

**“BY THE BLOOD YE ARE SANCTIFIED”:
THE SYMBOLIC, SALVIFIC, INTERRELATED,
ADDITIVE, RETROSPECTIVE,
AND ANTICIPATORY NATURE
OF THE ORDINANCE OF SPIRITUAL REBIRTH
IN JOHN 3 AND MOSES 6**

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Abstract: In chapter 3 of the Gospel of John, Jesus described spiritual rebirth as consisting of two parts: being “born of water and of the spirit.”¹ To this requirement of being “born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit,” Moses 6:59–60 adds that one must “be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; ... For ... by the blood ye are sanctified.”² In this chapter, we will discuss the symbolism of water, spirit, and blood in scripture as they are actualized in the process of spiritual rebirth. We will highlight in particular the symbolic, salvific, interrelated, additive, retrospective, and anticipatory nature of these ordinances within the allusive and sometimes enigmatic descriptions of John 3 and Moses 6. Moses 6:51-68, with its dense infusion of temple themes, was revealed to the Prophet in December 1830, when the Church was in its infancy and more than a decade before the fulness of priesthood ordinances was made available to the Saints in Nauvoo. Our study of these chapters informs our closing perspective on meaning of the sacrament, which is consistent with the renewed teaching emphasis of Church leaders that the “sacrament is a beautiful time to not just renew our baptismal covenants, but to commit to Him to renew all our covenants.”³



Figure 1. *Nicodemus Comes to Jesus By Night.*

Introduction: What Does It Mean To Be Born Again?

One of the most illuminating stories of the Gospel of John tells of Nicodemus' private visit to inquire of Jesus.⁴ John portrays Nicodemus as a prime example of one of those who had initially "believed in [Christ's] name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But," as John explains, "Jesus did not commit himself unto [such], because he knew all men" and "he knew what was *in* man."⁵ Though Nicodemus was one "of the Pharisees,"⁶ "a ruler of the Jews,"⁷ and a "master of Israel,"⁸ he struggled to grasp the meaning of what Jesus tried to teach him.

In contrast to the untutored woman of Samaria in the following chapter of John who met the Lord in the brightness of high noon,⁹ Nicodemus, then a blind leader of the blind,¹⁰ came to Jesus in the darkness of night.¹¹ Happily, however, the day dawned, and the daystar arose in his' heart.¹² Eventually, Nicodemus must have experienced the "birth from above" that he did not at first comprehend, for John tells us that, at great personal risk, he later defended Jesus before the chief priests and Pharisees¹³ and helped prepare the Lord's body for burial.¹⁴

Like the humble Peter, whose foibles and weaknesses are candidly presented in the Gospels, Nicodemus was not ashamed to share the private story of his transformation from wondering skeptic to devoted disciple. Indeed, it is plausible that he was John's eyewitness source for the account that we will now discuss in more detail.



Figure 2. *Nicodemus Is Confused By Jesus' Words.*

Nicodemus opened the conversation with Jesus that night. His use of the pronoun “we” in his statement that “we know that thou art a teacher come from God”¹⁵ revealed that he was not merely speaking for himself but also for the governing body of the Jews to which he belonged. As the basis for the council’s belief that Jesus was a “teacher come from God,” Nicodemus explained: “No one is able to do the miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him.”¹⁶

Jesus did not affirm Nicodemus’ declaration. Instead, He discounted it with a parallel assertion: “No one is able to see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”¹⁷ The Master was saying that Nicodemus and his brethren were mistaken in taking Jesus’ miracles as the basis for their confidence in Him as a divine teacher. Though they had seen these signs, they did not see the kingdom of God.

To see the kingdom of God — and eventually to enter within it, said Jesus — one must be born again.¹⁸ Indeed, seeing the kingdom of God is a *prerequisite* for entering into it.¹⁹ Joseph Smith taught that even to see the kingdom of God, individuals “must have a change of heart,”²⁰ “a portion of the Spirit” that would take “the vail from before their eyes,”²¹ as was later experienced by Cornelius.²² At first, however, Nicodemus resisted Jesus’ invitation to “behold” with an “eye of faith” those things that are “within the veil.”²³

That said, Nicodemus’ astonishment at Jesus’ teaching was not an entirely negative thing, since in later rabbinic literature, “marveling or wondering ... form[ed] an important part of the process of gaining knowledge.”²⁴ For example, it was said of Rabbi Akiba that “his learning



Figure 3. Firoozeh Navab: *All Things Move from Darkness to Light*.

began with wonder and culminated with a crown, a symbol of his power ... to bring hidden things to light.”²⁵ Thus, Jesus’ words to Nicodemus that night, “Marvel not,”²⁶ should not be understood as a peremptory dismissal of his interlocutor’s initial doubts but rather as a spur to his further faith and inquiry, as in his later directive to the wondering Thomas: “be not faithless, but believing.”²⁷

Nevertheless, up to that moment Nicodemus had not had a change of heart. His eyes were still veiled. As a test of Nicodemus’ powers of spiritual perception, Jesus used a double entendre — or double meaning — in His discussion on the subject of being “born again.” The Greek word *anōthen* and the corresponding Aramaic/Syriac expressions *bar derish* (*bar dērīš*) and *men derish* (*men dērīš*) can mean both “again” — a second time — and also “from above” — literally denoting, “from the head.”²⁸ Each time Jesus repeated the requirement for those who would see and enter the kingdom of God to be “born *from above*” — in other words, “born of the Spirit”²⁹ — Nicodemus heard only the most obvious, superficial meaning of the Savior’s saying, namely, that one must be “born *again*” — or, in other words, “born *of the flesh*,”³⁰ mistakenly thinking that Jesus meant coming forth a “second time” from the “mother’s womb.”³¹



Figure 4. “*We Speak That We Do Know, and Testify That We Have Seen*” (John 3:11).

“earthly”³⁶ wind yet stone-blind to the hidden operations of the divinely discerned “heavenly”³⁷ Spirit reinforces the prior distinction, made in verses 2 and 3, between those who see only the superficial signs of His mission, lacking the spiritual vision required to see the kingdom of God.

Jesus wanted Nicodemus to understand the difference between the blindness of men and His own eyewitness testimony. Indeed, in John’s phrasing of Jesus’ statement, he may have intended the careful reader to make a connection between Nicodemus’ prior use of “we” in reference to the “Council” (Sanhedrin = Greek *synedrion*) and Jesus’ use of the pronoun “we” in his reference to Himself, His disciples, and the prophets who preceded him as members of the Divine Council in heaven: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye [the earthly “council” of the Sanhedrin and its adherents] receive not our witness.*”³⁸ Jesus’ words evoke the “we”/“us” of the Divine Council found in Isaiah 6:8: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for *us*? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”

Gently rebuking Nicodemus’ lack of understanding,³² Jesus continued with a play on words that exploited the double meaning of “wind” and “Spirit” in both Greek (*pneuma*) and Hebrew (*ruach*). Since Nicodemus and his brethren could perceive the outward workings of the wind only faintly through its immediate “sound,”³³ they had no hope of understanding the more difficult question of “whence it cometh” or “whither it goeth.”³⁴ Jesus and His disciples, on the other hand, understood perfectly the goings and comings that are governed by the divine “winds” of God’s Spirit, crucially including Jesus’ own ascent to and descent from heaven.³⁵ Jesus’ description of

those who are vaguely sensible to the obvious evidences of the



Figure 5. J. James Tissot (1836–1902):
The Brazen Serpent, ca. 1896–1902.

Then, in an intensification of the drama of the dialogue, Jesus explained fully what it meant not only to be born of the water and the Spirit but also to be fully “born of God.”³⁹ Once again, the Lord’s elaboration simultaneously disclosed and obscured His meaning⁴⁰ through the use of double entendre.⁴¹

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,⁴² even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

To comprehend the double meaning of “lifted up” (from Greek verb *hypoō*) in Jesus’ words, we must first realize that, in the story of Moses, neither the serpents that bit the Israelites nor the figure on the standard that was “lifted up” by Moses were meant to be seen as ordinary desert snakes. Rather, they are described in the rich language of Old Testament symbolism with the same Hebrew terms used elsewhere in scripture to refer to the glorious seraphim, the angelic attendants of God’s throne.⁴³ If we fail to identify the seraphim of the heavenly temple with the “fiery flying serpents”⁴⁴ that were presented as both the plague and the salvation of the children of Israel, we lack the interpretive key for the entire chapter.

Once we realize that in these verses Jesus has compared Himself, as the “Son of Man”⁴⁵ — or, more explicitly, as the Son of the “Man of Holiness,”⁴⁶ meaning the Son of God — to the seraphim that surround, in intimate proximity the throne of the Father, the meaning of His statement that He was to be “lifted up” becomes apparent. In temple contexts, the essential function of the seraphim was analogous to the



Figure 6. Marc Chagall (1887–1985): *L'Exode*, 1952–1966.

“If I Be Lifted Up from the Earth, [I] Will Draw All Men Unto Me” (John 12:32).

role of the cherubim at the entrance of the Garden of Eden:⁴⁷ they were to be sentinels or “keep[ers] [of] the way,”⁴⁸ guarding the portals of the heavenly temple against unauthorized entry, governing subsequent access to increasingly secure compartments, and ultimately assisting in the determination of the fitness of worshipers to enter God’s presence.⁴⁹ Thus Jesus, described by Nephi as “the keeper of the gate,”⁵⁰ could legitimately and literally assert: “no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”⁵¹

Jesus’ application of the phrase “lifted up” to Himself is appropriate for other reasons. For example, the idea of His being “lifted up” ties back to Isaiah 52:13, a verse in the messianic “servant song”: “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be *exalted* and extolled, and be *very high*.” Isaiah’s language in this chapter describes both the suffering and the exaltation of Jesus Christ. Significantly, however, in the Book of Mormon the resurrected Jesus Christ Himself applies Isaiah’s description of a “suffering servant” to the prophet of the Restoration.⁵² Consequently, it is clear that others in addition to Jesus Christ can be “lifted up” — becoming *sons of Man*⁵³ and receiving “everlasting life”⁵⁴ — through unwavering faithfulness in “the trial of [their] faith.”⁵⁵ This is consistent with the explicit teaching in the first chapter of John that “as many as received [Christ], to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”⁵⁶



Figure 7. Harry Anderson (1906–1996): *The Ascension of Jesus*.

Note that the Greek phrase for “sons of God” used here, *tekna theou*, as well its Hebrew equivalent *bēnê (hā-)’ēlōhīm*, are gender neutral in this and similar contexts. Although it would be possible to substitute the neutral term “children of God” in its place, we have preferred to keep the scriptural term “sons of God” — or exceptionally, when citing the discourse of King Benjamin, “sons ... *and daughters*”⁵⁷ of God. This allows a distinction to be made between the more common scriptural sense that describes how *every* mortal, “in the beginning,”⁵⁸ was a child “of heavenly parents”⁵⁹ and the special sense used in the Gospel of John and elsewhere in which only the most faithful of God’s “offspring” are given “power to *become* the sons of God.”⁶⁰

In short, whereas readers sometimes equate the lifting up of Christ exclusively with His suffering in Gethsemane and His death on the cross, the means by which “whosoever believeth in him”⁶¹ may be sanctified and receive “everlasting life” through the shedding of His blood, a more careful examination of the passage makes it clear that John is exploiting a double meaning in the term “lifted up.” Should there be any doubt of the subtle literary art present in John’s account, consider the explicit confirmation of similar, deliberate wordplay in 3 Nephi 27. Within two verses, the resurrected Savior shifts artfully and seemingly effortlessly among multiple senses of “lifted up,” including “lifted up upon the cross,”⁶² “lifted up by men”⁶³ in unrighteous judgment, “lifted up by the

Father"⁶⁴ in righteous judgment, and, ultimately, "lifted up at the last day" in exaltation.⁶⁵

Similarly, in John 3 it is clear that the "lifting up" of Jesus has as much to do with His heavenly ascent and glorious enthronement as it does with his ignominious death.⁶⁶ Hence, according to Herman Ridderbos, "the crucifixion is not presented [by John] as Jesus' humiliation but as the exaltation of the Son of Man,"⁶⁷ a "birth from above" that He intended to share with His disciples. Thus, those who "look" and "begin to believe in the Son of God"⁶⁸ as He is typologically revealed in the seraphic figure that has been "lifted up" will themselves receive "eternal life,"⁶⁹ being "lifted up" — meaning exalted — with their Lord.

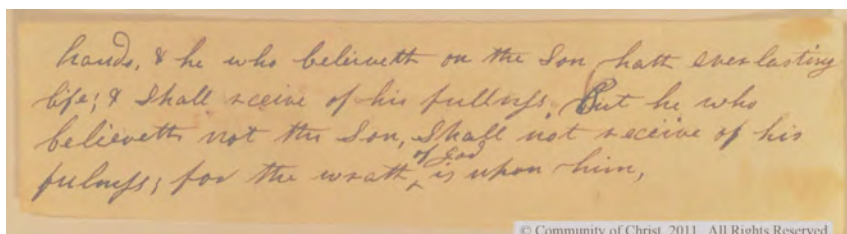


Figure 8. Note Pinned to the JST NT2 Manuscript for John 3:36⁷⁰

As a witness that the Prophet understood the implication of Jesus' words to Nicodemus as we have interpreted them here, a note pinned to the NT2 manuscript of the Joseph Smith Translation of the last verse of John 3 reads in part:⁷¹

He who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life⁷² and shall receive of his fulness.

Consistent with Jesus' expectation that Nicodemus, as a "master of Israel"⁷³ should have already been familiar with this line of interpretation, there is evidence that "some early Jewish [exegetes] in the more mystic tradition may have also understood 'seeing God's kingdom' in terms of visionary ascents to heaven, witnessing the enthroned king."⁷⁴ Moreover, the Jewish scholar "Philo[, a near contemporary of Jesus Christ,] declares that the Sinai revelation worked in Moses a second birth which transformed him from an earthly to a heavenly man; Jesus, by [way of] contrast, came from above to begin with and grants others a birth 'from above.'"⁷⁵

Some scholars have argued that ideas corresponding to those of Philo about a "new birth" that transforms earthly man to heavenly man may have been reflected figuratively in Jewish ritual at Qumran⁷⁶ and elsewhere. Such rituals seem to have enacted the liturgical equivalent



Figure 9. *Ezekiel and the Resurrection in the Valley of Life,*
Dura Europos Synagogue, ca. AD 254.

of actual heavenly ascent. As has been detailed elsewhere,⁷⁷ a plausible narrative foundation for such rituals in the synagogue of Dura Europos was the story of Ezekiel’s vision, in chapter 37, of the resurrection of the dry bones. This is of particular interest in light of Donald Carson’s observation that although many Old Testament writers “look forward to a time when God’s ‘spirit’ will be poured out on humankind,”⁷⁸ the most important of all these is Ezekiel. He observes that in Ezekiel 36:25–27, as in John 3, “water and spirit come together so forcefully, the first to signify cleansing from impurity, and the second to depict the transformation of heart that will enable people to follow God wholly. And it is no accident that the account of the valley of dry bones, where Ezekiel preaches and the Spirit brings life to dry bones, follows hard after Ezekiel’s water/spirit passage.”⁷⁹

The culminating passage of Ezekiel 37, like John 3, promises exaltation and eternal life to the faithful through a new and “everlasting covenant.”⁸⁰ In imagery that parallels chapters 21 and 22 of the book of Revelation, God promises that in the future day of their salvation Israel will be called His people — meaning that they will be called by His name⁸¹ — that they will be sanctified, and that His “sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”⁸²

Going further, Carson observes that “Israel, the covenant community, was properly called ‘God’s son,’”⁸³ an idea that can be extended not only corporately but also individually to His people. In chapter 16, Ezekiel describes how, when Israel was born, “thy navel was not cut, neither was thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor

swaddled at all.”⁸⁴ However, using the Israelite terminology of adoption, the Lord relates that He looked upon fledgling Israel with pity, spread His skirt over it to cover its nakedness, and entered into a covenant so that Israel could become His own.⁸⁵ Continuing in terminology reminiscent of royal investiture and exaltation, with conceptual roots in the First Temple that will recall for Latter-day Saints the symbolism of modern temples, the Lord said: “Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee with broidered work, and shod thee with badger’s skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk, ... And I put ... a beautiful crown upon thine head.”⁸⁶ In reflecting on Jesus’ words, Nicodemus might have begun to remember these and other prophetic passages that describe ritual rebirth in anticipation of the eventual fulfillment of God’s promise to Moses that Israel as a body eventually was to become “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”⁸⁷



Figure 10. J. James Tissot (1836–1902):
Jesus Goes Up Alone unto a Mountain to Pray (detail), 1886–1894.

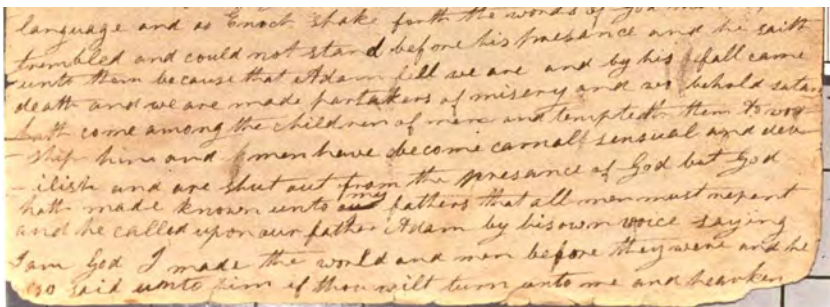
By way of summary, a careful reading of John 3 based on modern linguistic evidence and adequate consideration of relevant threads in Jewish scripture and tradition makes it clear that being “born again” — perhaps better expressed as being “born from above” or “born of God”⁸⁸ — is not a process that is completed when one is baptized by water and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost. Disciples of Jesus Christ are not fully reborn *ritually* until they have received and kept all the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood⁸⁹ “to the end,”⁹⁰ and are not fully reborn *in actuality* until they attain “the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a

perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,⁹¹ both suffering in His likeness⁹² and also being “lifted up” to “eternal life” and exaltation as He was. In other words, to qualify for eternal life, each of the Father’s children must be prepared to enter the kingdom of heaven as a son or daughter of God,⁹³ having been reborn of water, of the Spirit, and of the blood⁹⁴ “by the Spirit of God through ordinances”⁹⁵ and through the atonement of Christ, in similitude of their Redeemer, the Son of God,⁹⁶ their peerless, perfect prototype.⁹⁷

Having concluded from our study of chapter 3 of the Gospel of John that being born again, in its full sense, describes a process that begins before baptism when one begins to “see the kingdom of God”⁹⁸ and culminates with “the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come,”⁹⁹ the remainder of this article will draw out important details regarding spiritual rebirth that are available through close reading of Moses 6:51–68. First, we will provide a brief overview of the setting, structure, and burden of these verses. Then we will conclude with deeper examination of issues and insights relating to the three key phrases of Moses 6:60 one by one: “by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified.”

When discussing temple-related matters, we will try to follow the model of Hugh W. Nibley, who was, according to his biographer Boyd Jay Petersen, “respectful of the covenants of secrecy safeguarding specific portions of the LDS endowment, usually describing parallels from other cultures without talking specifically about the Mormon ceremony.”¹⁰⁰

The Setting, Structure, and Burden of Moses 6:51–68



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Figure 11. JST OT1 Manuscript of Moses 6:42–58a.

14
 (Part of Salvation)

write my voice & believe & repent of all their transgressions &
 be baptized even by water in the name of mine only begotten
 son which is full of grace & truth which is your savior the
 only name which shall be given under Heaven where by
 salvation shall come unto the children of men & ye shall ask
 all things in his name & what ^{ye} shall ask it shall be given
 & our father Adam spake unto the Lord & said why is it that men
 must repent & be baptized by water & the Lord said unto Adam
 because I have forgiven this thy transgression in the garden of Eden
 hence come the saying abroad among the people that Christ hath
 atoned for original guilt whereas the sins of the Parents cannot
 be answered upon the heads of the children for they are whole from
 the foundation of the world & the Lord spake unto Adam saying
 as ^{much} as thy children are conceived in sin even so
 when they begin to grow up sin cometh in their hearts &
 they take the bitter that they may know to prize the good & it is
 given unto them to know good from evil whereas they are
 agents unto themselves & I have given an unto you another law &
 commandment wherefore teach it unto your children that all
 men may where must repent for they can in no wise enter
 at the Kingdom of God for no unclean thing can dwell there so
 dwell in his presence for in the language of Adam son of
 holiness is his name & the name of his only begotten is the
 Son of man even Jesus Christ a righteous judge which shall
 come & give unto you a commandment to teach these things
 freely unto your children saying that as ^{much} as ye have received in the
 world by the fall which bringeth death by water & the spirit
 which I have made & so become of dust a living soul even
 so ye must be born again of water & the spirit & cleansed by
 blood given the blood of mine only begotten into the mysteries of
 the Kingdom of Heaven that ye may be sanctified from all sin &
 enjoy the words of eternal life in this world & eternal life in
 the world to come even immortal glory for by the water ye are
 sanctified that in you is given the record of Heaven the
 compasser the peaceable things of immortal glory the truth of all
 things that which quickeneth all things which maketh alive all things
 that which knoweth all things & hath all power according to wisdom
 man's thought & judgment & now ^{before} I say unto you this is the
 flesh of salvation unto all men the blood of mine only begotten which
 shall come in the mansions of time & before all things has its likeness
 & all things are created & made to his record of me both things which
 are temporal & things which are spiritual things which are in the Heaven
 above & things which are on the earth & things which are in the earth
 & things which are under the earth both above & beneath all things
 are record of me & it came to pass when the Lord had spoken with

Figure 12. JST OT1 Manuscript of Moses 6:58b-64a, p. 2.

The passage comprising Moses 6:51-68¹⁰¹ is an “excerpt from the Book of Adam.”¹⁰² Perhaps it formed part of the “book of remembrance” mentioned in Moses 6:46. The setting for these verses is a sermon by Enoch. A notation in the handwriting of John Whitmer on the OT1 manuscript above Moses 6:52b reads “The Plan of Salvation.”¹⁰³ The verses that follow were sometimes cited by early leaders of the Church as evidence for the continuity of the plan of salvation from the time of Adam and Eve to our day.¹⁰⁴

Verses 51–68 can be seen as a structure of several parts. The introduction is a firsthand statement of God the Father wherein He justifies and provides a résumé of the commandments that underlie the plan of salvation, namely, to hearken, believe, repent, and be baptized. Then, having summarized these commandments, the Father justifies them one by one in reverse order within a succession of ladder-like rhetorical cascades that culminate in a sublime promise of sanctification through “the blood of [His] Only Begotten.”¹⁰⁵

It should be understood that the sure knowledge provided by the “record of heaven”¹⁰⁶ that is promised to Adam and Eve and their posterity is more than the prefatory witness that comes to those who have “receive[d] the Holy Ghost.”¹⁰⁷ Indeed, elsewhere Joseph Smith equates the “power which records”¹⁰⁸ with the sealing power — or, in other words, the power that “binds on earth and binds in heaven.”¹⁰⁹ Consistent with this idea, in the OT2 manuscript of Moses 6:61, this “Comforter” is described as “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”¹¹⁰

In response to God’s explanation, Adam obediently hearkened to the voice of the Father by obeying the commandments he had been given.¹¹¹ In return, he does receive the promised “record of heaven,”¹¹² — later described in more detail as the “record of the Father, and the Son” that was declared through “a voice out of heaven.”¹¹³ Having had “all things confirmed unto [him] by an holy ordinance,”¹¹⁴ Adam was “born again into the kingdom of heaven of water, and of the Spirit, and . . . cleansed by blood,” having become a “son of God”¹¹⁵ in the full sense of the term. Elder Theodore M. Burton’s explanation of the event leaves no room for doubt about the nature of the occurrence:¹¹⁶

Thus Adam was sealed a son of God by the priesthood, and this promise was taught among the fathers from that time forth as a glorious hope to men and women on the earth if they would listen and give heed to these promises.

Relating this event to the sequence of ordinances and blessings that led up to it, Hyrum L. Andrus further explains:¹¹⁷ “To receive such communion, ordinarily one must be justified, sanctified, and sealed by the powers of the

Gospel 'unto eternal life.'"¹¹⁸ In brief, Moses 6:68 testifies that Adam received "the more sure word of prophecy."¹¹⁹

After declaring the sonship of Adam, the Father solemnly averred that all the posterity of Adam and Eve, both men and women, must follow the same pattern in order to be born again: "Thus [in other words, by doing as Adam did] may *all* become my sons."¹¹²



Figure 13. Ron Richmond (1963-): *Triplus, Number 3* (detail), 2005.

Spiritual Rebirth by Water, Spirit, and Blood

Having summarized the meaning and import of Moses 6:53–68 as a whole, we now will examine the symbolism of water, Spirit, and blood that are introduced therein. Hugh Nibley describes the significance of these three elements as follows:¹²¹

The water is an easy act of obedience. ... "By the water ye keep the commandment."¹²² "I know not, save the Lord commanded me."¹²³ That's your sacrifice. Then "by the Spirit ye are justified."¹²⁴ That's the Holy Ghost. ... You've got to be baptized physically, but then it goes beyond that to the Spirit, where you understand and are aware of what's going on. ...

Then the last thing is “and by the blood ye are sanctified.”¹²⁵ You can’t sanctify yourself but by completely giving up life in this world, which means suffering death, which means the shedding of blood. ... [T]he shedding of blood is your final declaration that you are willing to give up this life for the other.

In the temple sacrifices of ancient Israel — which pointed back to Isaac’s arrested sacrifice and pointed forward to Jesus’s *un*arrested sacrifice — the people were to “see” their own arrested sacrifice and redemption, having been spared the shedding of their *own* blood through the atonement of Christ. By means of these sacrifices, ancient Israel could be brought to “see” the kingdom of God. Likewise, Adam and Eve’s eyes were “opened”¹²⁶ after their transgression and they “saw” their own redemption in the garments of skin that God made for them and in the sacrifices that He commanded them to make.¹²⁷

“By the Water Ye Keep the Commandment”

Let us now survey six topics that provide some idea of the richness of ancient traditions and modern revelation relating to the ordinances of baptism and washing with water.



Figure 14. J. Kirk Richards (1977-): *The Baptism of Jesus Christ by John.*

1. Baptism as a commandment and an introduction to the law of obedience. Baptism by water is often described in scripture as a *commandment* — both a means to demonstrate obedience to the divine directive to *be* baptized and also a sign of willingness to keep the *law of obedience* with respect to all God’s *other* commandments.¹²⁸

For example, Nephi cites the baptism of the Savior as a witness to His Father “that he would be obedient unto him in *keeping his commandments.*”¹²⁹ Alma exhorted the people of Gideon to “enter into a covenant with [God] to *keep his commandments,* and witness it unto him this day by

going into the waters of baptism."¹³⁰ And Mormon taught that "baptism is unto repentance to the *fulfilling the commandments* unto the remission of sins."¹³¹

Significantly, the blessing on the sacrament bread also specifies that those who partake witness "that they are willing to ... *keep his commandments*."¹³² This direct association between the sacramental bread and baptism is reinforced by the pointed *omission* of a reference to keeping the commandments in the companion blessing on the emblems of the Lord's blood.¹³³ In addition, only the blessing on the bread mentions that those who partake must be "*willing* to take upon them the name of [the] Son,"¹³⁴ an initial promise that, as Elder David A. Bednar taught, "clearly contemplates a future event or events and looks forward to the temple."¹³⁵ More will be said later on about the distinctive symbolism of the two parts of the sacrament.

Loren Spendlove¹³⁶ points out that the first meaning of "partake" in *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* is: "To take a part, portion or share in common with others; to have a share or part; to participate."¹³⁷ "We all 'share in common' or 'participate' in the benefits that come from the death and resurrection of Christ (as symbolized by the bread), in that we all will resurrect from the dead."¹³⁸ Of course, if we expect to partake in the common benefits of the resurrection, we might also be expected to partake, at least in a measured fashion, in the common effort that makes salvation possible. This joint participation in the work of salvation is sometimes expressed in the kjv New Testament with the word "fellowship" (Greek *koinonia*). "Fellowship" describes the intimate relationship between the Savior and His disciples, who must partake of what He suffered in order to partake of His glory.¹³⁹

Returning more specifically to the subject of baptism, the importance of the commandment for all people to be baptized cannot be overstated.¹⁴⁰ However, Joseph Smith taught that unless those who are baptized also have "truly repented of all their sins and ... have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins"¹⁴¹ their baptism "is good for nothing" — it would be of no more use than if "a bag of sand" had been baptized in their place.¹⁴²

The teachings of the Prophet are a reminder that there is no magic in earthly elements to cleanse us from sin — neither in the water of baptism itself nor, strictly speaking, in the act of eating and drinking the emblems of the sacrament.¹⁴³ As President Brigham Young explained:¹⁴⁴



Figure 15. *Broken Bread.*

Will the bread administered in [the] ordinance [of the sacrament] add life to you? Will the wine add life to you? Yes; if you are hungry and faint, it will sustain the natural strength of the body.¹⁴⁵ But suppose you have just eaten and drunk till you are full, so as not to require another particle of food to sustain the natural body. ... In what consists [then] the benefit we derive from this ordinance? It is in obeying the commands of the Lord. When we obey the commandments of our Heavenly Father, if we have a correct understanding of the ordinances of the House of God, we receive all the promises attached to the obedience rendered to His commandments. ...

It is the same in this as it is in the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins. Has water, in itself, any virtue to wash away sin? Certainly not, ... but keeping the commandments of God will [open the way for the atoning blood of Christ to]¹⁴⁶ cleanse away the stain of sin.

2. Baptism as the gate to the pathway that leads to eternal life.

Latter-day Saints know that repentance and baptism are symbolized in scripture as a “gate,”¹⁴⁷ the essential access point to the “strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life.”¹⁴⁸ In order to eventually enter the Kingdom of God, to which that path leads, each disciple must in addition receive and keep every other law and ordinance of the priesthood “and continue in the path until the end of the day of probation.”¹⁴⁹ As Elder David A. Bednar expressed this idea: “Total immersion and saturation with the Savior’s gospel are essential steps in the process of being born again.”¹⁵⁰



Figure 16. J. Kirk Richards (1977-):
The Salt Lake Temple.

Associating the gate of baptism with all subsequent laws and ordinances of the Priesthood, Joseph Smith made it clear that baptism was not only a commandment but also a “sign”:¹⁵¹

Baptism is a sign ordained of God, for the believer in Christ to take upon himself in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. ... It is a sign of command¹⁵² which God hath set for man to enter ... [and] those who seek to enter in any other way will seek in vain; for God will not receive them, neither will the angels¹⁵³ ... for they have not obeyed the ordinances, nor attended to the signs which God ordained for man to receive in order to receive a celestial glory. ...

There are certain key words and signs belonging to the Priesthood which must be observed in order to obtain the blessing.¹⁵⁴ ... Had [Cornelius] not taken [these] sign[s or] ordinances upon him ... and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, and it obey him;¹⁵⁵ for the spirits might say unto him, as they did to the sons of Sceva: “Paul we know and Jesus we know, but who are ye?”¹⁵⁶

3. The antiquity of water symbolism in washing rituals of rebirth. In this article, we will not provide a summary of the varied and controversial histories that have been attempted for the washing rituals of purification, penitence, and proselytism in Jewish and Christian traditions.¹⁵⁷ We will simply say that no credible scholar today doubts that immersion was practiced by Jews for various religious purposes in pre-Christian times, nor would deny that immersion was the standard form of baptism in the early Christian church.



Figure 17. *Ancient Mikveh at the Jerusalem Temple Mount, 2011, recalling Oliver Cowdery’s description of the baptismal font as a “liquid grave.”*¹⁵⁸



Figure 18. *The Penitent Baptism of Adam and Eve. 1340–1351. West façade, detail of the upper tympanum, middle archivolt, Church of St. Théobald, Thann, France.*

With respect to the antiquity of baptism, we will simply note in passing that not only the book of Moses but also several Islamic, Christian, Mandaean, and Manichaean accounts speak of the baptism of Adam and Eve.¹⁵⁹

Some scholars, including Stephen D. Ricks¹⁶⁰ and David J. Larsen,¹⁶¹ have argued that the water symbolism of baptism is better understood when it is seen in connection with rituals in ancient Israel wherein the king was washed and anointed, both prior to both his initiation and also at regular renewals of his right to rule.

For example, Larsen writes:¹⁶²

We learn from the Bible that the ... king was washed and purified, likely at the spring of Gihon.¹⁶³ He was anointed on



Figure 19. Impression of Seal of Gudea, Tello, Iraq, ca. 2150 BCE.

the head with a perfumed olive oil that was kept in a horn in the sanctuary.¹⁶⁴ He was clothed in robes and also wore a priestly apron (ephod¹⁶⁵), sash,¹⁶⁶ and diadem/headdress.¹⁶⁷ Finally, the king was consecrated a priest “after the order of Melchizedek.”¹⁶⁸

Relevant context for understanding these practices also can be found in the religious literature of ancient Mesopotamia. For example, in the story of *Atrahasis* we can trace the basic conception that water, spirit, and blood — the latter derived from the body of a slain deity — were the life-giving elements used by the gods in the creation of humankind.¹⁶⁹

In the seal of Gudea shown above, the bareheaded and nearly-naked Gudea is introduced by a mediating deity to a seated god. The mediating god presents a vase featuring a seedling and flowing water to the seated god. Water flows from the seated god himself into flowing vases, no doubt anticipating the sprouting of future seedlings that have yet to appear. The scene suggested is one of rebirth and transformation: drawing on the phraseology of the Gospel of John we might say that having been “born of water,” the king, in likeness both of the sprout within the flowing vase and of the god to which he is being introduced, is also to become a “well of water springing up into everlasting life.” A sculpture of Gudea attests to just such an interpretation, where Gudea himself is shown with his head now covered and holding a vase of flowing water in likeness of the seated god.

A comparative analysis of the full set of rituals of kingship at Mari in Old Babylon and in the Old Testament¹⁷⁰ concluded that none of the major themes of Mesopotamian kingship ritual, including the roles that water plays in those rites,¹⁷¹ should be unfamiliar to students of the Bible.

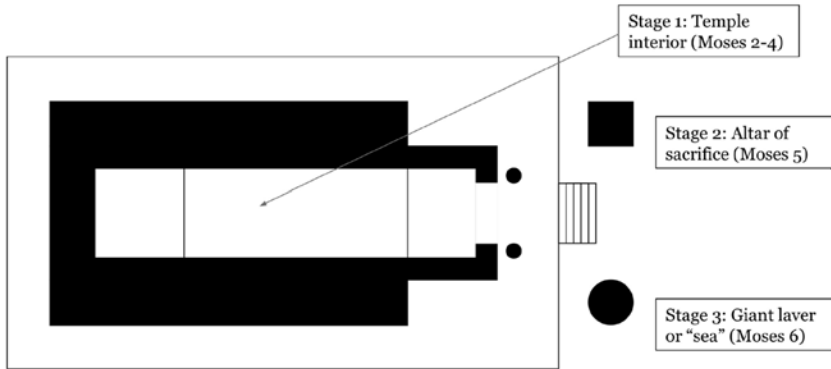


Figure 20. David Calabro: *Floor Plan of the Temple of Solomon, with Suggested Locations of the Ritual in Moses 2–6.*

Indeed, as John Walton correctly observes, “the ideology of the temple is not noticeably different in Israel than it is in the ancient Near East. The difference is in the God, not in the way the temple functions in relation to the God.”¹⁷²

David Calabro has explored the possibility that a text similar to the book of Moses may have been used in Solomon’s Temple to instruct and guide initiates through specific areas where instruction was given and rituals were performed. Of relevance to the present discussion is the connection he suggests between the text of Moses 6 and the “molten sea” that stood in front of the temple.¹⁷³ After discussing several clues supporting his thesis from the book of Moses, Calabro concludes:

While there is no evidence that the temple laver was used as a baptismal font, it was definitely large enough to suggest such a use, and Joseph Smith’s specifications for a baptismal font modeled after the Solomonic laver for the Nauvoo temple show that he understood it in this connection.

It is evident that two sorts of washings — namely baptism and priestly or kingly initiation in the temple — became confused in the first centuries after Christ, making it difficult to be sure what kind of ordinance is taking place when Christian scripture and tradition mention the use of water in religious ritual.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, ordinances of washing, anointing, and clothing were sometimes performed as an integral part of baptismal rites for new Christians.

For example, in some Christian baptismal traditions the idea of “reversing the blows of death” was represented by a special anointing with the “oil of mercy” prior to (or sometimes after) baptism or washing,



Figure 21. Viktor Vasnetsov (1848–1926): *The Baptism of Saint Prince Vladimir*, 1890. “Attendants hold Vladimir’s golden royal robes, which he has removed, and the simple white baptismal robe, which he will put on.”

as the candidate was signed upon the brow, the nostrils, the breast, the ears, and so forth.¹⁷⁵

It was commonly accepted by some Christians that the precedent for such anointings went back to the beginning of time. For instance, in the pseudepigraphal *Life of Adam and Eve*, we can read an incident where Adam, as he lay on his deathbed, requested Eve and Seth to fetch him oil from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden so that he could be restored to life.¹⁷⁶



Figure 22. *The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Mercy*, 1351–1360. Heilig-Kreuz Münster (Holy Cross Minster) in Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany.



Figure 23. *Early Christian Painting of a Baptism*, Saint Calixte Catacomb, 3rd century.

Some traditions describe how the baptismal candidate was “stripped of the garments inherited from Adam and vested with the token of those garments he or she shall enjoy at the resurrection.”¹⁷⁷ In other traditions, the baptismal candidates “stood [barefoot] on animal skins while they prayed, symbolizing the taking off of the garments of skin they had inherited from Adam” as well as figuratively enacting the putting of the serpent, the representative of death and sin, under one’s heel. Thus the serpent, his head crushed by the heel of

the penitent relying on the mercies of Christ’s atonement, was by a single act renounced, defeated, and banished.



Figure 24. *Jesus and Nicodemus.*

4. The background of circumcision in Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus about being "born again." A passage from Joseph Smith's translation of Genesis, discussed in more detail below, highlights the importance of the relationship between baptism, as revealed in the beginning to Adam and Eve, and the later institution of the Old Testament ordinance of circumcision through God's command to Abraham. Samuel Zinner describes the relationship between baptism and circumcision as part of the generally underappreciated background to the dialogue of Jesus and Nicodemus about the importance of being "born again":¹⁷⁸

It is perhaps not usually recognized that implicit in John 3's discussion on the new birth and baptism is the topic of circumcision. Early Christian theology understood baptism as a spiritual circumcision for Gentile adherents of the Jesus sect.¹⁷⁹ Rabbinic sources also understand proselyte immersion as a new and spiritual birth. In John 3:4 Jesus' teaching on rebirth in verse 3 naturally brings circumcision to Nicodemus' mind, so that in effect he asks, how can a male adult return to the state of infancy and be circumcised again? The (rhetorical) confusion in the discussion arises because Jesus is teaching that a circumcised Jewish male adult must be reborn spiritually. Nicodemus' thought is that Jewish males are already spiritually reborn from the time of their

infant circumcision. Only Gentile proselytes stand in need of spiritual rebirth. In fact, Jesus is referring to John's baptism of repentance¹⁸⁰ for Jews, and Jesus' imperative, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," alludes to the necessity of John's baptism of repentance, and forms part of the background of John 3:5's "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God," an allusion to John 1:26's baptism with water and 1:33's baptism with the Holy Spirit.¹⁸¹ Jesus' point in John 3 is that Jews need spiritual circumcision in addition to the physical rite, a traditional enough prophetic *tanakhic* trope.¹⁸² In 1QS V we see that spiritual circumcision is demanded in the "community": "circumcise in the Community the foreskin of his tendency and of his stiff neck" [1QS V 5]. This follows 1QS IV's teaching on immersion, which matches the pattern established already by Ezekiel¹⁸³ who speaks of cleansing water followed by the insertion of a new spirit and heart: ... [Such] Qumran passage[s], like John the [Baptist's] and Jesus' baptismal teachings, [do] not suggest that [baptism] replaces circumcision, but that it complements and perfects it.

5. Circumcision, covenant, and baptism in antiquity and in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. Consistent with the linking of circumcision, covenant, and baptism suggested by Zinner are many allusions to these subjects both in antiquity and in Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon and the Bible.

For example, consider Joseph Smith's gloss on Isaiah 48:1 as quoted in 1 Nephi 20:1, which first appeared in the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon.¹⁸⁴

Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, *or out of the waters of baptism*, who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, yet they swear not in truth nor in righteousness.

The term "waters" within the phrase "come forth out of the waters of Judah" might be more plainly rendered as "out of the belly or loins of Judah," a poetical reference to the literal seed of the body out of which the corporeal descendants of Judah are propagated. For this reason, one might see in this phrase an allusion to the covenant of circumcision, a covenant that was not only made necessary for Abraham

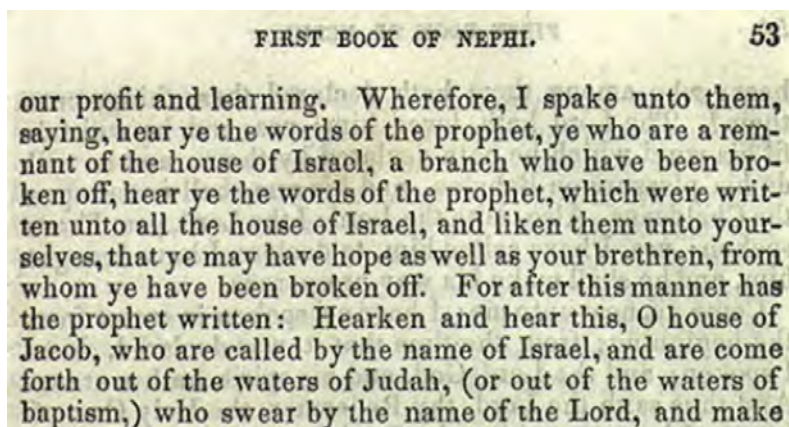


Figure 25. 1 Nephi VI [1 Nephi 20:1], 1840 Edition of the Book of Mormon, p. 53.

and his biological posterity but also, significantly, something to which all those who had been “adopted” into his household were required to submit.¹⁸⁵ Joseph Smith’s gloss, “or out of the waters of baptism,” expands Isaiah’s reference explicitly to include Gentiles who could become part of covenant Israel by adoption through proselyte baptism, consistent with 3 Nephi 30:2: “Turn, all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways; ... and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, that ye may receive a remission of your sins, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, *that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.*”¹⁸⁶



Figure 26. Jan van Eyck (ca. 1395–1441): *The Offering of Abel and Cain*, 1425–1429

An even more pointed reference connecting the themes of circumcision and baptism can be found in a reference to the “blood of Abel” within Joseph Smith’s subsequent translation of the book of Genesis. The story of Abel has always been linked with the idea of proper sacrifice¹⁸⁷ — indeed his name seems to be a deliberate pun on the richness of the sacrifice that he will make, in contrast to the stingy offering of Cain:¹⁸⁸ “And Abel [*hebel*], he also

brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof” [*ûmêhelēbēhen* — in other words, from the fatlings, the richest or best part of the herd]. Not only does the Hebrew word *hēleb* denote “fat,” but also the word *ûmêhelēbēhen* “contains within itself the name of *hbl* [Abel] ... reversed” — i.e., *ûmêhelēbēhen*, thus strengthening the pun.¹⁸⁹



Figure 27. J. James Tissot (1836–1902):
Zacharias Killed Between the Temple and the Altar, ca. 1896–1894.

Remember that in the book of Hebrews, the shedding of Abel’s blood was seen as a type of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.¹⁹⁰ With respect to his place among the biblical canon of martyrs, Hamilton writes: “Abel is coupled with Zechariah¹⁹¹ as the first¹⁹² and the last¹⁹³ victims of murder mentioned in the Old Testament. ... Understandably Abel is characterized as ‘innocent.’”¹⁹⁴

The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible connects the death of the righteous Abel to an anomalous ordinance of sprinkling blood coupled with “washing” or “baptism” for little children that is denounced in JST Genesis 17:3–7:¹⁹⁵

And it came to pass, that Abram fell on his face, and called upon the name of the Lord.

And God talked to him, saying, My people have gone astray from my precepts, and have not kept mine ordinances, which I gave unto their fathers;

And they have not observed mine anointing,¹⁹⁶ and the burial, or baptism wherewith I commanded them;

But have turned from the commandment, and taken unto themselves the washing or baptism¹⁹⁷ of children, and the blood of sprinkling;¹⁹⁸

And have said that the blood of the righteous Abel was shed for sins; and have not known wherein they are accountable before me.

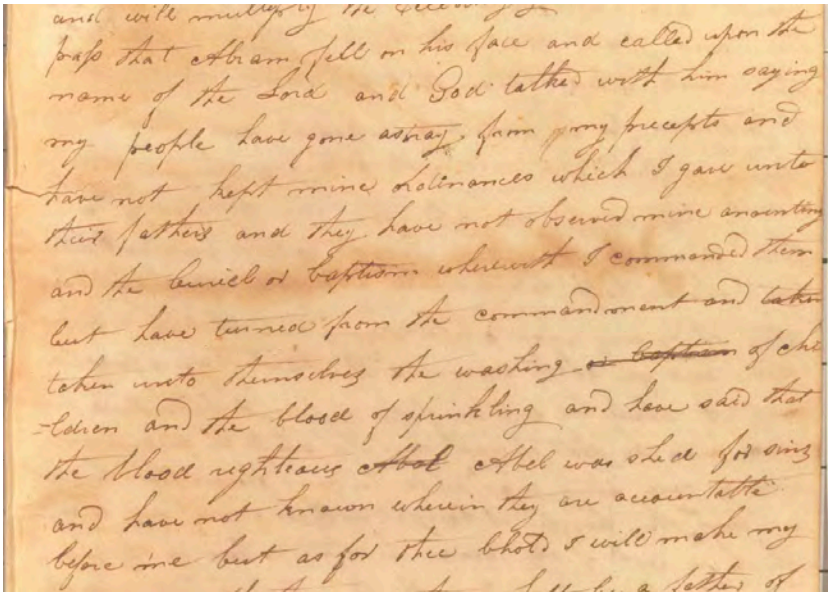


Figure 28. JST OT1 Manuscript of Genesis 17.

To counteract this practice, we are told that the Lord established the covenant of circumcision at the age of eight days,¹⁹⁹ “that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me till [they are] eight years old.”²⁰⁰ D&C 68:25–28, received later in the same year that JST Genesis 17 was translated, also emphasizes that children are not accountable until eight years old.²⁰¹

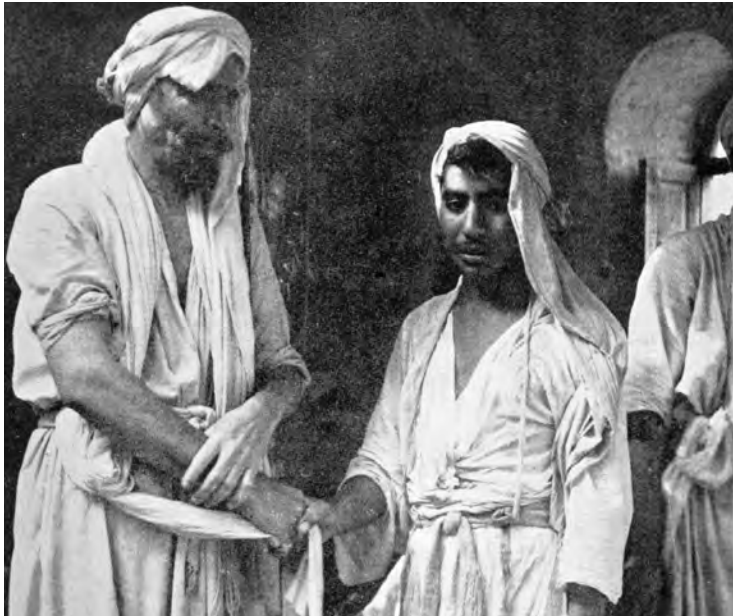


Figure 29. E. S. Drower, 1879–1972: *The Kushta*, 1956²⁰²

In remarkable resonance with Joseph Smith’s translation, the central figure of Abel is associated with the washing rituals of immersion among the Mandaeans.²⁰³ Indeed, Abel (often called *Hibil Ziwa* = Abel Splendor), who is often identified with the roles of redeemer and savior, was said to have performed the first baptism — that of Adam, who prefigures every later candidate for these repeated rituals.²⁰⁴

Following the ceremonies of immersion, the Mandaeans still continue ritual practices that include anointing and the pronouncing of the names of the gods upon the individual.²⁰⁵ The *kushta*, a ceremonial handclasp, is given three times, each one of which, according to Elizabeth Drower, “seems to mark the completion ... of a stage in a ceremony.”²⁰⁶ At the moment of glorious resurrection, Mandaean scripture records that a final *kushta* will also take place, albeit in the form of an embrace, called the “key of the *kushta* of both arms.”²⁰⁷

The concept of an “atoning embrace”²⁰⁸ can be compared to similar imagery in Jacob’s wrestle with the angel²⁰⁹ and his subsequent encounter with Esau,²¹⁰ in the reconciliation of the father with his prodigal son in Jesus’ parable,²¹¹ and especially in the eschatological embraces of Enoch’s Zion and Latter-day Zion described in Moses 7:63: “Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other.”²¹²

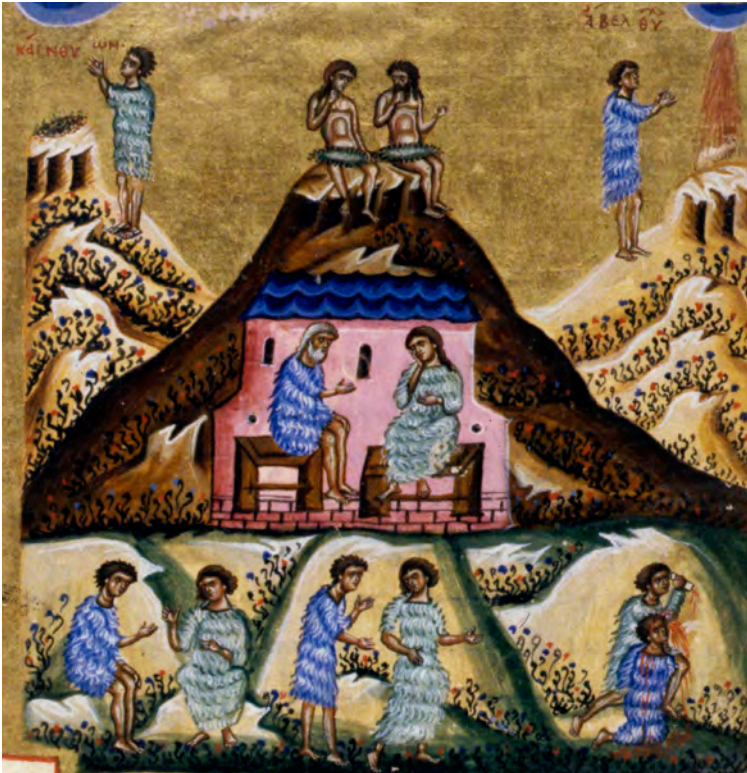


Figure 30. *Adam and Eve Outside Paradise, Cain and Abel*, 12th century.

Hebrews 12:24 speaks of the saints coming “to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”²¹³ To Craig Koester, this suggests the idea that “Abel’s blood brought a limited atonement, while Jesus’ blood brought complete Atonement.”²¹⁴ With reference to Hebrews 11:4, Joseph Smith said that Abel “holding still the keys of his dispensation ... was sent down from heaven unto Paul to minister consoling words, and to commit unto him a knowledge of the mysteries of godliness.”²¹⁵

The practice of swearing “by the holy blood of Abel” is portrayed in early Christian and Islamic accounts of the efforts of the antediluvian patriarchs to dissuade their posterity from leaving the “holy mountain” to associate with the children of Cain.²¹⁶ Serge Ruzer interprets this as evidence for the existence of a group that looked to Abel rather than to Christ for salvation. He concludes that the “emphasis here [is] on the salvific quality of Abel’s blood. ... Swearing by Abel’s blood ... is presented in our text as sufficient for the salvation of the sons of Seth; those who dwell — thanks to swearing by Abel’s blood — on the holy mountain do not need any further salvation.”²¹⁷



Figure 31. *Red Heifer Being Raised in Israel by The Temple Institute and an Israeli Cattleman.*

Additional evidence suggesting a belief in salvific power for Abel's blood comes from a 1 Enoch description of Abel as a "red calf." Patrick Tiller sees this as an allusion to the red heifer²¹⁵ of Numbers 19:1-10.²¹⁹ The great Jewish scholar Maimonides saw the ritual of the red heifer not merely as law of purity, but rather as a matter "of transcendent, even salvific weight and meaning."²²⁰ The red heifer was a pointedly young animal used in purification rites, comprising a washing and a sprinkling of blood,²²¹ for those who had come into contact with "one ... found slain" and "lying in the field,"²²² as was Abel. A widely varying set of Islamic accounts attempt to explain the origin of a related Qur'anic story.²²³ What these accounts have in common is the idea that the murderer denied his crime but was identified by the voice of the dead man who was touched by the sacrificial animal.²²⁴ Could this be an echo of the voice of the righteous Abel of whom it is said in scripture that his "blood cries unto [God] from the ground"²²⁵ — "he being dead yet speaketh"?²²⁶

In summary, there is ample evidence from a variety of sources dating to at least the Second Temple period to support the plausibility of the account in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible wherein anomalous rituals for little children purporting to cleanse them by washing and the sprinkling of blood are coupled with the erroneous idea that "the blood of the righteous Abel was shed for sins."²²⁷ As a figure associated anciently with proper sacrifice, with baptism, and with innocent martyrdom, Abel arguably could have attracted religious notions of this character. Significantly, the rationale for the institution of circumcision

in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament is consistent with Samuel Zinner's conclusion about the symbolic connection between circumcision and baptism in its New Testament context: namely, that baptism was not meant to replace "circumcision, but [rather] that it complements and perfects it."²²⁸

6. Digression: Baptism and ritual washings as illustrations of the nature of all ordinances. Before concluding our discussion of the symbolism of water in spiritual rebirth, we digress to show how baptism and ritual washings provide a paradigmatic illustration of the nature of all priesthood ordinances. We conclude from our brief study of baptism and ritual washings that they, when administered as authentic priesthood ordinances, are *symbolic, salvific, interrelated and additive, retrospective, and anticipatory.*

- *Symbolic.* Hugh Nibley defined the endowment as "a model, a presentation in figurative terms."²²⁹ The same can be said for baptism, which Paul described as a symbol of death and resurrection.²³⁰ Like the parables of Jesus, the ordinances are meant to provide both an understanding of the spiritual universe in which we live and a model for personal conduct within that context — which is precisely why the Lord condemns in such strong terms those who have "strayed from [His] ordinances," who "seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness" but rather "walk in [their] own way and after the image of [their] own god, whose image is in the likeness of the [mortal rather than the celestial] world."²³¹

Those who base their understanding of the universe and their place within it on their own warped conceptions rather than on the blueprint of eternity provided within the ordinances inevitably reap results in the frustration of mistaken ambitions of this life and stunted growth in the personal and social qualities that matter most in eternity. On the other hand, repeated participation in sacred ordinances over the course of a lifetime is meant to deepen our understanding of "who we are, and who God is, and what our relationship to Him [and to His children] is."²³²

- *Salvific.* President Joseph F. Smith taught:²³³

I frequently hear people say, "All that is required of a man in this world is to be honest and square," and

that such a man will attain to exaltation and glory. But those who say this do not remember the saying of the Lord, that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of [God].”²³⁴

While recognizing the superior forms of pedagogy embodied in the symbolism of the ordinances,²³⁵ Elder David A. Bednar taught that we err if we think that their value is limited to inspired instruction. He said, citing D&C 84:19–21:²³⁶ “The ordinances of salvation and exaltation administered in the Lord’s restored Church are far more than rituals or symbolic performances. Rather, they constitute authorized channels through which the blessings and powers of heaven can flow into our individual lives.” In other words, the realization of the promised endowment of knowledge and power promised in the ordinances requires that we be both *informed* and *transformed*.²³⁷ The blessing of being “born again by the Spirit of God through ordinances,”²³⁸ in conjunction with the strengthening power of the atonement of Christ, is obtained only as we live for it — in a continual effort of obedience and service that strengthens the ties of covenant with which we are freely and lovingly bound to our Heavenly Father.²³⁹ Only by understanding and conforming to the divine pattern given in the ordinances may we gradually experience an increasing measure of the joy of becoming all that God now is.

- *Interrelated and additive.* Elder David A. Bednar has taught:²⁴⁰ “The ordinances of baptism by immersion, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the sacrament are not isolated and discrete events; rather, they are elements in an interrelated and additive pattern of redemptive progress. Each successive ordinance elevates and enlarges our spiritual purpose, desire, and performance. The Father’s plan, the Savior’s Atonement, and the ordinances of the gospel provide the grace we need to press forward and progress line upon line and precept upon precept toward our eternal destiny.”

The fact that the ordinances are closely interrelated is a necessary and obvious thing — after all, each ordinance is based on the same doctrine of Christ. For example, Elder Bruce R. McConkie noted that three different ordinances — baptism, the sacrament, and animal sacrifice — were instituted at different times, are enacted using different symbolic elements, and are employed in different

types of settings, however all are performed in association with one and the same covenant.²⁴¹ In other words, although each of these three ordinances fulfill a unique purpose and vary significantly in their expressions of relevant symbolism, each of them “is performed in similitude of the atoning sacrifice by which salvation comes.”²⁴² What is important in every ordinance is that any adaptations to different times, cultures, and practical circumstances be done under prophetic authority in order to minimize the possibility of changes that alter them in crucial ways.

Likewise, it is essential that the ordinances be additive in nature. For example, just as baptism must be preceded by faith in Jesus Christ and sincere repentance,²⁴³ so the ongoing processes of justification and sanctification made available to those who are confirmed and receive the Holy Ghost can only come to those who have been previously prepared through baptism. Likewise, the initial budding of “the power of godliness” that is increasingly “manifest”²⁴⁴ in the lives of faithful members of the Church as they worthily partake of the sacrament and renew their prior covenants prepares them for the additional ordinances and covenants they will eventually receive in the temple.



Figure 32. *Greek Orthodox Icon Depicting the Ladder of Virtues, Thessaloniki, Macedonia.*

Further illustrating the additive nature of the ordinances, we note that faith, hope, and charity — serving both as symbols of the three degrees of glory represented in the temple and also as stages in the disciple’s earthly experience marked by progression in the ordinances and the keeping of covenants — were represented anciently and in the teachings, translations, and revelations of Joseph Smith as a ladder of heavenly ascent that must be mounted rung by rung.²⁴⁵



Figure 33. Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890): *Le Moissonneur*, 1889.

Elder Bednar’s characterization of the “additive pattern of redemptive progress”²⁴⁶ suggests that those who are striving to become saints are passionate, not passive, about their discipleship. Like Abraham,²⁴⁷ they are driven by “divine discontent,”²⁴⁸ not being satisfied with the sort of minimal, negative obedience which requires only that they avoid the “appearance of sin,”²⁴⁹ but rather, in addition, seek to be “anxiously engaged”²⁵⁰ in furthering the Father’s work with “all [their] heart, might, mind and strength.”²⁵¹ By this means, they eventually become capable of enduring all things, being filled with perfect faith, hope, and charity,

their will “being swallowed up in the will of the Father”²⁵² to the point that, after a lifetime of faithfulness to every covenant they have received and through the strengthening power of the Atonement, they begin to approach the “measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”²⁵³

- *Retrospective.* An appreciation of the retrospective regard of the ordinances clears up any confusion about the relationship between baptism and other washing ordinances.²⁵⁴ Since the time of Adam, baptism has been the *first*,²⁵⁵ *introductory*²⁵⁶ saving ordinance of the Gospel given in mortal life, and any similarities of baptism to later ordinances of washing are meant to highlight and build upon that resemblance retrospectively.

Further illustrating the retrospective regard of the washing ordinances, we would argue that they hark back beyond baptism, echoing earlier events that occurred in the premortal life. For example, it appears that the ordinance received by Aaron



Figure 34. Harry Anderson, 1906–1996:
Moses Calls Aaron to the Ministry.

when he was “wash[ed],” “anoint[ed],” and clothed in “holy garments ... so that he [might] minister unto [the Lord] in the priest’s office”²⁵⁷ retrospectively recapitulated his foreordination in the premortal world to this priesthood calling.²⁵⁸ Consistent with the teachings of Joseph Smith,²⁵⁹ Alma 13 teaches that “[high] priests were ordained after the order of [God’s] Son, ... being called and prepared from the foundation of the world ... with that holy calling ... *according to a preparatory redemption* for such.”²⁶⁰ Similarly, President Spencer W. Kimball taught that in premortal life, faithful women were also given assignments to be carried out later on earth.²⁶¹

Speaking of Christ as the premortal prototype for all those who were foreordained to priestly offices and subsequently ordained in mortal life, the *Gospel of Philip* suggests that the meaning, symbolism, and sequence of the ordinances has always been the same: “He who ... [was begotten] before everything was begotten anew [i.e., “by the water”²⁶²]. He [who was] once [anointed] was anointed anew [i.e., “by the Spirit”²⁶³]. He who was redeemed in turn redeemed (others) [i.e., “by the blood”²⁶⁴].”²⁶⁵

- *Anticipatory*. Because the round of eternity²⁶⁶ is embedded in the ordinances, we would expect them not only to be retrospective but also anticipatory in nature. For example, in Moses 5 Adam learns that the ordinance of animal sacrifice was instituted in explicit anticipation of the sacrifice “of the Only Begotten of the Father”²⁶⁷ — just as, of course, the ordinance of the sacrament looks back retrospectively on that same expiatory sacrifice. With regard to the sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac, Hugh Nibley asks:

Is it surprising that the sacrifice of Isaac looked both forward and back, as “Isaac thought of himself as the type of offerings to come, while Abraham thought of himself as atoning for the guilt of Adam,” or that “as Isaac was being bound on the altar, the spirit of Adam, the first man, was being bound with him”?²⁶⁸ It was natural for Christians to view the sacrifice of Isaac as a type of the crucifixion, yet it is the Jewish sources that comment most impressively on the sacrifice of the Son. When at the creation of the world angels asked, “What is man that You should remember him?”²⁶⁹ God replied: “You shall see a father slay his son, and the son consenting to be slain, to sanctify My Name.”²⁷⁰

As an aside, we note that Abraham is unique in scripture in that he came to understand Christ’s atonement both from the perspective of a father²⁷¹ and also from that of a son.²⁷²

As another example of the anticipatory nature of the ordinances, recall the witness of JST Genesis 17:11 that the divine introduction of circumcision in the time of Abraham, like the ordinance of naming and blessing of little children in our day, was not only important in its own right, but also significant because it pointed forward to the ordinance of baptism. Remember that a primary reason for the institution of the practice of circumcision was “that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me till [they are] eight years old.”²⁷³ The blood shed in circumcision, whose mark remained in the child as a permanent “sign” in the flesh,²⁷⁴ can be understood as a symbol of arrested sacrifice²⁷⁵ that invites *retrospective* reflection on the universal salvation of little children through the blood of Christ’s atonement. At the same time, the symbolism of



Figure 35. Abraham Bloemaert (1566–1651): *The Circumcision*, 1601.

circumcision also implicitly facilitates a correct, *anticipatory* understanding of the necessity of justification accomplished through “the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins”²⁷⁶ that is meant to accompany the baptism of children when they subsequently reach the age of accountability.

Note also that the symbolism of death and resurrection in the ordinance of baptism anticipates the instruction and covenants of the temple endowment that further detail the responsibilities and blessings of those who will rise in first resurrection.²⁷⁷ Similarly, the initiatory ordinance of washing, anointing, and clothing²⁷⁸ provides an anticipatory capsule summary of *all* the ordinances. More specifically, one might conclude that in every detail, the performance of the initiatory ordinance of the temple reflects the threefold symbolism of water, spirit, and blood found in Moses 6, thus outlining the path of exaltation that is further elaborated in the endowment. Moreover, the anticipatory nature of the initiatory ordinance is captured in Truman G. Madsen’s description of it as “a patriarchal blessing to every organ and attribute and power of our being, a blessing that is to be fulfilled in this world and the next.”²⁷⁹



Figure 36. Linda McCarthy (1947-): *City of Enoch*, 2002.

Going further — and consistent with the idea that the temple is a model or analog rather than an actual picture of reality — Elder John A. Widtsoe taught that the essential earthly ordinances anticipate or, perhaps better, prefigure heavenly ordinances in which eternal truths and blessings will be taught and bestowed in a more perfect and finished form:²⁸⁰

Great eternal truths make up the Gospel plan. All regulations for man's earthly guidance have their eternal spiritual counterparts. The earthly ordinances of the Gospel are themselves only reflections of heavenly ordinances. For instance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and temple work are merely earthly symbols of realities that prevail throughout the universe; but they are symbols of truths that must be recognized if the Great Plan is to be fulfilled. The acceptance of these earthly symbols is part and parcel of correct earth life, but being earthly

symbols they are distinctly of the earth and cannot be accepted elsewhere than on earth. In order that absolute fairness may prevail and eternal justice may be satisfied, all men, to attain the fulness of their joy, must accept these earthly ordinances. There is no water baptism in the next estate nor any conferring of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of earthly hands. The equivalents of these ordinances prevail no doubt in every estate, but only as they are given on this earth can they be made to aid, in their onward progress, those who have dwelt on earth.

The distinction between earthly and heavenly ordinances is perfectly expressed in the OT1 manuscript version of Moses 6:59. While the first part of the verse might seem to imply that the culminating earthly ordinances, whose cleansing power is provided by "the blood of mine Only Begotten," provide a complete initiation "into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" in this life, the verse closes by making a distinction between the "words of eternal life" — meaning both the revelations of the Holy Spirit with regard to temple ordinances and, ultimately, the sure promise of exaltation that can only be received in an anticipatory way "in this world" — and also "eternal life" itself, which can only be granted "in the world to come."²⁸¹

By way of summary, we might say that the ordinances associated with water, spirit and blood are *saturated with symbolism*. Indeed, Elder John A. Widtsoe specifically described the endowment as being "so packed full of revelations ... that no human words can explain or make [them] clear."²⁸² More pointedly, we might say that the ordinances are *overloaded* with a superabundant profusion of meanings, *overdetermined* in the tangible forms that they take, and deliberately *overlaid* in successive refinement so as to facilitate incremental growth of understanding and practical application in the lives of those who receive them.

As the joint and several purport of the ordinances is gradually revealed to faithful disciples, they begin to see how their meaning and import function as keys to the dense conceptual and practical nexus at the heart of the Gospel; reverberating in harmony throughout the parallel yet interwoven worlds of doctrines, ordinances, and covenants; and ultimately unlocking the "power of godliness"²⁸³ that constitutes the supreme significance and purpose of Creation.



Figure 37. *Unfurling Fern Frond*, a Symbol of New Life in the Maori Culture (*Koru*) and a Manifestation of the Fibonacci Sequence in Nature.

Both in their additive auto-resemblance and also in their Janus-like anticipatory and retrospective regard, the fractal nature of the ordinances is made apparent, with the beauty of their self-similar patterns becoming even more impressive under bright light and increasingly closer examination. There is glory in the details.

“By the Spirit Ye Are Justified”

Now we turn our attention to the phrase “by the Spirit ye are justified.”²⁸⁴ As in the previous discussion of the water ordinances of baptism and washings, the symbolic, salvific, interrelated, additive, retrospective, and anticipatory nature of the ordinances of spiritual rebirth associated with the Spirit will become apparent.

Before delving deeper into this subject, we will discuss four fundamental questions about justification and sanctification:

- 1. *What does it mean to be justified?* Simply put, individuals become “just” — in other words, innocent before God and ready for a covenant relationship with Him — when they demonstrate sufficient repentance to qualify for an “*initial cleansing from sin*”²⁸⁵ “by the Spirit,”²⁸⁶ thus having had the demands of justice satisfied on their behalf through the Savior’s atoning blood.²⁸⁷
- 2. *But don’t the scriptures refer specifically to “baptism for the remission of sins”?*²⁸⁸ Because “baptism” and “remission of sins”²⁸⁹ occur together so often in telescoped scripture references, the role of the Spirit in the process of justification is easily forgotten. However, a survey of scripture will reveal that “remission of sins” is mentioned most frequently in verses that *omit* any mention of baptism. In these and other references, remission of sins is typically coupled with the preparatory principles of faith or repentance rather than with the ordinance of baptism itself.²⁹⁰

Although baptism by proper authority is a commandment that must be strictly observed to meet the divine requirement for entrance into the kingdom of God, it is but the necessary, outward sign of our willingness to take upon the name of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. A significant phrase in D&C 20:37 explains with precision that it is not the performance of the baptismal ordinance that cleanses, but rather the individuals’ having “truly manifest[ed] by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto a remission of their sins” — a requirement that is clearly intended to *precede* water baptism.²⁹¹ In other words, technically speaking, it is not baptism but rather the fact of having “received of the Spirit of Christ” as the result of faith and repentance that is responsible for the mighty “change of state,” wherewith individuals are “wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost”²⁹² — for “by the Spirit ye are justified.”²⁹³

- 3. *How do the ongoing processes of justification and sanctification complement and sustain one another?* To adapt imagery from C. S. Lewis,²⁹⁴ it might be said that the interwoven processes of justification and sanctification are as complementary and mutually necessary as the two blades of a pair of scissors. Just as the Spirit of Christ should be received *prior* to baptism so that individuals may receive an initial, *justificatory* remission of sins, so the Holy Ghost should be received and cherished *after* baptism subsequent to the ordinance of confirmation, so that individuals may benefit from the availability of its constant,²⁹⁵ ongoing²⁹⁶ *sanctifying* influence.

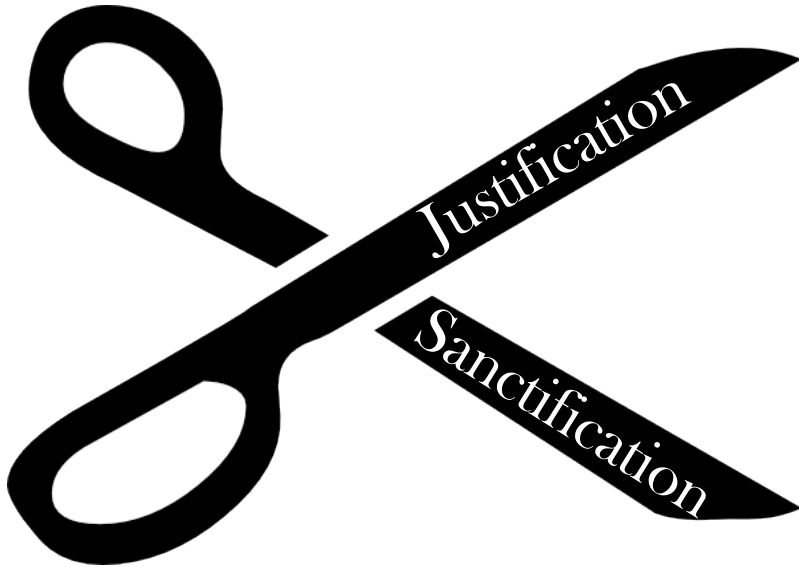


Figure 38. *Justification and Sanctification as Complementary, Interwoven Processes.*

Without *justification*, the *sanctifying* “companionship and power of the Holy Ghost”²⁹⁷ are not operative. This is so because just as “no unclean thing can dwell ... in [God’s] presence,”²⁹⁸ so the “Holy Ghost [cannot] dwell in”²⁹⁹ unclean individuals.³⁰⁰ On the other hand, without *sanctification*, those who are clean through the *justifying* Spirit of Christ could never begin to gain the power that enables them “to keep the commandments of God and grow in holiness.”³⁰¹

The “companionship and power of the Holy Ghost”³⁰² are available for the ongoing work of *sanctification* only so long as individuals live worthy to maintain its presence. When those on the path of sanctification fail to keep the commandments, they must be repent and be *justified* again before they can continue their onward growth along the path of sanctification. In this fashion, the complementary processes of *justification* (remission of sins) and *sanctification* (the gradual changing of one’s nature that allows individuals to become “new creatures”³⁰³ in Christ) may operate, if we so choose, throughout our lives, preparing us eventually to be spiritually reborn in the ultimate sense.³⁰⁴

Aided by repeated preparation for and participation in the ordinance of the sacrament, we can “*always* retain [a *justificatory*] remission of our sins”³⁰⁵ and we can “*always* have the Spirit of the Lord to be with us”³⁰⁶ for the ongoing work of *sanctification*.

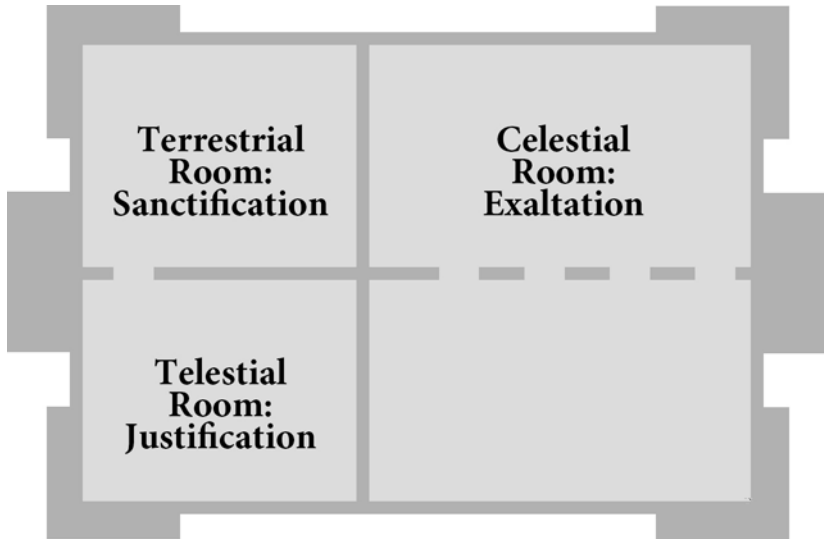


Figure 39. Adapted from Samuel H. Bradshaw (1990-):
Second Floor of the Salt Lake Temple.

This figure superposes the sequence of justification, sanctification, and exaltation upon the layout of ordinance rooms on the second floor of the Salt Lake Temple. It is meant to illustrate how justification and sanctification can be seen from a different but equally valid perspective as sequential steps instead of as interwoven parts of a parallel process.³⁰⁷ Two of these sequential steps are described in King Benjamin's imagery when he exhorts his people, first, to "[put] off the natural man" (without which one cannot be "clothed upon with robes of righteousness"³⁰⁸) and then, second, for each to "become a saint," "willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him." He emphasizes that this fundamental transformation, by which a "natural man" may become a "saint" if he so chooses, is made possible "through the atonement of Christ the Lord."³⁰⁹

From this perspective, we might consider the initial remission of sins through the Spirit, the *washing* ordinance of baptism, and the receiving of the gift of the Holy Ghost after confirmation as accomplishing the first step of *justification*, by which we "put off the natural man."³¹⁰ Through their continued *faith*³¹¹ in Jesus Christ and faithfulness³¹² in keeping the commandments, individuals living in a telestial world may progress to a point where they begin to be "quickened by a portion of the *terrestrial* glory."³¹³

In the process of *sanctification* associated with progress of a terrestrial nature, individuals may become “saints”³¹⁴ in very deed. Having been “quickened by a portion of the terrestrial glory,” they continue to “receive of the same” unto “a fulness”³¹⁵ through additional ordinances and the ongoing, sanctifying *anointing*,³¹⁶ as it were, of the Spirit of the Lord. Finally — having received a “fulness” of the terrestrial glory, having experienced a “perfect brightness of *hope*”³¹⁷ (as described by Nephi), “a more excellent *hope*”³¹⁸ (as described by Mormon), or “the full assurance of *hope*”³¹⁹ (as described by Paul),³²⁰ demonstrating their capacity for supreme self-sacrifice as required by the law of consecration, and at last being filled with “*charity*[,] ... the pure love of Christ,”³²¹ — these individuals can be “sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood.”³²² In this manner, they are sanctified so that they might be “quickened by a portion of the celestial glory”³²³ and “behold the face of God.”³²⁴

In the process of *exaltation*, individuals who have been previously “cleansed by blood, even the blood of [the] Only Begotten; that [they] might be sanctified from all sin”³²⁵ may then go on to receive additional blessings in the celestial world, being “crowned with honor, and glory, ... immortality,”³²⁶ and “eternal lives.”³²⁷ Of these individuals the Lord has said that they shall be “*clothed upon*, even as I am, to be one with me, that we may be one.”³²⁸

- 4. *Do justification and sanctification come by the Spirit or through the Savior?* Because justification and sanctification are accomplished through the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost³²⁹ and, at the same time, made possible through the atonement of Christ, it is no contradiction when scripture testifies both that we are “sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost”³³⁰ and also that it is “by the blood [we] are sanctified.”³³¹ D&C 20:30–31 tells us that both “justification” and “sanctification” come “through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”³³²

Confirmation, Anointing, and the Sanctifying Influence of the Holy Ghost. The forms that have been divinely prescribed for the ordinance of confirmation and for subsequent ordinances of anointing have much to teach us about the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost. The form of baptism, being performed in the likeness of death and resurrection, and the form of the physical action of the laying of hands on the head³³³ that is used in confirmation both suggest a retrospective regard toward the scriptural



Figure 40. William Blake (1757–1827): *Elohim Creating Adam*, 1795–ca. 1805.

account of the creation of Adam wherein God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”³³⁴ As Joseph Smith highlighted the importance of the manner in which baptism is performed, describing it as a “sign,” so also he specifically referred to the means by which the Holy Ghost is given and the sick are healed through “the laying on of hands” as a “sign.” He said pointedly that if these ordinances were performed in any other way they “would fail.”³³⁵

In this context, we might recall Jesus’ response during the Last Supper when Peter wanted him to wash his head and hands in addition to his feet: “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.”³³⁶ While taking into account the essential differences in purpose and pedagogic focus embodied in every ordinance, we might still consider, by way of analogy, that the entire body may participate in ordinances that involve only the physical action of laying hands on the head.

With regard to ordinances of anointing that are associated with the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, biblical and Egyptian sources associate the receiving of divine breath not merely with an infusion of life, but also with royal status.³³⁷ For example, Isaiah attributes the presence of the Spirit of the Lord to a prior messianic anointing, the anointing oil, like divine breath, being a symbol of new life: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; *because* the



Figure 41. *Samuel Anoints David*. Dura Europos Synagogue, ca. AD 254.

Lord hath anointed me.”³³⁸ Anointing followed by an outpouring of the Spirit is documented as part of the rites of kingship in ancient Israel, such as when Samuel anointed David “and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.”³³⁹

Note that in Israelite practice, as witnessed in the examples of David and Solomon, the moment when the individual was actually made a king would not necessarily have been the time of his first anointing. The culminating anointing of the king corresponding to his definite investiture was, at least sometimes, preceded by a prior princely anointing. LeGrand Baker and Stephen Ricks describe “several incidents in the Old Testament where a prince was first anointed to become king, and later, after he had proven himself, was anointed again — this time as actual king.”³⁴⁰ Modern Latter-day Saints can compare this idea to the conditional promises they receive in association with ordinances and blessings, which are to be realized only through their continued faithfulness. Further emphasizing the anticipatory nature of this ordinance, Brigham Young explained that “a person may be anointed king and priest long before he receives his kingdom.”³⁴¹



Figure 42. *Queen Elizabeth II, Dressed in White Linen, Is “Screened from the General View” in Preparation for Her Anointing.*

Even in modern times one sees vestiges of the symbolism of anointing, royal status, and the Holy Spirit brought together. For example, prior to the British ceremonies of coronation, in the holiest rite of that service, the monarch is “divested of ... robes,” clothed in simple white linen, and “screened from the general view” in order to be “imbued with grace” through the Archbishop’s anointing with holy oil “on hand, breast and forehead.”³⁴²

Just as the separate yet interrelated rites of baptism and subsequent washings with water became blurred in early Christianity, so also the distinctive ordinances of confirmation and anointing have become confused in many religious traditions. For example, the Armenian liturgy includes two anointings — “one with unperfumed oil before the baptism and the other, after it, with the myron or perfumed oil.”³⁴³

However, from modern revelation we know that just as baptism is the first ordinance of the Gospel, administered by the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood, with later ordinances of washing looking back retrospectively upon it, so confirmation for the gift of the Holy Ghost is the first ordinance administered by the Melchizedek Priesthood. In “interrelated,” “additive”³⁴⁴ fashion, temple initiatory ordinances of washing and anointing echo and build upon the ordinances of baptism and confirmation, while also looking forward in anticipation to subsequent confirmatory anointings and sealing blessings wherein we imitate the Christ.



Figure 43. Ampulla 11, inscribed with “Oil from the Tree of Life,” 5th-6th century.

Indeed, the title “Christ” is explained in Pseudo-Clement’s *Recognitions* 1:45:2 as an anointing of oil: “Although indeed He was the Son of God, and the beginning of all things, He became man; Him first God anointed with oil which was taken from the wood of the Tree of Life: from that anointing therefore He is called Christ.”³⁴⁵ Confirming that this was an ordinance not meant to be restricted to the Lord Himself, Tertullian describes how in his day all newly “baptized” Christians were anointed, stating that this is “a practice derived from the old discipline, wherein on entering the priesthood, men were wont to be anointed with oil from a horn, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses. Whence Aaron is called ‘Christ,’ from the ‘chrism,’ which is the unction [or oil of anointing].”³⁴⁶

C. S. Lewis expressed the principle behind the practice of anointing succinctly: “Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.”³⁴⁷

“By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified”

Of course, becoming a “little Christ” is not a process that ends with an anticipatory anointing. There is a double meaning in the phrase “by the blood ye are sanctified,”³⁴⁸ as was expressed in the previously cited words about Christ from the *Gospel of Philip*: “He who was redeemed in turn redeemed (others).”³⁴⁹ Although redemption itself comes only “in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son,”³⁵⁰ it might be said similarly with regard to those who have been



Figure 44. Vasily Perov (1833-1882): *Christ in Gethsemane*, 1878.

“ordained after the *order of [the] Son*”:³⁵¹ He who was redeemed with “a preparatory redemption”³⁵² in turn must assist “with all [his] heart, might, mind and strength”³⁵³ to bring about the redemption of others. In brief, those who would follow Christ “to the end,”³⁵⁴ must continue to move beyond the keeping of the law of obedience and sacrifice toward the complete dedication required by the law of consecration.³⁵⁵

Before saying more on this point, let us first examine the essential role and symbolism of blood in the context of the ordinances — for “by the blood ye are sanctified.”³⁵⁶

Blood as a Symbol of Sanctification. The first explicit mention of “blood” in the Bible is Genesis 4:10–11, when Abel’s blood cries to God from the ground as a plea of redress for Cain’s murder, and the earth in turn from thenceforth refused to yield its strength to the perpetrator of the crime.³⁵⁷

The deliberate “eating of blood” has been practiced in many cultures — in both ancient and modern times — because “popular thought had it that one could renew or reinforce one’s vitality through its absorption of blood.”³⁵⁸ However, the Lord commanded Noah that “the blood of all flesh which I have given you for meat shall be shed upon the ground which taketh the life thereof and the blood ye shall not eat.”³⁵⁹

Intriguingly, an alternate reading of Moses 6:29 given in the OT1 manuscript, describes a wicked Cain-like people who, “by their oaths, ... have eat[en] unto themselves death.”³⁶⁰ If this variant is not a scribal error, perhaps it indicates a corrupt ritual practice akin to the sacrament where eating unworthily brought condemnation,³⁶¹ or perhaps even the eating of blood itself.



Figure 45. Lars Justinen: *The Sanctuary*.

Because blood was a symbol of life,³⁶² it was reserved in ancient Israel for use on “the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”³⁶³

Exodus 24:8 recounts how blood was sprinkled on all the people in order to ratify the covenant, making it binding on Israel. At the same time the sprinkling of blood symbolized the sanctification of Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel who immediately thereafter were enabled to see Jehovah standing above what seems to be the *kapporet* or mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, where the High Priest applied atoning blood to the Ark of the Covenant.³⁶⁴ Following a similar description of the appearance of the Lord in the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were told: your sins are forgiven you [in other words, they were justified]; you are clean before me [in other words, they were sanctified].³⁶⁵

Related symbolism is apparent in the sixth chapter of Isaiah. When Isaiah was taken up to the presence of God to receive his prophetic commission, “one of the seraphims” flew to him:³⁶⁶

having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.



Figure 46. Benjamin West (1738–1820): *Isaiah’s Lips Anointed with Fire*, after 1772.

Presumably the coal, “taken ... off the altar”³⁶⁷ that “touched [Isaiah’s] lips” to take away his iniquity” and to purge³⁶⁸ his sin previously had been sprinkled with sacrificial blood.

Incidentally, the English word “blood” has an interesting derivation that leads back from Old English to a Proto-Germanic term.³⁶⁹ The Old Norse noun *blót* (verb *blóta*), which derives from the same Proto-Germanic root, from was the term for both “sacrifice” and “worship.”³⁷⁰ The old roots are also connected with both the modern English terms “bliss” and also “bless,”³⁷¹ the latter by means of pre-Christian rites where blood was sprinkled on pagan altars or other objects to make them holy.³⁷²

Being “Sealed Up to Eternal Life.” Elder David A. Bednar has explained that “Purifying and sealing by the Holy Spirit of Promise constitute the culminating steps in the process of being born again.”³⁷³ Those who are sanctified have “their garments washed white through the blood of the Lamb.”³⁷⁴ As an aside, note that the Hebrew word for washing clothes

— *kābas* (כַּבַּס) — is very similar in sound to one of the words for “lamb” — *kebeś* (כֶּבֶשׂ), suggesting a possible word play.

Although it is not unusual for lesser blessings, ordinances, and ordinations to be sealed upon the heads of individuals,³⁷⁵ the supreme manifestation of the sealing power occurs when one’s calling and election is “made sure” or, in other words, when one is “sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy.”³⁷⁶ To be sealed in this ultimate sense requires taking upon oneself both the divine name and also the divine form — just as Jesus Christ was “the express image”³⁷⁷ of the Father.

In former times, seals were the means by which a unique stamp of identity was placed on important documents — the image of the author being transferred, as it were, to the document itself.³⁷⁸ Similarly, Luke T. Johnson sees the scriptural concept of sealing as both an empowering and an “imprinting” process,³⁷⁹ recalling Alma’s words about receiving God’s “image” in our countenances.³⁸⁰

Using similar imagery, Paul described his beloved Corinthian saints as “the epistle of Christ . . . , written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.” These saints, “with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, [were meant to be] changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”³⁸¹



Figure 47. Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669): *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, 1634.

The Substitute Sacrifice of the Suffering Servant.

“Properly, of course, the sinner’s own blood must be used [in sacrificial ordinances],” explained Hugh Nibley, “unless a *go’el*, a representative substitute advocate or redeemer, could be found to take one’s place. The willingness of the candidate to sacrifice his own life (the *akedah*) is symbolized by the blood on the right thumb and right earlobe, where the blood would be if the throat had been cut.”³⁸²

In the case of Isaac’s near sacrifice by Abraham, at the last moment a sacrificial ram was supplied in his stead.³⁸³

More important, however, as Hugh Nibley relates, is the fact that:³⁸⁴

Isaac himself was a substitute. “In Jewish tradition,” writes Rosenberg, “Isaac is the prototype of the ‘Suffering Servant,’ bound upon the altar as a sacrifice.”³⁸⁵ Rosenberg has shown that the title of Suffering Servant was used in the ancient

East to designate “the substitute king” — the noble victim. Accordingly, the “new Isaac” mentioned in Maccabees must be “a ‘substitute king’ who dies that the people might live.”³⁸⁶ The starting point in Rosenberg’s investigation is Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12, which “seems to constitute a portion of a ritual drama centering about a similar humiliation, culminating in death, of a ‘substitute’ for the figure of the king of the Jews.” ... The [rite of] sacrifice of the substitute king is found all over the ancient world.



Figure 48. *The High Priest Sprinkles Blood on the Altar of Incense That Stood Before the Veil.*

We have already observed that the servant song of Isaiah 52 can be generalized to apply not only to Jesus Christ, but also to others who may eventually qualify to become *sons* of Man or *sons* of God, with a small ‘s.’ While the initial blessing of *justification* comes exclusively by means of a substitutionary sacrifice — thus “relying *wholly* upon the merits of him who is mighty to save,”³⁸⁷ the culminating step of the process of *sanctification* is a joint effort³⁸⁸ that, while necessarily dependent on the merits of Christ and the ongoing endowment of His strengthening power, in addition requires that individuals grow in their capacity to meet the stringent measure of self-sacrifice enjoined by their covenant to keep the law of consecration — “for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do.*”³⁸⁹



Figure 49. Minerva Teichert (1888–1976):
Alma Baptizes in the Waters of Mormon, 1949–1951.

In this sense, the Lord has made it clear that the Saints must “sanctify themselves”³⁹⁰ as He also applis His own sanctifying power. This they do by “purify[ing their] hearts, and cleans[ing their] hands and [their] feet” in order that “I[, the Lord,] may make [them] clean ... from the blood of this wicked generation; that I may fulfill ... this great and last promise”³⁹¹ to “unveil [my] face unto [them].”³⁹² Explaining the need for disciples to be made “clean every whit”³⁹³ that they may be fit to stand in the presence of God,³⁹⁴ John W. Welch describes the change in law that was announced by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount:³⁹⁵

The old law of sacrifice was explicitly replaced by that of the “broken heart and contrite spirit,”³⁹⁶ and whereas previously the sacrificial animal was to be pure and without blemish [*haplous*], now the disciples themselves are to become “single” [*haplous*] to the glory of God.³⁹⁷

Within modern temple ordinances, as within the sacrament, animal sacrifice is replaced by the offering of oneself in the manner of “memorials of ... sacrifices by the sons of Levi”³⁹⁸ — in other words, as symbolic rather than literal reenactments of ancient temple practices that required the shedding of blood. Illuminating the difference between the ordinances of the “preparatory”³⁹⁹ Aaronic priesthood and those of the “holy” Melchizedek priesthood “after the Order of the Son of God,”⁴⁰⁰ Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught that “real, personal sacrifice never

was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed!³⁴⁰¹

Spiritual Rebirth within the Succession of Ordinances. We return to the statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith that being “born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances.”³⁴⁰² Through the ordinances we are repeatedly “reborn” as we experience the cleansing justification of “the Spirit of Christ,”³⁴⁰³ the symbolism of death and resurrection through baptism of water,³⁴⁰⁴ the new life granted us when we receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost,³⁴⁰⁵ the spiritual and physical “renew[al]”³⁴⁰⁶ of the initiatory ordinances, and the unfolding stages of the drama of our existence in the endowment. Indeed, the endowment itself enacts our individual progress through multiple “rebirths” — from the spirit world to mortal life, and from thence to becoming the sons and daughters of Christ — and ultimately of the Father Himself, receiving all the blessings of the Firstborn.³⁴⁰⁷

Similarly, by the end of Moses 6, it is clear not only that Adam had been born of water and of the Spirit, but also that he had been “born of God,” as was Alma:³⁴⁰⁸

For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God.

Changes in Name and Relationship That Accompany Changes in State.

For each change of state that accompanies one’s progression through the ordinances, the Father grants a corresponding change in name and relationship to Him. To paraphrase C. S. Lewis, “God turns tools into servants[, servants into friends,] and [friends] into sons.”³⁴⁰⁹ Moses 6:67–68 makes it clear that to receive the fulness of the priesthood is, when also accompanied by a divine, personal ratification, to become “a son of God” “after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years.”³⁴¹⁰ Reflecting the experience of Adam in Moses 6:68, this idea is consistent with the royal rebirth formula of Psalm 2:7: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

In Mosiah 5:7, King Benjamin uses a temple setting and context to explain this same concept: “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.”



Figure 50. Minerva Teichert (1888–1976):
King Benjamin's Farewell Address, 1949–1951.

Significantly, King Benjamin not only goes on to say that those who keep the covenant will be “found at the right hand of God,”⁴¹¹ thus, in essence, receiving the name of their king, “Benjamin” (meaning “son of the right hand”), but also that they were taking upon them, as royal sons and daughters, a title of the true “Son of the right hand,” namely “Christ.” In so doing, they were also to become, in likeness of the son of Benjamin, little *Mosiahs* (meaning “saviors”) and, in likeness of the Only Begotten Son of God, little *messiahs* (meaning “anointed ones”).⁴¹² Having thus qualified, the Father might appropriately “seal” them “his.”⁴¹³

Identification of the High Priest with the Lord Himself. In order to further emphasize that those who enter into the “oath and covenant ... [of] the priesthood”⁴¹⁴ do so in similitude of the Son of God, we note Margaret Barker’s description of how the concept of becoming a son of God can well relate both to ordinances in earthly temples and to actual ascents to the heavenly temple:⁴¹⁵

The high priests and kings of ancient Jerusalem entered the holy of holies and then emerged as messengers, angels of the Lord. They had been raised up, that is, resurrected; they were sons of God, that is, angels; and they were anointed ones, that is, messiahs. ... Human beings could become angels, and then



Figure 51. *Worshipping the High Priest.*

continue to live in the material world. This transformation did not just happen after physical death; it marked the passage from the life in the material world to the life of eternity.

Speaking of the figurative heavenly journey that was enacted in ancient temple ordinances, Matthew Bowen has argued elsewhere that both the king and the high priest, emerging from the Holy of Holies, were seen and worshiped as Yahweh, the Lord.⁴¹⁶ Consistent with this identification, Alma 13 specifically states that high priests were ordained “in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to [God’s] Son for redemption”⁴¹⁷ and that the reason the ancient “ordinances” of the high priesthood associated with the temple were given was so “that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God ... for a remission of their sins.”⁴¹⁸

The Ontological Change Accompanying Sonship Is Meant To Be Universal. Significantly, the last verse of Moses 6 includes the words “and thus may all become my sons.”⁴¹⁹ This statement relating to Adam’s exaltation presages the account in the book of Moses of Enoch’s adoption as a son of God, with a right to God’s throne.⁴²⁰ At the end of Moses 7:3 we read: “and as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory.”



Figure 52. Viktor Vasnetsov (1848–1926): *God of Hosts*, 1885–1896.

The pseudepigraphal books of 2 and 3 Enoch also purport to describe the process by which Enoch was literally “clothed upon with glory” in some detail. As a prelude to Enoch’s introduction to the secrets of creation, both accounts describe a “two-step initiatory procedure” whereby “the patriarch was first initiated by angel(s) and after this by the Lord”⁴²¹ Himself. In 2 Enoch, God commanded his angels to “extract Enoch from (his) earthly clothing. And anoint him with my delightful oil, and put him into the clothes of my glory.”⁴²² Philip S. Alexander speaks of this event as an “ontological transformation [that] blurred the distinction between human and divine,” amounting to “deification.”⁴²³ In the first chapter of the book of Moses, Moses underwent a similar transformation.⁴²⁴ He explained that if he had seen God without such a change, he would have “withered and died in his presence; but his glory was upon me; and ... I was transfigured before him.”⁴²⁵ After Enoch was changed, he is said to have resembled God so exactly that he was mistaken for Him.⁴²⁶

Summarizing the ancient Jewish literature relevant to this passage, Charles Mopsik concludes that the exaltation of Enoch is not meant to be seen as a unique event. Rather, he writes that the “enthronement of Enoch is a prelude to the transfiguration of the righteous — and at their head the Messiah — in the world to come, a transfiguration that is the restoration of the figure of the perfect Man.”⁴²⁷

In LDS theology, such a transfiguration is not the result of an arbitrary, capricious act of God but rather a sign of love and trust made in response to individuals’ demonstration of their determination to serve

God "at all hazard."⁴²⁸ Only such will be privileged to hear the personal oath from the Father Himself⁴²⁹ that they shall obtain the fulness of the joys of the celestial kingdom "for ever and ever."⁴³⁰

Epilogue: Sanctification, the Sacrament, and Consecration

Hugh Nibley sums up the principle of sanctification "by the blood"⁴³¹ as follows:⁴³²



Figure 53. Alonso Berruguete (1488–1561): *Sacrificio de Isaac*, Museo Nacional del Prado.

The gospel is more than a catalogue of moral platitudes; these are matters of either eternal life or nothing. Nothing less than the sacrifice of Abraham is demanded of us.⁴³³ But how do we make it? In the way Abraham, Isaac, and Sarah all did. Each was willing and expected to be sacrificed, and each committed his or her all to prove it. In each case the sacrifice was interrupted at the last moment and a substitute provided: to their relief, someone else had been willing to pay the price, but not until after they had shown their good faith and willingness to go all the way — "lay not thy hand on the lad ... for now I know."⁴³⁴ Abraham had gone far enough; he had proven to himself and the angels who stood witness (we are told) that he was actually willing to perform the act. Therefore the Lord was satisfied with the token then, for he knew the heart of Abraham. This is the same for Isaac and Sarah and for us. And whoever is

willing to make the sacrifice of Abraham to receive eternal life will show it by the same signs and tokens as Abraham, but he or she must do it in good faith and with real intent.



Figure 54. J. Kirk Richards (1977-): *The Sacramental Emblems*.

Understanding the self-sacrifice required in order to become “a saint”²⁴³⁵ enhances the meaning one can take away when participating in the ordinance of the sacrament. Although, as we have argued earlier, the eating of the broken bread is tightly linked in its symbolism to the initial covenant of baptism through their common witness of one’s intention to “keep [God’s] commandments,”²⁴³⁶ it would be easy in light of the previous discussion to see the sacramental emblems of the Lord’s blood as representing the epitome of the covenants and ordinances that *follow* baptism, namely the last and most difficult covenant of consecration,⁴³⁷ corresponding symbolically to the blood by which we are sanctified. As Ugo A. Perego succinctly expressed: “through the partaking of

consecrated bread and wine, we also consecrate ourselves.”²⁴³⁸

This understanding of the covenant we are making is consistent with the recent teaching emphasis of Church leaders that the “sacrament is a beautiful time to not just renew our baptismal covenants, but to commit to Him to renew *all* our covenants.”²⁴³⁹

In the second part of the sacrament, the Saints not only witness that they are willing to take the Savior’s name upon them in the essential but strictly limited sense of accepting the blessing of *justification* made possible by His submitting His will to the will of His Father “even unto death,”²⁴⁴⁰ but also by their personal willingness⁴⁴¹ “to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [*them*], even as a child doth submit to his father,”²⁴⁴² “even unto death,”²⁴⁴³ — thus qualifying themselves for the blessings of *sanctification* in the spirit of the law of consecration.

In the carefully measured, specifically tailored manner that God has ordained for those who would endeavor to follow Jesus to the end,

disciples of Christ must be willing to suffer, sometimes unjustly and always uncomplainingly,⁴⁴⁴ "that [they, in likeness of Christ,] might bring [others] to God."⁴⁴⁵

In the sacramental symbolism wherein they drink the emblems of sanctifying blood, they must not only express their remembrance of and gratitude for the "bitter cup"⁴⁴⁶ that the Savior drank on their behalf⁴⁴⁷ but also acknowledge that they are willing to drink to the dregs the individually prepared cup they have themselves been given.⁴⁴⁸ Moreover, in doing this, they must covenant not only to "give away all [their] sins to know [God]"⁴⁴⁹ but also to undertake a deliberate and sustained effort to *know Him through giving their all*.⁴⁵⁰

All this, so that when the Lord comes again "in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,"⁴⁵¹ they may be among the sanctified⁴⁵² who will "drink of the fruit of the vine[, the emblems of His blood,] with [Him and with all His Saints] on the [sanctified⁴⁵³] earth."⁴⁵⁴

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Endnotes

1. John 3:5. See also 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18; Mosiah 5:7; 27:24–25, 28; Alma 5:14, 49; 22:15; 36:5, 23–26; 38:6; D&C 5:16; Moses 6:49, 59–60, 65–68.
2. Compare 1 John 5:5–8.
3. Elder Neil L. Andersen, "Witnessing to Live the Commandments," General Conference Leadership Training on the Sabbath Day Observance at Church (April 2015, available to priesthood leaders), emphasis added, cited in U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, p. 14.
4. John 3:1–20. By way of context for Jesus' teachings about the symbolism of water, spirit, and blood in this chapter, Samuel Zinner's observes that they are immediately "preceded in John 2 by the story of Cana involving a transformation of water into wine, after which follows a visit to Jerusalem for Passover, a time of both metaphorical (wine, the blood of the grape) and literal blood (of the Passover lamb)" (S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*). Likewise, we might say that in the ordinances, the Lord transforms the water of baptism, wherein we keep the commandment, into blood, whereby He provides us with the means of salvation.
5. John 2:23–25, emphasis added.
6. John 3:1.
7. John 3:1.

8. John 3:10.
9. See John 4:6: “about the sixth hour.”
10. See Matthew 15:14; Luke 6:39.
11. A point emphasized by its threefold mention by John (John 3:2; 7:50; 19:39).
12. 2 Peter 1:19.
13. John 7:50.
14. John 19:39.
15. John 3:2, emphasis added.
16. See John 3:2.
17. See M. M. Thompson, *John*, pp. 78–79, cited in R. Boylan, Some Comments.
18. See John 3:3, 5.
19. The verb “is ὁρᾶω which means simply ‘to see’; it appears 73 times in the Greek of John’s gospel, and never means ‘to enter into’ (e.g., John 1:18, 29, 33, 34, 39 [x2], 46, 47, 48, 50, 51; 3:11, 26, 32, 36, etc)” (R. Boylan, Some Comments).
20. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 15 October 1843, Joseph Smith Diary by Willard Richards, p. 256. Cf. Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12–14, 26; Helaman 15:7. The Prophet’s statement in context reads: “[It is] one thing to see the kingdom and another to be in it. [One] must have a change of heart to see the kingdom of God and subscribe [to] the articles of adoption to enter therein.”
21. These additional statements of the Prophet are from the recollections of Daniel Tyler (D. Tyler, *Recollections*, pp. 93–94):

The birth here spoken of ... was not the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was promised after baptism, but was a portion of the spirit, which attended the preaching of the gospel by the elders of the Church. The people wondered why they had not previously understood the plain declarations of scripture, as explained by the elders, as they had read them hundreds of times. When they read the Bible it was a new book to them [cf. Joseph Smith — History 1:74]. This was being born again to see the Kingdom of God. They were not in it, but could see it from the outside, which they could not do until the Spirit

of the Lord took the vail from before their eyes. It was a change of heart but not of state; they were converted, but were yet in their sins.

22. See Acts 10:47. Joseph Smith compared the difference between seeing and entering the kingdom of God to the difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost: "There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken [these] sign[s] or [ordinances] upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him [see Acts 10:1–48]" (J. Smith, Jr., *Words, Wilford Woodruff Journal*, 20 March 1842, p. 108, spelling and punctuation modernized. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, p. 199).
23. Ether 12:19.
24. S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*. See, e.g., "Now this caused us to marvel, for it was given unto us of the Spirit. And while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about" (D&C 76:18–19).
25. *Ibid.*
26. John 3:7. Cf., e.g., Mark 5:20; John 5:20, 28, 7:21; Acts 3:12; Revelation 17:7; Jacob 4:12; Mosiah 27:25; Alma 19:24; 39:17; Helaman 5:49; 7:15; 3 Nephi 15:3; D&C 10:35; 18:8; 27:5; 76:18; 136:37. Samuel Zinner observes that the Gosepl of "Thomas' use of 'marvel' is closer to Qumranic usage than to Greco-Roman philosophy, and ... the two Coptic verbs ... are ultimately derived not from Plato, but from the Book of Daniel [Daniel 2:3–4; 4:2, 6, 16; 5:6, 9, 19; 7:28; 8:17, 27; 12:6]" (*ibid.*, referring to mysteries that can be made known only through revelation).
27. John 20:27. Note the difference in the echo of John 3:5–8 found in D&C 5:16: "Behold, *whosoever believeth on my words*, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit; and they shall be born of me, even of water and of the Spirit." Lynne Hilton Wilson observes: "Even though both verses focus on the same promise of the Spirit, only one discloses that belief is the operative principle involved" (L. H. Wilson, *A New Pneumatology*, p. 149).

28. See Mosiah 5:7–8, where the idea of being “born of him” and the assertion that “under this head (Hebrew *rōš*) ye are made free” (cf. “born from the head”) are mentioned in two successive verses: “And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives” (Mosiah 5:8). See below for more on this passage from King Benjamin’s discourse.

See Born Again Narrative for a discussion of the Aramaic and Greek terms behind this conversation as well as a critique of Bart Ehrman’s claim regarding the impossibility of its having taken place as reported. “The Greek word translated “from above” in v. 3 can also mean “anew.” ... This is the source of Nicodemus’ misunderstanding” (H. W. Attridge et al., *HarperCollins Study Bible*, p. 1819 n. 3:4. See also C. S. Keener, *John*, 1:538–539). Christ is speaking of a being born of God, whereas Nicodemus thinks, incorrectly, that He is speaking of being born again.

29. John 3:6, emphasis added.
30. John 3:6, emphasis added.
31. John 3:4.
32. John 3:10.
33. John 3:8. Samuel Zinner sees a possible understanding of “wind” as “life breath.” He also points out, in defense of Nicodemus’ interpretation, that the idea of birth “of the water and the spirit” is a clear allusion to Genesis 1:2 (S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*):

The Apocalypse of Paul 45 seems to presuppose the idea of the holy spirit as a mother bird who moves over the waters of creation, but who after creation comes to rest (like a bird) on the tree of life, yet who periodically blows (like wind) through the tree, which causes waters to flow from the tree. This passage may shed light on John 3’s maternal spirit who blows, like wind through the trees, and who is by allusion associated with the waters of Genesis 1:2. The hidden nature of the wind’s origin is compared to the concealed state of a developing fetus in a pregnant woman’s womb in Ecclesiastes 11:5, which

may have relevance for the understanding of the spirit as both wind and mother in John 3: "Just as you do not know how the wind blows, like [developing] limbs in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know how God works, which causes everything." The "wind" can also be understood as "life breath" (Cf. the JPS version: "Just as you do not know how the life breath passes into the limbs within the womb of the pregnant woman, so you cannot foresee the actions of God, who causes all things to happen." As the JPS notes, "into" reads "like" in most manuscripts. The "wind" as "life breath" makes the passage even more relevant to John 3.)

Note that John 3:6–7 joins the themes of flesh and spirit with the term "marvel." This constellation corresponds precisely with Thomas logion 29's central components which describe the fleshly, earthly birth and the spiritual heavenly birth, just as we find in John 3:6–7 and 12. That which is born of the spirit is spirit, or divine, and this leads smoothly into logion 30 with its theme of "gods." The Thomasine connection with the traditions behind John 3 is strengthened by logion 28's isomorphism with further Johannine traditions as reflected in John 1:14. However, it is important to insist that logion 28 is connected more with pre-Christian wisdom traditions than with the actual text of John 1:14, as a comparison with 1 Enoch 42 and logion 28 will reveal. Compare logion 28's theme of thirst with 1 Enoch 42:3's "thirsty land" and logion 28's theme of finding with the same trope in 1 Enoch 42:3. This is not to overlook other features not present in 1 Enoch but shared between logion 28 and John 1, namely the fleshly dwelling in the world.

Regarding John 3:5's spirit and water, usually understood with reference to Genesis 1:2, the waters could naturally have been expanded to include the waters of the four rivers of paradise, which seem to be the waters referred to in Apocalypse of Paul 45 as flowing from the tree of life.

34. John 3:8.

35. John 3:13.

36. John 3:12.

37. John 3:12.

38. John 3:11.

39. Below we discuss in more detail the distinction that might be made between being “born of water and the spirit” and that of being “born of God.” In John 3:13, Jesus linked His identity as the “Son of man” to His having descended from and ascended to heaven. Alma also described the experience of being “born of God” in somewhat similar terms. After telling of his vision of “God sitting upon his throne” and his subsequent missionary labors (Alma 36:22–24), he testifies that “many have been born of God, and have tasted [of exceeding joy] as I have tasted, and have seen [God] eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God” (Alma 36:26; cf. Mosiah 27:28). By way of contrast, 1 John 3:9 and 5:1 seem to use the term “born of God” in a more general fashion.

In describing what it meant to be “born of God,” Jesus showed not only what was required of Himself as the Only Begotten, but also of every child of God who would later “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32) as He Himself was made “perfect” (Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48) like the Father. Nicodemus had to be reminded that Jesus’ own fitness to ascend to heaven and “enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5), like the fitness of every disciple, cannot be apprehended through outward signs that are seen and commended by men like himself, but only through the notice and approbation of the Father, who “seeth in secret” (John 3:2. Cf. Matthew 7:22–23) and “knoweth the hearts” (Acts 15:8. Cf. 1 Samuel 16:7). What the Father alone can fully see and determine is whether mortals are on the path that will eventually allow them to complete the commission that He has entrusted to them, their uniquely tailored “errand from the Lord” (Jacob 1:17), which errand the Son of God fulfilled as a “forerunner” (Hebrews 6:20) every “jot” and “tittle” (Matthew 5:18). In other words, Jesus had to teach Nicodemus that the ultimate sign of His Sonship — and, moreover, the commonality of commission shared by all who would become God’s sons and daughters — was in His perfect patience in the “bearing [of] his cross” (John 19:17. Cf. Matthew 16:24–25), being “lifted up” (John 3:14) in temporary humiliation so that He might “draw all men unto [Him]” (John 12:32) to enjoy eternal exaltation.

40. For an excellent discussion of the topic of simultaneous revelation and concealment generally as it relates to the Gospel of John, see S. Hamid-Khani, *Revelation*.
41. John 3:13–15. Samuel Zinner points out the linkage of “new spirit birth with the ascent of the Son of man to heaven” is also found in “John 6:62, immediately before verse 63’s teaching on the flesh and spirit, which as we have seen is related to Thomas logion 53 as well” (S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*). He further observes:

The joining of the two tropes of new birth and the ascent of the Son of man is intriguing. The implication in John 3:12–13 seems to be that the Son of man’s ascent would cause a greater wonder or marvel than the new spirit birth. Similarly John 6:62–63 seems to imply that the Son of man’s ascent is a greater wonder or marvel than the bread of life discourse. And since verses 62 and 63 seem to constitute a unitive block, the verses naturally suggest that the ascent of the Son of man and the teaching on the flesh that profits nothing and the spirit which is life (which alludes to the same teaching on new spirit birth as we find in John 3) represent equivalent entities.

42. See Numbers 21:4–9.
43. See Isaiah 6. The Hebrew verb *saraph* means “burn.” Most commentators on Numbers 21 associate this description with the serpent’s deadly poison, but it seems better in context to apply the term to describe their fiery *appearance* (i.e., they are “burning” with celestial glory), as references to the seraphim that guard the Divine Throne make clear (J. H. Charlesworth, *Serpent*, pp. 444–445). See pp. 30, 87, 220, 258, 332, 426 and, especially, K. R. Joines, *Winged Serpents*, cited in J. H. Charlesworth, *Serpent*, p. 444.

Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4:6–9 describe beings with a similar function. Charlesworth comments: “The seraphim have wings, faces, feet, and human features; these characteristics have confused some scholars who assume they thus cannot be serpents. Near Eastern iconography ... is replete with images of serpents with faces, feet, wings, and human features” (*ibid.*, p. 444).

The only explicit references in the Bible to seraphim in the Holy of Holies are in Isaiah 6:2, 6. However, Nickelsburg suggests, based on a midrash on Genesis 3:24 that cites Psalm 104:4 (H. Freedman

- et al., *Midrash*, 1:178) that the “flaming sword” of Genesis 3:24 (Moses 4:31) might be associated more correctly with seraphim rather than cherubim (G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, p. 296 n. 7). He also sees the “those who were there ... like a flaming fire” in 1 Enoch 17:1 and the “serpents” of 1 Enoch 20:7 as good candidates for the appellation of seraphim (*ibid.*, 17:1 p. 276; 20:7, p. 294).
44. 1 Nephi 17:41. Cf. Numbers 21:6. See also Isaiah 14:29; 30:6; 2 Nephi 24:29.
 45. John 3:13. We capitalize “Man” to be consistent with Moses 6:57.
 46. Moses 6:57. A disputed phrase in John 3:13 (“which is in heaven”), generally accepted as a late gloss, becomes more intelligible in context if we conjecture a possibility that an editor may have intended its referent to be “Man” rather than “Son of Man.” Note that the referent appears with two definite articles (*ho huios tou anthrōpou*), i.e., “the Son of the Man” (English capitalization added), giving the reading “the Son of the Man which is in heaven.” Other scholars who accept the phrase “which is in heaven” (e.g., R. L. Overstreet, John 3:13) have interpreted it as a witness to the omnipresence of Jesus, i.e., that He was simultaneously in earth and in heaven.
 47. See Genesis 3:24 and G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, p. 296 n. 7. The sword mentioned in scripture is described by Sarna as a “separate, protective instrument, not said to be in the hands of the cherubim” (N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 30). While the function of the cherubim is to selectively admit those authorized to enter, Nibley argues that the fire and steel combined in the sword are specifically meant to repulse the serpent, forever preventing its return to the Garden (H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), pp. 319-320). For additional discussion of the sword of the cherubim, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, COMMENTARY Moses 4:31-d, pp. 280-281. For related discussion of similar symbolism in the sickle of the laborer (D&C 4:4), the sword of the Spirit (Hebrews 4:12-13. Cf. D&C 6:2; 11:2; 12:2; 14:2; 33:1-2), and the veil of the temple (cf. J. M. Bradshaw, *Tree of Knowledge*), see J. M. Bradshaw, *He That Thrusteth in His Sickle*, pp. 174-176. All these symbols share a common feature: they divide the righteous from the unrighteous — saving the former and condemning the latter.
 48. Genesis 3:24; Moses 4:31. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, COMMENTARY Moses 4:31-e, p. 282.

49. D&C 132:19; D. W. Parry, Garden, p. 139; B. Young, 6 April 1853 - B, p. 31. See also J. Gee, Keeper.
50. 2 Nephi 9:41.
51. John 14:6.
52. See 3 Nephi 20:43. Cf. 3 Nephi 21:10. Like Alma, one of the "hidden seed" of the Lord prophesied by Isaiah (see Isaiah 53:8, 10; 54:17), who was the sole individual among Noah's priests to whom "to whom" or "upon whom" (*'al-mî*) the Lord was "reveal[ing]" his arm as Abinadi's prophetic successor (Mosiah 17:2 and Mosiah 14:1, quoting Isaiah 53:1. See M. L. Bowen, Alma; A. P. Schade et al., To Whom), Joseph (like Jesus Christ Himself) was not known among his brethren for a time, but eventually revealed himself to them as the one that God had sent away in order to assure their (temporal) salvation (Genesis 45:5).
53. See also Samuel Zinner's extensive discussion of the plurality of "sons of man" in the mystical sense of the term in Gospel of Thomas Logion 106 (S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*).
54. John 3:16.
55. Ether 12:6. Cf. 1 Peter 1:7. Here, Moroni is speaking specifically of the sure witness that came when Christ personally "showed himself unto our fathers" (Ether 12:7).
56. John 1:12.
57. Mosiah 5:7, emphasis added.
58. D&C 93:23, 38.
59. G. B. Hinckley et al., The family: A proclamation to the world. Proclamation of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve presented at the General Relief Society Meeting, September 23, 1995, paragraph 2.
60. John 1:12. Cf. Psalm 2:7; 110:4; John 1:12-13; Romans 8:19; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 7:3; 1 John 3:1-3; Mosiah 5:7; 3 Nephi 9:17; Moroni 7:48; D&C 128:23; Moses 6:22, 68; 7:1; 8:13. See also Joseph Smith's description of the "sons of God who exalt[ed] themselves to be gods even from bef[ore] the foundat[ion] of the world" (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Thomas Bullock Report, 16 June 1844, p. 381; cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 16 June 1844, p. 375). For additional scriptural references that speak only of *the* Son of God (singular), see Daniel 3:25; Matthew 4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; 27:54;

Mark 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Luke 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 22:70; John 1:34; 5:25; 9:35; 11:4; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:20; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10–13; 20; Revelation 2:18.

61. John 3:16.
62. 3 Nephi 27:14. Cf. 1 Nephi 11:33; 19:10; Moses 7:24, 47, 55; 3 Nephi 27:14–15; 28:6; Ether 4:1.
63. 3 Nephi 27:14.
64. 3 Nephi 27:14.
65. 3 Nephi 27:22.
66. Compare Isaiah 6:1; 1 Nephi 13:30, 37; 16:2; Alma 13:29; 36:3; 37:37; 38:5; Helaman 8:14–15; 3 Nephi 27:14–15, 22; Mormon 2:19; Ether 4:19; Moses 7:24, 47, 55, 59. It should be noted that the basic Aramaic/Syriac verb meaning “to crucify,” *zqp, literally means to “raise,” “lift up,” “elevate.”
67. H. N. Ridderbos, *John*, P. 137.
68. Alma 33:19, 22. B. A. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 4:472–473 notes that, by way of contrast to John, Alma 33:19–22 “emphasizes the healing that resulted from looking upon the symbol. He does not emphasize the ‘raising up.’ While the Nephite prophets had [received divine foreknowledge] of the Savior’s crucifixion (1 Nephi 19:13; 2 Nephi 6:9; 10:3; 25:13; Mosiah 3:9), they did not have direct experience with crucifixion on or its social implications, unlike John. Alma’s listeners, with their reliance on the brass plates, did not have the Nephite prophets’ understanding of ‘raising up.’ Thus, the symbolic association so important to John is entirely missing in Alma’s analysis.”
69. John 3:15. Cf. John 3:16: “everlasting life.”
70. S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, NT2 (p. 110 [John 3:25–4:9]), p. 448.
71. *Ibid.*, NT2 (p. 110 [John 3:25–4:9]), p. 448.
72. Cf. John 1:12.
73. John 3:10.
74. C. S. Keener, *John*, 1:538.
75. *Ibid.*, 1:563. See John 3:3.

76. See, e.g., C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Heavenly Ascent*; D. J. Larsen, *Angels*.
77. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*. Donald Carson refutes exegetes who see Jesus, in John 3, as "arguing against the ritual washings of the Essenes . . . , or perhaps against Jewish ceremonies in general. What is necessary is Spirit-birth, not mere water-purification. But 'water' and 'Spirit' are not contrasted in [John 3:5]: they are linked, and together become the equivalent of 'from above' (v. 3)" (D. A. Carson, *John*, p. 193).
78. D. A. Carson, *John*, p. 194.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
80. Ezekiel 37:26.
81. E.g., Jeremiah 15:16; Mosiah 5:7–10. For more on the significance of names and keywords in ancient temple ordinances, see J. M. Bradshaw, *What Did Joseph Smith Know*, pp. 9–15.
82. Ezekiel 37:28.
83. D. A. Carson, *John*, p. 194. See Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 32:6; Hosea 11:1.
84. Ezekiel 16:4.
85. Ezekiel 16:8.
86. Ezekiel 16:9, 10, 12.
87. Exodus 19:6.
88. 1 John 3:9; 5:1; Mosiah 27:28; Alma 36:26.
89. Joseph Smith taught that to qualify for eternal life, each of God's children must be born again into the kingdom of heaven as a son or daughter of God (Moses 5:7) through the atonement of Christ, and "by keeping all the ordinances of the house of the Lord" (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 11 June 1843, Wilford Woodruff Journal, p. 213. Compare J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 11 June 1843, p. 308. See also J. W. Welch, *Sermon*, pp. 77–78).

Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook note (in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 286 n. 25):

Undoubtedly the Church historians decided to amplify this statement based on D&C 124:28, and their knowledge of the Prophet's teachings on temple ordinances: "If a

man gets *a fullness of the priesthood* of God he has to get *it* in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping *all the commandments and obeying* all the ordinances of the house of the Lord” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 11 June 1843, p. 308; changed words italicized). The essence of the Church historians’ amplification, which is confirmed by the Franklin D. Richards report, is additionally supported in the following statement of Brigham Young in the Nauvoo Temple which includes the Prophet’s teachings on the highest ordinances of the Temple:

Those who come in here and have received their washing & anointing will [later] be ordained Kings & Priests, and will then have received the fullness of the Priesthood, all that can be given on earth. For Brother Joseph said he had given us all that could be given to man on the earth (Heber C. Kimball Journal kept by William Clayton, 26 December 1845, Church Archives).

90. Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; Romans 6:22; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 6:11; James 5:11; 1 Peter 1:13; Revelation 2:26; 1 Nephi 13:37; 22:31; 2 Nephi 9:24; 31:16, 20; 33:4, 9; Omni 1:26; Mosiah 2:41; 26:23; Alma 12:27; 27:27; 32:13, 15; 38:2; 3 Nephi 15:9; 27:6; 27:11, 16, 17, 19; Mormon 9:29; Moroni 3:3; 6:3; 8:3, 26; D&C 10:4; 14:7; 18:22; 20:25, 29, 37; 31:13; 53:7; 66:12; 75:11, 13, 14; 76:5; 81:6; 100:12; 105:41; 121:32. The many scriptures cited above, which implicitly define “the end” as the end of probation or the time of judgment, can be contrasted with Mosiah 4:6, 30; 5:8; Alma 34:33; 41:6 which exceptionally describe this end in terms of the end of mortal life.
91. Ephesians 4:13.
92. E.g., Matthew 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; 10:21; Luke 9:23; 14:27; Acts 5:41; 9:16; Romans 8:17; Philippians 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:12; 3:12; Jacob 1:8; 3 Nephi 12:30; D&C 23:6; 56:2; 101:35; 112:14. Nevertheless, the followers of Christ are not called to endure the suffering for sin that has already been borne by Jesus Christ (D&C 19:16), though they are sometimes required to suffer “anguish of soul because of the wickedness of the people” (Alma 8:14).

93. Mosiah 5:7. See also Psalm 2:7; 110:4; John 1:12–13; Romans 8:19; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 7:3; 1 John 3:1–3; 3 Nephi 9:17; Moroni 7:48; D&C 128:23; Moses 6:22, 68; 7:1; 8:13.
94. Moses 6:60.
95. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Before 8 August 1839 (1), p. 12. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 2 July 1839, p. 162. See D&C 52:13–20; 84:19–25; Moses 6:57–68; JST Exodus 34:1–2.
96. Daniel 3:25; Matthew 4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; 27:54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Luke 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 22:70; John 1:34; 5:25; 9:35; 11:4; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:20; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10–13; 20; Revelation 2:18.
97. E.g., Matthew 5:48; Luke 18:22; John 13:36; 14:6; 21:19; 3 Nephi 12:48.
98. John 3:3, emphasis added.
99. Moses 6:59. Note the distinction between the “words of eternal life” — meaning the sure promise of exaltation that can be received only in an anticipatory way “in this world” (see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 59–63) through the ordinances that reveal the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, OT1, Moses 6:59, p. 102) — and “eternal life” itself, which will be given “in the world to come” (see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 68–71. Cf. H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, p. 279).
100. B. J. Petersen, *Nibley*, p. 354. Petersen added: “This approach earned him a great deal of trust from both General Authorities and from Church members.” Petersen cites a letter of gratitude sent from Elder Dallin H. Oaks to Nibley for his approach to temple scholarship. Along with the letter was a copy of a talk Elder Oaks had given “in which he addressed the manner and extent to which temple ordinances should be discussed outside the temple. Oaks assured Hugh that ‘nothing in this talk is intended to be a criticism of a discouragement of efforts as sensitive as yours. The talk has some targets, but you aren’t one of them’” (*ibid.*, p. 356).

George Mitton recalls Nibley being concerned about the appropriateness of his Egyptian endowment manuscript (H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005)). President Harold B. Lee graciously agreed to read it, and when he had finished he invited Nibley to his

office. Nibley was told that there was nothing of concern in what he had written, since he was only describing ancient Egyptian ritual (G. L. Mitton, 22 August 2014).

For Nibley's views on confidentiality as it relates to temple ordinances, see, e.g., H. W. Nibley, *Sacred*, pp. 553–554, 569–572.

101. In the verses from Moses 6:51–68 given below, emphasis is shown for words and phrases that differ significantly from the published version in the OT₁ and OT₂ manuscripts. For transcriptions of the original manuscripts of the Joseph Smith Translation, see S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*.
102. H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, p. 277.
103. S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, OT₁ (p. 14 [Moses 6:52–64]), p. 101. See J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God's Image 2*, COMMENTARY Moses 6:51-a, p. 75. See also Moses 6:62.
104. E.g., O. Pratt, 11 September 1859, pp. 251–253.
105. Moses 6:62.
106. Moses 6:61. Note that the concept of heavenly and earthly records is replete within scriptural writings ascribed to John (i.e., John 1:19, 32, 34; 8:13–14; 12:17; 19:35; 1 John 5:6–11; 3 John 1:12; Revelation 1:2; D&C 93:6, 11, 15, 16, 18, 26). See also Job 16:19; D&C 20:27; 42:17; 76:23, 40). Of prime interest is the passage in 1 John 5:5–8 that describes the witness of heaven and earth in conjunction with the three elements of water, spirit, and blood mentioned in Moses 6:59–60:

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Notably, on more than one occasion Joseph Smith argued for the separate embodiment of the three members of the Godhead by citing the phrase "these three agree in one" used in 1 John 5:8 (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, McIntire Minute Book, 16 February 1841, p. 63; Thomas Bullock Report, 16 June 1844 (morning), p. 380; George Laub Journal, 16 June 1844 (morning), p. 382; McIntire Minute Book, 16 June 1844 (morning), p. 383).

Although scholarly consensus sees verse 7–8, the so-called "Johannine Comma" that connects the witness of the Godhead in heaven to the symbols of spiritual rebirth on earth, as a late addition to 1 John 5, the Codex Vaticanus "demonstrates that a significant textual variant was known for 1 John 5:7 in the 4th century" (Johannine Comma). An ellipsis mark on the manuscript indicates "lines where a textual variant was known to the scribe" (*ibid.*). In any event, the witness of Moses 6:59-60 attests to the antiquity of the symbolism of water, spirit, and blood in relation to the witness of heaven and earth that underlies both these passages. Verse 63 further expands on these witnesses, declaring not only that these three elements but also "*all things*" in heaven and earth bear record of the Lord.

107. Acts 8:15, 19; 2 Nephi 31:13; 32:5; 3 Nephi 28:18; 4 Nephi 1:1; D&C 25:8; 84:74; Moses 8:24.
108. D&C 128:9.
109. D&C 128:9.
110. K. P. Jackson, *Book of Moses*, s.v. OT2 Page 18 (Moses 6:53–63). Cf. Matthew 16:19: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
111. Moses 6:64–65.
112. Moses 6:61.
113. Moses 6:66.
114. Moses 5:59.
115. Moses 6:68.
116. T. M. Burton, *Work of Elijah*, p. 532.
117. H. L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith*, p. 122.

118. D&C 131:5.
119. D&C 131:5. See also 2 Peter 1:19. For a detailed analysis and commentary on Joseph Smith's 21 May 1843 discourse on 2 Peter 1 where he discusses the "more sure word of prophecy," see J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*.
120. Moses 6:68, emphasis added.
121. H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, pp. 279–280. See also D. T. Christofferson, *Born Again*, pp. 78–79.
122. Moses 6:60.
123. Moses 5:6.
124. Moses 6:60.
125. Moses 6:60.
126. The initial opening of the eyes of Adam and Eve in Moses 4:13 anticipated the revelatory opening of their eyes as described in Moses 5:10, just as their initial self-clothing in fig leaves (Moses 4:13) anticipated the clothing that God would later give them (Moses 4:27). See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image* 1, COMMENTARY 4:13a, b, pp. 258–259, 4:27a,b, pp. 274–276, 5:10–11, pp. 363–364.
127. See Moses 4:27; 5:4–11.
128. Elder Robert D. Hales once asked (R. D. Hales, *Covenant of Baptism*, p. 8): "How many of our children — how many of us — really understand that when we were baptized we took upon us not only the name of Christ but also the law of obedience?" Elsewhere he explained similarly, citing King Benjamin (R. D. Hales, *If Ye Love Me*, p. 35): "When we are baptized, we 'take upon [us] the name of Christ' and enter 'into the covenant with God that [we will] be obedient unto the end of [our] lives' (Mosiah 5:8)."

Commenting further, L. B. Spindlove, *Comment* carefully draws a distinction between the act of baptism and the covenant itself by drawing from examples in the Book of Mormon:

I do not disagree with Elder Hales's comments that "when we are baptized, we "take upon [us] the name of Christ" and enter "into the covenant with God that [we will] be obedient unto the end of [our] lives." However, the Book of Mormon is not so clear on this doctrine. In fact, it may teach this doctrine differently.

Alma Sr. taught: "what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him" (Mosiah 18:10). It sounds like the covenant that he spoke of was made prior to their baptism, and that the baptism was merely a "witness" of the covenant. When baptizing Helam Alma said: "I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body" (Mosiah 18:13).

We also read that Limhi and his people "had entered into a covenant with God to serve him and keep his commandments" without the benefit of baptism (Mosiah 21:31). Additionally, we read: "since the coming of Ammon, king Limhi had also entered into a covenant with God, and also many of his people, to serve him and keep his commandments. And it came to pass that king Limhi and many of his people were desirous to be baptized; but there was none in the land that had authority from God. And Ammon declined doing this thing, considering himself an unworthy servant" (Mosiah 21:32–33). Their baptism only came after they had joined the Nephites in Zarahemla (Mosiah 25:17), and well after they had entered into the covenant.

Further, during King Benjamin's speech it appears that the people likewise entered into a covenant with God and "had taken upon them the name of Christ," to "be obedient unto the end of your lives" (Mosiah 5:8 and 6:2). There is no mention of baptism at the time of this covenant.

So, it appears that the covenant is separate from the act of baptism. This does not minimize the ordinance of baptism. It is a necessary witness or testimony of the covenant. Instead, I believe that it elevates the covenant. Many of those hearing King Benjamin's speech had no doubt already been baptized. The covenant can and should be made throughout our lives, without the necessity of baptism or rebaptism. This is essential in the missionary efforts of the church. New converts can and

should covenant with God even before their baptism, like Limhi and his people. Their lives need to be on the path of change well before they are baptized.

In addition, R. T. Swenson, *ibid.* insightfully points out that Alma's reference to being willing to "mourn with those that mourn" (Mosiah 18:9) is perhaps not best "explained as the promise we make to comfort people who are grieving for the loss of a loved one." He points out that, in the Savior's Sermon at the Mount (Matthew 5:4) and especially in His Sermon at the Temple (3 Nephi 12:4), "mourning" is introduced "in a covenant-making context, and the blessings come to those who make the covenant to follow the Savior." He argues that Moses 7:45–47 (cf. Matthew 9:15; James 4:9; Moses 7:49) Joseph Smith — Matthew 1:36) provides an important key to what it means to mourn in this covenant sense:

And it came to pass that Enoch looked; and from Noah, he beheld all the families of the earth; and he cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the Righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified and have eternal life?

And the Lord said: It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance.

And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his soul rejoiced, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world; and through faith I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me.

Swenson concludes:

"All they that mourn" are those who look forward to the great personal sacrifice of the Redeemer. We look back to His suffering body, marred with nail holes and a sword, and the blood He shed for us.

Of course, the mourning of the righteous for their sins and for the sufferings of Christ should be contrasted with the mourning of the wicked (Matthew 24:30; Luke 6:25; D&C 45:49; 87:6; 97:21; Revelation 18:11). The "sorrowing of the damned" is attributed by Mormon to their realization that "the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin" (Mormon 2:13).

130. Alma 7:15. Cf. vv. 16, 23.
131. Moroni 8:11. Cf. v. 25.
132. D&C 20:77. Cf. 3 Nephi 18:10.
133. D&C 20:79.
134. D&C 20:77.
135. Building upon the insights of Elder Dallin H. Oaks, Elder David A. Bednar explains this point as follows (D. A. Bednar, *Name*, pp. 97–98):

Elder Dallin H. Oaks has explained that in renewing our baptismal covenants by partaking of the emblems of the sacrament, “we do not witness that we take upon us the name of Jesus Christ. [Rather], we witness that we are willing to do so (see D&C 20:77). The fact that we only witness to our willingness suggests that something else must happen before we actually take that sacred name upon us in the [ultimate and] most important sense” (D. H. Oaks, *Taking Upon Us*, p. 81). The baptismal covenant clearly contemplates a future event or events and looks forward to the temple.

136. L. B. Spendlove, 22 October 2016.
137. N. Webster, *Dictionary*, s. v. partake.
138. L. B. Spendlove, 22 October 2016.
139. J. E. Seaich, *Freemasonry*. See, e.g.:
- 2 Corinthians 1:7: As ye are partakers (*koinonoi*) of the sufferings [of Christ], so shall you also be of the consolation.
 - Philippians 2:8–9: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.
 - Philippians 3:10–11: That I might know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings (*koinonian tes pathematon autou*), being conformed to his death, that if [possible] I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.
 - 2 Peter 1:4: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might become

partakers (*koinonoi*) of the divine nature.

140. See 2 Nephi 31:5.

141. D&C 20:37.

142. “[You] might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, *and* is good for nothing with[out] the other [half — that is, the baptism of] the Holy Ghost” (J. Smith, Jr., Words, 9 July 1843, Joseph Smith Diary by Willard Richards, p. 230, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation modernized).

“The baptism of water, without the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost attending it, is of no use. They are necessarily and inseparably connected” (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 7 April 1844, 6:213).

143. Cf. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 61.

144. B. Young, 23 October 1853, pp. 3–4.

145. In the early days of the Church, the portions of bread used for the sacrament were sometimes large enough to constitute a small meal. For example, Zebedee Coltrin stated that at meetings of the School of the Prophets in Kirtland (Z. Coltrin, *Remarks of Zebedee Coltrin*, 3 October 1883):

the sacrament was also administered at times when Joseph appointed, after the ancient order; that is, warm bread to break easy was provided and broken into pieces as large as my fist and each person had a glass of wine and sat and ate the bread and drank the wine; and Joseph said that was the way that Jesus and his disciples partook of the bread and wine. And this was the order of the church anciently and until the church went into darkness.

146. Our own clarification is added here in brackets to round out what we surmise to be the intended but incompletely expressed meaning of Brigham Young’s words.

147. 2 Nephi 31:9, 17–18; 33:9.

148. 2 Nephi 31:18.

149. 2 Nephi 33:9. See also, e.g., D. A. Bednar, *Ye Must Be Born Again*, p. 21; J. D. Cornish, *Gate*, pp. 46–47.

150. D. A. Bednar, *Ye Must Be Born Again*, p. 21.

151. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 20 March 1842, pp. 107–108, spelling and punctuation modernized. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, pp. 198–199.
152. Scott Kenney's transcription has "sign *or* command" (W. Woodruff, *Woodruff*, 20 March 1842, 2:161–162, emphasis added).
153. Cf. D&C 132:19: "they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation."
154. Brigham Young taught: "Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to able to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood" (B. Young, *Discourses*, p. 416; B. Young, 6 April 1853 - B, p. 31).
155. Cf. Moses 1:21: "Moses received strength, and called upon God, saying: In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan."
156. See Acts 19:13–15.
157. For a sampling of readily available online sources discussions on the topic, see, e.g., History of Baptism; R. Moseley, *The Jewish Background of Christian Baptism*; J. K. Howard, *New Testament Baptism*, pp. 12–34; A. J. Hultgren, *Baptism*; K. Kohler et al., *Baptism*.
158. Joseph Smith — History, footnote by Oliver Cowdery.
159. See, e.g., Ephrem the Syrian, *Epiphany*, 12:1, 4, p. 282; S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, 1:1, pp. 1–2, 1:32–33, pp. 34–36; M. i. A. A. al-Kisa'i, *Tales*, p. 61; E. S. Drower, *Prayerbook*, p. 30. Cf. J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image* 1, ENDNOTES 5–23, 5–24, pp. 435–436, ENDNOTE b-16, p. 907.
160. E.g., S. D. Ricks, *Coronation*; S. D. Ricks, *Kingship*; S. D. Ricks et al., *King*.
161. E.g., D. J. Larsen, *Ascending*, pp. 181–182. See also J. M. Bradshaw et al., *Investiture Panel*.
162. D. J. Larsen, *Ascending*, pp. 181–182.
163. 1 Kings 1:34.
164. 1 Kings 1:39; Psalm 89:20; Psalm 23:5.

165. See 1 Chronicles 15:27.
166. Isaiah 22:21; “girdle” in KJV.
167. See Ezekiel 21:26.
168. Psalm 110:4.
169. See lines 205–234. See also the related discussion in T. L. Givens, *When Souls*, pp. 9–12, citing J. Bottéro, *Mesopotamia*.
170. J. M. Bradshaw et al., Investiture Panel.
171. See especially *ibid.*, pp. 29–30.
172. J. H. Walton, *Ancient*, p. 129.
173. D. Calabro, Joseph Smith and the Architecture, p. 166.
174. E.g., Hebrews 6:2. See also John A. Tvedtnes, who wrote: “In early Christianity, following the apostasy, temple initiation eventually merged with the baptismal initiation, which included both washing and anointing with oil, along with donning of white clothing and sometimes the reception of a new name” (J. A. Tvedtnes, *Early Christian*). See also R. T. Wilkins, *Influence of Israelite Temple Rites*, pp. 91–96.
175. H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), p. 174. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Five*, 21:1–6, 7:149–150.
176. See G. A. Anderson et al., *Synopsis*, pp. 33E–45E.
177. G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, p. 130.
178. S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*.
179. See Colossians 2:11–12.
180. Matthew 3:11.
181. Cf. Matthew 3:11: “I baptize you with water for repentance . . .; he will baptize you with the holy spirit and with fire” (RSV).
182. See Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4 (cf. especially Romans 2:29; Philippians 3:3). Cf. also Leviticus 26:41; Jeremiah 9:26; Ezekiel 44:7, 9; Acts 7:21; 2 Nephi 9:33; Helaman 9:21.
183. Ezekiel 36:25–26. See also Jeremiah 9:26; Ezekiel 11:19–20; 18:31; Romans 2:29.
184. Emphasis added. Commenting on the status of this comment as an interpretive gloss rather than a part of the original Book of Mormon text, Royal Skousen writes (R. Skousen, *Analysis*, 1:427):

This change can mislead the reader into thinking that this parenthetical comment was actually part of the original text, even perhaps concluding not only that this extra phrase is the original biblical text, but also that some scribe deliberately edited it out of the Hebrew text. ... Joseph Smith's probable intention was to provide an interpretative reading.

For more on the textual history of this change, see *ibid.*, 1:427–428.

185. See Genesis 17:23.
186. Emphasis added. Cf. Mosiah 18:8–10; Alma 7:15.
187. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 22 January 1834, pp. 58–59.
188. M. Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, p. 92.
189. Genesis 4:4; Moses 5:20.
190. Hebrews 12:24; M.-B. Halford, *Eva und Adam*, pp. 270–271.
191. Matthew 23:35. See discussion of the identity of Zechariah in M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 149–150.
192. Genesis 4.
193. 2 Chronicles 24:20–22. Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew canon.
194. V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, p. 244.
195. See OT₁ text in S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, pp. 131–132. These verses were probably received between February 1 and March 7, 1831 (see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, FIGURE 0–2, p. 3). Note that D&C 74, now known to have been received “sometime in the last part of 1830, and not January 1832 as found in all editions of the Doctrine and Covenants,” “probably stemmed from discussions about infant baptism” (R. J. Woodford, *Discoveries*, p. 31).
196. The possessive “mine” in “mine anointing” is particularly interesting. Anointings are attested in the temple rites of ancient Egypt (*wrḥ* = anoint, smear on) in Mesopotamia (Akk. *pašašu* = to anoint, smear; this word is cognate with the Hebrew/Aramaic verb *mšḥ* [“anoint”], whence *māšīaḥ* [messiah = “anointed one”]) and Hittite (*iski[ya]* = “smear, daub, salve, oil, anoint). The “mine” seems to distinguish between the kind of anointing rite sanctioned by God himself versus the anointing practiced in various ancient

- Near-East cults (implicitly sanctioned by the deities of those cults). God’s “anointing” would presumably have to do with the reception of the Holy Ghost. Besides references to “oil of anointing,” the noun “anointing” specifically describes a ritual in Exodus 29:29 and 40:15.
197. The crossing out of the words is perhaps intended to disqualify the practice as being “baptism” in the legitimate sense. The words may also foreclose the possibility that a practice incorporating full immersion (“burial”) was being described.
198. Cf. Exodus 29:16–21; Leviticus 1:5–11; 3:2, 8, 13; 4:6, 17; 5:9; 7:2; 14:7, 51; 16:14, 15, 19; 17:6; Numbers 18:17; 19:4; 2 Kings 16:15; Isaiah 52:15; Ezekiel 43:18; Hebrews 9:13; 11:28; 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2; 3 Nephi 20:45.
199. Genesis 17:12.
200. JST Genesis 17:11. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image* 1, ENDNOTE E-134, p. 734.
201. L. E. Dahl, Joseph Smith Translation, p. 126.
202. For more about this photograph and the Mandaean practice of *kushta*, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image* 1, pp. 308 n. 4–32, 317–318 n. 4–66, 436 n. 5–23, 686, 777 n. E-278, 871–873.
203. E. S. Drower, *Mandaeans*, pp. 100–123.
204. W. Barnstone et al., *Gnostic*, p. 533; E. S. Drower, *Prayerbook*, p. 30.
205. A portion of Hibil-Ziwa’s own baptism and anointing (which is the model for all subsequent baptisms) is described as follows (E. S. Drower, *Haran*, pp. 53–54):

Then he descended into the jordan and submerged himself thrice in the name of Yawar-Rba, and Hibil-Ziwa placed his right hand into the left hand of Ayar-Rba [who] took it and transferred him to his right and set him before him, placing him between himself and his ritual staff. Ayar-Rba signed him thrice with his forefinger [the finger] beside the thumb, upon the forehead from the right ear to the left ear, and so cut off the name [reputation?] of any person who is signed with ‘the sign of the left,’ [the sign] wherewith Yusamin the Peacock signed. ...

When ye gave him [three] palmfuls of water to drink, ye lifted him out of all his pollutions [i.e., blows, see p. 54,

footnote 1] and re-established the mystery of spirit and soul. And when ye recited Let Light shine forth over the wreath and he set it upon his head, the wreath shone; from celestial worlds it came to him and thou didst set it on his head.

And when thou (the Baptist) pronounced the Names upon him [names of the gods are then mentioned] — then Ayar-Rba and the sixty kings of the celestial worlds are established.

And when thou liftest him up and takest his right hand in the *kusta*, thou has mingled the jordan with thy raiment and his raiment and hast set his mind at peace. And make him this response while his hand is in thy hand, say to him "*Kusta* strengthen thee and raise thee up! Seek and find, speak and be heard." And say to him "Thy *kusta* shall be thy witness and thy baptism shall be established and not be in vain. The *kusta* ["pad" (sic), i.e., "pact"] that thou hast made with the sixty priests and kings and Ayar-Rba, will deliver thee from all involuntary offences and from pollutions of the darkness which occur in the abode of mortality."

And he shall kiss their hands. . . .

And when ye take the oil and say: "Healing, purity and forgiving of sins be there for this the soul of Hibil-Ziwa son of Manda-d-Hiia who descended to the Jordan and was baptized and received the pure sign then each takes oil in his bowl.

And read We acknowledge and praises [are due] and Thou art the costly oil and Thou wast established, First Life and take oil with the finger next the thumb of your right hand and sign from the right ear to the left ear; [for the] sign of the Right, the Father, is brighter than the sign of the Messiah [a play on words, so that it could read "that was anointed"], of the Mother, for he ruleth in the Land of Darkness and the Left.

206. E. S. Drower, *Water*, p. 106.

207. M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, LG 1:1, p. 429. In this respect, the two-armed embrace of Mandaean ritual can be seen as an intensification and

a fulfillment of the handclasp gesture. It is an *intensification* of the handclasp because it signifies not only an unbreakable bond between two individuals but also powerful symbol that signifies absolute unity and oneness between them. It is a *fulfillment* of the handclasp in the same sense that a fully rendered circle and square represent the successful completion of the work that the tools of the compass and the square were designed to perform. Here is what the *Ginza* says about the culminating moment when the Mandaean exits the mortal world and enters the world of glory through a ritual embrace. It should no surprise that the candidate for admission is known as Seth, since Seth was in the likeness and image of Adam (Moses 6:10), just as Adam and Eve had been made in the image and likeness of God (Moses 6:9, 22):

Sitil [= Seth], the son of Adam... was brought to the guard house of Silmais, the treasurer [i.e., the keeper of the gate], who holds the nails of glory in his hand and carries the key of the *kushta* of both arms. They opened the gate of the treasure house for him, lifted the great veil of safety upward before him, led him in, and showed him that Vine [i.e., the Tree of Life, envisaged as a grapevine], its inner glory ... They eat [of it] and the joy of life comes and lies upon them. They make wreaths of joy [from the Vine] and lay them on their heads. ... Sitil, son of Adam, spoke: "On this [same] way, the path and ascent which I have climbed, truthful, believing, faithful and perfect men shall also ascend and come, when they leave their bodies [i.e., at death]."

Lidzbarski's German version reads as follows:

Sitil, den Sohn Adams ... stellten ihn an das Wachthaus Silmais, des Schatzmeisters, der die Pflöcke des Glanzes in der Hand hält und die Schlüssel der Kusta auf beiden Armen trägt. Sie öffneten ihm das Tor des Schatzhauses, hoben vor ihm den großen Vorhang der Sicherheit in die Höhe, führten ihn ein und zeigten ihm jenen Weinstock, dessen Inneres Glanz, ... Sie essen, und die Wonnigkeit des Lebens kommt und legt sich über sie. Sie winden Kränze der Wonnigkeit und legen sie sich aufs Haupt. ... Sitil, der Sohn Adams, sprach: "Auf diesem Wege, Pfad und Aufstieg, auf dem ich emporgestiegen bin, sollen auch

*die wahrhaften, gläubigen, trefflichen und vollkommenen
Männer emporsteigen und kommen, wenn sie aus ihrem
Körper scheiden."*

208. For examples with an extensive discussion, see M. L. Bowen, *And There Wrestled*, pp. 152–157.
209. Genesis 32:24–32. Cf. Enos' wrestle with God in Enos 1:2 (see *ibid.*, pp. 152–153).
210. Genesis 33:22–24.
211. Luke 15:20.
212. See M. L. Bowen, *And There Wrestled*, p. 156; J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God's Image 2*, COMMENTARY Moses 6:62–63, pp. 158–161
213. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE E-136, p. 735.
214. C. R. Koester, *Hebrews*, p. 546 n. 12:24a. Cf. H. W. Attridge et al., *Hebrews*, p. 377.
215. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 5 October 1840, p. 169. Cf. E. Lupieri, *Mandaeans*, p. 46. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, EXCURSUS 53: Comparative Explorations of the Mysteries, p. 663. See *ibid.*, ENDNOTE E-137, p. 735.
216. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE E-135, p. 734.
217. S. Ruzer, *Abel's Blood*.
218. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE E-138, p. 735.
219. P. A. Tiller, *Animal*, p. 226. Cf. G. W. E. Nickelsburg et al., *1 Enoch*, p. 371 n. 8. Cf. 85:3–6, 89:9, pp. 364, 365.
220. J. J. Neusner, *Without Myth*, p. 99.
221. Cf. JST Genesis 17:6.
222. Deuteronomy 21:1.
223. Qur'an 2:67–71.
224. M. M. Ayoub, *Qur'an* (Vol. 1), p. 117. See also B. M. Wheeler, *Prophets*, pp. 216–217. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE E-139, p. 735.
225. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, COMMENTARY 5:35-b, p. 383.
226. Hebrews 11:4. Cf. G. W. E. Nickelsburg et al., *1 Enoch*, 22:5–7, p. 300; 9:2, 10, p. 202; pp. 305–306 n. 5–7.

227. JST Genesis 17:7.
228. S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*.
229. H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), p. xxix.
230. See Romans 6:4–6.
231. D&C 1:15–16.
232. C. Broderick, *Adversity*, p. 129.
233. J. F. Smith, *Dedication*, Remarks at the Memorial Party in Boston, Dec. 24–25, 1905, p. 61.
234. John 3:3.
235. J. A. Widtsoe, *Temple Worship*, pp. 192–193.
236. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 60.
237. B. C. Hafen, *Anchored*, pp. 3–5. This transformation must go deeper than mere outward behavior. As C. S. Lewis wrote:

We might [mistakenly] think that God wanted simply obedience to a set of rules: whereas He really wants people of a particular sort (C. S. Lewis, *Mere*, p. 77).

Nothing gives one a more spuriously good conscience than keeping rules, even if there has been a total absence of all real charity and faith (C. S. Kilby, *Mind*, C. S. Lewis, Unpublished letter, 20 February 1955, p. 141).

238. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Before 8 August 1839 (1), p. 12. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 2 July 1839, p. 162. Cf. D&C 84:19–22.
239. Covenants are often compared to promises or contracts. However, this comparison can be misleading, as Scott Hahn insightfully explains (S. W. Hahn, *World as Wedding*, pp. 6–8):

It is important for us to get this right. But, in order to do so, we have to move beyond certain modern assumptions and retrieve the sense of covenant as it was lived in biblical cultures — and not only in the Hebrew and Christian religious cultures, but also in the Gentile and pagan societies of the ancient world. For covenant was the foundation of these societies. It gave individual persons their sense of kinship, their sense of relationship, their sense of belonging — to a family, a tribe, and a

nation. The covenant oath was the foundation of family, national, and religious life.

In today's legal usage, the words contract and covenant are almost interchangeable. But that was not true in the ancient world. Every covenant was based upon a contractual agreement, but a covenant differed from a contract in many ways. I'd like to mention just a few.

- In contracts, the terms are negotiable; in covenants, they are not. God sets the terms of the covenant. The people may freely choose to accept or reject those terms, but rejecting the terms means the loss of any share in the covenant blessings.
- Contracts are based upon the parties making promises; while covenants are only entered through the solemn swearing of an oath (*sacramentum* in Latin).
- Contracts are normally based on profit; covenants are based on love. The former speaks to self-interest, while the latter calls us to self-sacrifice.
- Contracts exchange goods and services; covenants exchange persons.
- Contracts are legal devices; they are conditional, and they can be broken. A covenant is more of a social organism; it is unconditional and ongoing. Even when it is violated, it is not thereby dissolved.
- Contracts are limited in scope; covenants affect many (if not all) areas of life.
- Contracts are limited in duration; covenants last for life, even extending to future generations.

We could list many other differences between contracts and covenants, but these will suffice. For we can see in these differences that every covenant includes a contractual element, but also that the covenant far surpasses the mere contract and establishes a much different kind of relationship.

The differences show us that God's covenantal relationship with humankind is non-negotiable, but freely accepted; that it is based on love; that it involves a sharing of our very lives — and His very life; that it is

unlimited in scope. And that it is forever. In all of this, the divine covenant is very much like a marriage.

For an in-depth study of covenants in the Bible, see S. W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*. On the differences between covenants and contracts in Scripture, particularly with reference to marriage, see Scott Hahn, *Swear to God: The Promise and Power of the Sacraments* (New York: Doubleday, 2004); John Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue: An Introduction to Sexual Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 32–38; Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics* (Leiden: Brill 1995), 185–279; Paul F. Palmer, S.J., “Christian Marriage: Covenant or Contract?” *Theological Studies* 33 (1972), 617–665; G. M. Tucker, “Covenant Forms and Contracts Forms,” *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965), 487–503.

240. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62.

241. See B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, pp. 294–295.

242. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

243. Elder Bednar has said (D. A. Bednar, *Ye Must Be Born Again*, p. 20): “Proper preparing and cleaning are the first basic steps in the process of being born again.” Joseph Smith taught (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 27 June 1839, Willard Richards Pocket Companion, p. 3, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization modernized):

Baptism is a holy ordinance preparatory to the reception of the Holy Ghost; it is the channel and key by which the Holy Ghost will be administered. The Gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, cannot be received through the medium of any other principle than the principle of righteousness.

244. D&C 84:20.

245. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*; J. M. Bradshaw, *Faith, Hope, and Charity* (book). Consistent with an understanding of hope and charity as more than personal virtues or gifts, note that, in contrast to 1 Corinthians 12:1–11 and Moroni 10:7–18, neither hope nor charity are included among the gifts of the Spirit in D&C 46:8–31 and Articles of Faith 1:7 (L. H. Wilson, *A New Pneumatology*, p. 137, Table 2).

246. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62.

247. E.g., Abraham 1:2: "And finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers."
248. Elder Neal A. Maxwell used this term on several occasions, once describing it as a condition that consists of having "great expectations, and then [having to] endure the difference between what we could be and what we are" (N. A. Maxwell, *If Thou Endure It Well*), having realized that our "progression [is] mixed with procrastination" (N. A. Maxwell, *Consecrate*, p. 36). He contrasted "divine discontent" with mere "impatience" (N. A. Maxwell, *Patience*), and especially with "the devil's dissonance," distinguishing carefully "between dissatisfaction with self and disdain for self. We need the first and must shun the second, remembering that when conscience calls to us from the next ridge, it is not solely to scold but also to beckon" (N. A. Maxwell, *Notwithstanding* (1976)).
249. 2 Nephi 4:31.
250. D&C 58:27.
251. D&C 4:2. For an in-depth discussion of the requirements outlined in this verse, see J. M. Bradshaw, *He That Thrusteth in His Sickle*, pp. 166–169.
252. Mosiah 15:7.
253. Ephesians 4:13.
254. See, e.g., Exodus 40:12–13; Leviticus 16:3–4, 23–24. For descriptions of similar ordinances in modern LDS temples, see, e.g., D&C 124:39; J. E. Talmage, *House of the Lord* (1912), p. 185.
255. See Articles of Faith 1:4.
256. Bible Dictionary, s.v. Baptism, cited in D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 60.
257. Exodus 40:12–13. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image* 1, pp. 661–662.
258. A poem by W. W. Phelps asserts that "[b]efore this world was known," certain spirits "were wash'd and set apart for the glory yet to be." He says that they were also given a "white stone" with a "new name," and that they were to receive these things again when they returned to their heavenly home (*Deseret News*, 6, 416, cited in *ibid.*, pp. 299–300 n. 4–9). See also J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 12 May 1844, p. 371; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 12 May 1844, p. 365; Alma 13:1–8; cf. D&C 138:53–56; Moses 1:6; Abraham 3:23.

259. Joseph Smith stated that “every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the grand Council of Heaven before this world was” (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Thomas Bullock Report, 12 May 1844, p. 367, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation modernized). In Samuel W. Richards’ account of the sermon, the Prophet specifically mentioned the heads of dispensation and the Apostles (*ibid.*, Samuel W. Richards Record, 12 May 1844, p. 371):

At the general & grand Council of heaven, all those to whom a dispensation was to be committed, were set apart & ordained at that time, to that calling.

The Twelve also as witnesses were ordained.

George Laub records (*ibid.*, George Laub Journal, 12 May 1844, p. 370):

Brother Joseph Smith was chosen for the last dispensation or Seventh Dispensation The time the grand council Set in heaven to organize this world Joseph was chosen for the last & greatest Prophet to lay the foundation of gods work of the Seventh Dispensation therefore the Jews asked John the Baptist if he was Elias or Jesus or that great prophet that was to come.

One month later, Joseph Smith made reference to the “sons of God who exalt[ed] themselves to be gods even from bef[ore] the foundat[ion] of the world” (*ibid.*, Thomas Bullock Report, 16 June 1844, p. 381; cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 16 June 1844, p. 375).

260. Alma 13:2–3. Cf., e.g., D&C 138:53–56; Abraham 3:22–23; B. R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 290–291; B. L. Top, Foreordination, p. 522; G. O. Brown, Premortal Life, 1123–1124; J. E. Jensen, Spirit, p. 1404.

While not questioning the well-established doctrine of foreordination to the priesthood, Keith Thompson argues for a different interpretation of Alma 13:1–16 that takes the terms “called” and “calling” (see Alma 13:3–6, 8, 11) to refer exclusively to a foreknown “ordination in mortality” (A. K. Thompson, *Were We Foreordained*, p. 259) rather than accepting the conventional interpretation that these terms refer to premortal events that included being “called and prepared” (Alma 13:1). Similarly, he restricts the meaning of the term “manner,” describing how such

individuals were ordained, to refer to their earthly ordination (ibid., pp. 259–260) rather than allowing the possibility that the “manner” described in scripture includes an actual premortal foreordination (see Alma 13:3, 8) — in addition to the divine foreknowledge that Thompson willingly admits.

Commendably, Thompson’s intentions are to harmonize these verses with the 1978 priesthood revelation found in Official Declaration 2. However, there are other ways to resolve this seeming inconsistency. For example, to say that all men that receive the priesthood in this life were foreordained to the priesthood in the premortal existence is not necessarily to say that all who were foreordained actually receive the priesthood in this life. For reasons known only to God, some blessings promised to all who receive and remain faithful to temple covenants in this life (e.g., temple marriage, posterity) are reserved for some individuals only in the next life. And all who have been born on earth without the chance to receive any of the blessings of the Gospel in this life “who would have received [the Gospel] had they been permitted to tarry” will “be heirs of the celestial kingdom” in the afterlife (D&C 137:7).

Of course, none of these views preclude the argument advanced in Thompson’s essay that the ordination of men to the priesthood was conditioned on their “exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God” (Alma 13:10) in this life, plausibly the core argument of Alma’s “message of repentance” (ibid., p. 254). However, in addition, according to the standard view, foreordination to the priesthood was also conditioned on “exceeding faith and good works” (Alma 13:1) in the premortal life (cf. Abraham 3:23).

261. S. W. Kimball, *Righteous Women*, p. 102. See the request Emma Smith wrote for a blessing from the Prophet, where she asked that she might live to “perform all the work that [she] covenanted to perform in the spirit-world” (G. N. Jones, *Emma*, p. 295).
262. Moses 6:60.
263. Moses 6:60.
264. Moses 6:60.
265. W. W. Isenberg, *Philip*, 70:36–71:3, p. 152.
266. See 1 Nephi 10:19; Alma 7:20; 37:12; D&C 3:2; 35:1.

267. Moses 5:7. See Moses 5:6–8.
268. M. J. bin Gorion (Berdichevsky), *Die Sagen* (1913–1927), 2:307–8.
269. See Psalm 8:4.
270. G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, p. 201. Cf. B. Beer, *Abraham's*, p. 68.
271. See Genesis 22.
272. Abraham 1:12–18 and Facsimile 1.
273. JST Genesis 17:11.
274. See Genesis 17:11; Romans 2:28; Ephesians 2:11.
275. For additional discussion of “arrested sacrifice” see below. With respect to circumcision, Hugh Nibley commented (H. W. Nibley, Return): “Circumcision is another form of arrested sacrifice in which the victim’s own blood was shed and a permanent mark was left. It represents the sacrifice of Abraham who initiated it (Genesis 17:10–14; and cf. Exodus 21:6–7).”
276. D&C 20:37.
277. D&C 76:64; 132:19. Cf. D&C 76:50–70; 132:19–20, 26. See also H. W. Nibley, Sacrifice of Isaac, s.v. The Resurrection Motif; J. M. Bradshaw, Ezekiel Mural, pp. 11–12; J. M. Bradshaw, What Did Joseph Smith Know, pp. 24–33.
278. B. K. Packer, Come, p. 20. Loren Spendlove observes (L. B. Spendlove, 22 October 2016): “The connection between blood and clothing may not seem so readily apparent until we realize that the robes of righteousness that we put on, even with our best efforts, are insufficient as a means of salvation until they are washed white in the blood of the Lamb.”
279. T. G. Madsen, House, pp. 280–281.
280. J. A. Widtsoe, Work, p. 33.
281. H. L. Andrus, *Doctrinal*, pp. 250–251:

Eternal life consists of attaining the endowments of immortal glory in the world to come, coming forth in the resurrection endowed with the divine attributes and powers of truth and light that constitute celestial glory and thereby possessing the same kind of life that God possesses—to be glorified as He is glorified so that man sees

as He sees, hears as He hears, and has power to manifest his will in and through all things even as God manifests His intelligence and power throughout universal space. (Eternal life is not to have eternal increase. The term denoting the power to have a continuation of posterity forever and ever is "eternal lives" [D&C 132:55], not "eternal life.") If man has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repents of all sin, is baptized by immersion for the remission of sins, receives the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and endures to the end in the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the divine promise is that he will attain eternal life in the resurrection.

282. J. A. Widtsoe, *Temple Worship*, p. 196.

283. D&C 84:20–21.

284. Moses 6:60.

285. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 61.

286. Moses 6:60.

287. See B. C. Hafen, *Broken*, p. 166. Cf. D. A. Bednar, *Clean Hands*. See N. T. Wright, *Justification* for a non-LDS view of justification that avoids the extremes of "grace-alone" interpretations of Paul's writings on the subject.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained justification in terms of D&C 132:7 and D&C 76:53 (B. R. McConkie, *Law of Justification*, pp. 419–420):

In the early 1830's, when the Lord was talking to the Prophet about what is called the new and everlasting covenant—that is, about the fulness of the gospel—he revealed this further truth relative to this great law of justification, and I think these following words are a perfect one sentence summary of the whole law of the whole gospel. The Lord said (D&C 132:7):

All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and

commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power . . . are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead.

One more expression in the revelations has bearing on this. The Lord said (D&C 76:53):

the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.

Now, to justify is to seal, or to ratify, or to approve; and it is very evident from these revelations that every act that we do, if it is to have binding and sealing virtue in eternity, must be justified by the Spirit. In other words, it must be ratified by the Holy Ghost; or in other words, it must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

All of us know that we can deceive men. We can deceive our bishops or the other Church agents, unless at the moment their minds are lighted by the spirit of revelation; but we cannot deceive the Lord. We cannot get from him an unearned blessing. There will be an eventual day when all men will get exactly and precisely what they have merited and earned, neither adding to nor subtracting from. You cannot with success lie to the Holy Ghost.

Now let us take a simple illustration. If an individual is to gain an inheritance in the celestial world, he has to enter in at the gate of baptism, that ordinance being performed under the hands of a legal administrator. If he comes forward prepared by worthiness, that is, if he is just and true, and gains baptism under the hands of a legal administrator, he is justified by the Spirit in the act which has been performed; that is, it is ratified by the Holy Ghost, or it is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. As a result it is of full force and validity in this life and in the life to come.

If an individual thereafter turns from righteousness and goes off and wallows in the mire of iniquity, then the seal is removed, and so we have this principle which keeps the unworthy from gaining unearned blessings. The Lord has

placed a bar which stops the progress of the unrighteous; he has placed a requirement which we must meet. We must gain the approval and receive the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost if eventually and in eternity we are to reap the blessings that we hope to reap.

The same thing that is true of baptism is true of marriage. If a couple comes forward worthily, a couple who is just and true, and they enter into that ordinance under the hands of a legal administrator, a seal of approval is recorded in heaven. Then assuming they do not thereafter break that seal, assuming they keep the covenant and press forward in steadfastness and in righteousness, they go on in the next world as husband and wife; and in and after the resurrection, that ordinance performed in such a binding manner here has full force, efficacy, and validity.

I think perhaps this doctrine, as almost all other doctrines that we teach in the Church, leads us back to the same central conclusion, which is that it is obligatory upon us to keep the commandments of God if we ever expect to inherit the blessings that he has promised the Saints. We should remind ourselves again and again of these words which he has spoken (D&C 59:23):

he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.

288. D&C 138:33, emphasis added.

289. Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Nephi 31:17; 3 Nephi 1:23; 7:25; 12:2; 30:2; Moroni 8:11, 25–26; D&C 13:1; 19:31; 20:37; 33:11; 49:13; 55:1–2; 68:27; 84:27, 64, 74; 107:20; 137:6; 138:33; Joseph Smith — History 1:68–69.

290. The concept of repentance is linked to the remission of sins without any reference to baptism in Luke 24:47; Enos 1:2; Alma 12:34; Helaman 14:13; 3 Nephi 7:16, 23–25; Moroni 3:3; D&C 21:8–9; 53:3. Remission of sins through faith or belief or “looking forward” to Jesus Christ is mentioned in Acts 10:43; Romans 3:25; Mosiah 3:13; Mosiah 4:3, 12, 20, 26; 15:11; Alma 4:14; 7:6; 13:16; 30:16; 38:8; Moroni 3:3; D&C 53:3. Other references not

specifically mentioning baptism include those to the remission of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:22; 10:18; D&C 27:2–3) and some less specific references (Luke 1:77–78; 2 Nephi 25:26; D&C 20:5). Significantly, the idea of the “baptism of *repentance* for the remission of sins” is mentioned in Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3. Cf. 3 Nephi 7:25; D&C 107:20.

291. In addition to clarifying that it is by the Spirit of Christ that individuals are justified through their faith in Jesus Christ, D&C 20:37 clearly dictates this initial justification is a requirement that ought to be fulfilled *prior* to baptism, rather than afterward. The revelation states that only those who have “received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins ... *shall* be received by baptism into his church.” This requirement became a point of contention for Oliver Cowdery, who apparently felt this passage was in error. The explanation below draws from an account of this and similar instances of contention between Oliver Cowdery and the Prophet that are discussed in J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2, EXCURSUS 1: Revelatory Experiences of Oliver Cowdery*, pp. 441–448.

In June 1829, two months after his failed effort to translate portions of the Book of Mormon, Oliver apparently was given another chance to participate in the revelatory process when he was assigned to prepare a summary of principles and practices for the use of missionaries and for the guidance of the Church. Having asked for help in how to proceed, the Lord gave instructions through the Prophet Joseph Smith that he should rely on what was already written in the Book of Mormon as his guide (D&C 18:1–5).

A subsequent document entitled “Articles of the Church of Christ,” phrased as a revelation from the Lord to Oliver and dated 1829, “contains directions about ordinations, the sacrament, and baptism” (R. L. Bushman, *Beginnings*, p. 156. Oliver Cowdery’s revelation is reprinted in full in R. J. Woodford, *Historical Development.*, 1:287–290 and S. H. Faulring, *Examination*, pp. 178–181). Consistent with the Lord’s instructions, many of the verses were based directly on passages in the Book of Mormon. Although some portions of Oliver’s revelation were eventually carried over into Joseph Smith’s later revelation on church organization and government recorded in D&C 20, the Prophet in essence received a new revelation. “Roughly one-fifth of section

20 relies on the Book of Mormon for its text, while more than half of Cowdery's Articles are either direct quotations or paraphrases with slight deviations from the Book of Mormon" (ibid., p. 167).

Concerning those who should be baptized, Oliver's revelation read very simply as follows (ibid., p. 178):

Now therefore whosoever repenteth and humbleth himself before me and desireth to be baptized in my name shall ye baptize them.

Doctrine and Covenants 20:37 greatly elaborated and extended these conditions, in particular adding the requirement that those who were to be baptized should have already received a remission of sins.

In Oliver's study of the Book of Mormon, he had surely encountered the following verses, which seem to imply that the remission of sins does not precede baptism but follows it (2 Nephi 31:17–18):

Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.

And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive.

Oliver also would have been familiar with Moroni 6:1–4. These verses contain parallels to the elaborated wording in D&C 20:37, yet imply that the spiritual cleansing by the Holy Ghost follows baptism:

And now I speak concerning baptism. Behold, elders, priests, and teachers were baptized; and they were not baptized save they brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it.

Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins.

And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.

And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith.

Despite the seeming contradiction of D&C 20:37 with the passages cited above, there are several Book of Mormon examples of the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost operating on repentant individuals before baptism. For example, there is the account of King Lamoni who before his baptism had “the dark veil of unbelief ... cast away from his mind” in a dramatic manner (see Alma 19:6), and the father of King Lamoni who desired to have “this wicked spirit rooted out of [his] breast” (see Alma 22:15). We do not know if Alma the Younger had already been baptized before his conversion experience — if not, his spiritual rebirth recounted in Mosiah 27 and Alma 36 qualifies as an example of remission of sins prior to baptism. If on the other hand, he had previously been baptized, at the very least we can say that the detailed description that he gives seems to be of the same kind as King Lamoni and Alma the Elder.

The Prophet Joseph Smith describes the controversy about verse 37 and its resolution as follows (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, July 1830, 1:104–105. For additional details about this controversy, see G. Underwood, Oliver Cowdery’s Correspondence, pp. 114–116):

Whilst thus employed in the work appointed me by my Heavenly Father, I received a letter from Oliver Cowdery, the contents of which gave me both sorrow and uneasiness. Not having that letter now in my possession,

I cannot of course give it here in full, but merely an extract of the most prominent parts, which I can yet, and expect long to, remember. He wrote to inform me that he had discovered an error in one of the commandments — Book of Doctrine and Covenants: "And truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto a remission of their sins."

The above quotation, he said, was erroneous, and added: "I command you in the name of God erase those words, that no priestcraft be amongst us!"

As explanation to Cowdery's mention of priestcraft, *ibid.*, p. 115 explains: "By including in the Articles and Covenants an additional requirement not specified in the Book of Mormon — especially when Cowdery's own 1829 'Articles of the Church of Christ' hewed so closely to Book of Mormon wording — Joseph had, as Oliver saw it, overstepped his bounds. To Cowdery, such arrogation on Joseph's part was nothing less than priestcraft."

Joseph Smith's account continues as follows:

I immediately wrote to him in reply, in which I asked him by what authority he took upon him to command me to alter or erase, to add to or diminish from, a revelation or commandment from Almighty God.

A few days afterwards I visited him and Mr. Whitmer's family, when I found the family in general of his opinion concerning the words above quoted, and it was not without both labor and perseverance that I could prevail with any of them to reason calmly on the subject. However, Christian Whitmer at length became convinced that the sentence was reasonable, and according to Scripture; and finally, with his assistance, I succeeded in bringing, not only the Whitmer family, but also Oliver Cowdery to acknowledge that they had been in error, and that the sentence in dispute was in accordance with the rest of the commandment. And thus was this error rooted out, which having its rise in presumption and rash judgment, was the more particularly calculated (when once fairly understood) to teach each and all of us the necessity of humility and meekness before the Lord, that He might teach us of His ways, that we might walk in His paths,

and live by every word that proceedeth forth from His mouth.

Note that nothing is mentioned about confirmation in Oliver's revelation. However, D&C 20:41 gives instructions on confirmation "for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost." This verse, not in the original manuscript of the revelation but added in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, "codified in scripture the usage so firmly established in the church" (R. P. Howard, *Restoration* (1995), p. 158).

Regarding the means of bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, as an Apostle, wrote "We may correctly believe that the Lord may bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost by other means than by the laying on of hands if occasion requires it" (J. F. Smith, Jr., *Answers*, 4:95). President Joseph F. Smith, as a counselor in the First Presidency, wrote in 1900:

As to the means through which the Holy Ghost confirms the ordinance of baptism, this is by the laying on of hands. If it be asked why this is so, the answer is, simply because God has so ordained. There are two instances on record when the Spirit confirmed baptism without the laying on of hands, (so far as we know). The one was that of Christ, the other that of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. In the case of the Savior, the Holy Ghost manifested itself in the sign of a dove, and a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' In the case of Joseph and Oliver, 'the ordinance of baptism by water was immediately followed by a most glorious baptism of the Holy Ghost.' Divine joy and inspiration fell upon the two brethren and each in turn exercised to a remarkable degree the spirit of prophecy. (See *Millennial Star*, vol. 3, p. 148.)

It will be noticed, however, that these two exceptions mark the beginning of dispensations. There was at hand no one with authority to confer the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands. But even if we had not these good reasons, the simple fact that God ordained that confirmation is to be by laying on of hands must forever dispose of the question." ("Editor's Table," *Improvement Era*, 4 [Nov. 1900]: 52–53), cited in G. A. Prince, *Power*, p. 93).

Writes Gregory Prince: "Once the church was organized, and, aside from the special case of Smith and Cowdery, there is no record of members receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost by other means" (*ibid.*, pp. 93–94).

292. Moroni 6:4.

293. Moses 6:60. Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote (B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 290): "Sins are remitted not in the waters of baptism, as we say in speaking figuratively, but when we receive the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Spirit of God that erases carnality and brings us into a state of righteousness. We become clean when we actually receive the fellowship and companionship of the Holy Ghost."

294. C. S. Lewis applied this imagery to the relationship between faith and works. To him, the debate about the role of faith vs. works seemed like (C. S. Lewis, *Mere*, pp. 131-132):

asking which blade in a pair of scissors is most necessary. ... The Bible really seems to clinch the matter when [in Philippians 2:12–13] it puts the two things together into one amazing sentence. The first half is, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"—which looks as if everything depended on us and our good actions: but the second half goes on, "For it is God who worketh in you"—which looks as if God did everything and we nothing. ... [This seems puzzling at first, but this is only because we are trying] to separate into water-tight compartments, what exactly God does and what man does when God and man are working together. And, of course, we begin by thinking it is like two men working together, so that you could say, "He did this bit and I did that." But ... God is not like that. He is [working] inside you as well as outside: even if we could understand who did what, I do not think human language could properly express it. In the attempt to express it different Churches say different things. But you will find that even those who insist most strongly on the importance of good actions tell you you need Faith; and even those who insist most strongly on Faith tell you to do good actions.

295. D&C 121:46.

296. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 61.

297. Ibid., p. 61.
298. Moses 6:57. Cf. 1 Nephi 15:34; Alma 7:21; 11:37; 40:26; 3 Nephi 27:19. See also D&C 94:8–9; 97:15; 109:20.
299. D&C 130:22. See also 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21–22.
300. According to Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “Forgiveness is assured when the contrite soul receives the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit will not dwell in an unclean tabernacle” (B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 239).
301. H. M. Smith et al., *Commentary*, p. 104. Cf. Helaman 3:35; D. T. Christofferson, Justification; H. L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith*, pp. 122–126; H. L. Andrus, *Perfection*, pp. 182–194.

Indeed, one who receives the Holy Ghost and then rebels against it, failing to continue in the process of sanctification to the end, his “last state . . . is worse than [his] first” (Luke 11:26). JST Matthew 12:37–38 explains:

Then came some of the Scribes and said unto him, Master, it is written that, Every sin shall be forgiven; but ye say, Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. And they asked him, saying, How can these things be?

And he said unto them, When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none; *but when a man speaketh against the Holy Ghost, then he saith, I will return into my house from when I came out; and when he is come, he findeth him empty, swept and garnished; for the good spirit leaveth him unto himself.*

302. D. A. Bednar, Always Retain, p. 61.
303. Mosiah 27:36. See also 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15.
304. In an 1839 discourse on the topic of the Second Comforter, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught that it is “our privilege to pray for and obtain” (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Before 8 August 1839 (3), p. 14, punctuation modernized) the knowledge that we are sealed up to Eternal Life. As we pray for this privilege, we should also prepare for it. To this end, we are told in revelation to “give diligent heed to the words of eternal life,” and to “live by every word that

proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" (D&C 84:43–44). The Prophet explained that it is the First Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which "shall teach you" until the joyous moment when, at last, as the Savior promised, "ye [shall] come to Me and My Father" (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 15, punctuation modernized, words in brackets added. Cf. D&C 84:45–47). Encouraging each of us to follow the example of the importunate widow, Joseph then said (*ibid.*, p. 15, punctuation and capitalization modernized):

God is not a respecter of persons. We all have the same privilege. Come to God. Weary Him until He blesses you.

305. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62. See Mosiah 4:11–12.
306. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62. See D&C 20:77, 79.
307. Cf. "Heaven is a place, but also a condition" (S. W. Kimball, *Glimpses*, p. 39).
308. D&C 109:76. Cf. D&C 29:12.
309. Mosiah 3:19.
310. Mosiah 3:19.
311. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Faith, Hope, and Charity* (book).
312. See D&C 88:34.
313. D&C 88:30, emphasis added.
314. Mosiah 3:19.
315. D&C 88:30.
316. 1 Samuel 16:13; Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18.
317. 2 Nephi 31:20, emphasis added.
318. Ether 12:32, emphasis added.
319. Hebrews 6:11, emphasis added.
320. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Faith, Hope, and Charity* (book).
321. Moroni 7:47. See *ibid.*
322. D&C 131:5.
323. D&C 88:29.
324. D&C 84:23. Cf. Exodus 19:10–11.
325. Moses 6:59. Cf. D&C 88:75.

326. D&C 75:5.

327. D&C 132:24, 55.

328. D&C 29:13.

329. See D&C 121:46.

330. 3 Nephi 27:20. Cf. D&C 84:33: “sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.” For more on this promise, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 28–29.

331. Moses 6:60. Cf. Moroni 10:33:

And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

332. Hyrum Andrus provides this succinct explanation (H. L. Andrus, *Doctrinal*, p. 253):

The process of being justified by the Holy Spirit is ... directly related to the process of being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, for the divine agent acts to bring man to realize both objectives in the Gospel. To be sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ means that though the Holy Spirit leads man to the condition of justification and is the sanctifying power by which he is cleansed from the effects of sin, the divine plan rests upon the blood of Christ, which He shed in making His infinite atonement.

333. Acts 8:14–17; Articles of Faith 1:4.

334. Moses 3:7. In Genesis, two Hebrew words *nishma* (e.g., Genesis 2:7; 7:22) and *ruach* (e.g., Genesis 6:17; 7:15, 22) are associated with the “breath of life.” While *ruach* is applied to God, man, and animals, the use of *nishma* is reserved for God and man alone (V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, p. 159).

335. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 20 March 1842, p. 108, spelling and punctuation modernized. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, pp. 198–199. The statement in context reads:

What is the sign of the healing of the sick? The laying on of hands is the sign or way marked out by James [James 5:14–15] and the custom of ancient saints as

ordered by the Lord, and we should not obtain the blessing by pursuing any other course except the way which God has marked out. What if we should attempt to get the Holy Ghost through any other means except the sign or way which God hath appointed. Should we obtain it? Certainly not. All other means would fail. The Lord says do so and so, and I will bless so and so. There are certain key words and signs belonging to the priesthood which must be observed in order to obtain the blessings. The sign of Peter was to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, with the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and in no other way is the gift of the Holy Ghost obtained. ... Had [Cornelius] not taken [these] sign[s or] ordinances upon him ... and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, and it obey him [cf. Moses 1:21: "Moses received strength, and called upon God, saying: In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan."] for the spirits might say unto him, as they did to the sons of Sceva: "Paul we know and Jesus we know, but who are ye?" [see Acts 19:13–15].

336. John 13:10.

337. E.g., Lamentations 4:20. See V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, pp. 158–159.

338. Isaiah 61:1, emphasis added. See also Luke 4:17–22.

339. 1 Samuel 16:13.

340. L. L. Baker et al., *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 353; cf., e.g., 1 Samuel 10:1, 15:17, 16:23; 2 Samuel 2:4, 5:3; 1 Kings 1:39; 1 Chronicles 29:22 and additional discussion on pp. 354–358. Compare J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 519–523.

341. J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 6 August 1843, 5:527.

342. B. Nichols, *Coronation*, pp. 18, 14. About ablutions and anointing of kings in other cultures, see S. D. Ricks et al., *King*, pp. 241–44, 254–255. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, EXCURSUS 52: Washing, Anointing, and Clothing Among Early Christians, p. 661.

343. M. E. Stone, *Angelic Prediction*, p. 125.

344. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62.
345. Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions*, p. 89. Cf. F. S. Jones, *Recognitions* (1995), pp. 76–77.
346. Tertullian, *Baptism*, 7, p. 672.
347. C. S. Lewis, *Mere*, p. 154.
348. Moses 6:60.
349. W. W. Isenberg, *Philip*, 70:36–71:3, p. 152.
350. Alma 13:5.
351. Alma 13:2, emphasis added.
352. Alma 13:3.
353. D&C 4:2. See J. M. Bradshaw, *He That Thrusteth in His Sickle*, pp. 166–159, where it is argued that “a careful examination of the Hebrew of Deuteronomy 6:5, a companion scripture to D&C 4:2, will reveal that it is essentially a statement of the law of consecration, the crowning law of the ordinances.”
354. Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; Romans 6:22; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 6:11; James 5:11; 1 Peter 1:13; Revelation 2:26; 1 Nephi 13:37; 22:31; 2 Nephi 9:24; 31:16, 20; 33:4, 9; Omni 1:26; Mosiah 2:41; 26:23; Alma 12:27; 27:27; 32:13, 15; 38:2; 3 Nephi 15:9; 27:6; 27:11, 16, 17, 19; Mormon 9:29; Moroni 3:3; 6:3; 8:3, 26; D&C 10:4; 14:7; 18:22; 20:25, 29, 37; 31:13; 53:7; 66:12; 75:11, 13, 14; 76:5; 81:6; 100:12; 105:41; 121:32. Contrast Mosiah 4:6, 30; 5:8; Alma 34:33; 41:6 which describe this end explicitly in terms of the end of mortal life, rather than implicitly as the end of probation or the time of judgment as in other scriptural references.
355. See E. T. Benson, *Vision*. Besides the discourse by President Benson cited here, other summaries of the temple covenants by General Authorities in our day can be found in J. E. Faust, *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 4; B. R. McConkie, *Obedience*; G. B. Hinckley, *Teachings* (1997), 10 April 1996, p. 147; J. E. Talmage, *House of the Lord*, p. 55; B. K. Packer, *Holy Temple*, p. 163; R. D. Hales, *Return*, pp. 4–5.
356. Moses 6:60.
357. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image* 1, COMMENTARY Moses 5:35–36, pp. 383–384.
358. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 61.

359. JST Genesis 9:4. See S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, p. 116. Joseph Smith taught that resurrected bodies would contain no blood, but rather would be "quickened by the Spirit" (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 12 May 1844, Thomas Bullock Report, p. 368). See also *ibid.*, 12 May 1844, George Laub Journal, pp. 370–371; *ibid.*, 20 March 1842, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 20 March 1842, p. 109.
360. S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, p. 99. The canonized version of Moses 6:29 resulted from a correction in the handwriting of Sidney Rigdon that is found in σT_2 (*ibid.*, p. 610): "by their oaths, they have brought upon themselves death."
361. Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:27–30.
362. E.g., Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:14; Deuteronomy 12:23. See also John 6:53–54.
363. Leviticus 17:11. See Leviticus 17:11–14; Deuteronomy 12:23–24, which provide "the basis of Jewish dietary laws governing the koshering of meat, the purpose of which is to ensure the maximum extraction of blood from the flesh before cooking" (N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 61).
364. See Exodus 24:9–11.
365. D&C 110:5.
366. Isaiah 6:6–7.
367. Isaiah 6:6.
368. Hebrew *tēkuppār*, literally, "atoned" **kpr*.
369. D. Harper, Dictionary, s.v. blood.
370. *Ibid.*, s.v. bless.
371. *Ibid.*, s.v. bless, bliss. Commenting on Moses 5:10, 12, where Adam and Eve "blessed" God, Hugh Nibley asks (H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 19, pp. 235–236): "How can you bless God? Does he need blessing? ... A blessing can go in both ways. A blessing is full approval and full acceptance of another ... Bless has a double etymology. One says it's from the Old English word, *blotsian*, connected with our word 'blood.' To make a blood sacrifice; to bless in that sense. But bless is also connected with the word 'bliss,' a complete approval ..., a complete acceptance when you bless God. So people can bless each other. You can bless your father or your mother as well as they can bless you."

Harper comments that the meaning of “bless” “shifted in late Old English toward “pronounce or make happy,” by resemblance to unrelated bliss” (D. Harper, Dictionary, s.v. bless).

372. Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster New Book of Word Histories*, p. 50; D. Harper, Dictionary, s.v. bless.
373. D. A. Bednar, *Ye Must Be Born Again*, p. 22.
374. Alma 13:11. See also Exodus 19:10, 14; Ether 13:11; Revelation 7:14
375. For example, as early as 25 January 1832, Elder Sidney Rigdon “sealed upon [the head of Joseph Smith] the blessings which he had formerly received” (O. Pratt, *Orson Pratt Journals*, p. 11). Joseph Smith recorded an experience that took place in the Kirtland Temple, just prior to his vision of the celestial kingdom: “my father anointed my head, and sealed upon me the blessings of Moses, to lead Israel in the latter days, even as Moses led him in days of old; and also the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 21 January 1836, 2:380).
376. D&C 131:5. Cf. 2 Corinthians 1:21–22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30; Revelation 7:2–4, 9:4.
377. Hebrews 1:3. Cf., e.g., 1 John 3:2. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 12 sees this idea in the creation of mankind “in the image of God,” concluding that “each person bears the stamp of royalty.”
378. Explains Nibley (H. W. Nibley, *Sacred*, p. 559):

The word *seal*, which is so important, is simply the diminutive of *sign*, *sigillum* from *signum*. It is a word rendered *peculiar* in Deuteronomy. Like the other tokens, it can represent the individual who bears the king’s seal, who bears the authority. Its particular value, however, is as a time-binder. The seal secures the right of a person to the possession of something from which he or she may be separated by space and time; it guarantees that he shall not be deprived of his claim on an object by long or distant separation. The mark on the seal is the same as that which he carries with him. And when the two are compared, his claim is established, but only if neither of the tokens has been altered. This is the control anciently exercised by tally-sticks, such as the Stick of Joseph and the Stick of Judah.

379. L. T. Johnson, *Religious Experience*, p. 78 and p. 78 n. 44.
380. Alma 5:14.
381. 2 Corinthians 3:3, 18. The contrast between the writing on tables of stone and the writing on the fleshy tables of the heart of the disciples in v. 3 draws on imagery from Ezekiel 36:26–27 and Jeremiah 31:33 (S. S. Lee, *Jesus' Transfiguration*, p. 59):

The new heart and Spirit in Ezekiel 36 are the vehicles of God's inwardly established commandments and the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 is identified with those commandments inscribed in human hearts. In this association, the stone with the extraordinary value of endurance appears as a condition of a hardened heart. According to Jeremiah, the New Covenant with new heart and Spirit has to come about because of Israel's breaking of the Mosaic Law, the Old Covenant, due to their stubborn hearts. Here, the stone tablets clearly refer to the tablets of the Law which Moses received at Mount Sinai.

According to Lee, the believer's transformation in v. 18 (*ibid.*, p. 69):

results from gazing upon the glory of the risen Christ with an unveiled face [i.e., as opposed to their requiring, in their unrighteousness, a veil to cover the face of the glorified Moses], a risen Christ who is now the Lord in Paul's Gospel.

382. H. W. Nibley, *Return*, p. 58. D&C 19 makes it clear that "every man must repent or suffer ... even as I" (D&C 19:3, 17). Remember that in Isaiah's prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ, the Lord is appareled in red garments. Of the unrepentant wicked who will not accept their Redeemer, the Lord says: "*their* blood shall be sprinkled upon *my* garments" (Isaiah 63:3).
383. Genesis 22:13.
384. H. W. Nibley, *Abraham* (2000), <http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1093&index=11> (accessed October 15, 2016).
385. R. A. Rosenberg, *Jesus, Isaac*, p. 385p. 385.
386. *Ibid.*, pp. 383, 385.
387. 2 Nephi 31:19.

388. Although we enter the gate of repentance and baptism by exercising “unshaken faith,” “relying *wholly* upon the merits” of Christ (2 Nephi 31:19), it is intended that we grow spiritually through a combination of our efforts and His strengthening power in gradual fashion until, someday, we come to “be like him” (1 John 3:2; Moroni 7:48). Certainly there is truth in Stephen Robinson’s emphasis on the difference in magnitude between the “61 cents” we contribute toward our salvation and the unfathomably costly contribution that Jesus Christ made on our behalf (S. E. Robinson, *Believing*, pp. 31–34). However, there are major differences between Latter-day Saint beliefs and extreme versions of “grace-oriented” theologies — as exemplified by Charles Spurgeon’s famous line: “If there be but one stitch in the celestial garment of our righteousness which we ourselves are to put in, we are lost” (cited in B. B. Warfield, *Plan*, p. 51).

Just as Jesus Christ will put all enemies beneath his feet (1 Corinthians 15:25–26), so Joseph Smith taught that each person who would be saved must also, with His essential help, gain the power needed to “triumph over all [their] enemies and put them under [their] feet” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 14 May 1843, p. 297. See also 17 May 1843, p. 301; 21 May 1843, p. 305), possessing the “glory, authority, majesty, power, and dominion which Jehovah possesses” (L. E. Dahl et al., *Lectures*, 7:9, p. 98; cf. 7:16 — note that the authorship of these lectures, traditionally ascribed to Joseph Smith, is uncertain).

As Chauncey Riddle explains (C. C. Riddle, *New*, p. 228), “the covenant of baptism is [not only] our pledge to seek after good and to eliminate all choosing and doing of evil in our lives, [but] also our receiving the power to keep that promise,” i.e., through the gift of the Holy Ghost. For us, Jesus Christ is not only our Redeemer but also the literal prototype of the process of probation that each of us is to pass through if we are to follow Him.

389. 2 Nephi 25:23. In our opinion, the word “after” should not be read mistakenly in a temporal sense, but rather in line with the atemporal Old English sense of “more away, further off” (cf. Greek *apotero*) — meaning essentially that “all we can do” is always necessary but never sufficient. In spirit, this is similar to Stephen E. Robinson’s line of thinking (S. E. Robinson, *Believing*, pp. 91–92):

I understand the preposition "after" in 2 Nephi 25:23 to be a preposition of separation rather than a preposition of time. It denotes logical separateness rather than temporal sequence. We are saved by grace "apart from all we can do," or "all we can do notwithstanding," or even "regardless of all we can do." Another acceptable paraphrase of the sense of the verse might read, "We are still saved by grace, after all is said and done."

Although Alma 24:10–11 defines "all we *could* do" [note the past tense, emphasis added] solely in terms of repentance, we are of the opinion that one of the purposes of the process of sanctification is to allow us to grow in holiness, gradually acquiring a capacity for doing "more" — specifically, *becoming* "good" like our Father (see Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19) and "*doing* good" (Acts 10:38, emphasis added) like the Son, an evolution of our natures jointly enabled by the Atonement and our exercise of moral agency that some non-LDS Christians might consider impossible. Despite all this, of course, it must never be forgotten that even repentance itself, which is "all we can do" at the time we first accept Christ, would be impossible had not the merciful plan of redemption been laid before the foundation of the world (Alma 12:22–37). And, of course, it is His continuous grace that lends us breath, "preserving [us] from day to day, . . . and even supporting [us] from one moment to another" (Mosiah 2:21).

390. D&C 88:74–75.

391. D&C 88:74–75.

392. D&C 88:68. For an extended discussion of D&C 88:68–69, 74–75, see B. R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, pp. 582–584, 594–595. See also B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 492.

393. John 13:10.

394. For an extensive discussion of what it means to stand in the presence of God, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Standing in the Holy Place*.

395. J. W. Welch, *Sermon*, <http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1095&index=6> (accessed December 19, 2016).

396. 3 Nephi 12:19; D&C 59:8. See also 2 Nephi 2:7; 4:32; 3 Nephi 9:20; Ether 4:15; Moroni 6:2. These scriptures make it clear that this sacrifice is to be directly connected with baptism.

397. See Matthew 6:22; 3 Nephi 13:22.

398. D&C 124:39. M. B. Brown, *Gate*, p. 242 observed that Malachi 3:3 (cf. D&C 128:24):

... does not say that blood sacrifices would be offered to the Lord... The Hebrew word used to designate the “offering” in this passage is *minchah*, which is commonly used in Old Testament temple texts to designate a “bloodless” sacrifice ... (cf. The Testament of Levi, where angel priests offer bloodless sacrifices in the heavenly temple [H. C. Kee, *Testaments, Levi 3:4-6*, p. 789]). [Moreover, the] Lord helped to clarify the meaning of the Prophet’s teachings when he revealed on 19 January 1841 that within the walls of the Nauvoo Temple he would restore “the fulness of the priesthood” (D&C 124:28), and there the latter-day “sons of Levi” would offer sacrifice in the manner of a memorial, meaning in symbolic fashion (D&C 124:39). On 6 September 1842, shortly after the Nauvoo temple ordinances were first bestowed, Joseph Smith quoted Malachi 3:2-3 and clearly stated that it was the “Latter-day Saints” who were to “offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” in the “holy temple” (D&C 128:24). He also indicated that the offering he was referring to was of a bloodless nature (D&C 128:24).

For more on this topic, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, EXCURSUS 33: The Restoration of Sacrifice, pp. 609-610.

399. D&C 84:26.

400. D&C 107:3.

401. N. A. Maxwell, *Deny*, p. 68.

402. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 2 July 1839, p. 162.

403. D&C 20:37.

404. See Romans 6:4–6; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 9 July 1843, p. 314.

405. Acts 8:15, 19; 2 Nephi 31:13; 32:5; 3 Nephi 28:18; 4 Nephi 1:1; D&C 25:8; 84:74; Moses 8:24.

406. D&C 84:33.

407. Truman G. Madsen explains (T. G. Madsen, *Foundations*, pp. 2, 5–6):

You have all been born as spirit children, and as such have a divine nature. You have now been born of mortal parents, and have been privileged, then, with a body, which is a step forward in your progression, not a step back . . . We are . . . to proceed to watch and pray, that it may be developed into the very likeness of our spirits, which are divine, and ultimately, then, to become, as it were, a product of another birth, which is the birth we call Jesus, who becomes, in the process of ordinances, our father. That's a proper use of the word "father" for Jesus, for he says in [D&C] 93:22, "all those who are begotten through me (through the ordinances) are partakers of the glory of the same (meaning his role as first-born), and are the Church of the Firstborn." Imagine. He has sacrificed for us in order that we can inherit what He alone could have claimed to be, the first-born. He's saying, "It will be as if you were [the Firstborn]; all of the blessings and powers that have been bestowed upon Me are now transmitted to you, if you are willing to come to Me." They are "begotten through me" and are "partakers of the glory of the same." . . . [T]here will be another birth ahead of us, and that's called the resurrection. And then the promise that we can be like him will be literal and complete.

408. Alma 36:26; cf. Mosiah 27:28. By way of contrast, 1 John 3:9 and 5:1 seem to use the term "born of God" with a more general meaning.
409. C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape*, Preface [1961 edition], p. 9. The original statement reads: "God turns tools into servants and servants into sons, so that they may be at last reunited to Him in the perfect freedom of a love offered from the height of the utter individualities which he has liberated them to be." For more on this topic, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 75–79.

Note that within modern revelation, the highest order of the priesthood is known by different names. For example, in the Doctrine and Covenants we read about "they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory" (D&C 76:56). They are described in relation to variously named orders as being "after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was [ultimately] after the order of the

- Only Begotten Son” (D&C 76:57. Compare B. Young, 26 June 1874, p. 113).
410. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 53–65; B. R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 1:229; B. R. McConkie, *Ten Blessings*, p. 33.
411. Mosiah 5:9.
412. See M. L. Bowen, *Onomastic Wordplay*, p. 269.
413. Mosiah 5:15; Alma 34:35.
414. D&C 84:39.
415. M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 5, 12. Compare W. J. Hamblin, *Sôd of YHWH*, pp. 147, 151.
416. M. L. Bowen, *They Came*, pp. 72–73. Ben Sira 50:1–21 describes such a scene, which is reminiscent of 3 Nephi 11–19; 17:9–10; and Hebrews 1:5; 5:1–10; 7:1–28; 9:1–28:

[1] Simon the high priest, the son of Onias, who in his life repaired the house again, and in his days fortified the temple:

[2] And by him was built from the foundation the double height, the high fortress of the wall about the temple:

[3] In his days the cistern to receive water, being in compass as the sea, was covered with plates of brass:

[4] He took care of the temple that it should not fall, and fortified the city against besieging:

[5] How was he honoured in the midst of the people in his coming out of the sanctuary!

[6] He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full:

[7] As the sun shining upon the temple of the most High, and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds:

[8] And as the flower of roses in the spring of the year, as lilies by the rivers of waters, and as the branches of the frankincense tree in the time of summer:

[9] As fire and incense in the censer, and as a vessel of beaten gold set with all manner of precious stones:

[10] And as a fair olive tree budding forth fruit, and as a cypress tree which groweth up to the clouds.

[11] When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy altar, he made the garment of holiness honourable.

[12] When he took the portions out of the priests' hands, he himself stood by the hearth of the altar, compassed about, as a young cedar in Libanus; and as palm trees compassed they him round about.

[13] So were all the sons of Aaron in their glory, and the oblations of the Lord in their hands, before all the congregation of Israel.

[14] And finishing the service at the altar, that he might adorn the offering of the most high Almighty,

[15] He stretched out his hand to the cup, and poured of the blood of the grape, he poured out at the foot of the altar a sweetsmelling savour unto the most high King of all.

[16] Then shouted the sons of Aaron, and sounded the silver trumpets, and made a great noise to be heard, for a remembrance before the most High.

[17] Then all the people together hasted, and fell down to the earth upon their faces to worship their Lord God Almighty, the most High.

[18] The singers also sang praises with their voices, with great variety of sounds was there made sweet melody.

[19] And the people besought the Lord, the most High, by prayer before him that is merciful, till the solemnity of the Lord was ended, and they had finished his service.

[20] Then he went down, and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation of the children of Israel, to give the blessing of the Lord with his lips, and to rejoice in his name.

[21] And they bowed themselves down to worship the second time, that they might receive a blessing from the most High.

417. Alma 13:2.
418. Alma 13:16. Some LDS scholars have conjectured that an ancient text somewhat like the book of Moses may have been used as a foundation for some of the narrative portions of temple liturgy in former times (J. M. Bradshaw, *LDS Book of Enoch*; D. Calabro, *Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis*; M. J. Johnson, *The Lost Prologue*). The second half of Alma 12, which opens with a question about the resurrection of the dead and a reference to the “mysteries of God” (Alma 12:8–9), segues to the story of Adam and Eve’s transgression in the Garden of Eden (cf. Moses 3–4), the plan of redemption as revealed by angels to them (Alma 12:28–35; cf. Moses 5:5–8, 58), and the ordinances of the high priesthood after the order of the son of God (Alma 13:1–20; cf. Moses 5:59; 6:59, 66–68). A careful study of the relationship between the book of Moses and Alma 12–13 is overdue.
419. Cf. John 1:12–13; Romans 8:14–21; D&C 39:4.
420. See Moses 7:59. Compare P. Alexander, 3 Enoch, 10:1, 3, pp. 263–64.
421. A. A. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, p. 102.
422. F. I. Andersen, 2 Enoch, 22:8 [J], p. 138. See also J. J. Collins, *Angelic Life*, p. 239.
423. P. S. Alexander, *From Son of Adam*, pp. 103, 105.
424. See Moses 1:2, 11, 13–15, 18, 25, 31.
425. Moses 1:11.
426. P. Alexander, 3 Enoch, 16:2–3, p. 268. Compare a similar confusion in identity between God and the newly created Adam in J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah* 1, 8:10, pp. 82–83. See also P. B. Munoa, *Four Powers*, p. 101. See more generally C. R. A. Morray-Jones, *Transformational*.
427. C. Mopsik, *Hénoch*, p. 214. Regarding arguments by scholars discounting the possibility that the Enoch Son of Man and the Jesus/Pauline Son of Man concepts grew out of the same soil, see the discussion in J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image* 2, pp. 190–91, ENDNOTE M7–14.
428. History, 1838–1856, volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842], addenda p. 9 (June 27, 1839), CHL, available at Church Historian’s Press, The Joseph Smith Papers, <http://>

josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history -1838 -1856 -volume-c -1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842?p=544.

429. 2 Nephi 31:20. For extensive discussions of this and related topics, see B. R. McConkie, *NT Commentary*, 3:325–50; B. R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, 1:570–95; J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*; J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 59–65.
430. See Revelation 11:15 (“he shall reign for ever and ever”) and compare Revelation 22:5 (“they shall reign for ever and ever”).
431. Moses 6:60.
432. H. W. Nibley, *Return*, p. **.
433. D&C 101:4.
434. Genesis 22:12.
435. Mosiah 3:19.
436. See, e.g., D&C 20:77 and Alma 7:15.
437. While not explicitly associating the second part of the sacrament with the law of consecration, U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, p. 12 cites the following statement by President Heber J. Grant that associates the sacrament with two covenants rather than one (H. J. Grant, *Ninety-First*, p. 650, emphasis added):

I rejoice in the inspiration of Joseph Smith, in translating the Book of Mormon, and giving to us those two wonderful sacramental prayers, those *two marvelous covenants* that all Latter-day Saints make when they assemble together and partake of the sacrament.

438. U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, p. 5.
439. Elder Neil L. Andersen, “Witnessing to Live the Commandments,” General Conference Leadership Training on the Sabbath Day Observance at Church (April 2015, available to priesthood leaders), cited in *ibid.*, p. 14, emphasis added. The entire statement by Elder Andersen on this topic reads as follows:

The title ‘renewing our baptismal covenants’ is not found in the scriptures. It is not inappropriate. Many of you [gesturing to the audience] have used it in talks. We [gesturing to those on the stand] have used it in talks, but it is not something that is used in the scriptures. And it can’t be the keynote of what we say about the sacrament.

Spirituality is not stagnant and neither are covenants. And hopefully, what we pray, is that all of us as members are moving along a progressive growth both in our spirituality and in our covenants. Covenants bring not only commitments, but they bring spiritual power. We should teach our members that we are moving towards our Heavenly Father. The sacrament is a beautiful time to not just renew our baptismal covenants, but to commit to Him to renew all our covenants, all of our promises, and to approach Him in a spiritual power that we did not have previously as we move forward.

For other statements that explicitly state or imply that the sacrament is meant to renew more than the baptismal covenant, see, e.g., J. E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (1899), p. 179; J. F. Smith, Jr., *Doctrines*, 2:345–346; D. L. Stapley, *This Pearl*, p. 1112; N. E. Tanner, *Keep Your Covenants*, p. 1136; S. W. Kimball, *Teachings* (1982), pp. 112, 220, 226–227, 503; A. T. Tuttle, *Covenants*; D. B. Haight, *Remembering*; J. E. Mackay, *What Covenants Do We Renew*; G. B. Hinckley, *Teachings* (1997), p. 561; R. M. Nelson, *Worshiping*, p. 25; L. T. Perry, *As Now*, p. 41; C. M. Stephens, *Do We Know*, p. 12.

For an excellent discussion of Elder Andersen’s renewed emphasis as part of the current understanding of the sacrament, see U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, especially pp. 11–14. For a contrasting view, see M. Clayton, *Covenant Renewal*.

440. Mosiah 15:7. Cf. Matthew 26:28

441. Elder Oaks has explained (D. H. Oaks, *Taking Upon Us*, p. 83):

Our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ [in the sacrament] affirms our commitment to do all that we can to be counted among those whom he will choose to stand at his right hand and be called by his name at the last day. In this sacred sense, our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ constitutes our declaration of candidacy for exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Exaltation is eternal life, “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

That is what we should ponder as we partake of the sacred emblems of the sacrament.

442. Mosiah 3:19.

443. Alma 24:19; Moroni 9:10; D&C 101:36.

444. 1 Peter 2:19–21; 3:18. For a recent analysis of the concept of reciprocity and suffering in these verse, see T. B. Williams, *Reciprocity and Suffering*. On p. 438, he observes insightfully:

Evaluated from the perspective of the ancient system of reciprocity, 1 Peter portrays unjust suffering as a binding responsibility which has been placed on the readers in view of the bountiful munificence which God (their divine benefactor) has lavished upon them. ... In this way, the Christian identification with suffering takes on a new dynamic. Patient endurance during times of trial is not simply a means of achieving divine favor; it has become the very definition of how a Christian relates to God.

445. 1 Peter 3:18.

446. 3 Nephi 11:11; D&C 19:18. See also Matthew 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11

447. "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Referring to this verse, Ugo Perego writes (U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, p. 4):

As biblical scholar Margaret Barker has stated, "his phrase 'for the remission of sins' immediately identifies [the sacrament] as the temple covenant, the covenant renewed by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement" (M. Barker, *Creation theology*. See Leviticus 16). Barker continues placing particular emphasis on the necessity of saving the Creation through the Lord's own life and preserving the eternal covenant by the removal of sins. Thus, on the Day of the Atonement, the High Priest would first wash himself and then take the blood of the sacrificial goat (representing the life the Lord gave in our behalf) to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat and on the drapes of the Holy of Holies. Additionally, a second goat was released in the wilderness, symbolically carrying away the sins of Israel and mending the spiritual gap caused by the Fall.

448. Cf. Matthew 20:22–23; Mark 10:38–39..

449. Alma 22:18, emphasis added.
450. Francis Webster was remembered for his eloquent testimony that he and others in his handcart company became “acquainted with [God] in our extremities,” by this means obtaining an “absolute knowledge that God lives” (C. M. Orton, Francis Webster, p. 140). father has molded the child to his way. If Jacob prevails with God, it is Jacob who is wounded (Genesis 32:22–32)” (D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, p. 186). Citing the experience of Stephen, who saw the Lord “in the agonies of death,” Elder Orson Hyde taught (O. Hyde, 6 October 1853, p. 125):

True it is, that in the most trying hour, the servants of God may then be permitted to see their Father, and elder Brother. “But,” says one, “I wish to see the Father, and the Savior, and an angel now.” Before you can see the Father, and the Savior, or an angel, you have to be brought into close places in order to enjoy this manifestation. The fact is, your very life must be suspended on a thread, as it were. If you want to see your Savior, be willing to come to that point where no mortal arm can rescue, no earthly power save! When all other things fail, when everything else proves futile and fruitless, then perhaps your Savior and your Redeemer may appear; His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, nor His ear heavy that He cannot hear; and when help on all sides appears to fail, My arm shall save, My power shall rescue, and you shall hear My voice, saith the Lord.

President John Taylor spoke on this same subject (J. Taylor, 18 June 1883, p. 197):

I heard the Prophet Joseph say, in speaking to the Twelve on one occasion: “You will have all kinds of trials to pass through. And it is quite as necessary for you to be tried as it was for Abraham and other men of God, and (said he) God will feel after you, and He will take hold of you and wrench your very heart strings, and if you cannot stand it you will not be fit for an inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom of God.”

On another occasion, he said (J. Taylor, 24 June 1883, p. 264):

I heard Joseph Smith say and I presume Brother Snow heard him also — in preaching to the Twelve in Nauvoo, that the Lord would get hold of their heart strings and wrench them, and that they would have to be tried as Abraham was tried. ... And Joseph said that if God had known any other way whereby he could have touched Abraham's feelings more acutely and more keenly he would have done so. It was not only his parental feelings that were touched. There was something else besides. He had the promise that in him and in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; that his seed should be multiplied as the stars of the heaven and as the sand upon the sea shore. He had looked forward through the vista of future ages and seen, by the spirit of revelation, myriads of his people rise up through whom God would convey intelligence, light and salvation to a world. But in being called upon to sacrifice his son it seemed as though all his prospects pertaining to posterity were come to naught. But he had faith in God, and he fulfilled the thing that was required of him. Yet we cannot conceive of anything that could be more trying and more perplexing than the position in which he was placed.

President George Q. Cannon wrote of Abraham's great trial (G. Q. Cannon, *Truth*, 9 April 1899, 1:113):

Why did the Lord ask such things of Abraham? Because, knowing what his future would be and that he would be the father of an innumerable posterity, He was determined to test him. God did not do this for His own sake for He knew by His foreknowledge what Abraham would do; but the purpose was to impress upon Abraham a lesson and to enable him to attain unto knowledge that he could not obtain in any other way. That is why God tries all of us. It is not for His own knowledge for He knows all things beforehand. He knows all your lives and everything you will do. But He tries us for our own good that we may know ourselves; for it is most important that a man should know himself.

He required Abraham to submit to this trial because He intended to give him glory, exaltation and honor;

He intended to make him a king and a priest, to share with Himself the glory, power and dominion which He exercised. And was this trial any more than God himself had passed through?

Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote (“Link Truths, Students Told Wednesday.” *Daily Universe* (7 Oct. 1983), 37:11, as cited in R. J. Matthews, *Great Faith*, p. 259): “God knows what his children can become and tries them to help them reach their potential. ... In time each person will receive a ‘customized challenge’ to determine his dedication to God.”

For additional quotations and examples, see *ibid.*. For insightful discussion with applications of the related principle of “waiting upon the Lord,” see B. C. Hafen et al., *Contrite Spirit*, pp. 96–127.

451. JS-Matthew 1:36. Cf. Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; D&C 45:16, 44.
452. U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, p. 15 cites Truman G. Madsen as follows (T. G. Madsen, *Savior, Sacrament, Self-Worth*):

the fullest flow of the Spirit of God comes to us through His appointed channels or ordinances. The sacrament is the central and oft-repeated ordinance that transmits that power to us. Indeed, it is the ordinance that gives focus to all other ordinances. ... Eventually, through a lifetime, His spirit can sanctify the very elements of our bodies until we become capable of celestial resurrection. In baptism we are born once — born of the water and of the spirit. In the sacrament, we are reborn, over and over, of the bread and of the wine or water and we are truly what we eat.

453. See Genesis 2:3; D&C 77:1, 12; 130:9; Moses 3:3; 7:45–69; Abraham 5:3; Articles of Faith 1:10.
454. D&C 27:5. President John Taylor stated, “In the sacrament we shadow forth the time when He will come again and when we shall meet and eat bread with Him in the kingdom of God” (J. Taylor, 20 March 1870, cited in U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, p. 4). For a short description of how this eschatological event was anticipated in the practice of the early Saints in sometimes “partaking of bread and wine in a quantity similar to a normal meal,” see *ibid.*, pp. 7–8.