

Ir-ot-30  
Come to the House of the Lord  
(2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 29-30; 32; 34)  
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Apostasy came to Israel, and a Restoration. **These ancient events bore witness of the Greater Apostasy and the Greater Restoration which have occurred in Our Days**)

- I. The Ten Tribes of Israel were the first to fall into apostasy, worshipping idols and living wickedly. Thus they were taken into captivity by Assyria, as prophesied.
- A. "... the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight..." (2 Kings 17:18).
  - B. Since then they have disappeared from the knowledge of the world, although through latter-day prophets we know many things about them.
  - C. In fact, **We are a part of them, and are now being re-gathered, as promised, with the responsibility of gathering all others!**
- II. Judah followed Israel into apostasy (2 Chron. 28:24-25).
- A. Hezekiah helped overcome their apostasy by renewing the temple (2 Chron. 29-30).
  - B. Hezekiah invited *all Israel* to come to that temple (2 Chron. 30:5-9), including those of the ten tribes still left in the land. But many mocked the invitation (2 Chron. 30:10).
  - C. In our day, prophets are again calling, "Come to the Temple!"
    - 1. President Boyd K. Packer gives such an invitation in his book *The Holy Temple*. Everyone should read its beautiful chapter with that very title.
- III. Hezekiah's works bear witness of the importance of temples to us in our day.
- A. The July 2010 *Ensign* shared examples of how the temple has blessed the lives of members in India, really strengthening God's people there.

"You notice it most when you look in their eyes. There is joy there, hope and belief, an optimism that ignites a smile when you say, "Tell me how you feel about the temple."

For Latter-day Saints in India, temple marriage brings a depth of understanding, a sense of fulfillment, and a commitment to keep covenants forever as they cherish the promises of eternity. **Although the nearest temple is thousands of miles away in Hong Kong, increasing numbers are finding their way to the house of the Lord.** Guided by prayer, faith, and the Spirit, they are choosing to be sealed in the temple" ["Choose the Temple, July 2010 *Ensign*, pp. 18-23). (Emphasis added).

- B. My own personal experiences verify the power within the Temple. Throughout my adult life, I have found great blessings by attending our temples. There I find a renewal of the Spirit, and refuge from the wickedness of the world. I am currently serving in the Palmyra Temple as a Temple Missionary (Fall of 2013 to Fall of 2014). This greater access to the temple has multiplied the blessings many times over. Living in Palmyra, we also have opportunities to visit the Sacred Grove, where God the Father and Jesus the Christ revealed themselves to Joseph Smith, the one foreordained to restore Christ's Church after Apostasy. When I visit, I feel the wonders of the revelatory

experience that occurred in this Grove. I have also learned that many people have begun to be converted due to the Spirit they feel while visiting the Sacred Grove.

But I have also come to understand, as I am inside the temple where trees of the Sacred Grove are memorialized in its stained glass windows, that **This is the new Sacred Grove!** What occurred out there was something which happened on one marvelous occasion. But **on a daily basis, revelatory experiences are available to every patron inside who seeks them,** and who is worthy and prepared to receive them. What a marvelous blessing!

**This means that not only this, but all 143 (and counting) temples which exist throughout the world are also now "True Sacred Groves" --- places where men can enter, be cut off from the wickedness of the world, renew their covenants, and go forth again to serve the Lord and mankind with strengthened faith, insight, testimony and commitment. This is a great weapon against apostasy.**

C. While Hezekiah's work was to renew the temple, **the work of today's prophets has been to take the temple to the people. Over 85% of the members now live within 200 miles of a temple, as recently announced by Elder Quentin L. Cook in General Conference.**

III. Undoubtedly Israel's renewed temple attendance brought humility and closeness to the Lord, and these things were a factor in helping save them from the Assyrians.

A. The saving of Judah from the Assyrians was a great and miraculous event (Ch. 32).

1. That miracle should inspire us to have more faith in the Lord's power to protect us.

2. And the truth is **Temple attendance does increase our protection.**

a. **Those who attend the temple should recognize promises given pertaining to protection. While many mock, I can personally testify those promises are real. For I have seen them fulfilled in the lives of members of my family on more than one occasion, and in very miraculous ways.**

IV. Judah was also led back from apostasy through renewed access to scriptures.

A. When a later king, Josiah, undertook another repair of the temple, they found lost scriptures, which added even greater spiritual strength to the people.

B. This event was also a witness of a future time --- when the return of scriptures would lead to the Restoration.

In England in the late 1500's, the scriptures were essentially lost to the people because they were not in their own languages. The following excerpt recounts the joy the people felt when they could finally read Bibles. **This event proved to be an essential step in the final Restoration of the Latter-day Church. For it was a Bible in the English language, read by Joseph Smith, which led him to seek God, and thus to usher in the Restoration.**

"There are many interesting reports of reactions to this sudden exposure to the Bible. It was now available to people of all classes, and the great controversy [about the Bible] had surely aroused immense curiosity about its contents. On the one hand, 'it was wonderful to see with what joy this book of God was received not only among the learned sort and those that were noted for lovers of the reformation, **but generally all England over among all the vulgar and common people; and with what greediness God's word was read and what resort to places where the reading of it was. Every body that could bought the book or busily read it or got others to read it to them if they could not themselves, and divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose.**'" (Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Making of the English New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), p 23. (Emphasis added).

“The way had been opened, and the people responded. Those with enough money purchased the Great Bible for private use, then often read to crowds who gathered. But its cost of ten to twelve shillings prevented its availability to the majority, except at the churches. There the poorer flocked to marvel that they could see and hear and handle a *whole* Bible, printed in the English tongue.”  
(From Lenet Hadley Read, July 1982 *Ensign*, “How the Bible Came to Be,” p 78).

C. For additional insights into the miracle and the blessing of scriptures, see “Scripture Legacy” the LDS Church video based on Elder D. Todd Christopherson’s April 2010 conference talk about scriptures.

V. Isaiah confirms the prophetic nature of Hezekiah’s life.

A. Isaiah wrote of Hezekiah as a forerunner of the Messiah. In writing about Hezekiah’s birth, he was also prophesying of Jesus’ birth. We can readily see that while Judah should rejoice in Hezekiah’s birth as a great leader for reform, **the praises given him could only be fulfilled by the greater and future King, Jesus the Christ.** [Also note the references to the darkness of apostasy and to the light at Christ’s coming].

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined....

“For unto us child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor,\* the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, (Isaiah 9:2, 6-7).”

1. Note the parallels: both were born in times of the darkness of apostasy. Both brought light back into the lives of the people.
2. Both cleansed the temple (Luke 19:45-6; John 2:13-17).
3. But the reign of Jesus Christ would be far more marvelous than Hezekiah’s.
3. Hezekiah was a pattern for Joseph Smith too, who was a reformer after apostasy. In particular, Joseph also restored temple worship!
4. These parallels show Joseph was a true prophet and his work, a true Restoration.

B. The restoration of scriptures through Josiah pointed to Christ and the Latter-day Restoration.

1. Jesus’ coming fulfilled events symbolized by Josiah. This includes His giving new understanding to the scriptures. And through His life, atonement and teachings, He actually brought forth *new* scriptures: The New Testament.

2. When Joseph Smith came, he restored a correct translation of the *Bible*; brought back scriptures lost from the *Bible*; brought forth the *Book of Mormon*, the *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price*.

**We see there have been patterns of apostasy when both the scriptures and the temple were lost to the people. The return of lost scriptures and the rebuilding of temples were meant to be a major part of the Restoration of God’s people. These patterns pointed to our day --- the Time of the Ultimate Restoration!**

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\*Some scholars say there are four Titles of Christ here: “Wonderful Counselor” is one of those titles, making it parallel to the others. Hebrew scriptures did not use punctuation. And translators did not understand Jesus served as a cherished Counselor to His Father.