mind’s eye bending over the ironing board with newspapers on the floor, ironing long strips of white cloth, with beads of perspiration on her forehead. When I asked her what she was doing, she said, ‘These are temple robes, my son. Your father and I are going to the temple at Logan.’

Then she put the old flatiron on the stove, drew a chair close to mine, and told me about temple work—how important it is to be able to go to the temple and participate in the sacred ordinances performed there. She also expressed her fervent hope that some day her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren would have the opportunity to enjoy these priceless blessings” (Read and study the whole article and unfold it to your children as you and they grow in spiritual capacity—*Ensign*, [August 1985]).

- President Howard W. Hunter emphasized: “• Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. • Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. • Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing” (Opening Address, *Ensign*, Nov 94:8). “• Let us share with our children the spiritual feelings we have in the temple. • Let us teach them more earnestly and more comfortably the things we can appropriately say about the purposes of the house of the Lord. • Let us prepare every missionary to go to the temple worthily and to make that experience an even greater highlight than receiving the mission call. • Let us plan for and teach and plead with our children to marry in the house of the Lord. • Let us reaffirm more vigorously than we ever have . . . that it does matter where you marry and by what authority you are pronounced man and wife. • All of our efforts in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead lead to the holy temple. This is because the temple ordinances are absolutely crucial; we cannot return to God’s presence without them. I encourage everyone to worthily attend the temple or to work toward the day when you can enter that holy house to receive your ordinances and covenants. • May you let the meaning and beauty and peace of the temple come into your everyday life more directly in order that the millennial day may come” (Final General Conference Address, *Ensign*, Nov 94):88.

Andrew F. Ehat, 4–5 May 2012, amplified 20 Aug. 2014
