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November 11, 2020

THE FIRST AND GREAT PROMISE

The First and Great Promise

By H. Wallace Goddard & Barbara Keil

“How did you come to trust God?” my friend asked over the phone. The question was poignant because the good woman who asked had never been given a good reason to trust anyone. Her parents took her to awful movies that were disturbing to a child. They encouraged, and at times required, her to join them in drugs and immorality from childhood throughout adolescence. Her brothers assaulted her while her parents ignored her pleas. In adulthood, her husband never loved her. It would be easy for her to conclude that she was unlovable and life was unbearable.

But she did not. She faithfully sought God and whole-heartedly loved her children.

She had been a devoted Protestant before starting a dialogue with a Latter-day Saint. Now she is a member of the Church. She loves God and serves Him faithfully-but still struggles to trust Him. It is hard for her to believe that He will take care of her and her family.

I was not sure that my answer would honor her special challenges. I grew up in an earnest LDS home with long traditions of faithfulness and goodness. Would my solutions address her challenges? I did not know. But I knew that the words that sprung to my lips in answer to her question filled me with the kind of joy that fills a soul and leaks out the eyes.

“I couldn’t help but trust Him when I found how much He loved me. I knew-and know-that I do not deserve that love. But I am everlastingly grateful for it.”

How is it done?

“How did you discover His love?” she asked.

I laughed. “While serving as a bishop, I regularly felt God’s overwhelming love for His broken, troubled, and confused children. He was especially clear about His love for those who were buried under a mountain of sin and confusion. After being a messenger for that love for a couple of years, I finally had to stop resisting His love for me. I had to acknowledge that He also loved me in spite of my abundant fallenness, self-defeating humanness, and silly pettiness.”

I admit it. When I think about His mysterious love for me, I still weep. I simply am amazed, and dumbfounded. I know that I was a pest to my siblings and a frustration to my parents. I know that I am often gloomy with my wife, Nancy. Yet God, the greatest of all, the most desirable company in the universe, seems to like me. He assures us in sacred places that He wants us home again *with Him*. He does not want to send us off to some heavenly institution where we can have joy and stay out from under His feet. He wants to encircle us in the arms of His love. He wants us close.

She sighed. “I was taught of-and still tend to think of-a God who cares about my holiness but not my happiness. As I investigated the Church and learned about a God who loves us so compassionately, I often wondered if such sweet doctrine was really self-deception. I found it hard to believe, hard to trust.”

“Yep. That’s the trademark of Truth: It’s too good to be true! That is just as we should expect. Any program developed by Someone who knows everything, has all power, and loves perfectly will regularly surprise us-even shock us! That is one of the surest signs that we have discovered Truth.”

The gift of His love

Emmy Werner has studied a group of high-risk kids in Hawaii for decades. She focused on those kids who were virtually guaranteed failure for a variety of reasons. The odds were stacked against them. Yet about a third of them flourished; they overcame the odds. Werner (1992) said of these resilient youngsters that “all had at least one person in their lives who accepted them unconditionally, regardless of temperamental idiosyncrasies, physical attractiveness, or intelligence” (p. 205). In

other words, the key to growing up to be healthy humans is that someone loves us unconditionally. Someone must be crazy about us.

Many people in this world never feel loved, as our friend's experience verifies. Are they doomed to the stagnant and foul sewers of life? I think the answer is no. God has provided a powerful remedy: The gift of His love. (I also believe that showing love to others heals our own souls. Isn't it remarkable that loving God and His children-the two central commands-are the keys to our development!)

Related to God's love, here is the recent counsel of two of the Lord's Apostles: "Think of the purest, most all-consuming love you can imagine. Now multiply that love by an infinite amount-that is the measure of God's love for you. . . . Though we are incomplete, God loves us completely. Though we are imperfect, He loves us perfectly. Though we may feel lost and without compass, God's love encompasses us completely. . . . He loves every one of us, even those who are flawed, rejected, awkward, sorrowful, or broken" (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Love of God," *Ensign*, Nov 2009, 21-24).

"I testify this morning of God's limitless love for his children, of his unquenchable desire to help us heal our wounds, individually and collectively. . . . God is not dead, and he is not an absentee landlord. God is not uncaring, or capricious, or cantankerous. Above all, he is not some sort of divine referee trying to tag us off third base. The first and great commandment on earth is for us to love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength because surely ***the first and great promise in heaven is that he will always love us that way.***" (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Look to God and Live'," *Ensign*, Nov 1993, 13, emphasis added)

What amazing declarations! Regardless of our earth histories, we all have someone who is crazy about us. Each one of us has Someone-a Father in Heaven-who loves us with His whole heart, might, mind and strength.

Building a relationship of trust

How do we gain trust in the love He offers us?

First, we can look for and acknowledge markers of His love: the tender mercies, answered prayers, feelings of comfort or joy, moments when we sense His presence, experiences of guidance and direction, etc. We are wise to record and revisit these revelations.

Then we can make ourselves available to His love. We can study what helps us connect with Him. We can do those things that bring us closer to Him.

As we begin to allow His love to permeate us, we respond by offering our hearts, might, mind, and strength to Him in return.

Even as our resolve to follow Him increases, we will continue to fall short. But rather than see occasions of repentance as humiliating admissions of remarkable stupidity that threaten His ability to continue loving us, we should view them as regular reminders of our dependence on Him.

Our continual need to humble ourselves and repent of failings does not separate us from His love. Rather it is an opportunity to celebrate that His loving redemptiveness is larger than our weakness. Indeed, nothing can "separate **us**

from the love **of God**, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39).

I don't know if my answer was meaningful and useful for my friend. I do know that the insight caused me to rejoice. I felt, yet again, the power and relentlessness of His love. Whether we grew up in a faith-filled home or suffered a mixed-up childhood, His love reaches to us in every circumstance. It fills our souls. And it draws us toward Home.

If you are interested in books, programs, retreats, or cruises by Brother Goddard, visit his Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dr-Wally/178676491370>

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“I JUST HAD TO COME”-ON THE PLANE TO HAITI

Editors' Note: Meridian's Publisher and Editor-in-Chief have gone to Haiti with the Utah Hospital Task Force and Healing Hands for Haiti to report the earthquake and subsequent disastrous conditions there. Their coverage will center on Latter-day Saint efforts. [As we sit on the ground in Orlando waiting to leave, our amazing group leaders are currently on the phone ordering pizzas to deliver to the 82nd Airborne Division in Haiti.]

To donate to this effort please go to www.utahhospitaltaskforce.org

Just 16 days ago I was doing the most normal day-to-day chores in our home in Virginia. We were reluctant to take down the Christmas decorations-our tree was still supple and green, our 67 nativities were still set up in various places around the house. Many days in January have been colder than normal and we just couldn't

bring ourselves to take the cheeriness of the season from our home. I had no idea what was coming.

I hadn't paid much attention to the news on Tuesday afternoon, January 12-I was just too busy. Besides, I would be putting up the news on Meridian early the next morning. At 3:45 Wednesday morning I arose to gather the news and post it on Meridian. I always begin my day with my devotions and personal prayers. I asked the Lord to direct my path in the news, to find the right stories that were most important to our readers. My first step each morning is to check the wires, see what is coming through and what I need to follow. I got on the AP wire first and all I could see was stories of the earthquake in Haiti. My heart was melted and I started to cry for the people in Haiti and for their tremendous loss. I hadn't read through the first full story when I felt the distinct impression from the Spirit: "You need to go to Haiti. A way will be opened." I have learned to trust those promptings.

I had been pondering President Monson's life-long example of caring for the poor and needy and I wondered these past two weeks if this disaster in Haiti is an opportunity to follow that example. I've even considered the thought that this is a test for us and the world, in an already-challenging economy, to see how we will truly respond to people in great need.

My personal interactions with the Utah Hospital Task Force volunteers really began last night in a mandatory pre-flight meeting. I started asking person after person “why are you here?” I thought I would mainly hear things like: “I served a mission in Haiti and I wanted to go back and help the people,” or “I am a doctor and I would like to serve.” Of course those answers came, too, but what I heard over and over again was this: “I heard about the earthquake and I had an immediate impression that I was supposed to go there and help. I didn’t know how I would get there, but I knew a way would be opened.” Truly, I have heard that so many times I just stopped asking. This is not just a mission of mercy-this is *an orchestrated mission of mercy*.

I heard one of the volunteers, Dr. Ivan Flint, say this morning, with tears, that this reminded him of Brigham Young’s talk in the conference of the Church in the fall of 1856 where he essentially said this to the Saints (after he had heard of the Martin and Willie Handcart companies caught in storms hundreds of miles from the Salt Lake Valley)-“This is my message-this is the theme of this conference-go out and save our people on the plains. This is my religion.” The Saints responded to that call in amazing and wondrous ways. Even in the conference the sisters were passing their shawls and petticoats to the aisles to be used in the rescue efforts. They responded immediately to that call.

As I write this I am sitting on a charter 737 heading for Haiti-Maurine by my side, and 125 amazing, Latter-day Saint volunteers surrounding us. To my right is Lee and Yvonne Roderick's daughter, Kim, (Lee is an old friend) a registered nurse who has already received her own mission call to serve in the Hungary Budapest Mission (she leaves in March). She was called by that same spirit that informed me. To my left is Jeff Bigelow, a fourth-year resident at Yale in neurology. He speaks fluent Creole. He has been to Haiti many times. Having to leave a pregnant wife behind, he also felt the call. Standing in the aisle about four rows back and circled in a conversation are six or seven returned missionaries who served in Haiti at the same time. They are all speaking in Creole and seeming to love every minute of their time together. They all felt the call. I feel like the spirit of that message of Brigham Young's talk is here. And we are heading to a place where 3 million people have been displaced. I have never said in my heart, "I can't believe this." I do believe it. I expected it. I was told in advance.

Nearly everyone I probe more than casually tears up when they think about the people in Haiti. They can hardly talk about this place without crying. Maurine and I have never been there. We are being told by the UN mission (reports change about every 30 minutes) that the situation is rapidly deteriorating and that this may very well be the greatest human disaster in recorded history.

The spirit on this plane is one of strength, confidence and a mix of fear of the unknown. I have talked to people who have never been in the third world. I have talked to others who said, “The people of Haiti blessed my life for two years, this is a small chance for me to give back.” I loved what Steve Studdert said last night to the group, “If there is anyone here with an ego-Go home now. If you are a complainer-go home now.” The overall feeling here on this plane is humility.

I don't think any of us, as yet, really know what the situation will be like in Port-au-Prince and environs. The logistics of even finding a place for 125 of us to camp is overwhelming. We have been moved a number of times already (without even arriving) and have just learned that one place where it appears some may be camping now has a recent infestation of snakes. I'm not Indiana Jones, and in this case, that is good. We have heard that two words describe the situation in Port-au-Prince: madness and chaos. Perhaps that is exactly what an *orchestrated mission of mercy* is designed to handle.

To donate to this ongoing effort, please go to www.utahhospitaltaskforce.org

Continue to follow the stories from Haiti as they come to you daily (as we can get Internet service).

All Haiti stories will be updated at www.latterdaysaintmag.com/haiti

**MESSIAH: BEHOLD
THE LAMB OF GOD,
EPISODE 4 AIRS
SUNDAY**

Messiah: Behold the Lamb of God, Episode 4 Airs Sunday

By S. Kent Brown

During the last 150 years, words of Jesus that have guided believers for 2,000 years have fallen on hard times. Many scholars have discounted His most trusted and beloved teachings, claiming that much of what the New Testament records of His words actually originated with His later followers. Their approach has been through a range of academic disciplines, including history, philology and comparison of texts. It is particularly in the contrasts-they would say contradictions-between the gospel accounts that they see the handiwork of followers who put words into Jesus' mouth to enshrine their own teachings as if they were from the Master.

One of the texts that has suffered an especially rough beating is the Sermon on the Mount. Most scholars who have published on this seminal sermon have concluded that it consists of a collection of individual sayings that Matthew or a prior editor arranged into a sermon-like format. Although additional scripture allows Latter-day Saints to reaffirm only a few of Jesus' sayings from the New Testament gospels (compare Mark 16:15-18 and Mormon 9:22-24), the appearance of virtually the same sermon in the book of Third Nephi demonstrates the originality of the Sermon on the Mount with Jesus. But they are not identical. The differences regularly point to the conclusion that the sermon recorded in 3 Nephi 12-14 comes from the Risen and Perfected Christ whereas the sermon repeated in Matthew 5-7 comes from the mortal Jesus.

In a similar vein, scholars have strangled the life from Jesus' miracles, disclosing their disbelief in such supernatural interventions in our world. Jesus' powers over disease and physical deformities, as well as natural forces, receive dismissive if any attention. Although some may grant that Jesus exercised an extraordinary control in some of the less spectacular miracles, such as healing Peter's mother-in-law of a fever, they turn their backs on the grander miracles, such as raising the paralyzed man and granting sight to Bar Timaeus (Mark 2:1-12; 10:46-52). But even if one holds that the gospel writers exaggerated their reports of miracles, an unassailable core remains that underscores Jesus' miraculous powers. Moreover, additional scripture highlights His wondrous abilities whereby he healed life-threatening ailments and elevated the lives of those around Him.

BOOKS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Books for the New Year

By Jennie Hansen

By some odd coincidence, among the books I received to review, I was given two historical books this month that cover almost the same portions of the 19th century. They both carry powerful messages concerning freedom and our nation's roots, but their similarity ends there.

One, *Am I Not a Man* by Mark L. Shurtleff tells the Dred Scott story, and is the compelling story of a black man who struggled during the mid-19th century to gain his freedom and that of his wife and daughters. Scott's experience and the suit he took to court was a compelling factor in rousing the nation's indignation against slavery and propelling Abraham Lincoln into the White House. Author Shurtleff, Utah's Attorney General, brings a long career in law to this work. *Dawn's Early Light* by L.C. Lewis highlights a slightly earlier period when the British burned the American Capitol in 1812. It deals, too, with the struggle for freedom and the right to own property, the question of black equality, and the right of Americans to maintain their own sovereign nation.

When economics forced booksellers to tighten their belts, several loved series were severely shortened, delayed or dropped. This happened to the *Free Men and Dreamers* series. With two volumes published, the series was cancelled. Lewis persevered, engaged a top level editor, and proceeded to self-publish *Dawn's Early Light*, the third volume in this series. This volume details a piece of American history that is both painful and often overlooked in a study of our past—the invasion of British troops on our nation's capital and the burning of irreplaceable books and documents along with the President's House and the Capitol Building.

Jed and Hannah are married now, but with war looming over them, they have little time together. With the threat of Napoleon removed as Britain's main focus, British ships and troops are freed to subdue the upstart Americans. Britain's House of Lords is divided over the war and without a leader of sense or sensitivity over the nation, there are limited checks and balances which lead to deprivations, theft of property, and unclear policies.

The Creole Sebastian Dupree and his mercenaries attack the Willows and leave it and the White Oaks farms in shambles. Not everyone survives. And as the British move toward Washington, the capitol is paralyzed by weak leadership, unclear lines of authority, and personal egos. Farms are burned, stock and provisions stolen, and the land laid waste as the red coats proceed. The untrained Americans retreat too readily and men flee to see to their families' safety instead of maintaining their military positions. Some slaves maintain their masters' homes or fight alongside the militias, others flee to the British believing they will be granted freedom. Freed slaves are caught in a strange middle ground where neither side trusts them.

This volume is filled with both heroic and cowardly acts. Loved characters from the earlier volumes play strong roles again as the War of 1812 progresses.

Dawn's Early Light is, in my opinion, the best written of the three volumes in the series. It is an important reminder of America's roots and the human drive to achieve freedom. Both characters and the plot are believable and are based on meticulous research. It tore at my heart, as though events like Washington burning occurred just yesterday. Historical fans and those who read the first two books in this series will enjoy this volume. My only complaint is that it ended too soon. I wanted more closure without waiting for volume four.

* * *

Am I Not a Man? The Dred Scott Story is based on a true account unfamiliar to many today, but it is one of the greatest civil rights stories of all time. It is the story of a slave boy who grew to manhood as a trusted and loved part of a large, white land-owning family. The children of the family considered him a brother. When hard times and alcoholism changed the family's circumstances, the slaves were sold, including Dred's wife, whom he never saw again. He was sold to a hypochondriac doctor attached to the military who dragged him from post to post, including long stretches in free states. There in a free state, he married again and had his first child. Eventually the doctor died, leaving his property, including Dred and his family, to his well-connected wife, who in turn turned them over to her brother, an avid and abusive slavery supporter. The children of his first owner tried to buy Dred back, but his current owner refused to sell him. They got a court order preventing the sale of the family to anyone else and prohibiting further beatings and abuse, and thus began a long legal battle that went all the way to a corrupt and biased U.S. Supreme Court. The case outraged most Americans, became the focus of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, and was a major factor in Lincoln becoming the nation's choice for president.

LDS readers will notice similarities between the treatment by ruffian mobs of Mormons in Missouri and Illinois and the treatment and tactics of those same border ruffians who attempted to force slavery on Kansas and other new states.

Much of this book is brilliantly written and history buffs and freedom lovers won't want to miss it. There are also sections that drag, and I found it distracting to have the story jump forward and backward from one time to another. The story would carry a greater impact if it were written in chronological order and omnipotent author intrusions were eliminated.

Most Americans today are completely repelled by the declaration of the Chief Justice that a black person was so inferior that he had "no rights a white man was bound to respect." A culture that considered a black man a beast of burden, a mere animal, is hard for us to fathom today. Our present culture doesn't permit the abuse of animals to the degree many slaves were treated at that time.

Parts of this novel, which closely follows the real case, are hard to read because of their painful nature. Though the book is absorbing and gives fascinating detail of one of the most important cases in our country's legal history, it could be better organized and many of the long poems, songs, letters, and newspaper accounts would have been better placed in a bibliography or historical notes section rather than slowing the story. Which brings me to the book's major defect; it lacks a bibliography which would allow the reader to follow up on particular events or rulings. This is one of those books that walks a narrow line between fiction and history with history carrying the greater weight. It would be helpful to be able to separate the fiction and factual parts of the book with greater accuracy. Though I found the book to be lacking several points necessary to a good novel, it was never dull and kept me glued to the pages. I found it a memorable, timely, and important look at historical events that helped to shape our country and our present day attitudes toward race. I highly recommend it.

* * *

Where the Sun Rises by Frank Richardson is a story with a message. It might be described as a Good Samaritan story or some might call it a "feel good" kind of story. It begins with a graphic description of Hatcher Stephens III at his lowest point. Hatch was born into a wealthy family, and he had good looks, and intelligence to go with it. He married a beautiful woman and fathered two children. Unfortunately life came too easily and he never learned to discipline himself, think of others or develop a strong work ethic. When he meets obstacles, his life falls apart and he slips into alcoholism.

Broke, in debt, divorced, and homeless, he falls into a drunken stupor where a strange phenomena of light leaves him obsessed with a desire to reach the place where the sun rises. He begins a journey eastward where he is rescued by Trevor, a security guard who is strongly committed to the concept that when one person rescues another, he is responsible for that person. From Trevor, Hatcher learns some hard lessons and finds employment with a woman he greatly admires. Eventually he pushes on, meeting other people who further his education in facing reality and who help him become a stronger person. As he remains sober, he dreams of returning to his family in Seattle.

This book is beautifully written with thoughts and feelings expressed in an identifiable way. There are a few typos and omitted words, but not enough to distract from the story. The main character is well-developed and the first few secondary characters are developed well enough to fill their role, but the characters introduced toward the end of the book are shadowy. Mollie, who is an important part of the Snowville section—a lead in to the conclusion—is too vague for the reader to sympathize with or understand why she has such a strong impact on the Snowville community or Hatch.

I think most readers will enjoy *Where the Sun Rises* and it will lead to some serious introspection, but its dependence on coincidences (or miracles) lessens its impact.

* * *

Ronda Gibb Hinrichsen's *Missing* is the story of a missing child and is as current as today's headlines.

While singing a solo at a choir performance in Canada, Stacie Cox catches a fleeting glimpse of a young girl she feels certain is a kidnapped child from Rexburg, Idaho. She notifies the police but isn't content to leave the matter in their hands. She begins a search on her own, assisted by several members of the choir, thus upsetting the schedule of the college choir tour. Running concurrently with her search for the little girl are her relationships with two young men from the choir who have strong feelings for her.

As her search for the child becomes an obsession, Stacie is haunted by memories of a child she couldn't save. The direction her search takes leads the police and the choir director to question her emotional stability, and a clever woman sets a trap for the hunter.

Though this is her first book, Hinrichsen weaves an intriguing tale that holds the reader's interest from start to finish. Stacie has a

few too many problems and the plot involves too many coincidences to be completely believable, yet the fast pace and style of presentation make the book difficult to put down once the reader is past the disjointed beginning. Even the copy editing improves drastically once past the first chapter.

Missing is at its strongest when the author deals with the missing child and the physical details of the plot. Her weakest points are Stacie's emotional hang-ups which don't feel real, then are too easily dismissed. Hinrichsen is an author to watch. Her debut novel is an exciting triumph and I predict we will see great things from this author in the future.

* * *

By Love or By Sea by Rachel Rager is like reading a highly romanticized book written half a century or more ago. It begins slowly and doesn't pick up momentum until almost the end. The heroine and her suitors seem immature and the seaside kingdom where they live is vague.

Alice, the heroine lives with her grandparents. One day as she walks down the street, she meets a sailor who reminds her of a boy she fell in love with when she was just six and who disappeared three years later. Of course, he turns out to be that boy and is now in love with her. A wealthy man who has been courting her threatens to reveal dark secrets concerning the young man's past and she is torn between her two suitors. She befriends a reclusive artist, indulges in several intense kissing sessions with the sailor, then he leaves. Almost a year passes before he returns again. Then the story picks up its pace, leading to a love-and-money happy ending. Those who enjoy dreamy, romantic fantasies will enjoy this one.

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DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT, VOL 3 of FREE MEN AND DREAMERS by L.C. Lewis, self-published (Amazon), softcover, 325 pages, \$18.99

[Click to buy: Dawn's Early Light.](#)

AM I NOT A MAN? The Dred Scott Story, by Mark L. Shurtleff, published by Valor Publishing Group, hardcover, 480 pages, \$24.95

[Click to buy: Am I Not a Man?](#)

WHERE THE SUN RISES by Frank Richardson, published by Bonneville Books, softcover, 217 pages, \$14.99

[Click to buy: Where the Sun Rises.](#)

MISSING by Ronda Gibb Hinrichsen, published by Walnut Springs Press, soft cover, 264 pages, \$16.95

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BY LOVE OR BY SEA by Rachel Rager, published by Bonneville Books, soft cover, 198 pages, \$14.99

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LESSON 6

In this lesson we explore the story of Noah's Ark and the story of the Tower of Babel, two potent symbols, and their meaning to our lives today in our journey back to our Savior.

One of the great ironies of scripture is that in the days before the Flood, there were two cities of Enoch.

The first city was built by Cain and was called "after the name of his son, Enoch." A counterfeit system of covenants and ordinances had grown up among his descendants, who "covenanted with Satan": "From the days of Cain, there was a secret combination, and their works were in the dark." This city was dedicated primarily to gain. They spent their time acquiring things-cattle, precious metals like brass and iron. When they couldn't get what they wanted, they would murder for it. So this first "city of Enoch" was the capital of Satan's kingdom on earth. "Their works were abominations, and began to spread among all the sons of men."¹

So God called a prophet-another Enoch, who was a descendant of Adam's righteous son Seth, to preach the Gospel "of Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time."² Enoch went forth to warn the people of his day that God would send the floods upon them,³ and those who listened joined him in the building of another city known as "Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them."⁴ Eventually, these people became so righteous that the city was taken up into heaven to save it from the destruction that would come-"God received it into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, Zion is fled."⁵

The departure of the faithful left the earth in the grip of wickedness. After several generations came Noah, the last of the godly line of Enoch remaining in the world. Noah's father had prophesied that this son would bring "comfort" to the world (the Hebrew word *noah* means "rest" or "comfort"). We learn in Genesis that "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."⁶ The phrase "perfect in his generations" might better be translated as "blameless in his home" (the Hebrew word *dowr*, here translated as *generations*, actually means "household" or "dwelling place"); thus, we can assume that Noah was an exemplary leader of his family. Perhaps this is one reason why Noah "found grace in the eyes of the Lord."⁷

Noah and his sons "hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed, and they were called the sons of God."⁸ Noah was also a faithful priesthood holder: "the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his Gospel unto the children of men."⁹

But Noah lived in a world dominated by Cain's system of gain and murder and an abominable counterfeit of the Gospel ordinances in which men made covenants with Satan. This last extension of the Lord's mercy to a wicked world bore no fruit. "They hearkened not unto his words." Intriguingly, Noah's neighbors saw nothing wrong in their lives: "Behold, we are the sons of God . . . are we not eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage?" In other

words, they saw themselves as upstanding citizens, pious and religious people just going about their routine “business as usual.” But “every man was lifted up in the imagination of the thoughts of his heart, being only evil continually.”¹⁰

“In those days there were giants in the earth, and they sought Noah to take away his life.”¹¹ The Hebrew word for “giants” is *nephilim*, and according to scholars, “a literal translation of *nephilim* is ‘fallen ones.’”¹² Intriguingly, the German Bible translates the word *nephilim* as “tyrants.” The “giants” were the proud tyrants bought up by Satan to rule the world Noah lived in. Noah was clearly an irritant to their Satanic system.

We know what became of these despots and their followers. “Behold,” the Lord said, “I will destroy all flesh from off the earth.” But before the flood, Noah preached to them for 120 years—an extraordinarily long mission that testifies to the incredible patience and endurance of this godly man. According to Jewish legends, Noah had to work hard on the ark, spending long years learning how to build it and master the various sciences he needed. Noah labored on it for 52 years, working slowly on purpose in the hope that the people would repent.¹³

They did not, and the flood completely eliminated the counterfeit “city of Enoch” and the kingdom of Satan that dominated the earth. God destroyed what was already destroying itself and would have utterly corrupted his plan for his children. It was necessary to start over. In Noah’s ark, according to 1 Peter, “few, that is eight souls, were saved by water, the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.”¹⁴ Thus the ark prefigured baptism as the means of salvation in Christ.

The ark is therefore a symbol of the Savior. Like the ark of Noah, Jesus Christ is our refuge in the storm, safely carrying us through the tempest and calming the anxious waters. The *Church News* has said, “As we go through the storms of life, our closeness to the Lord will, in a large measure, determine the peace and comfort and renewed strength that we feel.”¹⁵

The ark can also be likened to the temple, a celestial refuge in a telestial world. It was in the ark that the human family found salvation, and it is in the temple that our families find the means of exaltation.

It’s important to note that Noah’s first action upon leaving the ark was to build an altar and offer sacrifice “in similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father.”¹⁶ Noah received the same commandments given to Adam, and made a covenant to obey. In the rainbow, the Lord provided a token of that covenant: “I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.” Why the rainbow? Anciently, the archer’s bow was a symbol of divine power. Additionally, prophets have likened the glory of the Lord to the rainbow, as in the vision of Ezekiel: “As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was . . . the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.”¹⁷

Unfortunately, many of the descendants of Noah were unfaithful to that covenant, and the Satanic system was revived some generations after the Flood. “Go to,” they said, “let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may

reach unto heaven.”¹⁸

The Cainite city devoted to power, murder, and gain (“business as usual”) was thus restored. The tower of Babel was actually a temple devoted to the cult of Satan, symbolizing rebellion against God. In the Babylonian language, the word “Babel” is compounded of *bab*, which means “gate” and *el*, which means “god.”¹⁹ (“Babel” is the root of the word “Babylon,” which is throughout the scriptures a symbol of the capital of wickedness.) Thus, the people saw the tower of Babel as a gate to the heavens, a counterfeit temple raised in the rebelliousness of Satan. It was this symbol of their pride and wickedness that angered the Lord.

So the Lord confounded the language of the people and “scattered them abroad” to break the centralized power and priesthood of Satan. Such towers were raised throughout the ancient world for centuries thereafter. We see them in the ziggurats of Babylon and the pyramids of Egypt—all attempts by vainglorious men to raise monuments to themselves and their false gods. And we also see the confusion and conflict that results from the arrogance of power, symbolized in the confusion of tongues.

In 2 Nephi 12, we read the account of Lehi’s dream, that great symbolic summary of the Gospel. In journeying towards the tree of life, which represents the salvation of Christ, many of the multitude fall into a “fountain of filthy water . . . the depths thereof are the depths of hell.” Another great multitude “across a great and terrible gulf” occupy a “large and spacious building” symbolizing the “vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men.”²⁰

The waters of the Great Flood were like the filthy waters Lehi saw, the “depths of hell” reserved for the wicked. And the Tower of Babel was like the “large and spacious building” Lehi saw, which stands for the monumental structures of this telestial world that represent the vanity and conceit of those who mock God.

What is the significance to us of these two great symbols—Noah’s Ark and the Tower of Babel? They have great significance for us in the last days.

Jesus Christ prophesied that “as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”²¹ We know, therefore, that the last days will be similar to the days of Noah. It will be a time of great wickedness, a world ruled by pride and murder and a love of gain. But we also learn that those who listen to the prophets and follow their counsel will be spared the great destruction that accompanies the coming of the Son of man, as was Noah and his family.

In the symbol of the Tower of Babel we should see the monumental arrogance that accompanies wickedness. Unfortunately, this monument is “filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress [is] exceedingly fine; and they [are] in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those” who are seeking the fruit of the tree of life—the pure love of Christ.²² We know also that this symbol of the pride of the world will fall at

His coming, as the book of Revelation tells us: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. . . for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. . . how much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously. . . . Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire. . . . and the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her.”²³

Therefore, we should listen carefully and heed the prophet’s commandment: “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”²⁴

These are some of the lessons for us of Noah’s Ark and the Tower of Babel.

¹ Moses 5:42-52.

² Moses 6:57.

³ Moses 7:34.

⁴ Moses 7:18-19, 21.

⁵ Moses 7:69.

⁶ Gen. 6:9.

⁷ Gen. 6:8.

⁸ Moses 8:13.

⁹ Moses 8:19.

¹⁰ Moses 8:21-22.

¹¹ Moses 8:18.

¹² Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans, 1990,270.

¹³ “Noah-Making of the Ark,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=318&letter=N&search=noah>.

¹⁴ 1 Peter 3:20-21.

¹⁵ “Refuge from the Storm,” *Church News*, Jan. 26, 1991.

¹⁶ Gen. 8:20, Moses 4:7.

¹⁷ Ezek. 1:28.

¹⁸ Gen. 11:4.

¹⁹ “Babel, Tower of,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=45&letter=B&search=babel>.

²⁰ 1 Ne. 12:16, 18.

²¹ Matt. 24:37-39.

²² 1 Ne. 8:27.

²³ Rev. 18:2-11.

²⁴ Rev. 18:4.

THE TREE IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN AND THE TEMPLE SYMBOLISM OF THE “CENTER”

The Tree in the Midst of the Garden and the Temple Symbolism of the “Center”

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

One thing that has always perplexed readers of Genesis is the location of the two special trees in the Garden of Eden. The Hebrew phrase corresponding to “in the midst” literally means “in the center.” Although scripture initially applies the phrase “in the midst” only to the Tree of Life,¹ the Tree of Knowledge is later said by Eve to be located there, too. ²

Elaborate explanations have been advanced as attempts to describe how both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge could share the center of the Garden.³ For example, it has been suggested that these two trees were in reality different aspects of a single tree,⁴ that they shared a common trunk,⁵ or were somehow intertwined.⁶

The subtle conflation of the location of two trees in the Genesis account seems intentional, preparing readers for the confusion that later ensues in the dialogue between Eve and the serpent.⁷ The dramatic irony of the story is heightened by the fact that while the reader is informed about both trees, Adam and Eve are only specifically told about the Tree of Knowledge. In the story of the Fall, Satan exploits their ignorance to his advantage.

A brief review of the symbolism of the “center” in ancient thought will help clarify the important roles that the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge played “in the midst” of the Garden of Eden.⁸

The Symbolism of the “Center”

Explaining the choice of a tree to represent the concepts of life, earth, and heaven, Stordalen writes:

Every green tree would symbolize life, and a large tree-rooted in deep soil and stretching towards the sky-potentially makes a cosmic symbol.⁹ In both cases, it becomes a “symbol of the center.”¹⁰

The temple, described by Isaiah as “the mountain of the Lord’s house,”¹¹ is likewise a symbol of the center. In ancient Israel, the holiest spot on earth was believed to be the Foundation Stone in front of the Ark within the Holy of Holies of the temple at Jerusalem. To the Jews, “it was the first solid material to emerge from the waters of creation,¹² and it was upon this stone that the Deity effected creation.”¹³ As a famous passage in the *Midrash Tanhuma* states:

Just as a navel is set in the middle of a person, so the land of Israel is the navel of the world. Thus it is stated (in Ezekiel 38:12): “Who dwell on the navel of the earth.” The land of Israel sits at the center of the world; Jerusalem is in the center of the land of Israel; the sanctuary is in the center of Jerusalem; the Temple building is in the center of the sanctuary; the ark is in the center of the Temple building; and the foundation stone, out of which the world was founded, is before the Temple building.¹⁴

In the symbolism of the sacred center, the circle is generally used to represent heaven, while the square signifies earth. Among other things, the intersection of the circle and square can be seen as depicting the coming together of heaven and earth in both the sacred geometry of the temple and the soul of the seeker of Wisdom.¹⁵ For example, the above photograph shows the sacred mosque of Mecca during the peak period of *haji*.¹⁶ As part of the ritual of *tawaf*, *haji* pilgrims enact the symbolism of the circle and the square as they form concentric rings around the rectangular *Ka’bah*.¹⁷ Islamic tradition says that near this location Adam had been shown the worship place of angels, which was directly above the *Ka’bah* in heaven,¹⁸ and that he was commanded to build a house for God in Mecca where he

could, in likeness of the angels, “circumambulate. and offer prayer.” 19

Above we see Dor’s famous illustration of the “empyrean heaven.” 20 This is a representation of the highest heaven as a realm lighted by the pure fire of God’s glory. 21 Since the sacred center is located in heaven rather than earth, it is shown as a circle rather than a square. The heavenly throne is, in the words of Lehi, “surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God.” 22 Nibley points out: “A concourse is a circle. Of course [numberless] concourses means circles within circles and reminds you of dancing. And what were they doing? Surrounded means ‘all around’. It was a choral dance.” 23

A related pattern was reenacted in ancient prayer circles. For example, describing the connection between the earthly and the heavenly realms in the quorum of ten men forming a Jewish *minyan* for prayer, Kogan writes: “On one level, the body that is formed below, the actual *minyan*, is entered by the *Shekinah* (the supernal holiness), and is thus the point of contact between God and Israel. Simultaneously, the *minyan* formed in the proper manner below unifies the heavenly realm above.” 24

As shown in the figure above, the sacred center does not ultimately represent some abstract epitome of goodness, nor merely a ceremonial altar or throne,

but God Himself. The Gnostic *Acts of John* records that a prayer circle was formed by the apostles, with Jesus at the center: “So he told us to form a circle, holding one another’s hands, and himself stood in the middle.” 25

The center is the *most* holy place, and the degree of holiness decreases in proportion to the distance from that center. 26 For example, Emeritus BYU Professor S. Kent Brown observes how at His first appearance to the Nephites Jesus “stood in the midst of them,” 27 and cites other Book of Mormon passages associating the presence of the Lord “in the midst” to the placement of the temple and its altar. 28 He also noted a similar configuration when Jesus blessed the Nephite children:

As the most Holy One, [the Savior] was standing “in the midst,” at the sacred center. 29 The children sat “upon the ground round about him.” 30 When the angels “came down,” they “encircled those little ones about.” In their place next to the children, the angels themselves “were encircled about with fire.” 31 On the edge stood the adults. And beyond them was. profane space which stretched away from this holy scene. 32

Jesus’ placement of the children so that they immediately surrounded Him—their proximity exceeding even that of the encircling angels and accompanying fire—conveyed a powerful visual message about their holiness: namely, that “whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” 33 Hence, Jesus’ instructions to them: “Behold your little ones.” 34

Moses’ vision of the burning bush brings together all three of the symbols of the sacred center we have discussed: the tree, the mountain, and the Lord Himself. Directly tying this symbolism to the Jerusalem Temple, Nicholas Wyatt concludes: “The Menorah is probably what Moses is understood to have seen as the burning bush in Exodus 3.” 35 Thus, Jehovah, the premortal Jesus Christ, was represented to Moses as One who dwells at the top of a holy mountain, in the midst of the burning glory of the Tree of Life.

The Tree of Knowledge as the Veil of the Sanctuary

Having explored the concept of the sacred center, we will now return to the question of how both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge could have shared the center of the Garden of Eden.

Perhaps the most interesting tradition about the placement of the two trees is the Jewish idea that the foliage of the Tree of Knowledge hid the Tree of Life from direct view, and that “God did not specifically prohibit eating from the Tree of Life because the Tree of Knowledge formed a hedge around it; only after one had partaken of the latter and cleared a path for himself could one come close to the Tree of Life.”³⁶

It is in this same sense that Ephrem the Syrian, a brilliant and devoted fourth-century Christian, could call the Tree of Knowledge “the veil for the sanctuary.” ³⁷ He pictured Paradise as a great mountain, with the Tree of Knowledge providing a boundary partway up the slopes. The Tree of Knowledge, Ephrem concludes, “acts as a sanctuary curtain [i.e., veil] hiding the Holy of Holies which is the Tree of Life higher up.”³⁸ In addition, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim sources sometimes speak of a “wall” surrounding whole of the Garden, separating it from the “outer courtyard” of the mortal world. ³⁹

Consistent with this idea for the layout of the Garden of Eden, Barker sees evidence that in the first temple a Tree of Life was symbolized within the Holy of Holies. ⁴⁰ She concludes that the menorah was both removed from the temple and diminished in stature in later Jewish literature as the result of a “very ancient feud” concerning its significance. ⁴¹

For those who took the Tree of Life to be a representation of God’s presence within the Holy of Holies, it was natural to see the Tree of Life as the locus of the divine throne: ⁴²

[T]he garden, at the center of which stands the throne of glory, is the royal audience room, which only those admitted to the sovereign’s presence can enter. ⁴³

Ephrem’s view suggests that the Tree of Life was planted in an inner place so holy that Adam and Eve would court mortal danger if they entered uninvited and unprepared. Though God could minister to them in the Garden, they could not safely enter His world. ⁴⁴

Highlighting the merciful nature of God’s prohibition against eating the fruit of the Tree of Life prematurely, Elder Bruce C. Hafen has explained that the cherubim and a flaming sword were placed to “guard the way of the tree of life” until Adam and Eve completed their probation on earth and learned by experience to distinguish good from evil. ⁴⁵

“Eastward in Eden”

The figure above shows how circular and linear depictions of the layout of the Garden of Eden can be reconciled. Note also how some modern temples feature a linear progression toward a celestial room at the far end of the building,⁴⁶ whereas in others the movement is in an increasingly inward direction. For example, in the Ogden and Provo Utah temples, “six ordinance rooms [are] surrounded by an exterior hallway” with the “celestial room. in the building’s center.” ⁴⁷

The “eastward” location of the Garden may thus be explained by its position relative to the Creator at the sacred center. Note that the initial separation of Adam and Eve from God occurs when they are removed from His presence to be placed in the Garden “eastward in Eden” ⁴⁸-that is, east of the “mountain” where, in some representations of the sacred geography of Paradise, He is said to dwell. Such an interpretation also seems to be borne out in later events, as eastward movement is repeatedly associated with increasing distance from God. ⁴⁹ For example, after God’s voice of judgment visits them from the west, ⁵⁰ Adam and Eve experience an additional degree of separation when they are expelled through the Garden’s eastern gate. ⁵¹ Cain was “shut out from the presence of the Lord” as he resumed the journey eastward to dwell “in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden,” ⁵² a journey that eventually continued in the same direction-“from the east” to the “land of Shinar”-to the place where the Tower of Babel was constructed. ⁵³ Finally, Lot traveled east toward Sodom and Gomorrah when he separated himself from Abraham. ⁵⁴

On the other hand, westward movement is often used to symbolize return and restoration of blessings. Abraham’s “return from the east is [a] return to the Promised Land and. the city of ‘Salem,” ⁵⁵ being “directed toward blessing.”⁵⁶ The Magi of the Nativity likewise came “from the east,” westward to Bethlehem, their journey symbolically enacting a restoration of temple and priesthood blessings that had been lost from the earth.⁵⁷ Finally, the glorious return of Jesus Christ when He “shall suddenly come to his temple” ⁵⁸ is likewise symbolized by an east-to-west movement: “For as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” ⁵⁹

Conclusion

The central position of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden provides a parallel to the presence of God in the midst of His temple. The Tree of Knowledge may be a symbol of the protective veil initially concealing the Tree of Life from Adam and Eve. After their transgression of God's "first commandments," 60 God placed cherubim and a flaming sword to prevent their premature entry into His presence, and sent Adam and Eve away "eastward." However, God also provided a set of "second commandments" 61 that would eventually enable the return of all those who would fully avail themselves of the gift of the Atonement.

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Endnotes

¹ Rashi, Genesis Commentary, 1:25.

² Moses 4:9. See U. Cassuto, Adam to Noah, p. 111. Many commentators have "solved" the problem by assuming that the account originally spoke of only one tree, and that the Tree of Life was a late addition to the text. For a brief survey on the question of one or two trees, and related textual irregularities, see T. N. D. Mettinger, Eden, pp. 5-11.

³ R. M. Zlotowitz *et al.*, Bereishis, p. 96.

⁴ R. Gunon, Symboles, p. 325.

⁵ L. Ginzberg, Legends, 5:91 n. 50.

⁶ E.g., Wahb bin Munabbih in al-Tabari, Creation, 1:106, p. 277. See also A. Birrell, Mythology, p. 233; L. Ginzberg, Legends, 5:91 n. 50; J. C. Reeves, Jewish Lore, p. 96ff; J. A. Tvedtnes, Olive Oil, p. 430; B. M. Wheeler, Prophets, p. 23.

⁷ For a full and supportive analysis of this view, see T. N. D. Mettinger, Eden, especially pp. 34-41.

⁸ See H. W. Nibley, Hierocentric.

⁹ Often symbolized as a cosmic tree, the temple also "originates in the underworld, stands on the earth as a 'meeting place,' and yet towers (architecturally) into the heavens and gives access to the heavens through its ritual" (J. M. Lundquist, Fundamentals, p. 675).

¹⁰ T. Stordalen, Echoes, pp. 288-289.

¹¹ Isaiah 2:2.

¹² Psalm 104:7-9.

¹³ J. M. Lundquist, Meeting Place, p. 7.

¹⁴ J. T. Townsend, Tanhuma, Qedoshim 7:10, Leviticus 19:23ff, Part 1, 2:309-310. See also J. M. Lundquist, Meeting Place, p. 7; J. M. Lundquist, Temple of Jerusalem, p. 26; Z. Vilnay, Sacred Land, pp. 5-6; O. S. Wintermute, Jubilees, 8:19, p. 73, 3:9-14, 27, pp. 59-60, 4:26, p. 63.

15 J. M. Lundquist, *Fundamentals*, pp. 666-671; cf. Matthew 6:10.

16 = Arabic “pilgrimage.” See R. C. Martin, *Encyclopedia*, 2:529-533; G. D. Newby, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 71-72.

17 = Arabic “cube.”

18 G. Weil, *Legends*, p. 83.

19 S. A. Ashraf, *Inner*, p. 125.

20 Greek *empyros* (fiery); derived from *pyr* (fire)-and not to be confused with the unrelated term “imperial.” See, e.g., R. Giorgi, *Anges*, pp. 63-65.

21 See M. Barker, *Holy of Holies*, p. 185.

22 1 Nephi 1:8.

23 H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 17, p. 211. See also B. R. Bickmore, *Restoring*, pp. 304-306; F. M. Huchel, *Cosmic (Book)*; N. Isar, *Dance of Adam*.

24 D. Blumenthal, *Merkabah*, p. 147.

25 E. Hennecke *et al.*, *NT Apocrypha*, Acts of John, 94, p. 227.

26 Such symbolism illuminates the cosmology of the book of Abraham, where the planet Kolob is “set night unto the throne of God” (Abraham 3:9) with other planets in increasing distance from the center. The term Kolob “may derive from either of two Semitic roots with the consonants *QLB/QRB*. One has the meaning ‘to be near,’ as in Hebrew *qarob* (F. Brown *et al.*, *Lexicon*, p. 898). The other meaning is ‘center, midst,’ as in Hebrew *qereb* (F. Brown *et al.*, *Lexicon*, p. 899). In Arabic, *qalb* [heart, center] forms part of the names of several of the brightest stars in the sky, such as Antares. the constellation Scorpio. and Regulus. in the constellation Leo” (R. D. Draper *et al.*, *Commentary*, pp. 289-290).

27 3 Nephi 11:8.

28 E.g., 2 Nephi 22:6; 3 Nephi 11:8, 21:17-18; cf. Isaiah 12:6; Jeremiah 14:9; Hosea 11:9; Joel 2:27; Micah 5:13-14; Moses 7:69; Zechariah 3:5, 15, 17. See S. K. Brown, *Voices*, pp. 150-151; R. D. Draper *et al.*, *Commentary*, pp. 150-151.

29 3 Nephi 17:12, 13.

30 3 Nephi 17:12.

31 3 Nephi 17:24.

32 S. K. Brown, *Voices*, pp. 147-148.

33 Matthew 18:4.

35 N. Wyatt, *Space*, p. 169. Recall also the description in Orson Pratt's remembrance of Joseph Smith's First Vision where, as the light drew nearer, "it increased in brightness, and magnitude, so that, by the time that it reached the tops of the trees, the whole wilderness, for some distance around, was illuminated in a most glorious and brilliant manner. He expected to have seen the leaves and boughs of the trees consumed, as soon as the light came in contact with them" (D. C. Jessee, *First Vision*, p. 21; cf. D. Jones, *History*, p. 15).

36 R. M. Zlotowitz *et al.*, *Bereishis*, p. 101, cf. p. 96. See also L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:70, 5:91 n. 50.

37 Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, 3:5, p. 92. Note that the phrase "in the midst" was also used for the heavenly veil in the Creation account (Moses 2:6).

38 Brock in *Ibid.*, p. 52. Significantly, a Gnostic text describes the "color" of the Tree of Life as being "like the sun" while the "glory" of the Tree of Knowledge is said to be "like the moon" (H.-G. Bethge *et al.*, *Origin*, 110:14, 20, p. 179).

39 E.g., G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, 19:1a-19:1d, pp. 56E-57E; M. Herbert *et al.*, *Irish Apocrypha*, p. 2; G. Weil, *Legends*, p. 53 ("wall of red gold"). In at least one version of the story, Eve's transgression of the boundary God had set in the midst of the Garden had been preceded by her deliberate opening of the gate to let the serpent enter the Garden's outer wall (G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, 19:1a-19:1d, pp. 56E-57E).

40 E.g., M. Barker, *Hidden*, pp. 6-7; M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 85-86, 140. By way of contrast, most depictions of Jewish temple architecture show a menorah as being outside the veil. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image*, pp. 366-367 about the possibility that the story of the Garden of Eden included a "Tree of Life" on both sides of the veil.

Although the trees of Eden have been associated with the Garden Room of LDS temples since the time of Nauvoo (D. F. Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, p. 220; S. B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball*, p. 117; M. McBride, *Nauvoo Temple*, pp. 264-265), representations relating to the ultimate Tree of Life are centered on the Celestial Room. For example, the Celestial Room of the Salt Lake Temple is "richly embellished with clusters of fruits and flowers" (J. E. Talmage, *House of the Lord*, p. 134). The Celestial Room of the Palmyra New York Temple features a large stained-glass window depicting a Tree of Life with "twelve bright multifaceted crystal fruits" (G. E. Hansen, Jr. *et al.*, *Sacred Walls*, p. 4).

41 M. Barker, *Older*, p. 221, see pp. 221-232.

42 Revelation 22:1-3, G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, Greek 22:4, p. 62E. A late Christian text speaks of the "royal seat of the High-king in Paradise, in the very center of Paradise, moreover, where the Tree of Life was situated" (M. Herbert *et al.*, *Irish Apocrypha*, p. 6).

43 G. B. Eden, *Mystical Architecture*, p. 22; cf. the idea of "the luxuriant

sacred tree or grove: as a place of divine habitation” in D. E. Callender, Adam, p. 51; cf. pp. 42-54. See also T. Stordalen, Echoes, pp. 173, 293. Recall the book of Esther, which recounts the law of the Persians that “whosoever shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, [shall be] put to death” (Esther 4:11). However, properly dressed in her royal apparel as a “true queen” instead of a “beauty queen” (see A. Berlin, Esther, pp. 51-52), Esther is-against all odds-granted safe admission to the presence of the king (Esther 5:1-2).

44 See D&C 76:87, 112; Ephrem the Syrian, Paradise, 3:13-17, pp. 95-96.

45 B. C. Hafen, Broken, p. 30; cf. L. Schaya, Meaning, p. 16.

46 In ancient Israel and in the Kirtland Temple, the starting point for this movement was in the east, with the destination of most holiness being to the west. However, the Nauvoo and Salt Lake temples had their holiest places oriented to the east, where light would be greatest (V. Brinkerhoff, Day Star, 2:28, 30-31). The east doors of the Salt Lake Temple “are reserved for the Savior in his millennial return” (V. Brinkerhoff, Day Star, 2:30), however, in most modern temples, temple patrons enter through the door in a way that orients them “to the front of each of the initial ordinance rooms so that attention is focused on the concepts taught” (V. Brinkerhoff, Day Star, 2:31). “LDS temples constructed between 1890 and 1980 face all four points of the compass.” However, consistent with what seems to be an increased attention to temple symbolism, President Hinckley is remembered by one of the temple architects to have stated: “Where possible, movement in temples should be from east to west” (V. Brinkerhoff, Day Star, 2:30). For more on the direction of temple orientation and movement, see V. Brinkerhoff, Day Star, 2:27-31, 42-44.

47 R. O. Cowan, Dot, p. 174.

48 Moses 3:8. To an ancient reader in the Mesopotamian milieu, the phrase “eastward in Eden” could be taken as meaning that the garden sits at the dawn horizon—the meeting place of heaven and earth. The pseudepigraphal *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* skillfully paints such a picture: “On the third day, God planted the Garden in the east of the earth, on the border of the world eastward, beyond which, towards the sun-rising, one finds nothing but water, that encompasses the whole world, and reaches unto the borders of heaven” (S. C. Malan, Adam and Eve, 1:1, p. 1). This idea corresponds to the Egyptian *akhet*, the specific place where the sun god rose every morning and returned every evening, and also to the Mandaean “ideal world” which was held to hang “between heaven and earth” (E. S. Drower, Mandaeans, p. 56; E. Lupieri, Mandaeans, p. 128). The Chinese *K'un-lun* also “appears as a place not located on the earth, but poised between heaven and earth” (J. S. Major, Heaven, p. 156). The gardens of *Gilgamesh* and the Ugaritic *Baal* and *Mot* were liminally located at the “edges of the world” or, in other words, “at the borders between the divine and the human world” (T. Stordalen, Echoes, pp. 285-286). Similarly, *2 Enoch* locates paradise “between the corruptible [earth] and the incorruptible [heaven]” (F. I. Andersen, 2 Enoch, 8:5, p. 116; cf. p. 116 n. 1).

By its very nature, the horizon is not a final end point, but rather a portal, a

place of two-way transition between the heavens and the earth. Writes Nibley: “Egyptians. never. speak of [the land beyond the grave] as an earthly paradise; it is only to be reached by the dead.’ . [It] is neither heaven nor earth but lies between them. In a Hebrew Enoch apocryphon, the Lord, in visiting the earth, rests in the Garden of Eden and, moving in the reverse direction, passes through ‘the Garden to the firmament’ (See P. Alexander, 3 Enoch, 5:5, p. 260). Every transition must be provided with such a setting, not only from here to heaven, but in the reverse direction in the beginning” (H. W. Nibley, *Message* 2005, pp. 294-295. See also H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 16, pp. 198-199). “The passage from world to world and from horizon to horizon is dramatized in the ordinances of the temple, which itself is called the horizon” (Siegfried Schott, cited in H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 16, p. 199). Situating this concept with respect to the story of Adam and Eve, the idea is that the Garden “was placed between heaven and earth, below the firmament [i.e., the celestial world] and above the earth [i.e., the telestial world], and that God placed it there. so that, if [Adam] kept [God’s] commands He might lift him up to heaven, but if he transgressed them, He might cast him down to this earth” (Shelemon, *Book of the Bee*, 15, p. 20).

Eastward orientation is not only associated with the rising sun, but also with its passage from east to west as a metaphor for time (N. Wyatt, *Space*, pp. 35-52; cf. Philo, *Questions on Genesis*, 1:7, p. 5). The Hebrew phrase *mi-kedem* (‘in the east’) in the Genesis account could also be translated “in the beginning” or “in primeval times” (T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 261-270; cf. Habakkuk 1:12). Likewise, for the Egyptians, the West, the direction of sunset, was the land of the dead-hence the many tombs built on the west bank of the Nile.

49 J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, pp. 41-42; T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 267-268.

50 The phrase “in the cool of the day” in Moses 4:14 can be translated as “in the wind, breeze, spirit, or direction” of the day-in other words, the voice is coming from the west, the place where the sun sinks (R. M. Zlotowitz *et al.*, *Bereishis*, pp. 122-123). Since the voice is coming from the west, some commentators infer that Adam and Eve were then located on the east side-the end of the Garden furthest removed from the presence of the Lord-and possibly related to what Islamic commentary calls “the courtyard” (e.g., A. a.-S. M. H. at-Tabataba’i, *Al-Mizan*, 1:209). In other words, they seem to have one foot outside the Garden already (see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image*, pp. 261, 280). Thus, God’s question to Adam in the Genesis account-“Where art thou?”-might be taken as deeply ironic. In the view of Didymus, it is really not a question but rather “a statement of judgment as to what Adam has lost” (cited in G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, pp. 215-216). The idea of Adam and Eve being in the “courtyard” of Eden is an appropriate fit to the function of the outermost of the three divisions of the Israelite temple, a place of confession as the first step of reconciliation (J. L. Carroll, *Reconciliation*, pp. 96-99).

51 Moses 4:31.

52 Moses 5:41.

53 Genesis 11:2.

[54](#) Genesis 13:11.

[55](#) J. H. Sailhamer, Genesis, p. 59 and Genesis 14:17-20.

[56](#) T. L. Brodie, Dialogue, p. 117.

[57](#) Matthew 2:1. See J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, pp. 673-674.

[58](#) Malachi 3:1.

[59](#) Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:26.

[60](#) Alma 12:30.

[61](#) Alma 12:37.

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FEBRUARY BRINGS A FULL PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE TO TEMPLE SQUARE

February Brings a Full Performance Schedule to Temple Square

A variety of concerts will be held in the Tabernacle and the Assembly Hall, with BYU Winterfest performances in the Conference Center Theater. For convenience sake, specific performing groups and dates for BYU Winterfest are grouped together in this notice. Each event is open to ages eight and

older, unless otherwise indicated.

Friday, February 5-The Utah Youth Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Barbara Scowcroft, will perform in the Salt Lake Tabernacle at 7:30 p.m. Their program will feature Festival Overture, Op. 96 by Dmitri Shostakovich, and Symphony No. 6 in D Major, Op. 60 by Antonin Dvork. For free tickets, call 801-570-0080 or visit online at lds.org/events.

Friday, February 12-The Church Music Festival, featuring works of distinction and merit composed or arranged by LDS members throughout the United States, will be performed by the Logan Institute of Religion Latter-day Voices Choir in the Assembly Hall at 7:30 p.m. A children's choir from the River Heights Utah Stake will also be participating in the concert.

Saturday, February 13-The Air Force Academy LDS Cadet Choir will present a program of patriotic and sacred songs in the Assembly Hall at 7:30 p.m. Pieces include John Rutter's "Distant Land," Senator Orrin Hatch's "Heal Our Land," Janice Kapp Perry's "A Child's Prayer," and many others. The choir is under the direction of Carl Crockett. Acclaimed organist Joseph Galema will play three classical solo pieces during the program.

Friday, February 19-A Cultural Arts Submission Presentation will take place in the chapel at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building at 7:30 p.m. Featured will be an evening of poetry reading and a readers' theater script presentation of works recognized from the annual Church Cultural Arts Submission. This event is open to all ages.

Friday, February 26-The Saint Michael Trio (violin, cello, and piano), Artists in Residence at Menlo College in California, will present an impressive program in the Assembly Hall at 7:30 p.m. Violinist Daniel Cher, cellist Michel Flexer, and pianist Russell Hancock will play pieces by Chaminade, Mendelssohn, Debussy, Piazzolla, Bolling and others. Their repertoire spans classics to contemporary, including jazz greats and their own arrangements.

Saturday, February 27-Harpist Carolyn Duede will perform in the Assembly Hall at 7:30 p.m. She has been featured in solo concerts, on radio broadcasts, in chamber groups, and with community orchestras all over the country. This concert will feature such works as "Passacaille" by Handel, "La Source" by Hasselmans, "Sarabande" from *Pour le piano* by Debussy, and "Petite Suite" by Watkins.

In addition, 30-minute organ recitals are held in the Tabernacle weekdays and Saturdays at 12:00 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Also, Mormon Tabernacle Choir rehearsals are open to the public in the Tabernacle on Thursday evenings at 8:00 p.m., as is "Music and the Spoken Word" featuring the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on Sundays in the Conference Center when doors open at 8 a.m. and close at 9:15 a.m. for the 9:30 a.m. 30-minute broadcast.

For Temple Square Performances information, call 801-240-3323.

BYU Winterfest

Six Brigham Young University performing groups will perform in the Conference Center Theater throughout the month of February as part of BYU Winterfest. Tickets are required and cost \$8.00 per person. Tickets can be obtained by calling 801-570-0080 or online at lds.org/events. BYU Winterfest schedule is as follows:

Friday and Saturday, February 5 and 6-Living Legends. Enjoy dynamic choreography of Native America with the color and vitality of Polynesian and Latin American dances performed by talented descendants of these cultures and woven together by traditional and contemporary music. Performance starts at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 11-Vocal Point. Vocal Point has established itself as one of the nation's top collegiate a cappella groups. Patterned after the barbershop sound, these outstanding nine performers take the a cappella sound to a whole new level. Performance starts at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, February 12-Synthesis. Award-winning instrumental jazz ensemble, Synthesis combines swing, jazz, blues, rock, fusion, gospel, and Latin styles. The band performs favorites by jazz legends, such as Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, and Louis Armstrong, along with original compositions and arrangements. Performance starts at 7:30 p.m.

Friday and Saturday, February 19 and 20-Ballroom Dance Company. A wide variety of dance numbers from a graceful waltz to a playful swing, to an energetic Latin style will be performed by the Ballroom Dance Company. This award-winning group has won many competitions and toured around the world, stunning audiences everywhere with precision and professional-quality movements. Evening performances are at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday matinee at 2:00 p.m.

Friday, February 26-Theatre Ballet. BYU's Theatre Ballet will perform their new, captivating production, Fairy Tales and Fantasy, which includes excerpts from Cinderella, Le Corsaire, Don Quixote, Swan Lake, and Les Sylphides. Performance starts at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, February 27-Choral Showcase, featuring the BYU Singers and Concert Choir, has been a highlight of Winterfest each year. The Singers, under the direction of Ron Staheli, has captivated audiences around the world with their versatility, beautiful sound, and innovative programming. The Concert Choir is directed by Rosalind Hall and will perform works from various genres. Performance starts at 7:30 p.m.

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CAN SENIOR MISSIONARIES LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE?

Can Senior Missionaries Learn a New Language?

By Janice Kapp Perry

My morning walking path takes me past the entrance to the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah. One July morning I saw a group of senior missionaries boarding a bus for the airport and on to their different fields of labor. As I walked, I began making up a silly little song to the tune of “Popcorn Popping on the Apricot Tree”:

I looked out the window and what did I see?
Seniors leaving from the MTC.
Weeks of study made them smart and wise-
Spouting languages before my eyes!

In the dead of summer they braved the heat
To wake up brains that had been asleep.
They gave it all their best, God will do the rest,
One thing's sure: they'll always be well-dressed!

That was my idealistic view of senior missionaries long before I joined their ranks. I had not learned a language in my youth, and I thought maybe I should get a head start before our mission. I decided to sign up for a Russian class at BYU. Doug was fluent in that language so I thought we might receive a call to Russia. The class was taught by Bob Blair, a favorite of the students. During the first class, he spoke nothing but Russian—a technique that evidently works well for the younger, smarter students, but totally overwhelmed me. As we left the class, I was in tears and told Doug, “There’s no way I can take this class while I’m serving as Relief Society President!” Later I started private Spanish lessons at home but found it difficult to grasp the grammar and conjugations. My enthusiasm for learning a language was waning.

Our Mission Call

Several years later, the time came to send in our papers for a senior mission. There is nothing quite like that two weeks when you are waiting to see where you will spend the next 18 months! Then suddenly one morning:

Tune: (“Popcorn Popping on the Apricot Tree”)

I looked in the mailbox and what did I see?
Two white envelopes for Grandpa and me.
When we read them we were so surprised-
Life was changing right before our eyes.

Where the heck is Chile, I asked myself?
I got the atlas from off the shelf.
Our future looked so bright; everything felt right!
Soon we'd serve together side by side.

Chile Santiago West Mission—where everyone speaks Spanish. Now I definitely had motivation to learn a language. Because of Doug's great love for languages, I wanted to work hard at it—show him I could do it—and share in his passion. In 2002 when we received our call, senior missionaries were staying eight or nine weeks at the Senior MTC, spending up to nine hours a day in intensive language study. To get a head start, I went to the MTC twice a week for private tutoring prior to our official entry there. It was difficult, but it was my main focus now, and I knew I *had* to learn it.

During our first weeks in the MTC I kept repeating positive affirmations many times a day: "I can do this! I can do this!" During our last few weeks, I found myself saying, "Can I do this?" I wasn't sure, but I was committed now.

Arriving in Santiago, Chile

Our Mission President, Ole Smith, assigned us to the city of Talagante, Chile, population 50,000. As far as I could tell, *no one* there spoke English. It was going to be sink or swim. From the beginning, I spent hours a day on language study, feeling I could not succeed if I could not communicate. I felt sad when the saints spoke to me, and I could only respond with the most basic conversational phrases. I soon found that hugs, smiles, and charades are what I would live by for a while. Spanish is easy to read and pronounce so I was able to make a contribution during our visits in Chilean homes by singing hymns, reading scriptures, saying prayers, and bearing testimony—things I learned in the MTC. It fell to Doug to do the actual

teaching. In our pre-mission life, I had been the more talkative one and Doug the more quiet one, but we had a complete role reversal in Chile: He did all the speaking, and I just smiled a lot and pretended I understood what was going on.

Not long after we began our mission, we attended a funeral for the mother of our branch president. The chapel was filled and the meeting was about to begin when the branch president walked up the aisle and said to me, "Will you please sing a solo today?" I was dumbfounded as I watched him walk to the pulpit to begin the funeral. I grabbed my hymnbook and desperately searched the unfamiliar Spanish hymn titles. Then I said a prayer and started looking at the music to see if I recognized any of the hymns. I saw the music for "Each Soul That Touches Mine For Good" and hoped it had the same message in Spanish. I am not a soloist and I knew they had no keyboard, but when the time came I walked to the pulpit and sang an a cappella solo on three verses of "Quienes nos brindan su amor." It was an average performance at best, but the Spirit must have compensated for what I lacked. On the next Sunday, which was fast and testimony meeting, 10 members of the deceased's family (including non-members) stood in line behind the pulpit, and each one thanked me profusely for the spirit of the song that had comforted them.

Language Frustration

In my weekly *informe* to President Smith, I expressed my disappointment that I could not communicate better. I increased my study time to five or six hours a day. I felt somewhat desperate to "get it." President Smith was always encouraging, saying: "Don't worry about the Spanish. You'll slowly pick it up as you are more exposed to it. It's always harder than anyone expects. If you're not getting it yet, that means you're normal." But I could see time passing and my frustration grew.

In one *informe* to President Smith, I wrote:

How many ways can you spell **H-U-M-B-L-E**?

Having a hard time with *español*

Unable to communicate much

Making many dumb mistakes

Being misunderstood by natives

Learning humility

Even so, I'll continue

He answered,

Hermana Perry worries too much

Understanding takes a long time

Mistakes you're making are *smart* not dumb

Be patient, that's one of the things the mission teaches

Learning stretches us

Everything is good from my point of view

We love you,

President Smith

Some Things That Helped

President Smith's wife, Dena, suggested that it might be beneficial to give me a break from Spanish occasionally. President Smith suggested that we come into Santiago once or twice a month and have home evening with the English speaking missionaries who served in the temple, church office building, and other callings. It was truly a relief for me to be with them and speak English for an evening now and then.

On one of our forays into Santiago, I was able to spend some time with Ted Lyon, President of the Chilean MTC, and I asked him for any pointers he could give me for learning Spanish faster. I told him that in spite of my long hours of study, 19-year-old "greenies" from the MTC were passing me by very easily with their language ability. President Lyon was a professor of Spanish at BYU, and I thought if anyone could help me, he could. His advice was both encouraging and discouraging. He said that studies have shown that when a senior missionary is learning a language for the first time, it will take them four to five times as long as it will take a 19-year-old. He then gave me several helpful suggestions to aid in my language study.

From his office, we walked over to the Area President's office. While we were waiting for an appointment, I watched as *Hermana* Ann Jameson (wife of Elder Ron Jameson, Executive Secretary to Elder Holland) answered the phone several times and answered questions in beautiful Spanish. I was in awe and said, "*Hermana*, how have you been able to learn the Spanish language so well? I try so hard, but sometimes I think I might have a breakdown over it!" She said, "Welcome to the club! This is our *third* mission-I had my breakdown on our *first* mission!" That statement helped me so much because then I knew it was *possible* to eventually speak as well as she did.

On Thanksgiving Day, all the North American leaders and senior missionaries met together for a delicious feast in the back yard of one of the mission homes. It was our good fortune to have Elder and Sister Holland sit next to us. During the course of the meal, Elder Holland said to me, "You and Doug are doing such a great work out there in Talagante. If there is anything at all we can do to help you, please let us know." With tongue planted firmly in cheek, I responded, "Well, I would appreciate it if you would bless me with the gift of tongues." With a smile, he leaned over and whispered in my ear, "You don't know how many times I've wanted to place my hands on my *own* head for that very purpose, but I think He is going to make us learn Spanish on our own."

Relaxing a Little About the Language

I began to focus on what I *could* do with my level of language ability. We taught keyboard and conducting lessons to scores of students. Doug did the primary teaching, and I assisted at the keyboards, correcting and encouraging the students in simple Spanish. I purchased an English as

well as a Spanish course book so I could read a paragraph silently in English and then say it aloud in Spanish and know what I was saying. We developed four different choirs where Doug was up front doing the teaching and directing, and I was accompanying on the piano. When Doug was called as a counselor in the district presidency, I had more time alone when I could study and read. I finished reading *El Libro de Mormn* for the first time and learned so much from the side-by-side English/Spanish printout Doug had made for me. I read *Jess el Cristo* and many other books in Spanish. I took Spanish lessons from a dear Chilean friend, Carmen Lastres, in return for English lessons.

I found a little Spanish grammar book in which the author claimed that if one were to memorize 2,000 strategic words in a language, that would be enough to get by. Night after night, I memorized until I knew the meanings of his 2,000 words. I tried to get over my fear of making mistakes when I spoke. I found that the natives were happy to correct me, and it was a great way to learn. I developed a sense of humor about making mistakes, and this served me well. If I couldn't remember how to conjugate a certain verb, I would just throw out the infinitive and let the Chileans conjugate it. I wish I had learned some of these things much earlier in our mission.

The Language of the Spirit

Somewhere toward the end of our mission, I learned that Elder Richard G. Scott had said that for senior missionaries learning a new language, it would be about a 10-year process to fluency. I believe I was too intense about the language for the first part of our mission. I have known of many couples where neither of them has spoken the language of their mission, but through love and caring and helping where needed, they have made such a positive difference. Very capable friends of ours who were called to Russia realized that they were spending too much time and energy on the language without much success and decided to relax a little bit about the language and just love and serve the people. When we returned from our mission, we learned that senior missionaries no longer received language training at the Missionary Training Center. They just stay there for a week or so and then are sent to their mission. I felt very grateful to have had nine weeks of language training before arriving in Chile.

The last word on seniors learning languages is from President Thomas S. Monson:

“There is one language. . . that is common to each missionary—the language of the Spirit. It is not learned from textbooks written by men of letters, nor is it acquired through reading and memorization. The language of the Spirit comes to him who seeks with all his heart to know God and keep His divine commandments. Proficiency in *this* language permits one to breach barriers, overcome obstacles, and touch the human heart. (“The Spirit Giveth Life,” *Ensign*, June 1997, 2)

(Tune: "We'll Bring the World His Truth")

We have been born into Christ's true fold,
As seasoned servants, we've come forth as gold.
We know His word, and know we must share
A sacred message beyond compare.

We are called and now we work willingly,
Serving with heart, mind and soul
As ev'ry nation learns of the Savior
As prophets all have foretold.
(As prophets all have foretold)

(Part 3 will talk about the post-mission experiences of Senior Missionaries)

To find Janice Kapp Perry's eight Spanish CD's, [click here](#).

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TREASURE IN HEAVEN: A POIGNANT AND STIRRING MUST- SEE

If you've ever seen an LDS film that brought your soul to a higher plane, odds are T.C. Christensen had a hand in it. As a writer, director, producer, and cinematographer, he has helped add professional gloss, creative warmth, and spiritual sincerity to projects such as *The Testaments of One*

Fold and One Shepherd, The Work and the Glory, Joseph Smith: The Prophet of the Restoration, The Touch of the Master's Hand, Gordon B. Hinckley: A Giant Among Men, The Mouth of Babes, Forever Strong, Emma Smith: My Story, Only a Stonecutter, and many more. After enjoying the spirit and truth of many "Mormon Movies," but not necessarily the quality of the filmmaking, I have come to expect that when Christensen's name is in the credits, I'm in for an artistic treat as well as a spiritual banquet.

This is certainly the case with his latest effort: *Treasure in Heaven: The John Tanner Story*. As he did with *Only a Stonecutter*, Christensen, as well as his talented cast and crew, has captured with wonderful detail the story of one of Church History's unsung heroes. As was also the case with *Stonecutter*, he does so in about twenty minutes: perfect for family home evenings with youth who have short attention spans.

John Tanner was a well-to-do New Yorker in the 1830's when a crippling illness, as well as a meeting with missionaries, affected his life and the Church forever. To divulge any detail would be to rob the viewer of enjoying the story as it unfolds, so suffice to say that the tale is one of consecration and wholehearted dedication to the Lord as Tanner exercises faith in God's promises. Becoming a major hero for the Church, and much beloved by the Prophet Joseph, his tale carries a rich power in and of itself, a power fully realized in this screen adaptation.

The acting is very good. Nathan Mitchell, who has portrayed Joseph Smith for the better part of a decade, continues to impress as the prophet of the Restoration. Matthew Maddox and Shauna Thompson, respectively, portray John Tanner and his wife Elizabeth, and both do inspiring, realistic work. From the acting to the music, the cinematography, the creativity of the editing, and the screenplay, all are top-notch and effective.

All that said, this is not to say this is an epic masterpiece, and nor was it meant to be. It's a simple, faith-affirming tale, well-told. One might ask if a twenty-minute film is worth the roughly fifteen dollar asking price at

Deseret Book or Wal-Mart. That's up to you, but I believe the answer is yes, both for the quality of the product and for the probability that more films like this will be made if we support them. I watched the film once on my own for this review, and the next day shared it with my wife's family, who asked after viewing it: "Where do you find these little gems?" With the values of the world shifting slowly away from belief and righteousness, and with more and more emphasis placed on the media, I think it's important to use film, television, and music for godly ends, and to support those who magnify their creative talents to inspire testimony and faith.

But that's just me. You can always spend your dollar on empty bombastic drivel like *Transformers 2*. Ugh.

Editor's Note from Maurine Proctor: I have to add my words of praise for Treasure in Heaven. We not only saw it once for Family Home Evening, we saw it twice. That is not because we were out of ideas for Family Home Evening, but because this is such a genuinely moving story and beautifully done. Hurrah for the artistry that went into this film and cheer again for the life of John Tanner whose example rings through the ages and whose posterity has played significant leadership roles in the Church. After we saw this movie as a family, we were inspired to have a family council about what we could do to help someone in need, having this discussion with our souls fully moved and expanded for the viewing. Truly don't miss this show.

DARIUS GRAY TO KEYNOTE EIGHTH ANNUAL

SALT LAKE CITY-To commemorate Black History Month, the Utah Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) and the Family History Library announce the Seventh Annual African American Family History Research Series. The free event will be held Saturday, February 6, 2010, at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. The daylong series of classes and workshops will begin with a keynote address by author and genealogist, Darius Gray.

Trained in broadcast journalism at the University of Utah and Columbia University, Mr. Gray worked for KSL radio and television in the late 60's and early 70's. Mr. Gray recently co-hosted "Questions and Ancestors" a weekly series focused on genealogy questions submitted by the broadcast audience. The program was produced by BYU Broadcasting for radio and television. He also participated in the highly acclaimed PBS family history series, "Ancestors," and was involved in the KUED documentary, "Utah's African American Voices."

Perhaps his greatest genealogical accomplishment was as co-director of the project to organize and save to CD the "Freedman's Bank Records."

This genealogy treasure contains the marriage, birth and family records of more than 480,000 freed slaves from the 1860s and has offered breakthroughs for countless African Americans seeking to trace their family roots.

Mr. Gray’s presentation, “The African American Family: We Must Remember!”, will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the main floor classroom. There will also be free classes on how to succeed in doing African American family history research. The library staff and volunteers will be available throughout the day to offer free personal assistance. Family history classes and assistance with individual research will immediately follow the keynote address.

The class topics include:

Beginning African American Research
Bureau of Refugees, Freedman and Abandoned Land Records
Migration Patterns: An Alternative for Locating African Origins

For a complete schedule of classes and times, go to www.familysearch.org, then to Family History Library and Monthly Class Schedules.

There are three ways to register for the free classes:

Send an e-mail noting desired classes to FHLClassReg@ldschurch.org

Call 1-801-240-4950.

In person at 9:00 a.m. the day of the event in the Family History Library.

The Family History Library is located at 35 North West Temple Street, directly west of Temple Square in downtown Salt Lake City and just half of a block north of the Temple Square TRAX station.

FamilySearch is a nonprofit organization that maintains the world’s largest repository of genealogical resources. Patrons may access resources online at FamilySearch.org or through the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, and over 4,500 family history centers in 70 countries. FamilySearch is a trademark of Intellectual Reserve, Inc. and is registered in the United States of America and other countries.



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A promise is a special
JavaScript object that links
the “producing code” and the

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“consuming code”
together. In terms of our analogy: this is the
“subscription list”. The “producing code” takes
whatever time it needs to produce the
promised result, and the “promise” makes

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that result available to all of the subscribed code when it's ready. The analogy isn't terribly accurate, because JavaScript promises are more complex than a simple subscription list: they have additional features and limitations. But it's fine to begin with. The constructor syntax for a promise object is `new Promise(function(resolve, reject) {` When new Promise is created, the executor runs automatically. It contains the producing code which should eventually produce the result. In terms of the analogy above: the executor is the “singer”. King James Bible But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Christian Standard Bible But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Contemporary English Version But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. Good News Translation Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things. Our Lord at length gives a distinct promise that if God's cause is made the first aim, all the necessities of life shall be provided. Seek ye first . The difference between ζητεῖν here and ἐπιζητεῖν in ver. South Korea and the US have this week launched the world's first commercial 5G services, promising a new wave of capabilities for smartphone users. Samsung said its Galaxy S10 5G device will offer speeds up to 20 times faster than current phones as it began selling the handsets on Friday. Countries are racing to build 5G networks that will be crucial for future tech such as driverless cars. Part of the "leap" will come from the ability to move much greater volumes of data across networks. 5G will mean more devices can be connected to the network at better speeds. Nikhil Batra, senior research manager at technology consultancy IDC Asia Pacific, said speeds will be 10 times faster than what is possible with 4G. Samsung said its 5G device will be up to 20 times faster. What will 5G enable?