

#44: Ezekiel and the Temple

Monte F. Shelley, 5 Dec 2010

Quotes

- If it was going to be easy to raise kids, it never would have started with something called labor.

1. Stick of Judah and stick of Joseph (Ezek 37:16)

"The discovery in 1953 of these writing boards from biblical Calah in Mesopotamia altered the thinking of scholars about how Middle Eastern cultures made records. Wooden tablets filled with wax represent the 'earliest known form of ancient book' and help us understand an important prophecy of Ezekiel foretelling the uniting of the Bible and Book of Mormon." (Keith Meservy, *Ensign*, Feb 1987, 4)



2. Ezekiel = God will strengthen (prophesied 592–570 BC)

Year	Event
991 BC	Temple of Solomon (1 st Temple)
721 BC	Many of the Ten Tribes taken captive
16 Mar 597 BC	Ezekiel and many taken captive; Zedekiah = king
31 Jul 593 BC	Ezekiel saw vision of God and his chariot-throne.
17 Sept 592 BC	Ezekiel's vision of corruption in Jerusalem
Jul 586 BC	Jerusalem destroyed; most killed, few captives
28 Apr 573 BC	Ezekiel's vision of millennial temple
538–537	Cyrus conquered Babylon & lets Jews return
516 BC	Temple of Zerubbabel (2 nd Temple)
c.17 BC–AD 64	Temple of Herod (renovated 2 nd ; enlarged site)
AD 70	Romans destroyed the Temple of Herod

3. Ezekiel's First Vision by the Chebar river (597 BC)

1:¹ In the [30th] year ... as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, ... the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. ...

³ The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest. ...

⁴ <I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal.>

Note: <> = NIV

Ezekiel saw four living creatures or cherubim ^(10:9) with the face of a man, lion, ox, and eagle. They each had wings and were each by a wheel.^(10:9) When they lifted up the wheels lifted up. Above their heads on what looked like a throne was a figure like that of a man surrounded by bright light. "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD."

Ezekiel called to be a prophet (God's spokesman):

2:¹ He said unto me ... ³ I send thee ... to a rebellious nation. ... ⁶ Be not afraid of them. ... ⁷ And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. ...

3:¹⁷ I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. ¹⁸ When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and ... thou speakest [not] to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; ... [he] shall die in his iniquity; but <I will hold you accountable. ... ²⁵ They will tie [you] with ropes. ... ²⁶ I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent.> ²⁷ But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth.

4. Ezekiel says Jerusalem will be destroyed (Ezek 4–7)

5 The judgment of Jerusalem will include famine, pestilence, war, and the scattering of her inhabitants.

6 The people of Israel will be destroyed for their idolatry—A remnant only will be saved and scattered.

³ Thus saith the Lord GOD ... I will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. ⁴ And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. ... ⁸ Yet will I leave a remnant, that ... shall be scattered through the countries ... ⁹ [because they] go a whoring after their idols.

7 Desolation, war, pestilence, and destruction will sweep the land of Israel—The desolation of the people is foreseen.

²³ The land is full of <bloodshed>, and the city is full of violence. ²⁴ Wherefore I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses: I will also make the <pride> of the strong to cease; and their holy places shall be defiled. ²⁵ Destruction cometh; and they shall seek peace, and *there shall be none*. ... ²⁷ The king shall mourn ... and ... the people ... shall <tremble. I will deal with them according to their conduct, and by their own standards I will judge them.>

5. Ezekiel's vision of corruption in Jerusalem (592 BC)

8:³ The spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the <north gate of the inner court where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood.>

¹⁰ I ... [saw] every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, poutrayed upon the wall round about. ¹¹ And there stood ... seventy <elders> ... of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah ... with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. ¹² Then said he unto me, ... hast thou seen what the <elders> ... of Israel do in the dark, <each at the shrine of his own idol? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the <land> ...

¹⁴ [At the north] gate of the LORD's house ... there sat women weeping for Tammuz [a Babylonian fertility god].

¹⁶ At the door of the temple ... between the porch and the altar, were about [25] men, with their backs toward the temple ... and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. ...

¹⁷ They have filled the land with violence [HEB *chamas*], and <continually> provoke me to anger. ... ¹⁸ Therefore will I also deal in fury: ... neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, *yet* will I not hear them.

BDB *chamas* = violence, wrong (injurious language, harsh treatment). Includes oppression, injustice, and false accusation. (TDOT 4:478–487).

Book of Mormon: evil speaking, despise, persecute.

6. Lord's glory went from Holy of Holies to threshold

9:³ The glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub ... to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which *had* the writer's inkhorn ... ⁴ And the LORD said ... set a mark [HEB *tav*] upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in <it>.

Letter Name	Trans-literation	Early	Middle	Late	Modern
Aleph	A	א	אָ	אַ	אָ
Tav	T	ת	תָּ	תַּ	תָּ

http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/6_chart.html

Early Semitic= before 1500 BC; Middle= 1500–500 BC;
Late= 500 BC–AD 100; Modern= after AD 100;

⁵ To the others he said ... Go ... through the city, and ... ⁶ Slay utterly old *and* young ... but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the <elders> which were before the house. ...

10:⁴ Then the glory of the LORD ... stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's glory.

The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: (Ex 13:21)

7. Lord's glory went from threshold to the east gate

10:¹⁸ Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold. ... ¹⁹ And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and <rose> from the earth in my sight: ... and ... <they stopped> at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was <above> them. ²⁰ <These are the living creatures> that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubims.

11:¹ The spirit ... brought me unto the east gate of the LORD's house ... [There were 25] men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah ... and Pelatiah ... <leaders> of the people. ² Then said he unto me, ... these are the men that <are plotting evil>, and give wicked counsel in this city: ³ Which say, ... let us build houses: this city is <a cooking pot>, and we <are the meat>.

⁴ Therefore prophesy against them, ... ⁹ <I will drive you out of the city and hand you over to foreigners and inflict punishment on you.> ¹⁰ Ye shall fall by the sword; ... ¹² for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments, but have done after the manners of the heathen that are round about you. ... ¹⁶ Although I have scattered them, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. ...

¹⁷ I will even gather you ... out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. ... ¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; ...

²⁰ That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

8. Lord's glory went from east gate to Mount of Olives

11:²² Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. ²³ And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain ... on the east side of the city.

9. Why was Jerusalem destroyed? (Ezek 16)

When ... Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. (Jer 3:8)

³² You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband! ... ³⁸ I will sentence you to the punishment of women who commit adultery and who shed blood; I will bring upon you the blood vengeance of my wrath and jealous anger. (NIV Ezek 16)

Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorce, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away. (Isa 5:1)

10. Ezekiel sees the battle of Armageddon (Ezek 38–39)

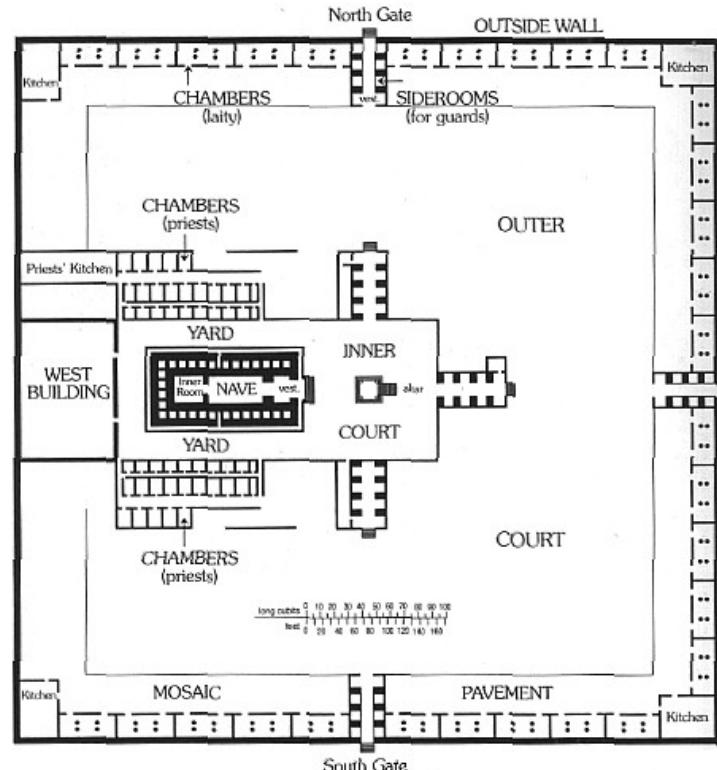
38 The battle of Gog and Magog against Israel will usher in the Second Coming—The Lord will come amid war and pestilence, and all men will shake at his presence.

39 Gog and Magog will be destroyed—For seven years the people in the cities of Israel will burn the weapons of war—For

seven months they will bury the dead—Then will come the supper of the great God and the continued gathering of Israel.

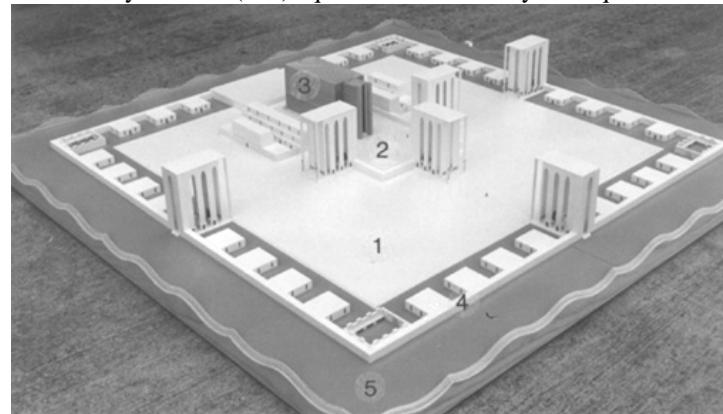
11. Ezekiel sees the millennial temple (40–42; 573 BC)

40:¹ In the [25th] year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the [14th] year after that the city was smitten, ... ² In the visions of God <he took me to> the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain. ... ³ And ... there was a man ... with a <linen cord> in his hand, and a measuring rod; and he stood in the gate. ⁴ And the man said unto me ... <Tell the house of Israel everything you see.>



<http://www.templemount.org/ezektmp.html>

500 royal cubits (21") squared = about 300 yards squared



12. Lord's glory returns to the temple (Ezek 43)

² <I saw> the glory of the God ... came from ... the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. ... ³ The vision which I saw <was like> the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.

God's visible glory is very bright (10:4; Lk 2:9; Rev 21:11, 23).

The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle when completed (Ex 40:34) and Solomon's temple when dedicated (1 Kgs 8:10–11). A cloud often represented the glory of the Lord.

⁴ And the glory of the LORD came into the house <through the gate facing east.> ⁵ So the spirit ... brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.

⁶ And I heard *him* speaking unto me out of the house. ... ⁷ And he said ... the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile. ... ⁹ Let them put away their whoredom ... ¹¹ If they be ashamed of all that they have done, [show] <them the design of the temple—its arrangement, its exits and entrances> ... and all the ordinances ... and all the laws thereof: and write *it* in their sight, that they may <be faithful to its design>, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. ¹² This is the law of the <temple: All the surrounding area on top of the mountain will be most holy.>

Kirtland Temple dedication: We have given of our substance to build a house to thy name, that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people. (D&C 109:5)

13. What is the purpose of the large altar (18' by 18')?

^{43:}¹⁸ He said unto me, ... These are the ordinances of the altar in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon.

Altars: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Lehi used altars for pray, sacrifice, worship, and making covenants (Moses 5:5–8; Gen 8:20; 12:7; Ex 19:3–6; 24:4–8; 1 Ne 2:7). The temple had four altars: altar of sacrifice, altar of incense with smoke (prayers) ascending before the veil, table of shewbread, and the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies. The bread on the “table of shewbread” was ‘most holy’ (Lev 24:9) which meant that it imparted holiness (Ex 30:29) to the priests who ate it in the Holy Place of the Lord’s house every Sabbath (Lev 24:8). The sacrament table is an altar. The sacrament symbolizes all the sacrifices of the Mosaic law and Christ’s sacrifice. Temple altars are used to make covenants and communicate with God.

14. Why was the outer east gate to be kept shut?

^{44:}² Then said the LORD unto me; This [outer east] gate shall be shut ... and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD ... entered in by it. ... ⁴ and ... the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD; and I fell upon my face.

This prevented sun worship and annual New Year rituals when Marduk, a Babylonian god, exited and returned through east gate.

15. What are the two levels of priesthood?

^{44:}⁹ Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary. ... ¹⁰ And the Levites ... ¹¹ shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates ... and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. ... ¹³ And they shall not ... do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place. ...

¹⁵ But the priests <who are> Levites, <and> the sons of Zadok, ... shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood: ... ¹⁶ They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. ...

BDB Zadok= *just, righteous*; 1st high priest of Solomon’s temple “sons of Zadok” = “sons of righteousness.” Melchizedek =

King of righteousness. Ezekiel was a descendent of Zadok (BD)

¹⁷ When they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments ... ¹⁸ linen bonnets upon their heads, and ... linen <undergarments around their waists. They must not

wear anything that makes them perspire.> ¹⁹ And when they go forth into the <outer> court ... they shall put off their garments ..., and lay them in the <sacred rooms>, and they shall put on other garments. ...

Priest clothing discussed in my notes or handouts for lesson 26.

²⁰ Neither shall they shave their heads, nor <let their hair> grow long; they shall <keep the hair of their heads trimmed>. ²¹ Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court.

... ²³ And they shall teach my people *the difference* between the holy and profane <common>, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. ²⁴ And in controversy ... they shall judge it according to my judgments. ...

45:⁹ Thus saith the Lord GOD; <You have gone far enough, O princes of Israel! Give up your violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people. You are to use accurate scales, an accurate ephah and an accurate bath.>

16. Living and healing waters from the temple (Ezek 47)

¹ <The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east.>

At 1000 cubit intervals the water reached the ankles, knees, waist, and then over Ezekiel’s head.

⁷ At the bank of the river were very many trees. ... ⁸ Then said he unto me, These waters ... go down into the desert, and go into the [dead or salt] sea ... [and] the waters shall be healed. ⁹ <Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live.> ¹⁰ <Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds--like the fish of the Great Sea. ¹¹ But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. ¹² Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.>

According to Leviticus, “atone means to cover or recover, repair a hole, cure a sickness, mend a rift, make good a torn or broken covering. ... Atonement does not mean covering a sin so as to hide it from the sight of God; it means making good an outer layer which has rotted or been pierced.” (TT, 69)

17. Land shall be divided according to the tribes

^{47:}²¹ So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel. ²² <You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who have settled among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.> ²³ And ... in what tribe the <alien settles>, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord GOD.

The Lord told Abraham, “as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be ... thy seed” (Abr 2:10). Nephi said, “as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord” (2 Ne. 30:2).

18. Second Temple or Temple of Zerrubbabel (516 BC)

Same size as 1st temple with table of shewbread and incense altar but only 1 menorah. **Missing:** (a) Ark + stone tablets, manna, and Aaron’s rod, (b) Urim and Thummim, (c) holy anointing oil, (d) sacred fire on altar, (e) spirit of prophecy, and (f) Shekinah or God’s glory or presence. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple; BD Temple of Zerrubbabel; www.jewishencyclopedia.com Second Temple)

Quotes

1. Joseph: It is generally supposed that sacrifice was entirely done away when ... the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was offered up, and that there will be no necessity for the ordinance of sacrifice in future; but those who assert this are certainly not acquainted with the duties, privileges and authority of the Priesthood, or with the Prophets. The offering of sacrifice has ever been connected and forms a part of the duties of the Priesthood. It began with the Priesthood, and will be continued until after the coming of Christ, from generation to generation. We frequently have mention made of the offering of sacrifice by the servants of the Most High in ancient days, prior to the law of Moses; which ordinances will be continued when the Priesthood is restored with all its authority, power and blessings. ... These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings. This ever did and ever will exist when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood are sufficiently manifest; else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by the Holy Prophets be brought to pass. It is not to be understood that the law of Moses will be established again with all its rites and variety of ceremonies; this has never been spoken of by the prophets; but those things which existed prior to Moses' day, namely, sacrifice, will be continued. It may be asked by some, what necessity for sacrifice, since the Great Sacrifice was offered? In answer to which, if repentance, baptism, and faith existed prior to the days of Christ, what necessity for them since that time?" (TPJS, 172-3; see also Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:93-94)

2. S. Michael Wilcox: Ezekiel's last description of the river's depth contains a beautifully symbolic truth of what the temple can become for all of us if we wade into its waters again and again. 'It was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, *waters to swim in*, a river that could not be passed over.' (Ezek 47:3-5.) The water is now over his head, and he can immerse himself in its cool freshness.

The first time we enter a temple, we barely get our feet wet. We are barely introduced to the Lord's light and love. What a tragedy it is when members of the Church judge the temple to be shallow or not deeply refreshing based on that first experience. Yet all of us know that on a hot summer day, wading even ankle deep in a cool stream brings instant refreshment and a hesitancy to leave the flowing water to return to our shoes. In light of this, it is not difficult to feel Moses' sense of wonder when he was told to 'put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' (Ex 3:5.) Elder Widtsoe cautioned that it is not fair 'to pass opinion on temple worship after one day's participation followed by an absence of many years. The work should be repeated several times in quick succession, so that the lessons of the temple may be fastened upon the mind.' ("Temple Worship," 64.) Little do the casual waders know that down the river, if they will patiently persist, are life-giving, healing 'waters to swim in.' For the water rises each time we wade. Little do they realize the power of those waters to heal the disharmony of our lives, our families, and eventually the world.

If we understand little or feel little the first time we enter the temple, at all cost let us not abandon the river. We must continue down the bank and wade in again and again. If we do that, we will feel the waters rise until they are over our heads, and we can plunge deeply into the refreshing, life-giving, healing waters of God's love and light. As we continue to wade in again and again, our understanding of the Lord's great plan of mercy and

happiness as taught through the temple symbols will rise also. If you feel you are understanding the temple ceremonies at an ankle-deep level, do not despair. Wade in again and again and again. In time you will feel the water rise and your understanding deepen. When talking with children about the temple, I often tell them about Ezekiel's river. Their eyes are full of wonder, delight and anticipation at the thought that one day they too will be able to swim in Heavenly Father's river. We, who are older, can learn a great deal from their eagerness. (*House of Glory: Finding Personal Meaning in the Temple*, 1995, 41-43)

3. Spencer J. Condie: Of all the places on earth, the Dead Sea is one of the most inhospitable to life. Even burning deserts of sand provide a home for hardy insects and reptiles and for certain plants with extremely deep roots. Concrete sidewalks and asphalt tennis courts sometimes crack, allowing a brave weed or two to survive above the surface. But the Dead Sea, because of its extreme salinity, harbors no life of any kind. Thus, using the example of the Dead Sea, the Lord's prophets have chosen the worst possible case to illustrate the power of the living waters to heal that which is dead. The living waters of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His atonement can heal dead marriages, dead relationships between parents and children, dead friendships between business partners and neighbors, and spiritual death from years of alienation from the Church. His promise is sure: "Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23). (Spencer J Condie, *Your Agency: Handle with Care*, 1996, chapter 5)

4. S. Michael Wilcox: My favorite scripture on the temple is in Ezek. 47. ... A spring of water bubbles up right at the east doors of the temple. We have water in front of many of our temples—reflecting pools. Every time you see that water, please think of Ezek. 47. The water in Ezekiel's vision ... goes into the Judean wilderness and then empties into the Dead Sea. ... Everywhere water flows, life springs up. ... When I read those words, the Spirit whispers this thought: 'That which will one day be temporally true of my house in Jerusalem, is spiritually true now of all my temples.' Out from the east doors of the Jordan River Temple, where I go most frequently, is a river of water. It is not a river you see with the eyes, but it is there nonetheless. It will do two things: give life and heal everything it touches—our families, our friendships, our bruised and broken hearts battered by the trials of life. Nephi tells us that the fountain of living water is the love of God (see 1 Ne. 11:25). The river that flows from the temple is a river of light, truth, and power, but primarily it is a river of love; it will heal and give life to everything. (*Every Good Thing: Talks from the 1997 BYU Women's Conference*, 1998, 296-297)

5. Howard W. Hunter: 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. As the prophets have said, the temple is a place of beauty; it is a place of revelation; it is a place of peace. It is the house of the Lord. It is holy unto the Lord. It must be holy and important to us. (*Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 5)

6. Marion G. Romney: There are three phases of the light of Christ. ... The first one is the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; The second phase is the gift of the Holy Ghost; And the third is the more sure word of prophecy [or second comforter, TPJS 150]. ("The Light of Christ," *Ensign*, May 1977, 43)