



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

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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.”<sup>1</sup> 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.”<sup>2</sup>

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. We note that 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 the meaning of the sacrament, which is consistent with the continuing 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.”<sup>3</sup> We discuss the relationship of the sacrament to the shewbread of Israelite temples, and its anticipation of the heavenly feast that will be enjoyed by those who have been sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ.



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

### What Does It Mean to Be Born Again?

One of the most illuminating stories in the Gospel of John tells of Nicodemus' confidential visit to inquire of Jesus.<sup>4</sup> 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.”<sup>5</sup> Though Nicodemus was one “of the Pharisees,”<sup>6</sup> “a ruler of the Jews,”<sup>7</sup> and a “master of Israel,”<sup>8</sup> 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,<sup>9</sup> Nicodemus, then a blind leader of the blind,<sup>10</sup> came to Jesus in the darkness of night.<sup>11</sup> Happily, however, “the day dawn[ed], and the day star [arose] in [his heart].”<sup>12</sup> 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 Pharisees<sup>13</sup> and helped prepare the Lord’s body for burial.<sup>14</sup>

Like the humble Peter, whose early foibles 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 possible 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. His use of the pronoun “we” in his statement that “we know that thou art a teacher come from God”<sup>15</sup> 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.”<sup>16</sup>

Jesus did not affirm Nicodemus’ declaration. Instead, He countered it with a parallel assertion: “No one is able to see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Joseph Smith taught that seeing the kingdom of God is a *prerequisite* for permanently entering into it.<sup>19</sup> He further clarified that even to *begin* to see the kingdom of God “from the outside”<sup>20</sup> (in the sense of acquiring an initial spiritual understanding of it), individuals must have a “change of heart,” “a portion of the Spirit” that would take “the vail from before their eyes,”<sup>21</sup> as was later experienced by Cornelius.<sup>22</sup> At first, however, Nicodemus resisted Jesus’ invitation to “behold” with an “eye of faith” those things that are “within the veil.”<sup>23</sup>

That said, Nicodemus’ astonishment at Jesus’ teaching was not an entirely negative thing. In later rabbinic literature, “marveling or



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

wondering ... form[ed] an important part of the process of gaining knowledge.”<sup>24</sup> For example, it was said of Rabbi Akiba that “his learning began with wonder and culminated with a crown, a symbol of his power ... to bring hidden things to light.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, Jesus’ words to Nicodemus that night, “Marvel not,”<sup>26</sup> 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.”<sup>27</sup>

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 had used a *double entendre* (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, “from the head.”<sup>28</sup> Each time Jesus repeated the requirement for all men to be “born *from above*,” or in other words, “born of the Spirit,”<sup>29</sup> Nicodemus heard only the most obvious, superficial meaning of the Savior’s saying, namely, that one must be “born *again*,” or rather, “born *of the flesh*,”<sup>30</sup> mistakenly thinking that Jesus meant coming forth a “second time” from the “mother’s womb.”<sup>31</sup>



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

Gently rebuking Nicodemus’ lack of understanding,<sup>32</sup> Jesus continued in verse 8 with a play on words that exploited the double meaning of “wind” and “Spirit” in both Greek (*pneuma*) and Hebrew (*rûah*). Although the invisible, immediate workings of the wind may be indirectly perceived by means of its “sound,”<sup>33</sup> it is beyond the power of physical sensation to reveal “whence it cometh” or “whither it goeth.”<sup>34</sup> This being the case with earthly wind, what hope has any mortal, save he is born from above, to understand movements that are governed by the unseen, divine “winds” of God’s Spirit, crucially including Jesus’ own celestial comings and goings?<sup>35</sup> Jesus’ description of those who are vaguely sensible to the evidences of the “earthly”<sup>36</sup>

wind yet stone-blind to the hidden operations of the divinely discerned “heavenly”<sup>37</sup> Spirit parallel His prior disavowal, in verses 2 and 3, of those who see the superficial signs of His mission yet lack the spiritual vision required to see the kingdom of God.

Jesus then directed his remarks more pointedly at Nicodemus and his brethren. Indeed, John’s phrasing of verse 11 seems to connect Nicodemus’ prior use of “we” in reference to the earthly council to which he belonged with Jesus’ use of the pronoun “we” in his reference to Himself and those of His prophetic predecessors who had, like Him, borne eyewitness testimony of the heavenly council: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, *We* speak that *we* do know, and testify that *we* have seen; and *ye* [a plural pronoun referring to the Sanhedrin and its partisans] receive not our witness”<sup>38</sup> — thus contrasting the heavenly council with the earthly council of the religious elite. As Nicodemus surely realized, Jesus’ testimony implied not merely that He had *seen* the divine council but also that He had there received a divine commission, as echoed in the experience of Isaiah 6:8: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for *us*? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”



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

Next, intensifying the drama of the dialogue, Jesus further described His commission. In doing so, He made it clear what it was not only to be justified and sanctified by water and the Spirit but also to be “lifted up” with power to traverse the veil in both directions as the “Son of man.”<sup>39</sup> Once again, the Lord’s elaboration simultaneously disclosed and obscured<sup>40</sup> His meaning.<sup>41</sup>

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,<sup>42</sup> 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 meaning of “lifted up” (from the Greek verb *hypsōō*) 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 only 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 — divine messengers, proximal attendants of God’s throne,<sup>43</sup> and preeminent members of the divine council. If we fail to connect the “fiery flying serpents”<sup>44</sup> that were both the plague and the salvation of the children of Israel with the burning, godlike seraphim of the heavenly temple, we will lack the interpretive key for Jesus’ central teaching to Nicodemus.

Once we realize that, in another double entendre,<sup>45</sup> Jesus has not only prophesied His atonement and death but also has compared Himself, as the “Son of Man,”<sup>46</sup> 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 similar to the role of the cherubim at the entrance of the Garden of Eden:<sup>47</sup> they were to be sentinels or “keep[ers] [of] the way,”<sup>48</sup> guarding



**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).

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.<sup>49</sup> Thus Jesus, “lifted up” to God’s throne as the better of all the seraphim and the innermost “keeper of the gate,”<sup>50</sup> could literally and legitimately assert: “no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”<sup>51</sup>

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 passage from a 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 Joseph Smith, and the book of Moses applies similar language to Enoch.<sup>52</sup> Consequently, it is clear that others in addition to Jesus Christ can be “lifted up”—becoming *sons of Man*<sup>53</sup> and receiving “everlasting life”<sup>54</sup>—through unwavering faithfulness in “the trial of [their] faith.”<sup>55</sup> 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”<sup>56</sup>—in other words, to be *born of God* in the ultimate sense.



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 as 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 prefer to use the term “sons of God” — or exceptionally, when citing the discourse of King Benjamin, “sons ... *and daughters*”<sup>57</sup> of God. Although the Church teaches that *every* mortal, “in the beginning,”<sup>58</sup> was a child “of heavenly parents,”<sup>59</sup> there is a distinction made in the Gospel of John and elsewhere in scripture in which only the most faithful of God’s “offspring” are given “power to *become* the sons of God.”<sup>60</sup>

In summary, whereas some readers 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”<sup>61</sup> 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 about the presence of subtle literary artistry in John’s account, consider the explicit confirmation of similar, deliberate wordplay in 3 Nephi 27. Within two verses, the resurrected Savior shifts aptly and seemingly effortlessly among multiple senses of “lifted up,” including “lifted up upon the cross,”<sup>62</sup> “lifted up by men”<sup>63</sup> in unrighteous judgment, “lifted up by the Father”<sup>64</sup> in righteous judgment, and, ultimately, “lifted up at the last day” in exaltation.<sup>65</sup>

Similarly, in John 3 the “lifting up” of Jesus has as much to do with His heavenly ascent and glorious enthronement as it does with his ignominious death.<sup>66</sup> Hence, according to Herman Ridderbos, “the crucifixion is not presented [by John] as Jesus’ humiliation but as the exaltation of the Son of Man,”<sup>67</sup> 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”<sup>68</sup> as He is typologically revealed in the seraphic figure that has been “lifted up” will themselves, if they “endure to the end,” receive “eternal life,”<sup>69</sup> being “lifted up”—in other words, exalted—with their Lord.

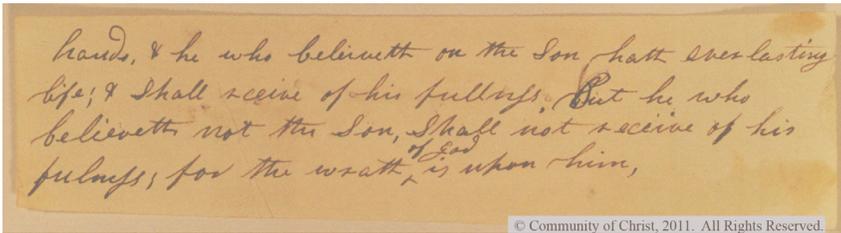


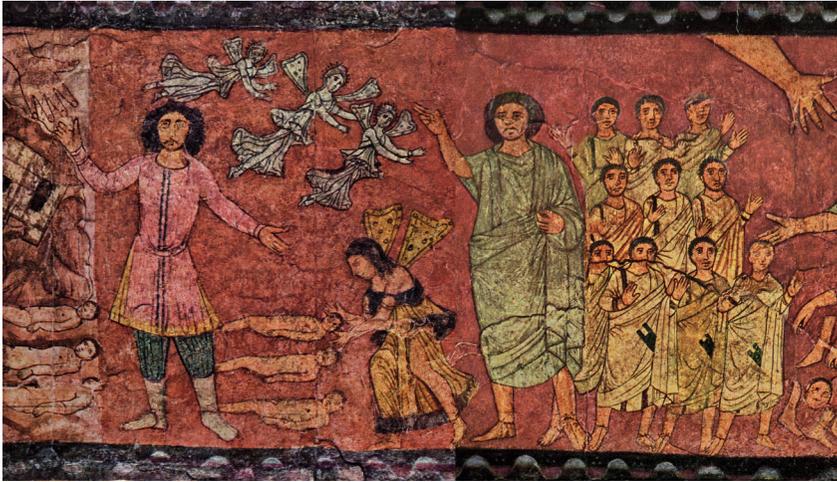
Figure 8. Note Pinned to the JST NT2 Manuscript for John 3:36<sup>70</sup>

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:<sup>71</sup>

He *who* believeth on the Son hath everlasting life<sup>72</sup> and shall receive of his fulness.

The experiences that allow disciples to “receive of his fulness” extend beyond the initial ordinances of divine rebirth and the accompanying spiritual enlightenment that would allow them to begin to discern the kingdom of God “from the outside,”<sup>73</sup> eventually permitting them to see it from within. Consistent with Jesus’ expectation that Nicodemus, as a “master of Israel,”<sup>74</sup> 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.” 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.’”<sup>75</sup>

Some scholars have argued that Philo’s ideas about a “new birth” that transforms earthly man to heavenly man may have been reflected in Jewish ritual at Qumran<sup>76</sup> and elsewhere. Such rituals seem to have enacted the liturgical equivalent of actual heavenly ascent.



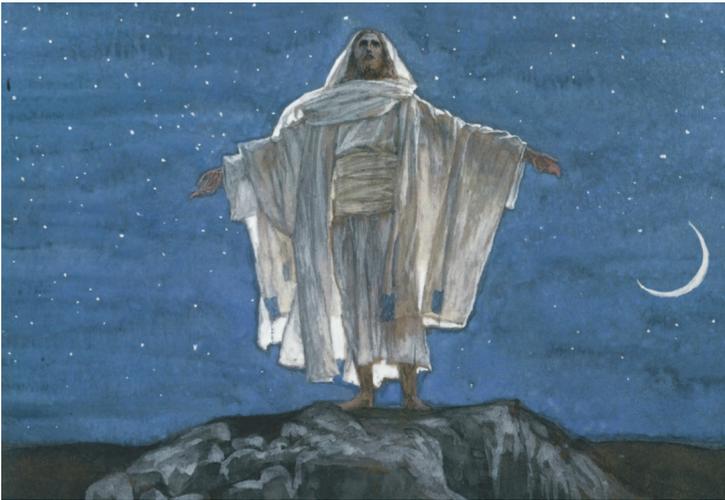
**Figure 9.** *Ezekiel and the Resurrection in the Valley of Life,*  
Dura Europos Synagogue, ca. AD 254

As has been detailed elsewhere in connection with the third-century AD synagogue of Dura Europos,<sup>77</sup> one of several plausible narrative foundations for such rituals was the vision of the resurrection of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37. Donald Carson observed that although many Old Testament writers “look forward to a time when God’s ‘spirit’ will be poured out on humankind,”<sup>78</sup> the most important of all these is Ezekiel. Carson points out 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.”<sup>79</sup>

The culminating passage of Ezekiel 37, like that of John 3, promises exaltation and eternal life to the faithful. This promise is to be fulfilled through a new and “everlasting covenant.”<sup>80</sup> In imagery that parallels chapters 21 and 22 of the book of Revelation, the Lord promises that in the future day of their salvation Israel will be called His people — meaning that they will be called by His name<sup>81</sup> — that they will be sanctified, and that His “sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”<sup>82</sup>

Going further, Carson observes that “Israel, the covenant community, was properly called ‘God’s son,’”<sup>83</sup> an idea that can be extended not only corporately but also individually, as described, for example, in Psalm 2:7 and Moses 1:4; 6:68. In chapter 16, Ezekiel describes unfaithful Israel as an abandoned female child on whom He had taken pity. When first 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.”<sup>84</sup> However, using the Israelite terminology of adoption and marriage, the Lord relates that He looked upon fledgling Israel with pity, spread His skirt over her to cover her nakedness, and entered into a covenant so that Israel could become His own.<sup>85</sup> The passage continues 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: “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.”<sup>86</sup> In reflecting on Jesus’ words, Nicodemus might have recalled prophetic passages like these 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.”<sup>87</sup>



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

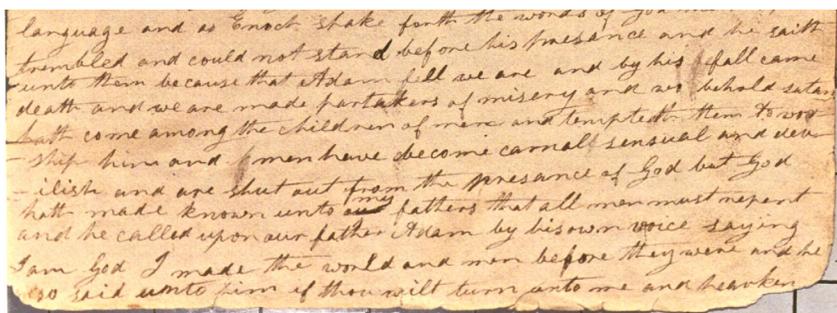
In summary, a careful reading of John 3, using modern linguistic evidence and considering relevant threads in Jewish scripture and tradition, makes it clear that being “born again” — or, rather, being “born from above” or “born of God”<sup>88</sup> — is not a process that is completed when one is baptized by water and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost. Being *ritually* reborn requires receiving and keeping all the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood<sup>89</sup> “to the end.”<sup>90</sup> Being fully reborn *in actuality* happens only after traversing the heavenly veil “to know the only

wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent,”<sup>91</sup> having both suffered in His likeness<sup>92</sup> and also having been “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,<sup>93</sup> having first been born again by water and “by the Spirit of God through ordinances,”<sup>94</sup> and then, when sanctified, must be received personally by the Father — all this in similitude of their Redeemer, the Son of God,<sup>95</sup> their peerless, perfect prototype.<sup>96</sup>

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”<sup>97</sup> from “afar off”<sup>98</sup> and culminates with “the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come,”<sup>99</sup> the remainder of this article will draw out additional, complementary details concerning the process of spiritual rebirth that are available through a close reading of Moses 6:51–68 in light of relevant scripture and prophetic teachings. 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 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 Latter-day Saint endowment, usually describing parallels from other cultures without talking specifically about the Mormon ceremony.”<sup>100</sup>

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



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**Figure 11.** JST OT1 Manuscript of Moses 6:34a–52a, p. 13 (end of page).



Hugh Nibley described Moses 6:51–68<sup>101</sup> as an “excerpt from the Book of Adam.”<sup>102</sup> 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.”<sup>103</sup> 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.<sup>104</sup>

Verses 51–68 form a structure of several parts. The introduction (verses 51–52) is a firsthand statement from God the Father wherein He, as the Maker of the world and of men, summarizes the commandments underlying the plan of salvation—namely, to hearken, believe, repent, and be baptized. Then, in verses 53–60, He motivates the commandments one by one in reverse order within a succession of ladder-like rhetorical cascades that culminate in a promise of sanctification through “the blood of [His] Only Begotten.”<sup>105</sup>

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

In response to God’s explanation of the “plan of salvation,” as it is termed in verse 62, Adam hearkened without hesitation to the voice of the Father by obeying the commandments he had been given,<sup>111</sup> as outlined in verses 64–65. In return for the witness of Adam’s covenant given in his baptism, he receives the promised “record of heaven,”<sup>112</sup> described in more detail in verse 66 as the “record of the Father, and the Son” that was declared through “a voice out of heaven.”<sup>113</sup> Having had “all things confirmed unto [him] by an holy ordinance,”<sup>114</sup> 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”<sup>115</sup> 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 described in verse 68:<sup>116</sup>

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:<sup>117</sup> "To receive such communion, ordinarily one must be justified, sanctified, and sealed by the powers of the Gospel 'unto eternal life.'"<sup>118</sup> In other words, Moses 6:68 witnesses that Adam received "the more sure word of prophecy."<sup>119</sup>

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."<sup>119</sup>



**Figure 13.** Ron Richmond (1963–), *Triplus, Number 3*, 2005. The contents of the three bowls symbolize water, blood, and spirit.

### Spiritual Rebirth by Water, Spirit, and Blood

Having outlined the meaning and import of Moses 6:51–68 as a whole, we will now examine the interrelated symbolism of water, Spirit, and blood that is highlighted in verse 60. Hugh Nibley summarizes the significance of these three elements as follows:<sup>121</sup>

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

thing is “and by the blood ye are sanctified.”<sup>125</sup> 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.

As we will discuss in more detail later on, the temple sacrifices of ancient Israel—which pointed back to Isaac’s arrested sacrifice and pointed forward to Jesus’ *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”<sup>126</sup> after their transgression and they “saw” their redemption in the garments of skin that God made for them and also in the sacrifices that He commanded them to make.<sup>127</sup> In a similar manner, Saints of the latter-days are meant to begin to “see” the Kingdom of God in the sacrament.

### “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 water ordinances of baptism and washing.



**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.<sup>128</sup>

For example, Nephi described the baptism of the Savior as a witness to His Father “that he would be obedient unto him in *keeping his commandments.*”<sup>129</sup> 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."<sup>130</sup> And Mormon taught that "baptism is unto repentance to the *fulfilling the commandments* unto the remission of sins."<sup>131</sup>

Significantly, the blessing on the sacrament bread also specifies that those who partake witness in so doing "that they are willing to ... *keep his commandments*."<sup>132</sup> 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.<sup>133</sup> 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,<sup>134</sup> an initial promise that, as Elder David A. Bednar taught, "clearly contemplates a future event or events and looks forward to the temple"<sup>135</sup> for its fulfillment. The distinctive symbolism of the two parts of the sacrament will be addressed later.

Loren Spendlove<sup>136</sup> 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."<sup>137</sup> He comments: "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."<sup>138</sup> Of course, since we expect to partake in the common benefits of the atonement of Christ, we should expect to partake in the common effort to invite and persuade, by word and example, all men and women to enjoy the full blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. 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 emulate the good He did and partake of the things He suffered in order to partake of His glory.<sup>139</sup>

With all this in mind, the importance of the commandment for all people to be baptized cannot be overstated.<sup>140</sup> 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"<sup>141</sup> their baptism "is good for nothing," being of no more use than if "a bag of sand" had been baptized in their place.<sup>142</sup>

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 physical act of eating and drinking the emblems of the sacrament.<sup>143</sup> As President Brigham Young explained:<sup>144</sup>



**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.<sup>145</sup> 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]<sup>146</sup> 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,”<sup>147</sup> the essential access point to the “strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life.”<sup>148</sup> In order to eventually enter the Kingdom of God, to which that path leads, each disciple must additionally receive and keep every other law and ordinance of the priesthood “and continue in the path until the end of the day of probation.”<sup>149</sup> As Elder Bednar expressed this idea: “Total immersion and saturation with the Savior’s gospel are essential steps in the process of being born again.”<sup>150</sup>



**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”:<sup>151</sup>

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 command<sup>152</sup> 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 angels<sup>153</sup> ... 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.<sup>154</sup> ... 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;<sup>155</sup> 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?”<sup>156</sup>

**3. The antiquity of water symbolism in rituals of rebirth.** We will not attempt to summarize the varied and controversial histories of the water rituals of purification, penitence, and proselytism in Jewish and Christian traditions.<sup>157</sup> Suffice it to 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.”*<sup>158</sup>



**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 traditions concerning the antiquity of baptism, we 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.<sup>159</sup>

Some scholars, including Stephen D. Ricks<sup>160</sup> and David J. Larsen,<sup>161</sup> have argued that the water symbolism of baptism is better understood when it is compared and contrasted with separate rituals in ancient Israel wherein the king was washed and anointed, both prior to his initiation and also at regular renewals of his right to rule.

For example, Larsen writes:<sup>162</sup>

We learn from the Bible that the...king was washed and purified, likely at the spring of Gihon.<sup>163</sup> He was anointed on the head with a perfumed olive oil that was kept in a horn



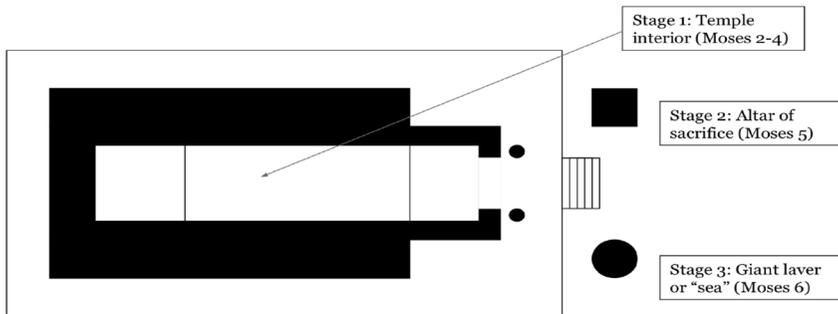
Figure 19. Impression of Seal of Gudea, Tello, Iraq, ca. 2150 BCE.

in the sanctuary.<sup>164</sup> He was clothed in robes and also wore a priestly apron (ephod<sup>165</sup>), sash,<sup>166</sup> and diadem/headress.<sup>167</sup> Finally, the king was consecrated a priest “after the order of Melchizedek.”<sup>168</sup>

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.<sup>169</sup>

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 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 conjecture that having been “born of water,”<sup>170</sup> the king, in likeness both of the sprout within the flowing vase and the god to which he is being introduced, is also to become a “well of water springing up into everlasting life.”<sup>171</sup> A sculpture of Gudea attests to just such an interpretation, where Gudea himself is shown, with his head now covered, 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 Testament<sup>170</sup> concluded that none of the major themes of Mesopotamian kingship ritual, including the roles that water plays in those rites,<sup>173</sup> 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.”<sup>174</sup>

David Calabro has explored the possibility that a text with an outline 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 suggested between the text of Moses 6 and the “molten sea”<sup>175</sup> that stood in front of the temple. After discussing several clues supporting his thesis from the book of Moses, Calabro concluded:<sup>176</sup>

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 distinct sorts of water ordinances—namely baptism by immersion (“preparatory to the reception of the Holy Ghost”<sup>177</sup>) “in order to enter the kingdom of God”<sup>178</sup> and washing (“preparatory to the anointing with holy oil ... in the man[ner] [of] Moses and Aaron”<sup>179</sup>) as part of priestly or kingly initiation—became confused in the first centuries after Christ, making it difficult to be sure which one is meant when Christian scripture or tradition mentions the use of water in religious ritual.<sup>180</sup> Indeed, as religious practices evolved, rituals resembling washing, anointing, and clothing were sometimes performed as part of “baptism.”

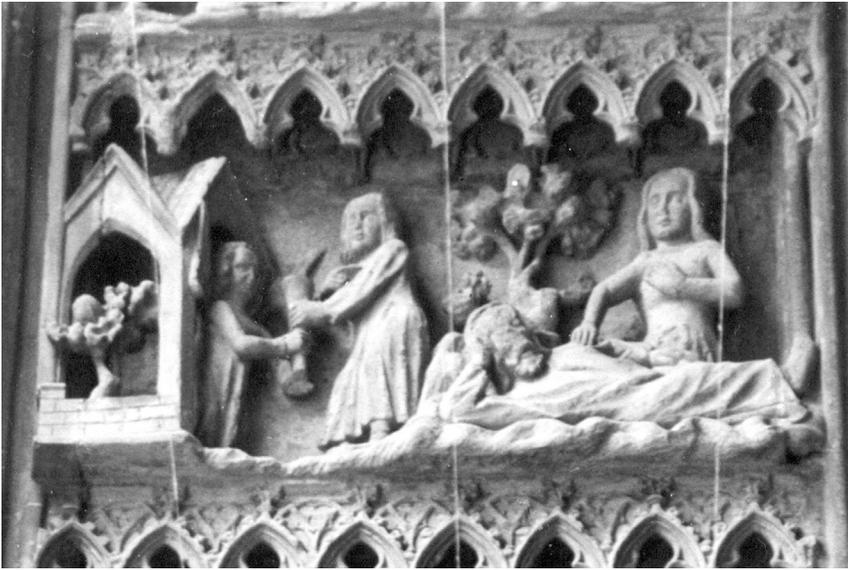
For example, in some Christian baptismal traditions the idea of



**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.”

“reversing the blows of death” was represented by a special anointing with the “oil of mercy” prior to (or sometimes after) “baptism,” as the candidate was signed upon the brow, the nostrils, the breast, the ears, and so forth.<sup>181</sup>

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.<sup>182</sup>



**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.”<sup>183</sup> 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 context 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 context for the dialogue of Jesus and Nicodemus about the importance of being "born again":<sup>184</sup>

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.<sup>185</sup> 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 repentance<sup>186</sup> 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.<sup>187</sup> Jesus' point in John 3 is that Jews need spiritual circumcision in addition to the physical rite, a traditional enough prophetic *tanakhic* trope.<sup>188</sup> In IQS 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" [IQS V 5]. This follows IQS IV's teaching on immersion, which matches the pattern established already by Ezekiel<sup>189</sup> 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 linkages between circumcision, covenant, and baptism suggested by Zinner are allusions to these subjects in antiquity and in Joseph Smith's translations of the Book of Mormon and the Bible.

For example, consider Isaiah 48:1 as it is quoted in 1 Nephi 20:1. This gloss (clarifying comment) by Joseph Smith first appeared in the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon:<sup>190</sup>

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 "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 and his

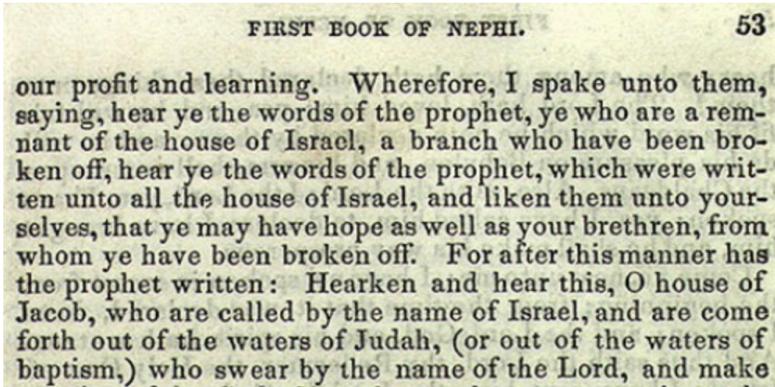


Figure 25. 1 Nephi VI [1 Nephi 20:1], 1840 Edition of the Book of Mormon, p. 53.

biological posterity but also, significantly, something to which all those who had been “adopted” into his household were required to submit.<sup>191</sup> Joseph Smith’s gloss—the disjunctive phrase “or out of the waters of baptism”—expands Isaiah’s reference 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.*”<sup>192</sup>

An even more pointed reference connecting the themes of circumcision and baptism can be found in the mention of the “blood of Abel” within Joseph Smith’s translation of the book of Genesis. The neglect of this passage by scholars argues for a detailed treatment here.



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

The story of Abel has always been linked with the idea of proper sacrifice<sup>193</sup>—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:<sup>194</sup> “And Abel [*hebel*], he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof” [*ûmêhelëbêhen*—in other words, from the fatlings, the richest part of the herd]. Not only does the Hebrew word *hēleb* denote “fat,”

but also the word *ûmêhelëbêhen* “contains within itself the name of *hbl* [Abel] ...reversed”— i.e., *ûmêhelëbêhen*, thus strengthening the pun.<sup>195</sup>



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

Remember also that in the book of Hebrews, the shedding of Abel’s blood was seen as a type of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.<sup>196</sup> With respect to his place among the biblical canon of martyrs, Hamilton writes: “Abel is coupled with Zechariah<sup>197</sup> as the first<sup>198</sup> and the last<sup>199</sup> victims of murder mentioned in the Old Testament .... Understandably Abel is characterized as ‘innocent.’”<sup>200</sup>

The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible connects the death of the righteous Abel to an anomalous ordinance for little children consisting of the sprinkling of blood coupled with “washing” that is denounced in JST Genesis 17:3–7.<sup>201</sup>

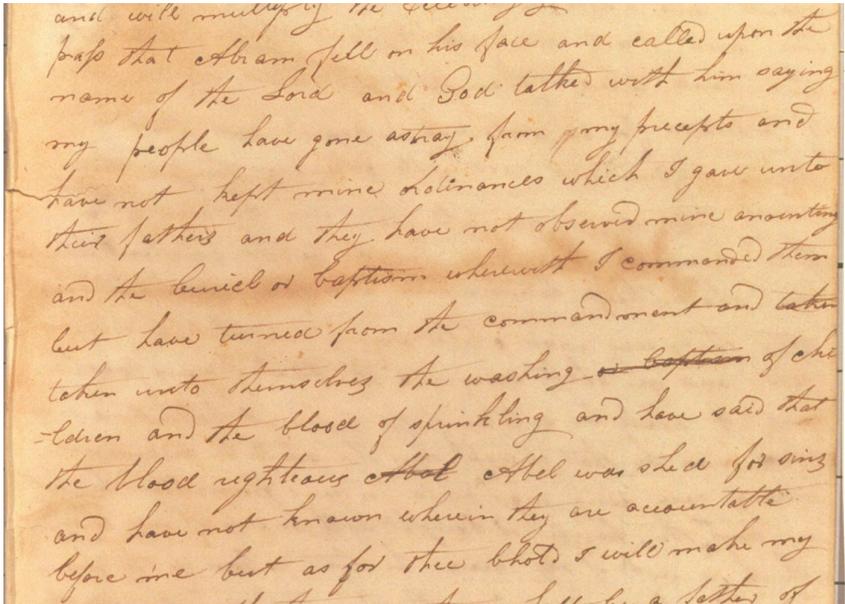
And it came to pass, that Abram fell on his face, and called upon the name of the Lord.

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,<sup>202</sup> and the burial, or baptism wherewith I commanded them;

But have turned from the commandment, and taken unto themselves the washing or ~~baptism~~<sup>203</sup> of children, and the blood of sprinkling;<sup>204</sup>

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 16:19b-17:9, p. 38 (excerpt from the middle of page containing vv. 3-7).

To counteract this practice, we are told that the Lord established the covenant of circumcision at the age of eight days,<sup>205</sup> “that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me till [they are] eight years old.”<sup>206</sup> 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.<sup>207</sup>

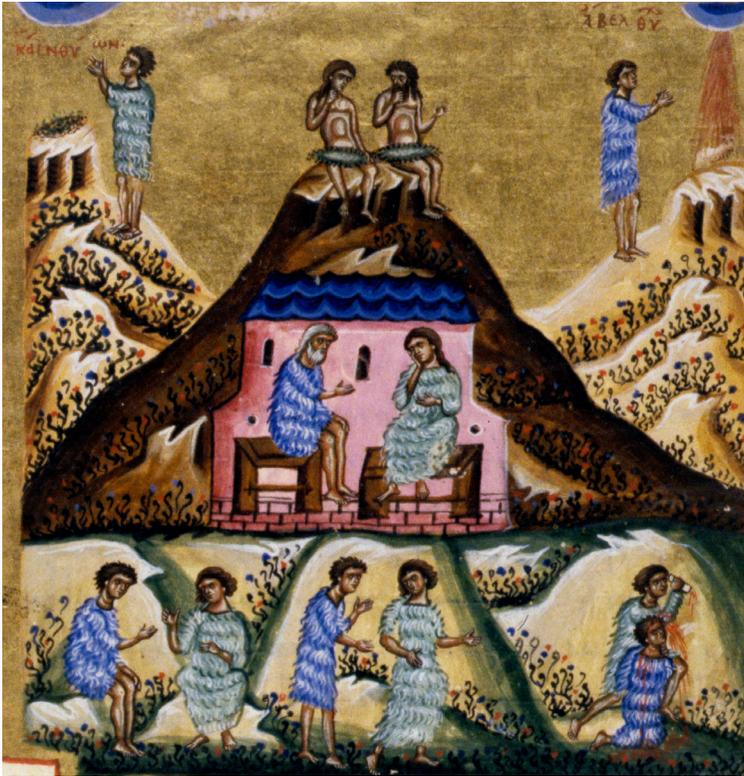


Figure 29. E. S. Drower, 1879–1972, *The Kushta*, 1956<sup>208</sup>

In remarkable resonance with Joseph Smith’s translation, the central figure of Abel is associated with the rituals of water immersion among the Mandaean.<sup>209</sup> 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 Mandaean candidate for these repeated rituals.<sup>210</sup>

Following the ceremonies of immersion, the Mandaean still continue ritual practices that include anointing and the pronouncing of the names of the gods upon the individual.<sup>211</sup> The *kushta*, a ceremonial handclasp, is given three times in the ritual, each one of which, according to Elizabeth Drower, “seems to mark the completion ... of a stage in a ceremony.”<sup>212</sup> 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.”<sup>213</sup>

The concept of an “atoning embrace”<sup>214</sup> can be compared with similar imagery in Jacob’s wrestle with the angel<sup>215</sup> and his subsequent encounter with Esau;<sup>216</sup> in the reconciliation of the father with his prodigal son in Jesus’ parable;<sup>217</sup> and 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.”<sup>218</sup>



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

Equally relevant to JST Genesis 17:3–7 is Hebrews 12:24, which 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.”<sup>219</sup> To Craig Koester, this suggests the idea that “Abel’s blood brought a limited atonement, while Jesus’ blood brought complete atonement.”<sup>220</sup> 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.”<sup>221</sup>

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.<sup>222</sup> 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



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

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.”<sup>223</sup>

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 heifer<sup>224</sup> of Numbers 19:1-10.<sup>225</sup> 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.”<sup>226</sup> The red heifer pointedly was a young animal used in purification rites (comprising a washing and a sprinkling of blood<sup>227</sup>) for those who had come into contact with “one ... found slain” and “lying in the field,”<sup>228</sup> as was Abel. A widely varying set of Islamic accounts attempt to explain the origin of a related Qur’anic story;<sup>229</sup> 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.<sup>230</sup> Could this be an echo of the righteous Abel, of whom scriptures says his “blood cries unto [God] from the ground”<sup>231</sup>—wherein “he being dead yet speaketh”?<sup>232</sup>

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.”<sup>233</sup> As a figure associated anciently with sacrifice, baptism, and innocent martyrdom, Abel arguably could have attracted religious notions of this character. Additionally, the rationale for the institution of circumcision in the Joseph Smith Translation is also consistent with Samuel Zinner’s

conclusion about the symbolic connection between circumcision and baptism in its New Testament context: namely, that baptism of Jewish converts to Christianity was not meant to replace "circumcision, but [rather] that it complements and perfects it."<sup>234</sup>

**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 discussion 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."<sup>235</sup> The same can be said for baptism, which Paul described as a symbol of death and resurrection.<sup>236</sup> 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. This is why the Lord condemns in such strong terms those who take their fundamental bearings from other, less perfect "instruments." Such individuals are described as 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 [testial, rather than the celestial,] world."<sup>237</sup>

When our understanding of the universe and our place within it is based on our own warped conceptions instead of the blueprint of the celestial world provided in the ordinances, we will experience the frustration of mistaken ambitions and stunted growth in the personal and social characteristics that matter most in eternity. On the other hand, repeated participation in sacred ordinances over the course of a lifetime allows us to deepen our understanding of "who we are, and who God is, and what our relationship to Him [and to His children] is."<sup>238</sup>

- *Salvific.* President Joseph F. Smith taught:<sup>239</sup>

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].”<sup>240</sup>

While recognizing the superior forms of pedagogy embodied in the symbolism of the ordinances,<sup>241</sup> Elder Bednar taught that we err if we think that their value is limited to inspired instruction. He said, citing D&C 84:19–21:<sup>242</sup>

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 one be both *informed* and *transformed*.<sup>243</sup> Indeed, the blessing of being “born again by the Spirit of God through ordinances,”<sup>244</sup> in conjunction with the strengthening power of the atonement of Christ, is obtained only as individuals live for it—in a continual effort of obedience and service that strengthens the ties of covenant with which they are freely and lovingly bound to their Heavenly Father.<sup>245</sup> Only by both understanding and conforming to the divine pattern given in the ordinances may individuals gradually experience an increasing measure of the joy of becoming all that God now is.

- *Interrelated and additive.* Elder Bednar explained:<sup>246</sup>

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.

That the ordinances must be closely *interrelated* should be obvious—after all, each one is based on the same doctrine of Christ. Illustrating this point, Elder Bruce R. McConkie noted that three different ordinances—baptism, the sacrament, and

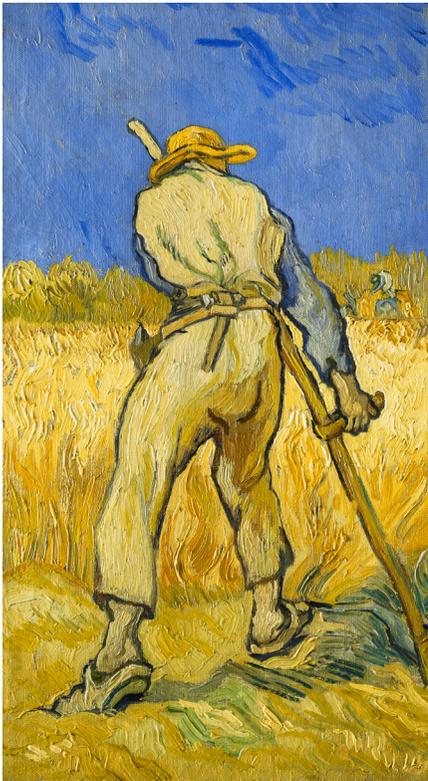
animal sacrifice — were instituted at different times, are enacted using different symbolism, and are employed in different settings, however all are performed in association with one and the same covenant.<sup>247</sup> In other words, although each of these ordinances fulfills a unique purpose, has its “own distinctive types and shadows,” and “does its own work in its own way,” all three are “performed in similitude of the atoning sacrifice by which salvation comes.”<sup>248</sup> As an aside, we note in this connection that any adaptation of an ordinance to different times, cultures, and practical circumstances must be made by proper authority in order to minimize the possibility of changes that may alter it in crucial ways.

It is likewise essential that the ordinances be *additive*. For example, just as baptism must be preceded by faith in Jesus Christ and sincere repentance,<sup>249</sup> so the ongoing process of sanctification — made available to those who are confirmed, receive, and retain the gift of the Holy Ghost — can come only to those who have already been prepared through baptism. Likewise, the initial budding of “the power of godliness” that is increasingly “manifest”<sup>250</sup> in the lives of faithful members of the Church as they renew their prior covenants through the sacrament prepares them for the additional ordinances and covenants they will later receive in the temple.



**Figure 32.** *The Ladder of Virtues*, Thessaloniki, Macedonia.

Further illustrating the additive nature of the ordinances, we note that faith, hope, and charity served anciently 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. This same triad was represented both anciently and in the teachings, translations, and revelations of Joseph Smith as a ladder of heavenly ascent that must be mounted rung by rung.<sup>251</sup>



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

Elder Bednar’s characterization of the “additive pattern of redemptive progress”<sup>252</sup> suggests that those who are striving to become saints are passionate, not passive, about their discipleship. Like Abraham,<sup>253</sup> they are driven by “divine discontent,”<sup>254</sup> not being satisfied with the sort of minimal, negative obedience which requires only that they avoid the “appearance of sin,”<sup>255</sup> but rather, seeking to be “anxiously engaged”<sup>256</sup> in furthering the Father’s work with “all [their] heart, might, mind and strength”<sup>257</sup> — in other words, consecrating themselves. 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”<sup>258</sup> to the point that,

after a lifetime of faithfulness to the covenants 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.”<sup>259</sup>

- *Retrospective.* An appreciation of the retrospective regard of the ordinances clears up any confusion about the relationship between baptism and later temple washings.<sup>260</sup> Since the time of Adam, baptism has been the *first*,<sup>261</sup> *introductory*<sup>262</sup> saving ordinance of the Gospel given in mortal life, and any similarities between baptism and temple ordinances of washing are meant to highlight and build upon that resemblance retrospectively.

Further illustrating the retrospective regard of temple washing ordinances, we would suggest that their significance harks back before baptism, echoing earlier events that occurred in the premortal life. For example, it appears that the ordinance



**Figure 34.** Harry Anderson, (1906–1996),  
*Moses Calls Aaron to the Ministry.*

received by Aaron 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”<sup>263</sup> recapitulated his foreordination to this priesthood calling when he was “wash’d and set apart”<sup>264</sup> in the premortal world. Consistent with the teachings of Joseph Smith,<sup>265</sup> Alma 13 states 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.”<sup>266</sup> Similarly, President Spencer W. Kimball taught that in premortal life, faithful women were also given assignments to be carried out later on earth.<sup>267</sup>

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 general 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”<sup>268</sup>]. He [who was] once [anointed] was anointed anew [i.e., “by the Spirit”<sup>269</sup>]. He who was redeemed in turn redeemed (others) [i.e., “by the blood”<sup>270</sup>].”<sup>271</sup>

- *Anticipatory.* Because the round of eternity<sup>272</sup> is symbolically 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”<sup>273</sup>—just as, of course, the ordinance of the sacrament looks back retrospectively on that same expiatory sacrifice. With regard to the sacrifice of Isaac, Hugh Nibley asked:

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”<sup>274</sup> 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?”<sup>275</sup> God replied: “You shall see a father slay his son, and the son consenting to be slain, to sanctify My Name.”<sup>276</sup>

In this regard, we note that Abraham is unique in scripture in that he came to understand Christ’s atonement both from the perspective of a father<sup>277</sup> and also from that of a son.<sup>278</sup>

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, perhaps roughly analogous to the ordinance of naming and blessing of little children in our day, was important not only in its own right, but also 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.”<sup>279</sup> The blood shed in circumcision, whose mark remained in the child as a permanent “sign” in the flesh,<sup>280</sup> could be understood as a symbol of arrested sacrifice<sup>281</sup> that invited *retrospective* reflection on the universal salvation of little children through the blood of Christ’s atonement. At



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

the same time, the symbolism of circumcision also implicitly facilitated a correct, *anticipatory* understanding of the necessity of justification accomplished through “the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins”<sup>282</sup> that was meant to accompany the baptism of children when they reached 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 hope to rise in the first resurrection after passing through the heavenly veil.<sup>283</sup> Similarly, the initiatory ordinance of washing, anointing, and clothing<sup>284</sup> can be seen as providing an anticipatory, capsule summary of *all* the ordinances. For example, one might infer that the threefold structure of the initiatory ordinance reflects the threefold symbolism of water, spirit, and blood found in Moses 6, thus outlining the path of exaltation that is elaborated in the endowment. The anticipatory nature of the initiatory ordinance is also 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.”<sup>285</sup>



**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 more precisely, prefigure heavenly ordinances in which eternal truths and blessings will be taught and bestowed in a more perfect and finished form:<sup>286</sup>

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. It is true that 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. However, 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 be received only in an anticipatory way “in this world”—and “eternal life” itself, which can be granted only “in the world to come.”<sup>287</sup>

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.”<sup>288</sup> More specifically, 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. Like the cruse of oil blessed by Elijah and the inexhaustible pitcher of Baucis and Philemon, study of and participation in the ordinances will continually pour out new depths of meaning to those who are spiritually prepared to receive them.<sup>289</sup>

As the joint purport of the ordinances is gradually revealed to faithful disciples, they begin to see how their several meanings function as keys to the dense conceptual and practical nexus at the heart of the Gospel; reverberating in harmony throughout the parallel yet interwoven conceptual realms of doctrines, ordinances, and covenants; and ultimately—in their transformative power when coupled with personal faithfulness and the atonement of Christ—unlocking the “power of godliness”<sup>290</sup> that constitutes the supreme significance and purpose of Creation.



**Figure 37.** *Unfurling Heart-Shaped 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 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 second phrase in Moses 6:60: “by the Spirit ye are justified.” 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”<sup>291</sup> “by the Spirit,”<sup>292</sup> thus having had the demands of justice satisfied on their behalf through the Savior’s atoning blood.<sup>293</sup>
- 2. *But don’t the scriptures refer specifically to “baptism for the remission of sins”?*<sup>294</sup> Because “baptism” and “remission of sins”<sup>295</sup> occur together so often in telescoped scripture references, the role of the Spirit as the agent for 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.<sup>296</sup>

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 one’s willingness to take upon oneself 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, according to this verse, is clearly intended to *precede* water baptism.<sup>297</sup> In other words, strictly 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”<sup>298</sup>—for “by the *Spirit* ye are justified.”<sup>299</sup>

- 3. *How do the ongoing processes of justification and sanctification complement and sustain one another?* To adapt imagery from C. S. Lewis,<sup>300</sup> 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 ought to 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 and confirmation, so that individuals may benefit from the availability of its constant,<sup>301</sup> ongoing<sup>302</sup> *sanctifying* influence.

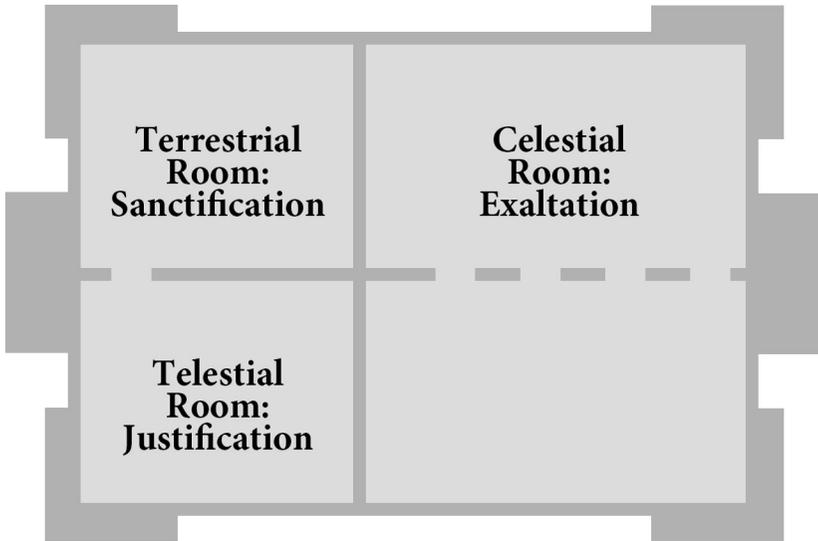


**Figure 38.** *Justification and Sanctification as Complementary, Interwoven Processes.*

Without justification, the sanctifying “companionship and power of the Holy Ghost”<sup>303</sup> are not operative. For just as “no unclean thing can dwell ... in [God’s] presence,”<sup>304</sup> so the “Holy Ghost [cannot] dwell in”<sup>305</sup> unclean individuals.<sup>306</sup> And without sanctification, those who have been made clean through the justifying Spirit of Christ could never gain access to the strengthening power that will enable them “to keep the commandments of God and grow in holiness.”<sup>307</sup>

The “companionship and power of the Holy Ghost”<sup>308</sup> are available for the ongoing work of sanctification only so long as individuals are worthy to maintain its presence. When those on the path of sanctification fail to keep the commandments, they must repent and be made clean 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”<sup>309</sup> in Christ) may operate, if we so choose, throughout our lives, preparing us eventually to be spiritually reborn in the ultimate sense.<sup>310</sup>

Aided by repeated preparation for and participation in the ordinance of the sacrament, we can “*always* retain [a justificatory] remission of our sins”<sup>311</sup> and we can “*always* have the Spirit of the Lord to be with us”<sup>312</sup> 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 instructive perspective as sequential steps instead of as interwoven parts of a parallel process.<sup>313</sup> Justification and sanctification, the two initial steps of this sequence, are described in imagery from King Benjamin’s speech. He exhorts his people, first, to “[put] off the natural man” (without which one cannot be “clothed upon with robes of righteousness”<sup>314</sup>) and, 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.”<sup>315</sup>

From this perspective, we might consider the initial *remission of sins* through the Spirit, the ordinance of baptism (distinct from washing, yet related to it through the symbolism of cleansing water) as accomplishing the first step of *justification*, by which we “put off the natural man.”<sup>316</sup> Through their continued *faith*<sup>317</sup> in Jesus Christ and *faithfulness*<sup>318</sup> in living the gospel, individuals living in a telestial world may progress to a point where they are “quicken[ed] by a portion of the *terrestrial* glory.”<sup>319</sup>

In the process of *sanctification* associated with progress of a terrestrial nature, individuals may become “saints”<sup>320</sup> in very deed. Being “quickened by a portion of the terrestrial glory,” they continue to “receive of the same” unto “a fulness”<sup>321</sup> through additional ordinances and the ongoing, sanctifying *anointing*,<sup>322</sup> 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”<sup>323</sup> (as described by Nephi), “a *more excellent* hope”<sup>324</sup> (as described by Mormon), or “the *full assurance* of hope”<sup>325</sup> (as described by Paul),<sup>326</sup> and having demonstrated their capacity for supreme self-sacrifice as required by the law of consecration, and being filled with “*charity*[,] ... the pure love of Christ”<sup>327</sup>—these individuals can be “sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood.”<sup>328</sup> In this manner, they are sanctified by the blood, “quickened by a portion of the celestial glory,”<sup>329</sup> and made ready to “behold the face of God.”<sup>330</sup>

Continuing onward 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”<sup>331</sup> may then go on to receive additional blessings in the celestial world, being “crowned with honor, ... glory, ... immortality,”<sup>332</sup> and “eternal lives.”<sup>333</sup> The Lord declared that these individuals shall be “*clothed upon*, even as I am, to be one with me, that we may be one.”<sup>334</sup>

- 4. *Do justification and sanctification come by the Spirit or through the Savior?* Justification and sanctification are accomplished through our efforts to live so as to maintain the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost<sup>335</sup> and, at the same time, made possible through the atonement of Christ. Therefore, it is no contradiction when scripture testifies both that we are “sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost”<sup>336</sup> and also that it is “by the blood [we] are sanctified.”<sup>337</sup> D&C 20:30–31 states that both “justification” and “sanctification” come “through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>338</sup>

**Confirmation, Anointing, and the Sanctifying Influence of the Holy Ghost.** Specific symbolic gestures have been divinely prescribed for the ordinance of confirmation as well as for subsequent ordinances of anointing. While the form of baptism recalls the symbolism of death and resurrection, the laying of hands on the head<sup>339</sup> that is used in confirmation suggests a retrospective regard toward the scriptural account of the creation of Adam wherein God “breathed into his nostrils



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

the breath of life.”<sup>340</sup> In this respect, recall also the account in John 20:22, when Jesus “breathed on [His disciples], and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” As Joseph Smith highlighted the importance of the manner in which baptism is performed, describing it as a “sign,” so did he refer to the symbolic evocation of the breath of life in “the laying on of hands,” by which the Holy Ghost is given, ordinations are performed, and the sick are healed, as a “sign.” He said pointedly that if such ordinances were not performed in the way God had appointed they “would fail.”<sup>341</sup>

In this context, we might recall what Jesus said 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.”<sup>342</sup> The Lord’s reply to Peter suggests why, in similar fashion, the laying of hands on the head within various ordinances equates to a blessing for the entire body.

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.<sup>343</sup> 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 Lord hath anointed me.”<sup>344</sup>



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

Anointing followed by an outpouring of the Spirit is documented as part of the rites of kingship in ancient Israel, as when Samuel anointed David and “the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.”<sup>345</sup>

Note that in Israelite practice, as witnessed in the examples of David and Solomon, the moment when the individual was made king would not necessarily have been the time of his first anointing. The culminating anointing of David corresponding to his definitive investiture as king was preceded by a prior, princely anointing. LeGrand Baker and Stephen Ricks describe other “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.”<sup>346</sup> Modern Latter-day Saints can compare this idea to the conditional promises they receive in association with *all* priesthood ordinances, promises which are to be realized only through their continued faithfulness. Further emphasizing the anticipatory and conditional nature of even a second, royal anointing, Brigham Young explained that “a person may be anointed king and priest long before he receives his kingdom.”<sup>347</sup>



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

In modern times one can still see 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” to be “imbued with grace” through the Archbishop’s anointing with holy oil “on hand, breast and forehead.”<sup>348</sup>

Just as the separate yet interrelated rites of baptism and subsequent washings became blurred in early Christianity, so also the distinctive ordinances of confirmation to prepare one to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and the separate, priestly anointing have become confused in some 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.”<sup>349</sup>

From modern revelation it is clear that just as baptism is the first saving ordinance—administered by the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood with later ordinances of temple 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” and “additive”<sup>350</sup> fashion, temple initiatory ordinances of washing and anointing echo and build upon the ordinances of baptism and confirmation. Substantiating the idea that priestly anointing ordinances were not meant to be restricted only to a small subset of disciples, Tertullian



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

described how in his day *all* newly “baptized” Christians were anointed. He stated that this was “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].”<sup>351</sup>

The initiatory anointing is not only retrospective but also looks forward in anticipation to subsequent confirmatory anointings and sealing blessings wherein disciples imitate the Christ. Indeed, Pseudo-Clement’s *Recognitions* 1:45:2 defines the Greek title “Christ” (equivalent to the Hebrew “Messiah,” meaning “Anointed One”) with reference to an anointing of oil administered by God Himself: “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.”<sup>352</sup>

C. S. Lewis succinctly expressed the principle behind the practice of anointing all Christians: “Every Christian is to become a little christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.”<sup>353</sup>

### “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,”<sup>354</sup> as was expressed in the previously cited words about Christ from the *Gospel of Philip*: “He who was redeemed in turn redeemed (others).”<sup>355</sup> Although redemption itself comes only “in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son,”<sup>356</sup> it might also be said regarding those who have been “ordained *after the order of [the] Son*”:<sup>357</sup> He who was redeemed with “a preparatory



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

redemption<sup>358</sup> in turn must assist “with all [his] heart, might, mind and strength<sup>359</sup>” to bring about the redemption of others. In brief, those who would follow Christ “to the end<sup>360</sup>” must continue to move beyond the keeping of the initiatory law of obedience and sacrifice toward the complete dedication required by the law of consecration.<sup>361</sup>

Before saying more on this point, we will examine the role of blood in the context of the ordinances — for “by the blood ye are sanctified.”<sup>362</sup>

**Blood as a Symbol of Sanctification.** The first explicit mention of “blood” in the Bible is Genesis 4:10–11, when Abel’s blood cried 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.<sup>363</sup>

The deliberate consumption of blood has been practiced in many cultures because “popular thought had it that one could renew or reinforce one’s vitality through its absorption of blood.”<sup>364</sup> 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.”<sup>365</sup> If this variant is not a scribal error, it may indicate a corrupt practice where participation in ordinances by those who were ritually unclean was condemned,<sup>366</sup> or perhaps even the “eating” of blood itself. Note that this language further echoes and extends the symbolism of the “eating of death” in the act that precipitated the Fall.<sup>367</sup> Later, God said to Noah: “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.”<sup>368</sup>



Figure 45. Lars Justinen, *The Sanctuary*.

Because blood is a symbol of life,<sup>369</sup> it was used in Israelite temples for “the altar [of sacrifice] to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul”<sup>370</sup> — thus symbolizing *justification*.

Consistent with this temple symbolism, Exodus 24:8 recounts how blood was sprinkled on Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai to ratify the divine covenant, thus making it binding. In contrast to this lesser, justificatory sprinkling on all the people, an additional sprinkling of blood on the group that accompanied Moses on his ascent of the mountain symbolized *sanctification*. As a result of this second sprinkling, they were enabled immediately thereafter to see Jehovah standing above what seems to have been a representation of the *kapporet* or mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, where the High Priest applied atoning blood to the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>371</sup> 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, it appears they were sanctified].”<sup>372</sup>

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:<sup>373</sup>

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”<sup>374</sup> of incense that “purged” (literally “atoned for”<sup>375</sup>) Isaiah’s sin previously had been sprinkled with sacrificial blood. Thus, symbolically, his lips had been sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ (who, arguably, may have been the very “one of the seraphims” mentioned in the verse), preparing him to speak with God.

Incidentally, the English word “blood” has an interesting derivation that leads back from Old English to a Proto-Germanic term.<sup>376</sup> The Old Norse noun *blót* (verb *blóta*), which derives from the same Proto-Germanic root, was the term for both “sacrifice” and “worship.”<sup>377</sup> The old roots are also connected with the modern English terms “bliss” and “bless,”<sup>378</sup> the latter by means of pre-Christian rites where blood was sprinkled on pagan altars or other objects to make them holy.<sup>379</sup>

**Being “Sealed Up to Eternal Life.”** Elder Bednar has explained: “Purifying and sealing by the Holy Spirit of Promise constitute the culminating steps in the process of being born again.”<sup>380</sup> Those who are

sanctified have “their garments washed white through the blood of the Lamb.”<sup>381</sup> Note that the Hebrew word for washing clothes—*kābas*—is very similar in sound to a word for “lamb”—*kebeś*—suggesting a possible word play.

Although it is not unusual for lesser blessings, ordinances, and ordinations to be sealed upon the heads of individuals,<sup>382</sup> 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.”<sup>383</sup> To be sealed in this ultimate sense requires taking upon oneself both the divine name and the divine form—just as Jesus Christ was “the express image”<sup>384</sup> of the Father.

In former times, seals provided a unique stamp of identity on important documents—the image of the author being transferred, as it were, to the document itself.<sup>385</sup> Similarly, Luke T. Johnson sees the scriptural concept of sealing as both an empowering and an “imprinting” process,<sup>386</sup> recalling Alma’s words about receiving God’s “image” in our countenances.<sup>387</sup>

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 to be “changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”<sup>388</sup>



**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 [on the altar of sacrifice],” 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.”<sup>389</sup>

In the case of Isaac’s near sacrifice by Abraham, a sacrificial ram was supplied in his stead at the last moment.<sup>390</sup>

More significant, however, is the fact that:<sup>391</sup>

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.”<sup>392</sup> 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.”<sup>393</sup>

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 applies 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 offering on the altar of sacrifice in the temple courtyard — "relying *wholly* upon the merits of him who is mighty to save"<sup>394</sup> — the culminating step of the process of *sanctification* is a joint effort,<sup>395</sup> symbolized by a "second sacrifice"<sup>396</sup> made on the altar of incense that stands before the veil. While that second sacrifice is no less dependent on the "merits, and mercy, and grace"<sup>397</sup> of Christ and the ongoing endowment of His strengthening power, it requires in addition that individuals grow in their capacity to meet the stringent measure of *self*-sacrifice enjoined by the law of consecration as exemplified by Nephi and his companions in their soul-saving labor on behalf of their "children" and "brethren" — "for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do.*"<sup>398</sup>



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

In light of these considerations, it is clear that, although the Saints cannot be made clean without God’s own sanctifying power, they must in addition fulfill His requirement to “sanctify *themselves*.”<sup>399</sup> 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<sup>400</sup> to “unveil [my] face unto [them].”<sup>401</sup> Explaining the need for disciples to be made “clean every whit”<sup>402</sup> that they may be ready to stand in the presence of God,<sup>403</sup> John W. Welch described the change in law that was announced by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount:<sup>404</sup>

The old law of sacrifice was explicitly replaced by that of the “broken heart and contrite spirit,”<sup>405</sup> 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.<sup>406</sup>

Within modern temple ordinances, as within the sacrament, animal sacrifice is replaced by the offering of oneself. Such offerings are “*memorials* of ... sacrifices by the sons of Levi”<sup>407</sup>—in other words, symbolic rather than literal reenactments of ancient temple practices that required the shedding of blood. Illuminating the difference between the ordinances of the “preparatory”<sup>408</sup> Aaronic priesthood and those of the “holy” Melchizedek priesthood “after the Order of the Son of God,”<sup>409</sup>

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!”<sup>410</sup>

**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.”<sup>411</sup> Indeed, as we progress through the prescribed series of saving ordinances we are *repeatedly* “reborn,” our nature transformed over and over, as we experience the cleansing justification of “the Spirit of Christ,”<sup>412</sup> the symbolism of death and resurrection through baptism of water,<sup>413</sup> the new life granted us when we receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost,<sup>414</sup> the spiritual and physical “renew[al]”<sup>415</sup> 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.<sup>416</sup>

Similarly, by the end of Moses 6, Adam had been not only born of water and of the Spirit, but also “born of God,” having entered His presence in the same manner described by Alma:<sup>417</sup>

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 is meant to accompany 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.”<sup>418</sup> Moses 6:67–68 makes it clear that to receive the fulness of the priesthood is to become, when divinely ratified, “a son of God” “after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years.”<sup>419</sup> This is consistent with the experience of Adam in Moses 6:68 and 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 the same general 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,”<sup>420</sup> — 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 supreme “Son of the right hand,” namely “Christ.” In so doing, they were also to become, in likeness of Benjamin’s son, little *Mosiahs* (meaning “saviors”) and, in likeness of the Only Begotten Son of God, little *messiahs* (meaning “anointed ones”).<sup>421</sup> Having thus qualified, the Father might then appropriately “seal” them “his.”<sup>422</sup>

**Identification of the High Priest with the Lord Himself.** To further emphasize that those who enter into the “oath and covenant ... [of] the priesthood”<sup>423</sup> 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 relates both to ordinances in earthly temples and to actual ascents to the heavenly temple:<sup>424</sup>

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



Figure 51. *Worshipping the High Priest.*

is, messiahs. ... Human beings could become angels, and then 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.<sup>425</sup> 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.”<sup>426</sup> Moreover, 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.”<sup>427</sup>

**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.”<sup>428</sup> This statement relating to Adam’s exaltation provides the doctrinal foundation for the account in the book of Moses of Enoch’s adoption as a son of God, with a right to God’s throne.<sup>429</sup> 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 purport to describe in detail the process by which Enoch was literally “clothed upon with glory.” 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”<sup>430</sup> Himself. In a culminating scene of 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.”<sup>431</sup> Philip S. Alexander speaks of this event as an “ontological transformation [that] blurred the distinction between human and divine,” amounting to “deification.”<sup>432</sup> In the first chapter of the book of Moses, Moses underwent a similar transformation.<sup>433</sup> He explained that had he 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.”<sup>434</sup> After Enoch was changed, he is said to have resembled God so exactly that he was mistaken for Him by the angels.<sup>435</sup>

Summarizing the ancient Jewish literature relevant to this passage, Charles Mopsik concludes that the exaltation of Enoch should not 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.”<sup>436</sup>

In Latter-day Saint theology, such a transfiguration is not the result of a capricious act of God but rather a sign of love and trust made in response to an individual’s demonstration of a determination

to serve Him "at all hazard."<sup>437</sup> Only such will be privileged to hear the personal oath in the Father's own voice<sup>438</sup> that they shall obtain the fulness of the joys of the celestial kingdom "for ever and ever."<sup>439</sup>

### Sanctification, Consecration, Shewbread, and the Sacrament

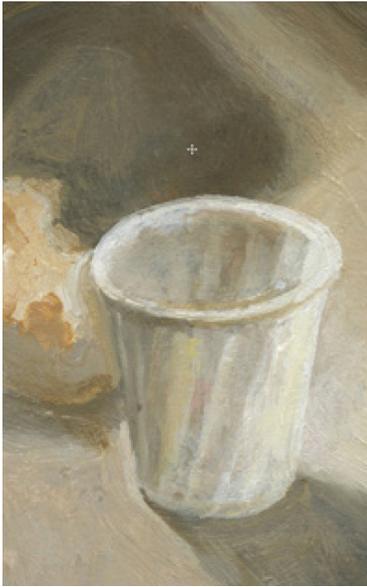
**Giving our all.** Hugh Nibley sums up the principle of sanctification "by the blood"<sup>440</sup> as follows:<sup>441</sup>



**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.<sup>442</sup> 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."<sup>443</sup> 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 to become “a saint”<sup>444</sup> enhances the meaning one can take away when participating in the ordinance of the sacrament. As we have argued earlier, the symbolism of the broken bread is strongly coupled to the initial covenant of baptism. Both ordinances are a witness of one’s intention to “keep [God’s] commandments.”<sup>445</sup> However, in light of the preceding discussion, we suggest that the emblems of the Lord’s sanctifying blood seem to provide a natural correspondence to the last and most difficult covenant of consecration.<sup>446</sup> As Ugo A. Perego succinctly expressed it: “through the partaking of consecrated bread and wine, we also consecrate ourselves.”<sup>447</sup>

Such an understanding is consistent with the recent re-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.”<sup>448</sup>

It is evident that the Saints witness in the sacrament that they are willing to take the Savior’s name upon them in the essential (though 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.”<sup>449</sup> However, in the same ordinance they also affirm their personal willingness<sup>450</sup> “to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [them], even as a child doth submit to his father,”<sup>451</sup> “even unto death,”<sup>452</sup> thus preparing themselves for the blessings of *sanctification* that result from keeping the law of consecration. In short, they covenant not only to “give away all [their] sins to know [God]”<sup>453</sup> but also to undertake a deliberate and sustained effort to *know God through giving their all*.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>455</sup>—that they, in likeness of Christ, “might bring [others] to God.”<sup>456</sup>

In the richly symbolic act wherein the Saints drink the emblems of sanctifying blood, they not only express their remembrance of and gratitude for the “bitter cup”<sup>457</sup> that the Savior drank on their behalf<sup>458</sup> but also acknowledge that they are willing to drink to the dregs the individually prepared cup they themselves have been given.<sup>459</sup> Similarly, in John 19:28–30 it is recorded that Jesus—as His last mortal act before He declared “It is finished” and “gave up the ghost”—in voluntary humiliation swallowed a mouthful of cheap wine from a sponge to fulfill the last iota of His prophetically foretold mission, “knowing that all things were now accomplished.”

**The sacrament and the temple shewbread.** The sacrament, like every ordinance, is retrospective. It looks back on all the covenants one has already made and, in addition, invites one to remember the unleavened bread of the Passover,<sup>460</sup> the manna from heaven,<sup>461</sup> and, most pointedly, the life and atonement of Jesus Christ, the “Lamb of God”<sup>462</sup> and the “true bread from heaven.”<sup>463</sup> Less recognized and discussed is the fact that the sacrament is also anticipatory, looking forward to the bounteous table of the heavenly feast that someday will be shared by sanctified souls.<sup>464</sup> This feast has been the subject of prophecy from Old Testament times to the present.<sup>465</sup>

The bread and wine that will be shared at this eschatological event were symbolized in the furniture of Israelite temples. On the table of the shewbread or “bread of the presence [of the Lord],”<sup>466</sup> twelve loaves of unleavened bread and utensils for libations of wine and offerings of frankincense were continually set out within the Holy Place of the temple. A meal of this sacred bread and wine, anticipating a future feast that will take place in the full glory of the “presence” of God,<sup>467</sup> was consumed each Sabbath by the temple priests.<sup>468</sup>

In contrast to the bread offered at the altar of sacrifice in the temple courtyard,<sup>469</sup> which John S. Thompson views as a preparatory, *Aaronic* ordinance,<sup>470</sup> the offering of shewbread and wine set out in the temple proper emulates the *Melchizedek* feast of bread and wine provided by the priest and king of that name when Abraham received the fulness of the high priesthood at his hands.<sup>471</sup>

It is likely that the feast shared by Moses and his companions when he was called to meet Jehovah face to face at the top of Mount Sinai was seen as the literal equivalent of the meal that was later ritually typified at the table in the Holy Place. In Exodus, we read that Moses took with him

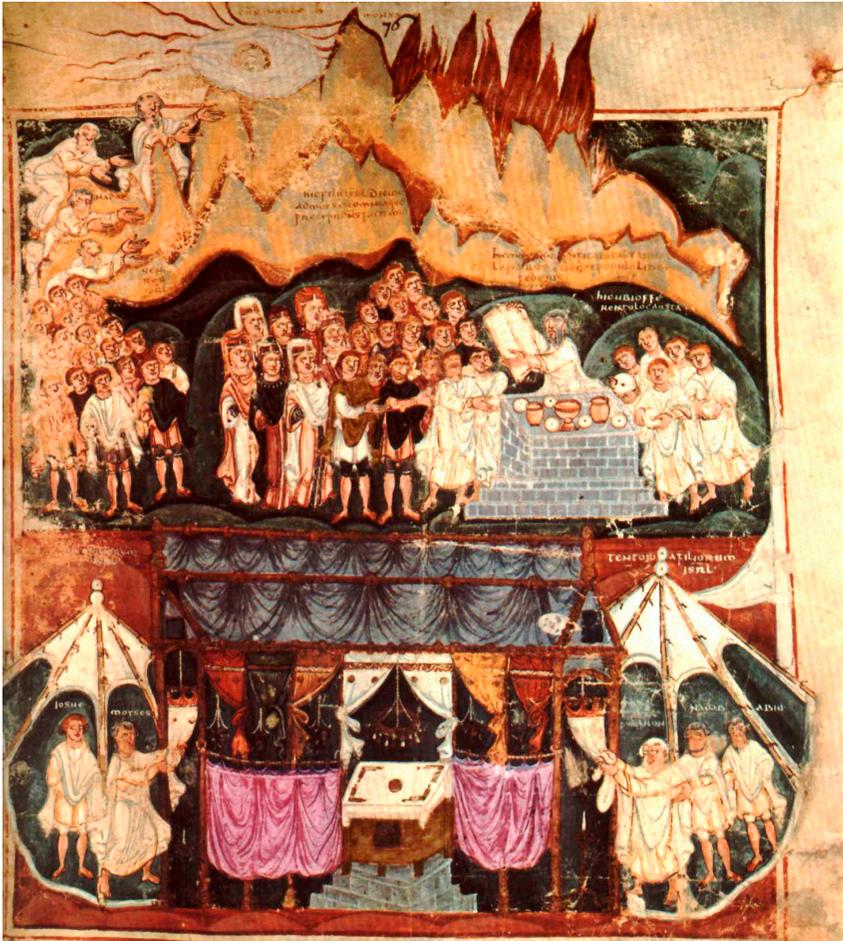


Figure 55. *Mount Sinai and the Christianized Tabernacle*, ca. 600.

“Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,” and that together they saw “the God of Israel” and “ate and drank” with Him.<sup>472</sup>

According to Brant Pitre, who has ably summarized the current scholarly consensus that the descriptions of Jesus’ actions in the Gospels mirror the profile of the long-awaited new “prophet-like-Moses” who was described in Deuteronomy 18:15,<sup>473</sup> Jesus’ blessing of the bread and wine at the Last Supper did not merely follow the pattern of Passover traditions but also paralleled in significant ways the experience of Moses and his fellows in their ascent of Sinai to feast at the divine table.<sup>474</sup> Note that in contemporaneous Jewish writings, Moses was described not only as a prophet, priest, and king, but also (like Jesus) as a god, having been “changed into the divine” through his initiation into the “mysteries.”<sup>475</sup>

Like Jesus, Moses was described as a hierophant, leading his disciples through these same mysteries so that they could also *see* God.<sup>476</sup>

The deliberate conflation of the offerings on the temple table of shewbread with the sacrament of the Lord's supper by the early Christian church is demonstrated in the image at left. The three registers represent respectively the temple courtyard (bottom), the Holy Place (middle), and the Holy of Holies (top). The ostensible subject of this illustration is Moses (shown as a type of Christ) who, in the top register, "accompanied by Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu [shown as types of Peter, James, and John<sup>477</sup>], approaches the Lord, whose head appears in a cloud at the top of Mount Sinai."<sup>478</sup> Within the cave in the middle scene is a gathering of Christians who, following the pattern of ancient Israel, hear a reading of the law and make covenants under the direction of Christ, shown here as the new Moses.<sup>479</sup> The "items on the altar clearly indicate a Christian Eucharist," which is here equated to the offerings on the table of shewbread.<sup>480</sup>

In the bottom register, a Christianized version of the Tabernacle courtyard is shown.<sup>481</sup> Note the prominent *gammadia* (squares) at the corners of the altar cloth, and its central, circular rosette. The same rosette with a border matching the *gammadia* is repeated on the parted veil. The pattern of the cloth strongly resembles depictions of altar cloths in two sixth-century Ravenna mosaics.<sup>482</sup> In Roman Catholic tradition, the cloth used for church altars is said to have been patterned after the burial garment of Christ, and garments with similar motifs have been found in Christian burial grounds in Egypt.<sup>483</sup> In the scene shown here, the Christian leaders of the new Israel part the outer veil, earnestly inviting all those outside the covenant to enter and begin their ascent.

An earlier link between the shewbread and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper appears in the Gospels as part of a passage where Jesus "speaks explicitly about the bread of the presence with reference to His disciples' act of plucking and eating grain on the Sabbath."<sup>484</sup> According to Pitre, Jesus' words explicitly linked "the priestly identity of Himself and His disciples with the sacrificial bread of the presence,"<sup>485</sup> just as He later equated His body and blood with the bread and wine He blessed in the Upper Room.<sup>486</sup>

In light of all these considerations, we conclude that the symbolism of the bread and wine blessed by the Lord at the Last Supper, while not inappropriately taken up in the modern Latter-day Saint sacrament administered by those holding the Aaronic priesthood, should also be studied in connection with ritual practices at the temple table of shewbread and its symbolic association with the priesthood of Melchizedek.



**Figure 56.** *Sacrament Bread Baked for a Priesthood Leadership Meeting Following the Dedication of the Salt Lake Temple, 1893.*

In the early years of the restored Church, the symbolism of the eschatological heavenly feast typified by the priestly meal of the temple shewbread seems to have been carried forward in priesthood gatherings where the portions of bread used for the sacrament were sometimes large enough to constitute a meal. For example, Zebedee Coltrin stated that at meetings of the School of the Prophets in Kirtland:<sup>487</sup>

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.

When the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated in 1893, one witness recorded in his journal that “Each participant was given a large tumbler with the Salt Lake temple etched into it and a napkin. Presiding Bishop Preston blessed the bread and ‘Dixie’ wine [from southern Utah], and the brethren were invited to eat till they were filled<sup>488</sup> but to use caution and not indulge in wine to excess.”<sup>489</sup>

There are other reasons, besides the substantial meal of bread and wine that was sometimes consumed for the sacrament on sacred occasions, to believe that Joseph Smith might have viewed the administration of the ordinance of the sacrament in temple contexts under the direction of

the presiding high priest of the modern Church as part of what Ugo A. Perego calls a "pre-sanctification experience."<sup>490</sup> Such experiences were meant to resemble in additional respects the events of the Last Supper. Elaborating on this point, Perego notes that:<sup>491</sup>

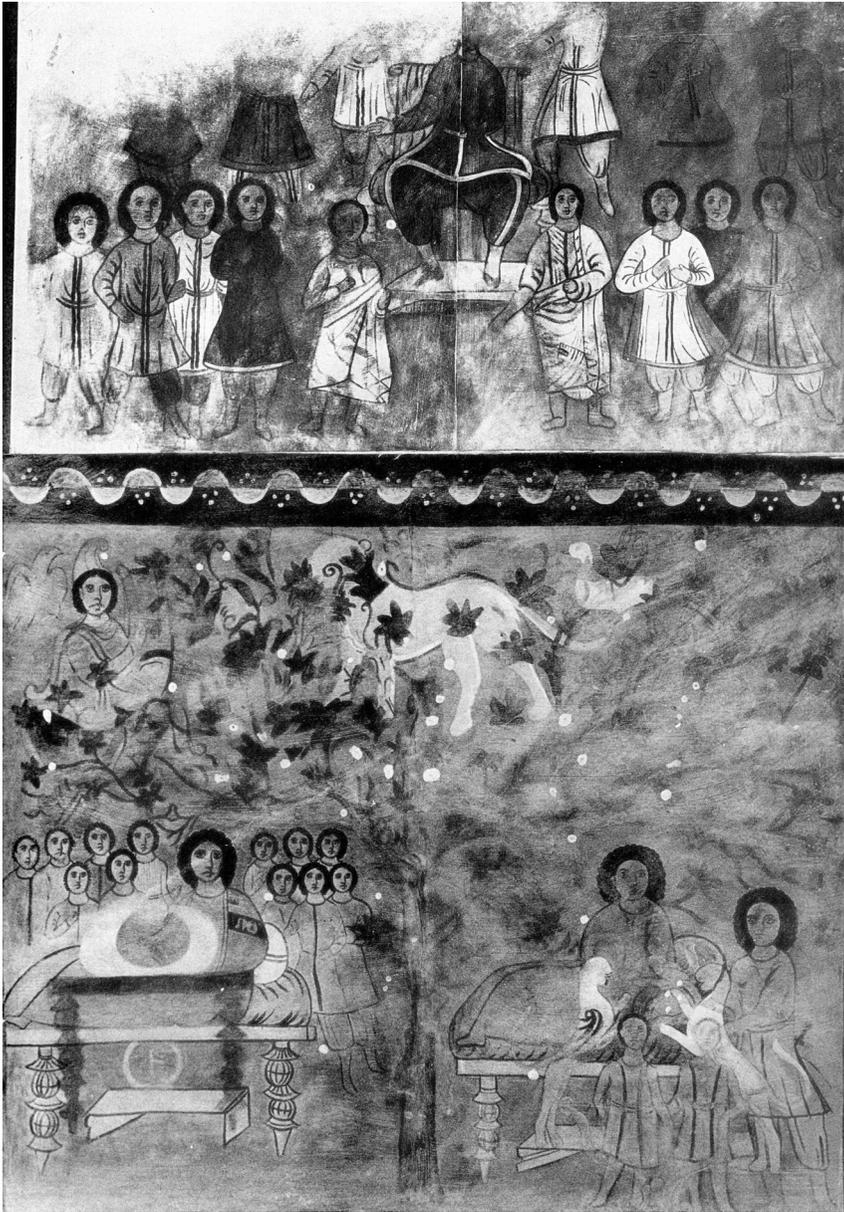
in the Kirtland Temple and in the School of the Prophets, the ordinance of washing of feet was accompanied by the partaking of the sacrament, just like the events that took place in the Upper Room as recorded in the New Testament.<sup>492</sup> The partaking of the bread and wine in remembrance of the Savior could not therefore be extrapolated as a stand-alone ritual but as an intrinsic and vital component with all other rites introduced while "feasting" on that last meal.

### **Conclusion: Anticipating the Heavenly Feast**

One of the most stunning archaeological finds of the last century was the accidental discovery in 1920 of the ruins of Dura Europos, located on a cliff ninety meters above the Euphrates River in what is now Syria. Among the structures uncovered by excavation was a small Jewish synagogue with elaborately painted walls, preserved only because the building had been filled with earth as a fortification during the city's destruction by siege. The art of the Dura Europos synagogue constitutes the most convincing physical evidence available that the Jewish mysteries described in ancient sources had a tangible expression in ritual.<sup>493</sup> As a conclusion to the present study, we will describe the most prominent mural of the synagogue, which highlights the participation of gathered Israel in the heavenly feast as the high point of Jewish anticipation for the last days.

After a study of the paintings of the synagogue, Hugh Nibley concluded that "the most important representation of all is the central composition that crowns the Torah shrine, the ritual center of the synagogue."<sup>494</sup> This mural had been "repainted several times, until it finally pleased whoever was designing it."<sup>495</sup> The "successive alterations show that great attention was paid to the problem of what should be represented in it."<sup>496</sup> Although the mural represents a single overall scene, it is divided into upper and lower parts by a horizontal band. The lower part depicts key events from Israel's past and the upper part its future as envisioned by prophecy.

The major theme of the composition is the restoration and exaltation of gathered Israel in the last days in fulfillment of God's everlasting covenant. At lower left, Jacob is shown lying on his bed while he gives a



**Figure 57.** *Composition Above the Torah Shrine as Reconstructed by Herbert Gute. Dura Europa Synagogue, ca. 254.*

last blessing to his twelve sons. At lower right, his blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh is depicted.<sup>497</sup> The top portion of the mural depicts the realization of these promised blessings: the thirteen who had been blessed by Jacob — the sons of Israel with Ephraim and Manasseh representing

Joseph in double measure — are exalted in the presence of God and his two divine throne attendants,<sup>498</sup> equivalent in function to the seraphim.

Spanning the upper and lower scenes is a tree. It is rooted in the foundational stories of the covenants and promised blessings of Israel and leads to the throne on high.<sup>499</sup> In this respect it might be seen as an arboreal “rod of iron,”<sup>500</sup> akin to the symbolism of ancient Jewish and Christian wooden ladders of ascent.<sup>501</sup> Erwin Goodenough concluded that this central figure represents both a tree and a vine, and Hugh Nibley agreed, observing that such imagery is paralleled in the Book of Mormon:<sup>502</sup> “The olive tree that stands for Israel in the Book of Mormon imagery is also a vine; it grows in a vineyard, is planted, cultivated, and owned ‘by the lord of the vineyard.’”<sup>503</sup>

The potential for double meaning in the tree-vine was highlighted by Goodenough. He maintained that it might have been more natural for Jewish and Christian viewers alike to conclude that it represented the power of the “hope of Israel”<sup>504</sup> that was to be demonstrated in the manifestation of the messianic “Redeemer of Israel”<sup>505</sup> than it would have been for them to see the tree-vine as representing Israel itself generally as a people:<sup>506</sup>

If ... the vine referred to the divine power made available to take one to heaven, ... the chances are overwhelming that the vine meant here not Israel itself but the hope of Israel, the hope that Jews would come to salvation through the Jewish God who was to His people what the vine represented to others. “I am the Vine, ye are the branches”<sup>507</sup> may originally have been a mystic description of the relation between God and Israel.

The Gospel of John goes further with this kind of imagery when it explicitly describes the person of Jesus as the only means by which disciples could make their climb to heaven. Alluding to the multiple deceits practiced in the story of Israel/Jacob and Laban, Jesus praised the approaching Nathanael at their first meeting, saying, “Behold an Israelite [i.e., descendant of Jacob] indeed, in whom is no guile!”<sup>508</sup> Then, referring to the “ladder”<sup>509</sup> of Jacob’s dream, on which angels ascended and descended,<sup>510</sup> Jesus solemnly asserted His preeminence over the revered patriarch, declaring that *He* was the ladder of heavenly ascent personified: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending *upon the Son of man*.”<sup>511</sup> Later in John, when Thomas asked Jesus how His disciples would know the way to His Father’s House, Jesus replied: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”<sup>512</sup>

In further consideration of the messianic significance of the central feature of the most important mural of the synagogue, we should not neglect the additional clues about priesthood and kingship that are embedded within the depiction of the tree-vine. Goodenough concluded that the Orpheus figure seated in the branches at left and playing a harp, “was probably called David” who, as shown here in a priestly role, provided “heavenly, saving ... music” through which “Israel could be glorified.”<sup>513</sup>

Kurt Schubert, stressing the aspects of the mural relating to kingship, saw the Lion to the right of David as a symbol of the King Messiah figure seated on the throne in the upper register. It was out of the tribe of Judah, the “lion’s whelp” of Jacob’s blessing, that this King Messiah, the literal descendant and regal heir of David, was to come.<sup>514</sup> In addition, Schubert saw the depiction of the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh as a probable reference to the “second messianic figure, ... the Messiah from the house of Joseph-Ephraim who was destined to suffer and die.”<sup>515</sup>

The beauty and comprehensiveness of the mural in its representation of the past and future of gathered, glorified Israel is stunning. All we are missing is the bread and wine of the heavenly feast. Or are we? In his careful examination of the layers of repainting in the mural, Gute recognized an intermediate design that included figures flanking each side of the tree-vine.<sup>516</sup> Goodenough saw ritual significance in these figures, taking the objects on a table to the left of the trunk to represent ceremonial bread, and the serpent-topped felines to the right as decorations for a wine bowl. In the later, final version of the mural, concluded Goodenough, “the symbol of bread and wine could be assumed,”<sup>517</sup> having been assimilated into the tree-vine itself. In Israel’s exalted state, standing at the top of the tree-vine, they could partake continually of its fruit, the dualized eschatological tree-vine having now merged with the Tree of Life, its protological counterpart.

For the Jews of Dura Europos, the dual, anticipatory roles of David, the anointed king who had eaten the priestly shewbread and later was made “a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek,”<sup>518</sup> were to be actualized someday in the messianic figure on the mural’s throne. For Christians, this long-awaited Messiah had already appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, the long looked-for “Root of David”<sup>519</sup> who was also the “Son of David,”<sup>520</sup> the kingly “Lion of the tribe of Judah”<sup>521</sup> and the “high priest after the order of Melchisedec,”<sup>522</sup> whose body and blood, typified in bread and wine, would sanctify not only His disciples but also the very earth.<sup>523</sup>

It is this same Jesus Christ who is destined to “come quickly,”<sup>524</sup> “in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”<sup>525</sup> May we keep every ordinance and covenant we have received, that when that time comes we may be numbered with the sanctified<sup>526</sup> who will “drink of the fruit of the vine,” the emblems of His blood, “with [Him] on the earth.”<sup>527</sup>

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### Notes

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 John 3, Samuel Zinner 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*).

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). For comments on the contrast of light and darkness in the writings of John and in Qumran, see M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, Kindle Edition: 4564 of 15473.
12. 2 Peter 1:19.
13. John 7:50–53.
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. The verb used "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).
19. On the requirement of seeing the Kingdom of God as a prerequisite for entering into it, see D&C 131:5–6. Cf. Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12–14, 26; Helaman 15:7.

Joseph Smith stated (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 15 October 1843, Joseph Smith Diary by Willard Richards, p. 256): "[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 [i.e., those things necessary to become a "son of God"] to enter therein."

M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, Kindle Edition: 4589 of 15473 explains that in its most complete sense, seeing the Kingdom of God “means seeing the heavenly throne.” Continuing, Barker writes (*ibid.*, 4650):

There is no complete account of the royal ascent in the Hebrew Scriptures, nor in the Greek, and so the rituals in the Holy of Holies and their meaning have to be reconstructed from what remains. The first Christians would have known far more than we do, but the pattern that can still be discerned is exaltation, anointing, becoming the Son, and then ruling/coming in judgment. This is the pattern implicit in how Jesus describes himself to Nicodemus: Jesus has been born from above (vv. 3–8; cf. 10:36), raised up and transformed into the Man (vv. 13–15), and then sent into the world to bring the judgment and heal the land (vv. 16–17).

20. Statements of the Prophet about the initial intimations of the spirit of enlightenment that lead faithful disciples through each of the earthly ordinances and eventually to the heavenly counterparts of these ordinances are found in 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.

21. On the “change of heart,” the “portion of the Spirit” that would take “the vail from before their eyes,” see *ibid.*
22. On Cornelius, see Acts 10:47. Joseph Smith discussed the difference between the initial glimpses of the Kingdom of God that can be

given by the Holy Ghost prior to baptism and the more complete and continuous spiritual awareness that is made available through the gift of the Holy Ghost after baptism: "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 Gospel 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.

Note that on at least one occasion Joseph Smith applied John 3:6 in a very different way to a contemporary situation. On Sunday evening, 2 April 1843, Joseph Smith touched upon the subject of Jesus’ “conversation with Nicodemus. except a man be born of water & of the spirit” (J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1841–1843*, p. 326; J. Smith, Jr., *Words, Joseph Smith Diary*, by Willard Richards, p. 173). The reason for the Prophet’s citation of this story in the context of his discourse is obscure. However, Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook observe that in relation to remarks on eternal marriage given a few months later, Joseph Smith said (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Franklin D. Richards “Scriptural Items,” p. 232): “[That] the earthly is the image of the Heavenly shows that [it] is by the multiplication of Lives that the eternal worlds are created and occupied [for] that which is born of flesh is flesh [and] that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit [see John 3:6].” Ehat and Cook conclude: “The implication is that if your body is not resurrected, your children will be born flesh and bones, but that if your body is resurrected ... your children will be spirits” (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 270 n. 9).

This incident provides a good example of how the specifics of Joseph Smith’s interpretations of scripture and doctrinal pronouncements sometimes can be interpreted correctly only

with reference to current events. Ben McGuire has argued that in contrast to the traditional view that our job in reading scripture is simply to uncover an absolute, "true" meaning that was meant to be grasped by the original audience, Joseph Smith frequently "ignores the increasing gap between the cultural and societal contexts of the past and present, and re-inscribes scripture within the context of the present" (B. L. McGuire, 7 March 2016). McGuire observes that such a reading strategy is quite foreign to the typical modern exegete (though not to ancient interpreters—see, e.g., J. L. Kugel, *How to Read*, pp. 674, 676): "[Joseph Smith] is consistently re-fashioning his interpretation of past scripture through the lens of his present revelations, and the outcome is something that [might have been] ... unrecognizable to the earlier, original audience" (ibid.). For more on this topic, see B. L. McGuire, *Nephi*, pp. 58–59 n. 21, 68–71, 77; J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*, p. 52.

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. This episode offers one of the finest examples of Jesus’ use of *qal wāḥōmer* (“light and weighty”), a Jewish form of *argumentum a minore a maius* (argument from the lesser to the greater). Jesus uses a very Jewish means of dialoging with — and teaching — a “master of Israel” (teacher of Israel, *ho didaskalos tou Israēl*). This strengthens the idea that Nicodemus may be our source for this episode.

Note that John 3:11–13 is but a prologue to Jesus' extended dialogues in chapters 7–10 with those who were reluctant to believe that He was sent by the Father (John 7:16–17, 28–29, 33; 8:18–19, 26, 29, 42; 10:36). Jesus would accomplish all things that the Father sent Him to do (John 8:26, 28–29, 38; 9:25; 10:25; 19:30); having come down from heaven (John 8:23; 17:5), the place to which He would return (John 7:33) but to which His unbelieving hearers could not go (John 7:34–36; 8:21). Though they "[knew] not from whence he [was]" (John 9:29. Cf. John 7:41–43, 52; 8:14, 29) nor where He would go (John 7:35–36; 8:14, 22), Jesus testified: "I know whence I came, and whither I go" (John 8:14, emphasis added). Thus, Isaiah asked rhetorically: "Who hath believed [His] report?" (Isaiah 53:1). Likewise, Georges Moustaki (Humblement) observed poetically:

*Humblement il est venu  
On ne l'a pas reconnu ...  
Ce n'était qu'un inconnu  
On ne l'a pas retenu.*

36. John 3:12.
37. John 3:12.
38. John 3:11.
39. Later in this article we discuss in more detail the distinction that might be made between being "born of water and the spirit" — the essential steps of justification and sanctification that bring the disciple to the threshold of exaltation—and being "born of God," wherein one may become His son or daughter. (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" in the specific sense of the term, Jesus showed not only what had been 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 became "perfect" in likeness of the Father (Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48).

More particularly, in John 3:13 Jesus linked His identity as the "Son of man" to His having descended from and ascended to heaven. The author of Hebrews describes "Jesus the Son of God" as "a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens" (Hebrews

4:14). Specifically, Jesus, “an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” “entereth ... within the veil” of the heavenly temple as a “forerunner” for all disciples who, “through faith and patience,” become fit to “inherit the promises,” “lay[ing] hold” (literally “grasping”) the “sure and steadfast” “anchor of the soul” “set before” them, thus having “*obtained* the promise” that can be “confirmed” only by the “immutability” of the Father’s personal “oath” (Hebrews 6:11–20. Cf., e.g., Psalm 2:7; 110:4; Matthew 25:21, 23; Revelation 4:1; 11:12; 2 Nephi 31:20; D&C 84:40. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 60–62).

Returning to the context of John 3, 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 who would qualify to do the same, could not be apprehended through outward signs that are seen and commended by men like himself (John 3:2), but only through the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10–16), who “seeth in secret” (Matthew 6:4, 18) and “knoweth the hearts” (Acts 15:8. Cf. 1 Samuel 16:7). Only the spirit of divine discernment (1 Corinthians 2:14) can reveal whether individuals, in their varied circumstances and capabilities, are following a course that will enable them to finish the work on the earth that God has given them to do (2 Timothy 4:7. Cf. John 17:4; 19:30), their uniquely tailored “errand from the Lord” (Jacob 1:17), which errand the Son of God as their exemplar fulfilled every “jot” and “tittle” (Matthew 5:18).

In other words, Jesus had to teach Nicodemus that the sure sign of His Sonship—and, moreover, the commonality of commission shared by all who would become God’s sons and daughters—was not in the approving words of men who “testify of man” (John 2:25. Cf. John 5:41), who “judge ... according to the appearance” (John 7:24. Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:12, 10:7), but rather in the eventual acceptance of one’s life and labors by the Father (2 Corinthians 5:9–10. Cf., e.g., John 5:36, 44; 8:17–18, 54. See also Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; 3 Nephi 11:7). As Kierkegaard expressed the supreme state of singlemindedness demanded of disciples: “Purity of heart is to will one thing” (S. Kierkegaard, *Purity*).

Jesus lived in faultless fidelity to the Father’s will, demonstrating perfect patience in “tak[ing] up his cross” (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, if they would, exaltation in the eternal world.

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. The phrase "which is in heaven" is bracketed because some ancient authorities omit this phrase. It is also frequently omitted in modern Bible translations. Because the phrase is well attested, "the shorter reading should be regarded as a deliberate correction by Alexandrian scribes who did not like the natural sense of the text," i.e., "his current presence in heaven, while he is still speaking here on earth" (M. Casey, *Solution*, pp. 284, 285). However, Casey (*ibid.*, p. 287) points out that the phrase becomes coherent if it is regarded as the later perspective of the readers of the Gospel — i.e., Jesus "is in heaven" as we are reading this passage after His ascension.

Given the many Jewish stories of heavenly ascent by prominent figures in circulation during New Testament times—most notably the ascent of Moses himself—many authors see John 3:13 as a polemic against such accounts. As Wayne Meeks expressed it: "The statement 'No one has ascended to heaven' would in this context carry the pointed implication, 'not even Moses'" (W. Meeks, *Jesus As King*, p. 474). But it should be observed that "the contrast is not only between Moses and Jesus, but also between 'ascending' and 'descending.' Humans go up to heaven and come down, but heavenly beings come down and go back up" (S. Hamid-Khani, *Revelation*, p. 89). Hamid-Khani (*ibid.*, p. 350) also makes the point that experiences of heavenly ascent may not have been foreign to Jesus' early disciples. He cites scholarship claiming that "in the context of the Johannine realized eschatology, the heavenly ascents and revelation were open not only to Jesus' immediate disciples, but also the Johannine church enjoyed a 'recurring actualization of His future Parousia' in the visions and 'heavenly journeys' which were a feature of their worship."

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 in context it seems more fitting 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).

Of course, the serpent is an ambivalent symbol, as James H. Charlesworth captured in the title of his book *The Good and Evil*

*Serpent.* Not only does the serpent sometimes represent evil, it also impersonates the good, as it apparently did in the Garden of Eden (J. M. Bradshaw et al., *Mormonism's Satan*, pp. 18–19):

Of great significance here is the fact that the serpent is a frequently used symbol of life-giving power (Numbers 21:8–9; John 3:14–15; 2 Nephi 25:20; Alma 33:19; Helaman 8:14–15). In the context of the temptation of Eve, LDS scholars Draper, Brown, and Rhodes conclude that Satan “has effectively come as the Messiah, offering a promise that only the Messiah can offer, for it is the Messiah who will control the powers of life and death and can promise life, not Satan” (R. D. Draper et al., *Commentary*, p. 43. See John 5:25–26; 2 Nephi 9:3–26).

Not only has the Devil come in guise of the Holy One, he seems to have deliberately appeared, without authorization, at a most sacred place in the Garden of Eden (*ibid.*, pp. 42, 150–151). Indeed, if it is true, as Ephrem the Syrian believed, that the Tree of Knowledge was a figure for “the veil for the sanctuary” (Ephrem, *Paradise*, 3:5, p. 92. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *Tree of Knowledge*), then Satan has positioned himself, in the extreme of sacrilegious effrontery, as the very “keeper of the gate” (2 Nephi 9:41. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4) to the Tree of Life—symbolizing the possibility, under proper circumstances, of “exaltation” in Mormon language. Thus, it seems, Eve’s deception consisted in having taken the forbidden fruit “from the wrong hand, having listened to the wrong voice” (M. C. Thomas, *Women*, p. 53).

44. 1 Nephi 17:41. Cf. Numbers 21:6. See also Isaiah 14:29; 30:6; 2 Nephi 24:29.
45. In the Bible, the term is used in two different ways, one stressing the humanity of the referent as a “son of man,” i.e., an ordinary human being (e.g., Numbers 23:19; Job 25:6; 35:8; Psalm 8:4; 146:3; Isaiah 51:12 [cf. 2 Nephi 8:12]; 56:2; Jeremiah 49:18; Ezekiel 2:3; Daniel 8:17), and the other clearly signifying the divinity of the Son of the “Man of Holiness” (Moses 6:57) or the Son of God (John 3:13; see the following endnote. See also, e.g., Matthew 25:31–46; Mark 14:61).

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the term “Son of Man” is consistently used, with only one exception (D&C 122:8), in passages referring to the coming of Jesus Christ in His glory (D&C 49:22; 58:65; 61:38; 63:53; 64:23; 65:5; 68:11; 109:5; 130:12, 14, 15, 17).

In the book of Moses, the term “son of man” is used in its first sense by Satan to refer to the mortal weakness of Moses (Moses 1:12) and elsewhere to refer to Jesus Christ, who descended below all things (D&C 122:8) and is made glorious in heaven (Moses 7:24) and at His coming (Moses 7:24, 47, 54, 56, 59, 65; cf. JS–Matthew 1:26, 36, 37, 41, 43, 48). This recalls the prominent use of the title “the Son of Man” in the Book of Parables within 1 Enoch (G. W. E. Nickelsburg et al., *1 Enoch* 2, 46:2–4, p. 153; 48:2, p. 166; 60:10, p. 233; 62:5, 7, 9, 14, p. 254; 63:11, p. 255; 69:26–27, 29, p. 311; 70:1, p. 315; 71:14, 17, p. 320), consistent with the density of its appearances in the vision of Enoch in the book of Moses. The related titles of “Chosen One” (Moses 7:39. Cf. Moses 4:2. See *ibid.*, 39:6, p. 111; 40:5, p. 130; 45:3–4, p. 148; 49:2, 4, p. 166; 51:5a, 3, p. 180; 52:6, 9, p. 187; 53:6, p. 194; 55:4, p. 198; 61:5, 8, 10, pp. 243, 247; 62:1, p. 254. See Isaiah 42:1, Luke 9:35 [best manuscripts have “chosen” rather than “beloved”], 23:35), “Anointed One” (i.e., Messiah. See Moses 7:53. See *ibid.*, 48:10, p. 166; 52:4, p. 187. Cf. Luke 23:35: “the Christ [Messiah], the chosen of God”), and “Righteous One” (Moses 6:57; 7:45, 47, 67. See *ibid.*, 38:2, p. 95; 53:6, p. 194. The term also appears by implication in 39:6, p. 111; 46:3, p. 153; 49:2, p. 166; 62:2–3, p. 254) each appears prominently in both the 1 Enoch Book of Parables and the LDS Enoch story.

In Abraham 1:27 we read: “And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me.” Arguably, the referent could be either the premortal Jesus Christ or the premortal Adam (see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image* 1, EXCURSUS 23: The Roles of Christ, Adam, and Michael, pp. 582–584), a reading that has a precedent in the story of Enoch’s exaltation to become a “son of Man” (G. W. E. Nickelsburg et al., *1 Enoch* 2, 71:14, p. 321).

46. John 3:13. We capitalize “Man” to be consistent with 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 the 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 huioi tou anthrōpou*), i.e., "the Son of the Man" (English capitalization added), giving the reading "the Son of the Man which is in heaven," which can be taken as meaning that "the Man," rather than "the Son" is the one who is currently "in heaven." Other scholars who accept the phrase "which is in heaven" (e.g., R. L. Overstreet, John 3:13) have interpreted it differently as a witness to the omnipresence of Jesus, i.e., that He is simultaneously on earth and in heaven.

For more on the "Son of Man" in this verse, see M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, Kindle Edition: 4618 of 15473.

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. Regarding the significance of the location that is "innermost" to the throne of God and the general symbolism of the sacred center, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Tree of Knowledge*, pp. 50-52. For more on Jesus Christ as the "keeper of the gate" in this sense and Satan's deception in presenting himself as a glorious serpent (i.e., as Jesus Christ, the most glorious of the seraphim), see *ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

On Jesus as the “better of all the seraphim,” see Hebrews 1:3–8, where He is described as the greatest of the divine attendants of the Father—specifically as the “brightness of [God’s] glory, and the express image of his person,” sitting nearer to the throne than any of the seraphim, i.e., “on the right hand of the Majesty on high,” and, in explicit terms, as having been “made so much better than the angels” (see vv. 3–4).

In Latter-day Saint theology and scripture, angels are not typically understood as beings of a different race than man. Although “Latter-day revelation has not identified or clarified the nature of seraphim or cherubim mentioned in the Bible” (J. E. Jensen, Spirit), the argument of Hebrews 1 is that although the angels spoken of resemble in their various honors God’s preeminent Son, He, through the accomplishment of His unique mission as Savior and Redeemer, has “by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:4).

51. John 14:6. Margaret Barker sees the Book of Revelation as “a record of [Jesus’] heavenly visions and their interpretations” (see, e.g., M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, Kindle Edition: 4619 of 15473). It must be said that Jesus had not only *seen* the members of the heavenly council, but, of course, was Himself preeminent among them.
52. Regarding the application of this prophecy to Joseph Smith, see 3 Nephi 20:43. Cf. 3 Nephi 21:10. Note the observation of Gaye Strathearn and Jacob Moody that 3 Nephi 21:10, using the language of Isaiah 52:13–15, appears to have reference not only to the prophet Joseph Smith, but also the Book of Mormon (G. Strathearn et al., Christ’s interpretation. See D&C 10:43).

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-mi*) 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, son of Jacob, (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).

There also seems to be a textual affinity between Isaiah’s prophecy and the story of Enoch in the book of Moses and in the

pseudepigraphal book of 1 Enoch. Because of Enoch's continued "faith" (Moses 7:13) and "righteousness" (Moses 7:19), he was "high and lifted up ... in the bosom of the Father and of the Son of Man" (Moses 7:24). The parallel between Enoch being lifted up in this verse and the Son of Man being "lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men" in Moses 7:55 (cf. Isaiah 52:13; John 3:14; 8:28) is noteworthy. In addition, as we have argued earlier in this article, there may be some connection between the idea of being "lifted up" and initiation into the heavenly mysteries like Enoch (Moses 7:59). In the Book of Parables 71:3 Enoch recounts: "And the angel Michael, one of the archangels, took me by my right hand, and raised me up, and brought me out to all the secrets; and he showed me all the secrets of mercy" (G. W. E. Nickelsburg et al., *1 Enoch 2*, 71:3, p. 320). Later in the account, Enoch was proclaimed as the "Son of Man" (ibid., 71:14, p. 321), a concept that may be disconcerting for some readers but which poses no problem for Latter-day Saint theology (see J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God's Image 2*, OVERVIEW Moses 7, p. 117).

Unlike priesthood ordinations performed by men, the ordinance by which one becomes a "son of God" (= son of Man) is administered directly by God Himself (See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 59–65), just as this status was conferred upon Enoch as part of his heavenly ascent: "And [the high priesthood after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch] was delivered unto men by the calling of [God's] own voice" (JST Genesis 14:29).

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*, 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; John 8:28; 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. For more on the double meaning of “lifted up,” see M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, Kindle Edition: 4618 of 15473. Barker also observes (*ibid.*, 4650 of 15473):

The three themes of this chapter—heavenly birth, lifting up, and a snake bite—are all found in Revelation 12:13–17: the Woman in heaven gave birth to her son, the ancient serpent was ready to bite him, about to “devour” him (Revelation 12:4), and the child escaped by being lifted up to the throne of God. The serpent went on to attack the Woman’s other children, those who were keeping the commandments and bearing witness [of] Jesus, and presumably these were the snake bites that were an ever-present danger to Jesus’ followers. Looking to the exalted Jesus would protect them. The mark of

the ancient serpent was worn on the right hand and the forehead of his followers (Revelation 13:16), exactly where the observant pro-Moses group wore their phylacteries (Deuteronomy 6:8).

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 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.” Nephi clarifies that to receive “eternal life” one must “endure to the end” (i.e., the veil that conceals both the earthly and heavenly Holy of Holies), where he or she may, if fully qualified, receive the personal oath of “the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20).
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. For Daniel Tyler’s recollection of a statement by Joseph Smith on seeing the kingdom of God “from the outside,” see D. Tyler, *Recollections*, pp. 93–94, reproduced in its entirety above.
74. John 3:10. M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, Kindle Edition: 4564, 4679 of 15473 observes:

As a Pharisee and a ruler, Nicodemus would have known the Hebrew Scriptures, and Jesus addressed him as *the* teacher of Israel, so perhaps John was using him as a representative of that group who did not understand even though they had studied the Scriptures (John 3:10; cf. 5:39–40, the Jews who searched the Scriptures but did not know what they meant. [See also Mark 4:11–12.]) If the cleansing of the temple had been a conflict with the temple authorities, then this meeting with Nicodemus

should be seen as a meeting of the two teachers of Israel. ...

Underlying Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus and the explanation of who He is are three royal texts: Psalm 110; Isaiah 52:13–53:12; and Deuteronomy 32:43, all of which would have been well known to those who studied the Hebrew Scriptures, *but all of which are different in the Masoretic Hebrew from which English Bibles are translated.* ...

It would be possible to conclude from [the] evidence that texts which were important for Christian claims—and indeed for Jesus' own understanding of His role—were removed from the Hebrew text or significantly altered. They may have been removed after Jesus made his claims and in reaction to them, or they may have been royal and temple texts that had already been edited out of some copies of the Hebrew Scriptures during the second-temple period, the work of the “restoring scribes.” If the latter, then Nicodemus could not have recognized and understood what Jesus was saying.

75. On Jewish mystic interpretations of seeing the kingdom of God, see C. S. Keener, *John*, 1:538. For the statement concerning Philo's teachings on becoming a heavenly man through spiritual rebirth, see *ibid.*, 1:563. Cf. 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. John S. Thompson has suggested to the first author that Ezekiel's vision of the “dry bones” was foreshadowed, perhaps, by Adam's creation from dry “dust” that follows hard after a passage

about a "mist from the earth" that watered the ground (see Genesis 2:6–7; Moses 3:6–7; Abraham 5:6–7).

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. Cf. Revelation 1:6 (especially JST Revelation 1:6) and 5:10. 1 Peter 2:9 applies this concept to all Christian converts who are invited to become "a royal priesthood, a holy nation." Similarly, the blessings associated with the divine oath recorded in Psalm 110:4 declaring "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" are extended not only to Jesus Christ (Hebrews 5:8) but also to every one who "patiently endure[s]" to the end and enters, like their "forerunner," "within the veil" to receive the same "oath ... from [the] Father" (see Hebrews 6:13–20; D&C 84:40; J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 61–62). According to D&C 76:56–58, such individuals are made "priests," "kings," and "sons of God":

They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

And are priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son.

Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—

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 a smaller set of scriptures Mosiah 4:6, 30; 5:8; Alma 34:33; 41:6 which instead describe this end more generally as the end of mortal life.
91. D&C 132:24. Cf. John 17:3.

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).
- The mourning of the righteous for sin 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).
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. 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.
95. 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.
96. E.g., Matthew 5:48; Luke 18:22; John 13:36; 14:6; 21:19; 3 Nephi 12:48.
97. John 3:3, emphasis added.
98. Hebrews 11:13.
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. See N. B. Reynolds, *True Points*, pp. 42–44 and N. B. Reynolds, *Understanding Christian Baptism* for a comprehensive discussion of the Book of Mormon teaching that baptism is an outward “witness to God of one’s repentance and commitment to follow Jesus Christ” rather than the cleansing from sin by fire that

comes through the operations of the Holy Ghost, as described in a later section of this article. As with baptism, the "prescribed sacrament prayers (Moroni 4:3; 5:2) precisely recapitulate the converts' witnessing to the Father, renewing their prior witness of the covenant they had made to take upon themselves the name of Christ, to keep his commandments, and to remember him always" (*ibid.*, p. 11).

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)."

Explaining 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.

129. 2 Nephi 31:7. Cf. vv. 10, 14, 18.

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 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. Perego documents how in the early days of the restored Church, the Saints sometimes partook the bread and wine of the sacrament “in a quantity similar to a normal meal.” See U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, pp. 7–8 for more on this subject.
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). However a close examination of the manuscript will reveal that this is an error. For the manuscript, see JS, Discourse, Nauvoo, IL, 20 March 1842, Wilford Woodruff, Diary, pp. 134–138 (p. 136); handwriting of Wilford Woodruff; CHL, posted as interim content on *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-20-march-1842-as-reported-by-wilford-woodruff/3> (accessed January 23, 2020).
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*. For a good overview of baptismal symbolism, theories, and practices from a Latter-day Saint point of view, see N. B. Reynolds, *Understanding Christian Baptism*, especially pp. 15–31.
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 1:33, 38.
164. 1 Kings 1:34, 39; Psalm 23:5; Psalm 89:20.
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. John 3:5.
171. John 4:14. Cf. Revelation 22:1: "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."
172. J. M. Bradshaw et al., *Investiture Panel*.

173. See especially *ibid.*, pp. 29–30.
174. J. H. Walton, *Ancient*, p. 129.
175. 1 Kings 7:23. See also vv. 24–26, 44.
176. D. Calabro, *Joseph Smith and the Architecture*, p. 172. Although some Latter-day Saint commentators have suggested that the laver of Solomon *was* used as a baptismal font, there is no ancient evidence for such usage. But the displacement of the account of Adam’s baptism in the book of Moses noted by Calabro certainly suggests that the careful reader is meant to make such an association.
177. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 20 March 1842, p. 107.
178. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Willard Richards Pocket Companion, 27 June 1839, p. 3.
179. L. G. Arrington, Oliver Cowdery’s Sketch Book, 21 January 1836, p. 418, spelling standardized.
180. 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.
181. H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), p. 174. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Five*, 21:1–6, 7:149–150.
182. See G. A. Anderson et al., *Synopsis*, pp. 33E–45E.
183. G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, p. 130.
184. S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*.
185. See Colossians 2:11–12.
186. Matthew 3:11.
187. Cf. Matthew 3:11: “I baptize you with water for repentance . . . ; he will baptize you with the holy spirit and with fire” (RSV).
188. 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.

189. Ezekiel 36:25–26. See also Jeremiah 9:26; Ezekiel 11:19–20; 18:31; Romans 2:29.

190. 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.

191. See Genesis 17:23.

192. Emphasis added. Cf. Mosiah 18:8–10; Alma 7:15.

193. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 22 January 1834, pp. 58–59.

194. M. Garsiel, *Biblical Names*, p. 92.

195. Genesis 4:4; Moses 5:20.

196. Hebrews 12:24; M.-B. Halford, *Eva und Adam*, pp. 270–271.

197. Matthew 23:35. See discussion of the identity of Zechariah in M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 149–150.

198. Genesis 4.

199. 2 Chronicles 24:20–22. Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew canon.

200. V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, p. 244.

201. See  $\text{OT}_1$  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).

202. The possessive "mine" in "mine anointing" is particularly interesting. Anointings are attested in the temple rites of ancient

Egypt (*wrh* = anoint, smear on) in Mesopotamia (Akkadian *pašašu* = to anoint, smear; this word is cognate with the Hebrew/Aramaic verb *mšḥ* [“anoint”], whence *māšīah* [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.

203. The crossing out of the words is perhaps intended to disqualify the practice as being “baptism” in a legitimate sense. The words may also foreclose the possibility that a practice incorporating full immersion (“burial”) was being described.
204. 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.
205. Genesis 17:12.
206. JST Genesis 17:11. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image* 1, ENDNOTE E-134, p. 734.
207. L. E. Dahl, Joseph Smith Translation, p. 126.
208. 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.
209. E. S. Drower, *Mandaeans*, pp. 100–123.
210. W. Barnstone et al., *Gnostic*, p. 533; E. S. Drower, *Prayerbook*, p. 30.
211. 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 [cf. Moses 6:64, where Adam was “caught away by the Spirit of the Lord . . . and laid under the water” and Mosiah 18:14, where Alma submerged himself] 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 *ibid.*, 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" [cf. Matthew 7:7]. And say to him "Thy *kusta* shall be thy witness and thy baptism shall be established and not be in vain [Note that the *kusta* handclasp is a later "witness" to the previously performed ordinance]. 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 [It is not clear whether the "sign" is something that was received at

baptism itself, or whether it consist of the *kusta* that was given later], 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. [Note that the candidate is both washed and anointed in the same way—on the forehead from right to left, using a finger.]

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

213. 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 a 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 be 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."*

214. For examples with an extensive discussion, see M. L. Bowen, *And There Wrestled*, pp. 152–157.
215. Genesis 32:24–32. Cf. Enos’ wrestle with God in Enos 1:2 (see *ibid.*, pp. 152–153).
216. Genesis 33:22–24.
217. Luke 15:20.
218. 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.
219. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, ENDNOTE E-136, p. 735.
220. C. R. Koester, *Hebrews*, p. 546 n. 12:24a. Cf. H. W. Attridge et al., *Hebrews*, p. 377.
221. 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.
222. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, ENDNOTE E-135, p. 734.
223. S. Ruzer, *Abel’s Blood*.
224. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, ENDNOTE E-138, p. 735.

225. 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.
226. J. J. Neusner, *Without Myth*, p. 99.
227. Cf. JST Genesis 17:6.
228. Deuteronomy 21:1.
229. Qur'an 2:67–71.
230. 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.
231. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image* 1, COMMENTARY 5:35-b, p. 383.
232. 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.
233. JST Genesis 17:7.
234. S. Zinner, *Gospel of Thomas*.
235. H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), p. xxix.
236. See Romans 6:4–6.
237. D&C 1:15–16.
238. C. Broderick, *Adversity*, p. 129.
239. J. F. Smith, *Dedication*, Remarks at the Memorial Party in Boston, Dec. 24–25, 1905, p. 61.
240. John 3:3.
241. J. A. Widtsoe, *Temple Worship*, pp. 192–193.
242. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 60.
243. 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).

244. 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.
245. 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*.

246. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62.
247. See B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, pp. 294–295.
248. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
249. 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.
250. D&C 84:20.
251. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*; J. M. Bradshaw, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*. 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).

252. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62.
253. 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."
254. 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)).
255. 2 Nephi 4:31.
256. D&C 58:27.
257. 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.
258. Mosiah 15:7.
259. Ephesians 4:13.
260. See, e.g., Exodus 40:12–13; Leviticus 16:3–4, 23–24. For descriptions of similar ordinances in modern Latter-day Saint temples, see, e.g., D&C 124:39; J. E. Talmage, *House of the Lord* (1912), p. 185.
261. See Articles of Faith 1:4.
262. Bible Dictionary, s.v. Baptism, cited in D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 60.
263. Exodus 40:12–13. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image* 1, pp. 661–662.
264. A poem by W. W. Phelps asserts that "[b]efore this world was known," he was "wash'd and set apart For the glory yet to be." He also wrote 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 ENDNOTE 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.

265. 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 was remembered as specifically mentioning 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).

266. 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 certain spirits 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 seeks by this means 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 certain individuals only in the next life. Happily, all who have been born on earth without the chance to receive any blessing 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 *premortals* life (cf. Abraham 3:23).

267. 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).

268. Moses 6:60.
269. Moses 6:60.
270. Moses 6:60.
271. W. W. Isenberg, Philip, 70:36–71:3, p. 152.
272. See 1 Nephi 10:19; Alma 7:20; 37:12; D&C 3:2; 35:1.
273. Moses 5:7. See Moses 5:6–8.
274. M. J. bin Gorion (Berdichevsky), *Die Sagen* (1913–1927), 2:307–8.
275. See Psalm 8:4.
276. G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition*, p. 201. Cf. B. Beer, *Abraham's*, p. 68.
277. See Genesis 22.
278. Abraham 1:12–18 and Facsimile 1.
279. JST Genesis 17:11.
280. See Genesis 17:11; Romans 2:28; Ephesians 2:11.
281. 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).”
282. D&C 20:37.
283. 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. According to Alma P. Burton, “the temple endowment is seen as the unfolding or culmination of the covenants made at baptism” (A. P. Burton, Endowment, p. 455).
284. B. K. Packer, Come, p. 20; B. K. Packer, *Holy Temple*, pp. 154–55; A. P. Burton, Endowment, p. 455. 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.”

285. T. G. Madsen, *House*, pp. 280–281.

286. J. A. Widtsoe, *Work*, p. 33.

287. 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.

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

289. On the cruse of oil, see 1 Kings 17:16. Commenting on the story of Baucis and Philemon (N. Hawthorne, *Pitcher*), Arthur Henry King wrote (Afterword, p. 237):

When Jupiter and Mercury left the hospitable cottage of Baucis and Philemon, they gave the old couple the gift of an inexhaustible pitcher; however much was poured out of it, the pitcher remained full. The scriptures are like that pitcher; however much they have given us, they have more to give. We drink them for life; we shall drink them forever.

A word of caution is in order about interpreting symbolism in scripture and in the ordinances. Members of the Church often have a tendency to approach learning about symbols in a piecemeal fashion. For example, they focus their primary attention on understanding the meaning of specific symbols used in scripture

and the ordinances. While there is much that can be learned from this kind of study, most of us not only struggle with the meaning of individual concepts and symbols, but also—and perhaps more crucially—in understanding how these concepts and symbols fit together as a whole system. The symbols and concepts in the scriptures and the ordinances are best understood, not in isolation, but within the full context of the plan of salvation to which they belong (see J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2*, ENDNOTE 0-23, p. 30).

G. K. Chesterton has compared our position as mortals struggling to apprehend the divine to that of a “sailor who awakens from a deep sleep and discovers treasure strewn about, relics from a civilization he can barely remember. One by one he picks up the relics—gold coins, a compass, fine clothing—and tries to discern their meaning” (P. Yancey, introduction to G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. xiii). Gradually, glimmers of recognition begin to emerge. However, the re-discovery of the significance of each item comes not so much through careful scrutiny of its outward features as it does through specific recollections of its former place as a natural part of the distant world where he once lived. The point of the illustration is that the answers to our most important questions about God cannot be found merely through piecemeal examination of the relics of religion. Specifically, we profit from careful scrutiny of individual religious symbols only in proportion to our efforts to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 109:7, 14. See also D&C 88:118) about the overall order from which they derive their significance. To the degree we lack revealed knowledge about this sacred order of things, we may be easily distracted by glittering details while failing to ascertain the “weightier matters” (Matthew 23:23) of divine instruction. In short, the greatest benefits will come, not to those who begin their learning by trying to comprehend the minute particulars of the ordinances, but rather to those who are prepared with an understanding of the Gospel as a whole—especially the all-embracing doctrines of the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement as revealed throughout scripture.

290. D&C 84:20–21.

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

292. Moses 6:60.

293. See B. C. Hafen, *Broken*, p. 166. Cf. D. A. Bednar, *Clean Hands*. See N. T. Wright, *Justification* for a non-Latter-day Saint 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.

294. D&C 138:33, emphasis added.
295. Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1–7; 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. For arguments by a Latter-day Saint scholar that Acts 2:38 and Romans 6:1–4 take the view that remission of sins comes through baptism, see R. Boylan, *Baptism*. By way of contrast, N. B. Reynolds, *Understanding Christian Baptism*, p. 20 holds that Acts 2:38 “still can be understood as a sequential process in which the purification of sin is brought about by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.”
296. 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.
297. 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 (see also N. B. Reynolds, *Understanding Christian Baptism*, pp. 11–16). 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 manuscript 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 should follow it (2 Nephi 31:17–18, emphasis added. Cf. 2 Nephi 30: 2. For further discussion of these verses, see N. B. Reynolds, *Understanding Christian Baptism*, pp. 12–13):

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 seem to imply that the spiritual cleansing by the Holy Ghost should follow baptism (emphasis added):

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).

298. Moroni 6:4.

299. 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.

300. 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.

301. D&C 121:46.

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

303. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

304. 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.

305. D&C 130:22. See also 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21–22.

306. 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).
307. 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, for one who receives the Holy Ghost and then “altogether turneth therefrom” (D&C 84:41)—refusing 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.*

308. D. A. Bednar, Always Retain, p. 61.
309. Mosiah 27:36. See also 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15.
310. 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. Those who pray for this privilege, must also prepare for it. To this end, revelation instructs them 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 his hearers to

follow the example of the importunate widow, Joseph Smith 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.

311. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62. See Mosiah 4:11–12.

312. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62. See D&C 20:77, 79.

313. Cf. "Heaven is a place, but also a condition" (S. W. Kimball, *Glimpses*, p. 39). Regarding the description of the telestial, terrestrial, and celestial rooms of the temple as places of justification, sanctification, and exaltation, consider the following statement about the order of sacrifices in Israelite temples (*Latter-day Saint Bible Dictionary*, s.v., sacrifices, emphasis and wording in brackets added):

It is noteworthy that when the three offerings were offered together, the sin always preceded the burnt, and the burnt the peace offerings. Thus the order of the symbolizing sacrifices was the order of atonement [*justification*], *sanctification* [culminating in the symbolism of complete consecration in the fully burnt offering], and fellowship with the Lord [*exaltation*].

314. D&C 109:76, emphasis added. Cf. D&C 29:12.

315. Mosiah 3:19, emphasis added.

316. Mosiah 3:19.

317. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*.

318. See D&C 88:34.

319. D&C 88:30, emphasis added.

320. Mosiah 3:19.

321. D&C 88:30.

322. 1 Samuel 16:13; Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18.

323. 2 Nephi 31:20, emphasis added.

324. Ether 12:32, emphasis added.

325. Hebrews 6:11, emphasis added.

326. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*.

327. Moroni 7:47. See *ibid.*

328. D&C 131:5.

329. D&C 88:29.

330. D&C 84:23. Cf. Exodus 19:10–11.

331. Moses 6:59. Cf. D&C 88:75.

332. D&C 75:5.

333. D&C 132:24, 55.

334. D&C 29:13.

335. See D&C 121:46.

336. 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.

337. 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.

338. 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.

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

340. 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).

341. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 20 March 1842, p. 108, spelling and punctuation modernized. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, pp. 198–199. In context, the statement 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 [Acts 8:18; 1 Timothy 4:14; Hebrews 6:2], 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].

342. John 13:10.
343. E.g., Lamentations 4:20. See V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, pp. 158–159.
344. Isaiah 61:1, emphasis added. See also Luke 4:17–22.
345. 1 Samuel 16:13. Further describing the blessing of the spirit of the Lord that is meant to be given in the anointing, Margaret Barker writes (*M. Barker, Lord Is One*):

The holy anointing oil was used only in the temple. Any imitation for personal use was forbidden (Exodus

30:31–33). The meaning of the oil was found only within the teachings of the temple, and any secular use would make no sense. This was because the oil imparted knowledge. The temple understanding of holiness included illumination of the mind. Isaiah said that when the king was anointed, he received the spirit of the Lord, that is, the spirit that transformed him into the Lord. He received the spirit [that is, the angel] of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge and of the reverence due to the Lord [“the fear of the Lord”]. His perfume [not “delight”] would be the reverence due to the Lord (Isaiah 11:2–3). In other words, the anointed one retained the perfume of the oil, and this identified him as the Lord. Paul said that Christians were spreading the perfume of the knowledge of the Anointed One, which did not mean knowing about Jesus; it meant having the knowledge that Jesus had because He was the Anointed One (2 Corinthians 2:14).

346. L. L. Baker et al., *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 353. See also additional discussion on pp. 354–358 and, e.g., 1 Samuel 10:1, 15:17, 16:23; 2 Samuel 2:4, 5:3; 1 Kings 1:39; 1 Chronicles 29:22. Cf. J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 519–523.
347. Quoted in J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 6 August 1843, 5:527. For descriptions of Joseph Smith’s restoration of the ordinance of “second anointing” and the offices of “kings and priests unto the Most High God” in Nauvoo, see J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1841–1843*, p. *xxi*; J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Council of Fifty Minutes*, pp. *xxxviii–xxxvix*. Joseph Smith explained that this office had ‘nothin[g] to do with temporal things’ but was instead related to the kingdom of God” (*ibid.*, p. *xxxviii*).
348. B. Nichols, *Coronation*, pp. 18, 14. For more on 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.
349. M. E. Stone, *Angelic Prediction*, p. 125.
350. D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62.

351. Tertullian, *Baptism*, 7, p. 672. Margaret Barker observes (M. Barker, *Lord Is One*):
- All [early] Christians were ... anointed—the name means anointed ones—and so they were heirs to the high priestly role: “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9).
352. Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions*, p. 89. Cf. F. S. Jones, *Recognitions* (1995), pp. 76–77.
353. C. S. Lewis, *Mere*, p. 154.
354. Moses 6:60.
355. W. W. Isenberg, *Philip*, 70:36–71:3, p. 152.
356. Alma 13:5.
357. Alma 13:2, emphasis added.
358. Alma 13:3.
359. D&C 4:2. See J. M. Bradshaw, *He That Thrusteth in His Sickle*, pp. 156–159, 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.” See also 2 Nephi 25:16 and Moroni 10:32.
360. 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 as the end of probation or the time of judgment as in most other scriptural references.
361. See E. T. Benson, *Vision*. 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.

362. Moses 6:60.
363. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image* 1, COMMENTARY Moses 5:35–36, pp. 383–384.
364. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 61.
365. 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 OT2 (*ibid.*, p. 610): “by their oaths, they have brought upon themselves death.”
366. Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:27–30.
367. See Moses 3:17; 4:9, 17, 18, 25.
368. JST Genesis 9:4. See S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, p. 116. Joseph Smith taught that resurrected bodies would not contain 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.
369. E.g., Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:14; Deuteronomy 12:23. See also John 6:53–54.
370. 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).
371. See Exodus 24:9–11.
372. D&C 110:5.
373. Isaiah 6:6–7.
374. Isaiah 6:6.
375. Hebrew *těkuppār*, literally, “atoned” \**kpr*.
376. D. Harper, Dictionary, s.v. blood.
377. *Ibid.*, s.v. bless.
378. *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).

379. Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster New Book of Word Histories*, p. 50; D. Harper, Dictionary, s.v. bless.
380. D. A. Bednar, *Ye Must Be Born Again*, p. 22.
381. Alma 13:11. See also Exodus 19:10, 14; Ether 13:11; Revelation 7:14. For more on this subject, see N. B. Reynolds, *Understanding Christian Baptism*, pp. 14–16.
382. 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).
383. D&C 131:5. Cf. 2 Corinthians 1:21–22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30; Revelation 7:2–4, 9:4.
384. 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."
385. 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 [see Ezekiel 37:16–20].

386. L. T. Johnson, *Religious Experience*, p. 78 and p. 78 n. 44.

387. Alma 5:14.

388. 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.

389. 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).
390. Genesis 22:13.
391. H. W. Nibley, *Abraham* (2000), pp. 336, 338, <http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1093&index=11> (accessed October 15, 2016).
392. R. A. Rosenberg, *Jesus, Isaac*, p. 385.
393. *Ibid.*, pp. 383, 385.
394. 2 Nephi 31:19.
395. 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 it is not certain whether Joseph Smith authored these lectures).

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 Latter-day Saints, Jesus Christ is not only their Redeemer but also their literal prototype, the One who demonstrates the process of probation that all people must pass through as they follow Him (Matthew 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 16:24; 19:21; Mark 2:14; 8:24; 10:21; Luke 5:27; 9:23, 59, 61; 18:22; John 1:43; 10:27; 12:26; 13:36; 21:19, 22).

396. B. C. Hafen, *Anchored*, p. 22. On the idea of the “second sacrifice” that is represented in a later part of the temple endowment, Elder Hafen writes (B. C. Hafen, *Disciple’s Journey*. Cf. B. C. Hafen, *Anchored*, pp. 22-23, 82):

As we approach the second barrier of sacrifice, we move symbolically from the moon to the sun. All of the moon’s light is reflected from the sun—it is borrowed light [cf. Book of Abraham, explanation of Facsimile 2, Figure 5].

Heber C. Kimball used to say that when life’s greatest tests come, those who are living on borrowed light—the testimonies of others—will not be able to stand (O. F. Whitney, *Kimball*, May 1868, pp. 446, 449–450; J. G. Kimball, 8 April 1906, 8 April 1906, pp. 76–77; J. G. Kimball, 4 October 1930, 4 October 1930, pp. 59–60; H. B. Lee, *Watch*, p. 1152. Cf. B. Young, *BY* 8 March 1857, 8 March 1857, pp. 265–266; A. M. Lyman, 12 July 1857, 12 July 1857, pp. 36–38; O. Hyde, 8 March 1857, 8 March 1857, pp. 71–72; C. W. Penrose, 20 May 1883, 20 May 1883, p. 41. See also Matthew 25:1–13). We need our own access to the light of the Son.

Baptism represents the first sacrifice. The temple endowment represents the second sacrifice. The first sacrifice was about breaking out of Satan’s orbit. The second one is about breaking fully into Christ’s orbit, pulled by His gravitational power. The first sacrifice was mostly about giving up temporal things. The second one is about consecrating ourselves spiritually, holding back nothing. As Elder Maxwell said, the only thing we can

give the Lord that He didn't already give us is our own will (See N. A. Maxwell, *Mentor*, p. 17).

Seeking to be meek and lowly, disciples gladly offer God their will. As our children sing, "I feel my Savior's love. ... / He knows I will follow him, / Give all my life to him" (*Children's Songbook*, "I feel my Savior's love," pp. 74–75). And then what happens? In President Benson's words, "When obedience ceases to be an irritant and becomes our quest, in that moment God will endow us with power" (cited in D. L. Staheli, *Obedience*, p. 82).

397. 2 Nephi 2:8.

398. 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. We are saved by grace despite all we can do. This is similar in spirit 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."

For additional discussion of this verse in the context of general discussions of divine grace, see B. C. Hafen, *Broken*, pp. 155–156; B. Wilcox, *His Grace*; J. M. Spencer, *What Can We Do?*. Two excellent studies by Jared Ludlow and Daniel O. McClellan have gone further to place the scripture in its required literary context (J. Ludlow, "After All"; D. O. McClellan, 2 Nephi 25:23 in linguistic and rhetorical context [Presentation at the conference; October 12–13, 2018] D. O. McClellan, *Despite All We Can Do*).

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.

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).

399. D&C 88:74–75.

400. D&C 88:74–75.

401. D&C 88:68. For an extensive 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.

402. John 13:10.

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

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

405. 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 directly connected with baptism.

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

407. D&C 124:39, emphasis added. 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).

Similarly, in Genesis 14:18 Melchizedek does not offer animal sacrifices to God, but "presents only the *memorials* of sacrifice, bread and wine" (G. J. Scofield, *Scofield Reference Bible*, Genesis 14:18, p. 23, emphasis in original).

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

408. D&C 84:26.

409. D&C 107:3.

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

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

412. D&C 20:37.

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

414. 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.

415. D&C 84:33.

416. 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.

417. 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.

Alma described the experience of being “born of God” in terms that emphasize the personal nature of the encounter that accompanies this experience. 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; D&C 84:22). Describing the knowledge that can be had only through keeping every ordinance of the Melchizedek priesthood, which ordinances hold “the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God” (D&C 84:19), Joseph Smith taught: “No one can truly say he knows God until he has handled something, and this can only be in the holiest of holies” (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 1 May 1842, 4:608. See also *ibid.*, February 1835, 2:195–196, 198). Cf. B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 492; B. R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, pp. 582–584, 594–595; Luke 24:39; John 20:19–29; 3 Nephi 11:14–15).

418. 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).

419. 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.
420. Mosiah 5:9.
421. See M. L. Bowen, *Onomastic Wordplay*, p. 269.
422. Mosiah 5:15; Alma 34:35.
423. D&C 84:39.
424. M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 5, 12. Compare W. J. Hamblin, *Sôd of YHWH*, pp. 147, 151.
425. 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.

426. Alma 13:2.

427. Alma 13:16. Some Latter-day Saint scholars have conjectured narrative portions of temple liturgy in former times may have been derived in part from an ancient text somewhat like the book of Moses (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.

428. Cf. John 1:12–13; Romans 8:14–21; D&C 39:4.

429. See Moses 7:59. Compare P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, 10:1, 3, pp. 263–64.

430. A. A. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, p. 102.

431. F. I. Andersen, *2 Enoch*, 22:8 [J], p. 138. See also J. J. Collins, *Angelic Life*, p. 239.

432. P. S. Alexander, *From Son of Adam*, pp. 103, 105.

433. See Moses 1:2, 11, 13–15, 18, 25, 31.

434. Moses 1:11.

435. 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* vol. 1, 8:10, pp. 82–83. Cf. also P. B. Munoa,

- Four Powers*, p. 101. See more generally C. R. A. Morray-Jones, Transformational.
436. C. Mopsik, *Hénoch*, p. 214. For a consideration of 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.
437. 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>.
438. 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.
439. See Revelation 11:15 (“he shall reign for ever and ever”) and compare Revelation 22:5 (“they shall reign for ever and ever”).
440. Moses 6:60.
441. H. W. Nibley, *Return*, p. 59.
442. D&C 101:4.
443. Genesis 22:12.
444. Mosiah 3:19.
445. See, e.g., D&C 20:77 and Alma 7:15.
446. While not explicitly linking 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.
447. U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, p. 5.

448. 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, *Worshipping*, 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. Peregó, *Changing Forms*, especially pp. 11–14. For a contrasting view of this issue, see M. Clayton, *Covenant Renewal*.

449. Mosiah 15:7. Cf. Matthew 26:28
450. 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.

451. Mosiah 3:19.

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

453. Alma 22:18, emphasis added.

454. 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). “Like a human father, the heavenly Father . . . teach[es] his children courtesy, persistence, and diligence. If the child prevails with a thoughtful father, it is because the 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.

455. 1 Peter 2:19–21; 3:18. For a recent analysis of the concept of reciprocity and suffering in these verses, 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.

456. 1 Peter 3:18.

457. 3 Nephi 11:11; D&C 19:18. See also Matthew 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11.

458. "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, "[the] 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.

The depth and totality of Jesus' atonement, His suffering and death to enable our joy and life, can be likened to these words from Georges Moustaki's "L'homme au Coeur Blessé":

*Dans le jardin de l'homme au cœur blessé,  
L'herbe est brûlée. Pas une fleur.  
Sur l'arbre mort, plus rien ne peut pousser.  
Rien que les fruits de sa douleur.*

In the garden of the man with the wounded heart,  
The ground is burned. Not one flower.  
On the dead tree, nothing more can grow.  
Nothing but the fruits of his suffering.

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

460. Exodus 12:8, 15, 17, 18, 20, 39. With respect to the drinking of wine at Passover, B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, p. 385 notes that the book of Jubilees, “written centuries before Jesus’ day,” claimed “that at the very first Passover in Egypt the Israelites ‘remained eating the flesh of the Passover and drinking wine’ (Jubilees 49:6).” By the time of Jesus, Philo of Alexandria “explicitly states that the Passover sacrifice would be accompanied by the drinking of ‘wine’ and the singing of ‘songs of praise’ to God (Philo, *Special Laws*, 2:146–148).”
461. Exodus 16:14–15. See also John 6:31 where the manna is described as “bread from heaven.”
462. E.g., John 1:29, 36.
463. John 6:32.
464. 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).
465. The foundational Old Testament reference for this event is Isaiah 25:6–9, which forms a part of longer descriptions of the coming day of the Lord (Isaiah 24–27):

6 ¶ And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

9 ¶ And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, p. 449 highlights several aspects of Isaiah’s description:

First, the coming feast is no ordinary banquet; it is an eschatological event. This eschatological dimension is evident from the fact that the banquet culminates in the overthrow of suffering and death: God will "swallow up death for ever" and wipe away "tears" from "all faces." Indeed, just a few verses after describing the banquet, Isaiah goes on to speak about the resurrection of the "bodies" of the "dead" (Isaiah 26:19). As Joseph Klausner suggests, the overall context of the banquet is Isaiah's vision of "the cessation of death and the resurrection of the dead in the Age to Come." Second, the banquet is a feast of redemption; it will be tied to the forgiveness of sins. At the time of the banquet, God will take away "the reproach of his people" and give them salvation (Isaiah 25:8–9). Third, the coming feast will be a cultic or sacrificial banquet. This is the meaning of the strange imagery of "fat things" and "wine on the lees." This is technical terminology for sacrificial offerings of the Temple cult, as when Deuteronomy speaks of "the fat of their sacrifices" and "the wine of their drink offering" (Deuteronomy 32:37–38; cf. Leviticus 3:3; 4:8–9). This cultic dimension is important to stress, since Isaiah explicitly states that the banquet will take place on "the mountain of the Lord," which in context refers to "Mount Zion ... in Jerusalem" (Isaiah 24:23). Fourth, in Isaiah, the eschatological banquet will be an international banquet, which will include both the restored tribes of Israel and the Gentile nations. The feast will be "for all peoples" and will result in the "veil" that is cast over all the "nations" or "Gentiles" (*goyim*) being lifted. This is a startlingly universal vision of salvation, nestled right in the heart of one of the most widely read prophets of the Old Testament.

Fifth and finally, ... it is significant that several scholars have suggested that the banquet in Isaiah 25 alludes to and is modeled on the heavenly banquet of Moses and the elders atop Mount Sinai (cf. Isaiah 24:23). In his commentary on Isaiah, Otto Kaiser writes:

Just as Yahweh once revealed himself on Sinai before the elders of his people in the whole fullness of his

light when the covenant was made (cf. Exodus 24:3ff., 9f.), he will once again show himself to the elders of Israel in order ... to ratify the covenant for all time.

B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, pp. 448–511 provides an extensive overview of the messianic banquet in early Judaism, in early Christianity, and in the teachings of Jesus. The most extensive description of this divine, sacramental feast in modern scripture is given in D&C 27:5–15.

466. Exodus 25:30. Hebrew *lechem ha-panim*, literally “bread of the faces.” Although the traditional understanding of this general term is that the shewbread “functions as a visible sign of the invisible heavenly ‘face’ (*panim*) of God” (B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, p. 125. See also p. 124, where it is noted that “in the ancient world, cakes of bread that were offered in temples [and later, in churches], were often stamped with some symbol of the deity [cf. Jeremiah 7:18; 44:19]”), more study of the subject is needed. Elsewhere, I have discussed how temple prayer seems to have been understood by Paul as not only a preparation for beholding the face of God, in likeness of Moses (Exodus 33:11; D&C 84:19–24), but also to enable participants to acquire the glorious likeness of God in their own faces. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, Appendix 5: Paul on Women’s Veiling of the Face in Prayer, pp. 111–116.

Stressing the importance of this ordinance, B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, pp. 128, 132, 133 notes that:

the bread of the presence is not depicted as just any kind of sacrifice, but as the premier sacrifice of the Sabbath. Indeed Leviticus is quite clear that the bread of the presence is to be offered “every Sabbath day” by Aaron the high priest and his descendants (Leviticus 24:8). This link is important to stress, because it reveals an often-overlooked cultic activity that characterizes the biblical Sabbath. Not only is the Sabbath a day of rest, it is distinctively characterized by the weekly offering of the unbloody sacrifice of the bread and wine of the presence, as a “remembrance” of the “everlasting covenant” between God and the twelve tribes of Israel [cf. D&C 59:12]. ...

[T]he bread of the presence was the most holy of all sacrifices, with the possible exception of the Day of Atonement. ...

[Texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls suggest], as Matthew Black has argued, ... that "the sacred meal of bread and/or wine of the Qumran priestly sect was not only an anticipation of the messianic banquet, but also a foretaste of the full Temple rite when that had been fully restored in the New Jerusalem"—a rite that was not just the sacrificial consumption of just any food, but specifically of the bread (and wine) of the presence.

467. The symbolism of the actualization of the eschatological feast (rather than merely the prefiguration in the showbread eaten in the Holy Place) may be represented in the golden pot of manna said to have been kept in the Holy of Holies (Exodus 16:33–34; Hebrews 9:4).

468. Although some scholars argue that the libations were meant merely to be poured out by the priests, B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, p. 123 cites "the position of Menahem Haran, who makes a strong case that [Exodus 25:23–30] envisages the wine being drunk by the priests, just as the bread is eaten by the priests, in a sacred banquet of bread and wine (cf. Leviticus 24:5–8)."

Pitre (*ibid.*, pp. 133–134) also cites Philo's account of the Therapeutae, a first-century Jewish sect, "who celebrated a sacred meal of bread and wine directly modeled on the bread of the presence of the Tabernacle of Moses" (Philo, *Contemplative Life*, 81–83, 85–88). Notably, both men and women participated in the feast, with the "male and female leaders of the banquet ... deliberately modeling their actions on Moses and Miriam."

469. Leviticus 2:1.

470. J. S. Thompson, *How John's Gospel*, p. 313. In this study, which compares the structure of the Gospel of John to Israelite temples, Thompson sees Jesus' sermon on the bread of life (John 6:35, 53–56) as corresponding to this first, preparatory offering and thus also to the modern ordinance that is administered by the Aaronic priesthood each Sunday during Latter-day Saint sacrament meetings.

471. Genesis 14:18; JST Genesis 14:25–40. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 53–58. Genesis Rabbah interprets Melchizedek’s giving of bread and wine to Abraham as follows: “He handed over to him the laws governing priesthood” and “The bread stands for the show-bread, and the wine stands for the offerings” (J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah* vol. 2, 43:6, pp. 119-120).

J. S. Thompson, How John’s Gospel, p. 314 observes:

The Passover is a small simple meal in the spring at the beginning of the harvest when the first-fruits of barley are also brought to the temple. Starting in chapter 7, John specifically links the next series of events in Jesus’ life to the autumnal festivals, particularly the Feast of Ingathering or Tabernacles, which is a larger more elaborate meal at the end of the harvest. This feast is typically associated with the ascension and coronation of kings, the reestablishment of law, and the dedication of temples (1 Kings 8:2, 63; Ezra 3:1–4; 2 Maccabees 1:9; 2:9–12; G. Yee, *Jewish Feasts*, p. 87; M. Coloe, *God Dwells*, pp. 148–149). Similarly, the temple program appears to reflect two meals: small preparatory meals associated with the sacrificial altar in the courtyard and a grander meal represented by the table of shewbread inside the holy place of the temple. [A similar pattern of an initial small meal in connection with being clothed in simple linen followed by a large meal in connection with being clothed in more kingly regalia appears in the earliest rituals of the ancient Egyptians. See John S. Thompson, *Context*, pp. 176–177.] Whereas the events of Jesus’s life during the Passover in the early chapters of John appear to reflect temple courtyard concepts, John’s record of the events in Jesus’ life during the Feast of Tabernacles and its closely associated Feast of Dedication have greater connection to the symbolism found in the Holy Place of the temple.

472. Exodus 24:1–11.

473. See B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, pp. 53–147.

474. B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, pp. 122–145. Additional echoes of Moses’ ascent of Sinai can be seen in the experience of Jesus,

- Peter, James, and John at the Mount of Transfiguration (see J. M. Bradshaw, Adam, Eve, and the Three Wise Men).
475. Philo, *Exodus*, p. 70. For more on the specifics of how this description of the deification of Moses might be understood, see J. M. Bradshaw, Ezekiel Mural, pp. 41–42, Endnote 68. See also *ibid.*, pp. 19–21. For an excellent, though now somewhat dated, general overview, see, e.g., W. A. Meeks, Moses.
476. Observes C. T. R. Hayward: "Philo saw nothing improper ... in describing Moses as a hierophant: like the holder of that office in the mystery cults of Philo's day, Moses was responsible for inducting initiates into the mysteries, leading them from darkness to light, to a point where *they are enabled to see* [God]" (C. T. R. Hayward, *Israel*, p. 192, emphasis in original). Hayward's view is consistent with D&C 84:21–23:
- 21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh;
- 22 For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.
- 23 Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God.
477. See B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, pp. 138–141.
478. D. H. Verkerk, *Pentateuch*, p. 90. See Exodus 24:9–18.
479. *Ibid.*, p. 90. See Exodus 24:4–8. This eucharistic scene takes place in the presence of presbyters [elders], deacons, "the canonical widows, and subdeacons and deaconesses and readers [and] those who have gifts" (J. Cooper et al., *Testament*, 1:23, p. 70; cf. D. H. Verkerk, *Pentateuch*, pp. 90–97.)
480. *Ibid.*, p. 90. Note also the square opening for the Christian reliquary beneath the altar table.
481. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
482. For reproductions and descriptions of these two Ravenna mosaics, which depict Abel, Melchizedek, and Abraham simultaneously offering sacrifice at a similar altar, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image* 1, EXCURSUS 20: The Circle and the Square, p. 573.

483. In Roman Catholic tradition, the linen altar cloth, called the corporal (Latin *corpus* = body), is said to be modeled after the burial garment of Christ. Thus, both literally at the Redeemer's death and figuratively in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, the cloth was meant "to cover and enfold the Body and Blood of Christ" (H. Thurston, *Corporal*, p. 387).

In his catalogue of textiles from Greco-Roman times found at Egyptian burial grounds, Kendrick notes the prominence of the symbol of the square in various contexts, including clothing, and explicitly links these decorations to the Ravenna mosaics (A. F. Kendrick, *Textiles 1*, pp. 32, 36, 37, 38–39. Thanks to Bryce Haymond for pointing out this reference). In addition, a photograph by C. Wilfred Griggs of well-preserved clothing at an Egyptian burial site showed an "early Christian garment... made of wool [that] was placed next to the body. The garment has a woven rosette over each breast, a hemmed cut on the abdomen, and a rosette above the right knee" (C. W. Griggs, *Evidences*, p. 227). Griggs also found that some burials included "one or more robes with linen strips wrapped around the upper half of the body and gathered into a knot on either the left ... or, more commonly, on the right shoulder," indicating priestly authority.

In a Hellenistic Jewish context, Goodenough discusses the appearance of *gammadia* at Dura Europos. These symbols were not only depicted in murals of holy figures, but also were found in a cache of white textile fragments discovered at the site that "may well have been the contents of a box where sacred vestments were kept, or they may have been fetishistic marks, originally on sacred robes, that were preserved after the garments had been outworn" (E. R. Goodenough, *Garments*, p. 225; cf. E. R. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 9:127–129). Goodenough points to similar findings on Christian robes, in hellenized Egypt, Palmyra, and on Roman figures of Victory which "so commonly appears as a symbol of immortality" (E. R. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 9:163). John W. Welch mentions Goodenough's conclusions, and reports similar findings at Masada and elsewhere (J. W. Welch et al., *Gammadia*).

484. B. Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, p. 141. See Matthew 12:1–8; Mark 2:23–27; Luke 6:1–5.
485. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

486. See Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20. Note also that, immediately after speaking of the new covenant represented by His blood, Jesus alluded to the wine of the divine feast, saying that He would “drink it new with [His disciples] in [His] Father’s kingdom” (Matthew 26:29. Cf. Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18).

Paraphrasing W. W. Wiersbe (*Bible Exposition*, 1:43), it is of interest that in His response to the Pharisees, Jesus appealed—as a Prophet, Priest, and King Himself—to the actions of a king (Matthew 12:3–4), to the practice of priests (Matthew 12:5–6), and to the words of a prophet (Matthew 12:7). Note, too, Wiersbe’s observations regarding the three “greater than” statements that Jesus made in the same chapter: with respect to the priests, He is “greater than the temple” (Matthew 12:6); with respect to the prophets, He is “greater than Jonah” (Matthew 12:41); and with respect to the kings, He is “greater than Solomon” (Matthew 12:42). In direct affirmation of these “greater than” statements, Jesus declared Himself “Lord of even of the Sabbath day” (Matthew 12:8), thus unequivocally averring His equality with God.

487. Z. Coltrin, Remarks of Zebedee Coltrin, 3 October 1883.

488. Cf. 3 Nephi 18:4, 5, 9; 19:13, 24; 20:8–9, where the connotation of “filled” might be taken as including both physical and spiritual aspects.

489. John Franklin Tolton, diary, 20 April 1893, as cited in U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, pp. 7–8.

490. U. A. Perego, *Changing Forms*, p. 8.

491. *Ibid.* The sacrament that Jesus blessed at the Last Supper (which was prefigured in part by both the Passover and the priestly feast of shewbread) is also given regularly today under the direction of the presiding high priest of the Church. The fact that the ordinance of the sacrament is still sometimes administered in the temple in the context of additional ordinances, e.g., the washing of the feet (cf. John 13:1–17) and formal, sacred prayer (cf. John 17), enriches its meaning and confirms Perego’s conclusion that the sacrament is not simply a “stand-alone ritual but [is also] an intrinsic and vital component with all other rites [Jesus] introduced while ‘feasting’ on that last meal.”

For a discussion of the similar but distinctive ordinances of the washing of the feet of the apostles by Jesus and the anointing of Jesus' feet by Mary in light of modern scholarship and the teachings and translations of Joseph Smith, see J. M. Bradshaw, *What Did Joseph Smith Know*, pp. 78–85 ENDNOTE 46.

For a firsthand account describing the purpose of early washings in Kirtland, instituted before the more complete version of the temple ordinances were given to the Saints in Nauvoo, see O. Pratt, 20 May 1877, p. 16. For additional background on the revelation of temple ordinances in Kirtland, see J. M. Bradshaw et al., *How Thankful*.

In 1979, President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency described the continuing place of the sacrament as part of regular temple meetings that include instruction and sacred, formal prayer (N. E. Tanner, *Administration*).

492. K. W. Perkins, *Kirtland Temple*.
493. For a more complete discussion of this possibility, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*.
494. H. W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, p. 189.
495. E. R. Goodenough, *Summary*, 12:160.
496. E. R. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 9:78–79.
497. *Ibid.*, 9:105.
498. Goodenough stresses that “The enthroned king surrounded by the tribes in such a place reminds us much more of the Christ enthroned with the saints in heaven ... than of any other figure in the history of art.” And Nibley observes: “As this is the high point in the Dura murals, so was it also in Lehi’s vision [in 1 Nephi 1]” (Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, p. 192, quoting Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 10:200, 201).
499. Nibley’s description illustrates how the placement of the mural evokes the grounding of the tree in God’s covenant with Israel (H. W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, p. 189; see also H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 1:135, 137): “Directly above the shrine, as if springing directly from the Law itself, is depicted a splendid tree. ... ‘Out of the Torah shrine ... grew the tree of life and salvation which led to the supernal throne’ (Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 10:200).”

500. 1 Nephi 8:19, 20, 24, 30; 11:25; 15:3.
501. See J. M. Bradshaw, Faith, Hope, and Charity.
502. See J. A. Tvedtnes, Vineyard.
503. H. W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, pp. 189, 191. See, e.g., Jacob 5:8.
504. Jeremiah 14:8; 17:13.
505. Isaiah 49:7ff.
506. E. R. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 9:80–81.
507. John 15:5.
508. John 1:47.
509. N. Wyatt, *Myths of Power*, p. 74 sees a likeness to the “ladder” (i.e., stairway, ramp) of Jacob’s dream:

The dream looks suspiciously like a description of a Babylonian ziggurat, in all probability the temple tower in Babylon. This had an external, monumental stairway leading to the top story, which represented heaven, the dwelling-place of the gods.

The Akkadian word *bāb-ili* means “gate of the god.” (For the Akkadians, the god was likely Marduk.) In practical terms, this means that “the Babylonian Tower was intended to pave a way for divine entrance into the city” (L. R. Kass, *Wisdom*, p. 229). Jacob will later claim a name with similar meaning to the Akkadian “gate of the god” for the place of his vision: “gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:17).

For more on the ancient Near East background of the Jacob’s dream and the related accounts of the Tower of Babel and the great and spacious building in Lehi’s dream, see J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2*, pp. 382–406.

510. Genesis 28:12.
511. John 1:51, emphasis added.
512. John 14:6, emphasis added.
513. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 10:201. In this picture, Goodenough maintained, the artist was trying to show “the glorification of Israel through the mystic tree-vine, whose power could also be represented as a *divine love* which the soul-purifying music of an Orpheus figure best symbolized” (Goodenough,

*Dura Symbolism*, 10:201, emphasis added). Nibley connected this Orpheus-David figure in a tree with the tree representing “the love of God” that Lehi and Nephi saw in vision (1 Nephi 11:21–22), with Alma’s “song of redeeming love” (Alma 5:26), and with the “new song” sung by the hundred and forty-four thousand redeemed before the throne of God (Revelation 14:3).

Nibley noted that the Orpheus theme was also associated with the ancient annual celebration of the new year, the *hilaria*, which “was the occasion on which all the world joined in the great creation hymn, as they burst into a spontaneous song of praise recalling the first creation.” Further associating this event with the Day of Atonement reiterated in the Dura image of the sacrifice of Isaac, he notes that the Greek term for “mercy seat” is *hilasterion*—the place of the *hilaria* (H. W. Nibley, *Atonement*, pp. 563–566, drawing on E. R. Goodenough, *Dura Symbolism*, 9:89–104. See also H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 2:228–230).

514. See Genesis 49:9–10. The extant Hebrew of these verses, and indeed much of the rest of the text of Jacob’s blessings, presents many difficult problems in translation, as it contains several obscure and archaic terms and phrases. In particular, the phrase “until Shiloh comes” (Genesis 49:10) has been particularly troublesome to scholars and has required modern translators to employ conjectural emendation to reconstruct the text. For example, many scholars today reconstruct the phrase “until Shiloh comes” as “until he comes to whom it belongs” (cf. Ezekiel 21:25–27).

Though controversy continues over the particulars of this passage, there is no doubt that to Jewish exegetes of the Second Temple era, these verses had messianic significance. With respect to verse 9, which referred to Judah as a “lion’s whelp,” Nahum Sarna observes that “under the influence of this verse, the ‘lion of Judah’ became a favorite motif in Jewish art and acquired messianic associations” (N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 336). With respect to verse 10, a Targum that is dated to sometime between the first and fourth century gives the following reading:

Kings shall not cease from the house of Judah, nor yet scribes teaching the law from the sons of his sons, until the time that the anointed king comes, to whom belongs the kingdom. (*Targum Neophyti*, Genesis 49:10, as cited in J. L. Kugel, *Traditions*, p. 472.)

The Joseph Smith Translation also understands this verse as referring to the "Messiah" (see JST Genesis 50:24).

515. K. Shubert, *Jewish Pictorial*, p. 173. For more on Messiah ben Joseph, see R. Patai, *Messiah*, pp. 165–170; T. G. Hatch, *Messiah ben Joseph*; J. A. Tvedtnes, *Lord's Anointed*.
516. For a reproduction of Gute's reconstruction, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*, p. 16, Figure 7.
517. E. R. Goodenough, *Summary*, 12:162.
518. Psalm 110:4.
519. Revelation 5:5. Cf. Isaiah 11:1–5.
520. Matthew 9:27; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9, 15; Mark 10:47–48; 12:35–37; Luke 18:38–39.
521. Revelation 5:5.
522. Hebrews 5:10; 6:20; 7:11, 21.
523. 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.
524. Revelation 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20; D&C 39:24; 41:4; 54:10; 88:26.
525. JS–Matthew 1:36. Cf. Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; D&C 45:16, 44.
526. 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.

527. D&C 27:5.



## THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF GENESIS: THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM AS A RITUAL TEXT

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Since the first publication of the Joseph Smith Papyri in *The Improvement Era* in 1968, academic studies on the Book of Abraham have dwelt almost exclusively on whether the book accurately translates (or does not translate) an Egyptian text from the papyri, as judged by philological and/or archaeological criteria. At least two major volumes and a host of scholarly and semi-scholarly articles have been devoted to this rather narrow topic, most of which adopt a strongly polemical (and at times, acrimonious) stance.<sup>1</sup> This debate has had the unfortunate effect of reducing Joseph Smith's achievement to a clump of true or false propositions. This is evident in a statement by Robert Ritner on the Book of Abraham: "As an episode in American religious history and early 'Egyptomania,' the text is still of interest; no investigator seeking ancient evidence should waste his time."<sup>2</sup> Ritner here judges the Book of Abraham's value only in terms of a true/false relation to the papyri. The text thus represents only an "episode," not an enduring work of literature in its own right. This position, while understandable given Ritner's primarily philological concerns, seems to miss the fact that the Book of Abraham is read as scripture by millions of men and women worldwide in dozens of languages. Indeed, the Book of Abraham's readership after only 200 years likely outnumbers that of the Book of Breathing (the main relevant text found on the Joseph Smith papyri) in its 2,000 years — not to mention that the popularity the Book of Breathing now enjoys is because of its association with the Book of Abraham. Surely the Book of Abraham is interesting as more than a good or bad attempt at translating ancient Egyptian. Although Latter-day Saint apologists do not tend to belittle the book, in marshalling ancient parallels as "evidence" they set up a similarly Boolean discourse.

In the present essay, I wish to depart from the debate on Joseph Smith's merits as a translator and focus instead on the Book of Abraham

as literature—in particular, as ritual literature. The category of ritual literature includes narratives comparable to the Book of Abraham, such as *Enuma Elish* in ancient Mesopotamia, the Memphite Theology in ancient Egypt, portions of the book of Leviticus, some apocryphal narratives like the Greek Life of Adam and Eve, and the words of institution read during the Eucharist in Orthodox Christian churches. I believe that we can profitably understand the Book of Abraham, like these other examples, as a narrative crafted to a ritual context.

The Book of Abraham occupies an unusual position as both ancient and modern scripture. On one hand, it is true that Joseph Smith revealed and published the book to a nineteenth-century audience. The book represents a key stage in his restoration of priesthood ordinances, along with certain Book of Mormon passages, the Book of Moses, some sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, and the modern temple endowment. Yet on the other hand, the book's setting in time is ancient from beginning to end. Joseph Smith put forward the book as ancient scripture derived from the Egyptian papyri. The book is in the first-person voice of Abraham, and its style is exotic, as would befit a translation of an ancient record. Like the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham instructs the modern reader by transporting him or her to a remote time and place—and, I would argue, by leading him or her vicariously through ritual performances belonging to that ancient context.

Several features of the Book of Abraham point to its being a ritual text. Among its distinctive characteristics is the presence of pictures that are an integral part of the book (one of them, Facsimile 1, is actually referenced in the text of chapter 1). All three pictures included in the Book of Abraham depict ritual scenes, and the second contains material that, according to the accompanying words, “is to be had in the Holy Temple of God” (Facsimile 2, Explanation, fig. 8). Another characteristic of the book is a high frequency of explicit gestures. Both the verbal text and the accompanying pictures are full of gestures, many more than are found in the parallel parts of Genesis. A third characteristic of the book is its extensive focus on cosmology, including arcane names of stars and planets in the third chapter and in the second facsimile. All these things—the iconography, the gestures, and the focus on cosmology—contribute to an overall impression that the Book of Abraham is intimately related to temple ritual. At the same time, the Book of Abraham is by no means a transcript of our modern ordinances, and the precise way in which the book relates to ritual is not obvious.

The ritual nature of the Book of Abraham has been explored at length by Hugh Nibley. In Nibley's interpretation, Abraham 3–5 is a "temple drama" composed by Abraham.<sup>3</sup> It begins with a "descriptive recitation" in the first part of chapter 3 (Abraham 3:1–21)<sup>4</sup> and then proceeds to a reenactment of events in the premortal council, including stage directions to actors who played the parts of God, the Son of Man, and others (Abraham 3:21–28).<sup>5</sup> Finally, the events of creation are depicted in the form of ritual dances or "ballets" (Abraham 4–5).<sup>6</sup> Facsimile 3, according to Nibley, "may well be a copy on papyrus of the funeral stele of one Shulem [figure 5 in the facsimile] who memorialized an occasion when he was introduced to an illustrious fellow Canaanite [i.e., Abraham, shown as figure 1] in the palace. . . . Shulem is the useful transmitter and timely witness who confirms for us the story of Abraham at court."<sup>7</sup> The event in progress during Shulem's introduction is a coronation ritual in which members of the royal court impersonate deities.<sup>8</sup>

Essentially, I agree with Nibley that the Book of Abraham is a ritual text in the sense that it contains actions to be performed and words to be uttered in a ritual performance. However, my approach to the book's ritual function differs from Nibley's in some ways. In Nibley's view, the book's function is discontinuous, with stark transitions from the autobiographical narrative of the first two chapters to the dramatic script of chapters 3–5, and from there to the memorial narrative of Facsimile 3. Nibley treats each of these sections as if they are separate documents with different origins and uses. In his view, only chapters 3–5 were intended for ritual use; the other portions are mainly descriptive. Although these different parts do correspond to transitions in the narrative, the narrative is coherent from beginning to end, and there is no evidence at all of the book being redacted from different ancient sources. It seems to me, therefore, that positing a single ritual function for the book as a whole is more consistent with the text. Chapters 3–5 are narrative and not prescriptive—they contain a vision Abraham received, which he recounts in the first-person voice characteristic of the rest of the book.<sup>9</sup> The ritual function, I would argue, rather than being given prescriptively in the manner of stage directions, is implicit in the overall structure of the book—especially in the interplay between the text and images. In my view, the entire narrative was meant to be recited as part of a ritual performance, along with a minimal dramatization employing gestures mentioned in the text.

My purpose here is to lay out a new approach to the Book of Abraham as literature, taking account of its qualities as a revealed ritual text. In this

approach, the primary source is the Book of Abraham as revealed by Joseph Smith. This means that I grant the explanations of the facsimiles published under Joseph Smith's editorship in *Times and Seasons*, and I consider the vignette in Joseph Smith papyrus 1 (= Abraham Facsimile 1) as an illustration of the near-sacrifice of Abraham as narrated in Abraham 1 (where the picture is explicitly referenced). I am well aware that these explanations are not accepted among Egyptologists. In the approach I am advocating, however, one must seek to understand the Book of Abraham on its own terms.

In what follows, I will first present arguments for the ritual context that the Book of Abraham presupposes. Then I will detail how this ritual understanding plays out in the narrative, first in terms of the overall structure, and then with particular attention to ritual gestures that feature in the book.

### 1. Ritual Context

The Book of Abraham is basically a narrative of Abraham's life, corresponding to the account in Genesis 11–13. But unlike Genesis, the narrative is related by Abraham in the first person. Nested within this narrative is Abraham's account of a vision he witnessed which includes events of the premortal council and the creation, corresponding to the first few chapters of Genesis. Unfortunately, the text breaks off in the midst of the vision, just after the creation of Adam and the naming of the animals, so we do not know the intended extent of the vision nor of the account of Abraham's life. It is an open question whether the incomplete nature of the book is attributable to the original text, to a subsequent deterioration of the source material, or to an interruption of the translation process. However, Joseph Smith's explanation of Facsimile 3 relates it to an event that lies beyond the end of the text in chapter 5, namely Abraham's lecture on the principles of astronomy before the Pharaoh's court in Egypt.

The strongest evidence that the Book of Abraham was set within a ritual context is the relationship between Facsimile 3 and the book as a whole. According to Joseph's Smith's explanation, Facsimile 3 shows Abraham sitting on the Pharaoh's throne, "reasoning upon the principles of astronomy" before a small audience consisting of the Pharaoh, his son, the king's waiter, and the prince's servant. The content of the discourse, "the principles of astronomy," relates to the content of chapter 3, in which God reveals principles of the cosmos to Abraham, including the names of several heavenly bodies. The connection between

God's revelation to Abraham in chapter 3 and Abraham's lecture before the court in Facsimile 3 is made explicit in Abraham 3:15:

And the Lord said unto me: Abraham, I show these things unto thee before ye go into Egypt, that ye may declare all these words (Abraham 3:15).

Chapter 3 and the third facsimile are identical in terms of the manner in which they are presented and received. In both the text and the facsimile, Abraham is relating what God said to him about the cosmos; there are two intended audiences, one within the text (the Egyptians) and the other outside the text (we who are hearing or viewing it).

The parallel between chapter 3 and the third facsimile becomes even more instructive when we examine the iconography of Facsimile 3 more closely. The inner frame of the facsimile represents a canopy painted with stars to represent the night sky.<sup>10</sup> This corresponds to Abraham 3:13–14:

And he said unto me: Kokaubeam, which signifies stars, or all the great lights, which were in the firmament of heaven. And it was in the night time when the Lord spake these words unto me: I will multiply thee, and thy seed after thee, like unto these.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1 in the facsimile is labeled as "Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne ... with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand." Yet this figure clearly has divine characteristics; aside from the fact that the crown is said to be "emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven," one cannot miss the similarity between this figure and the seated personage in Facsimile 2, figure 3, which is said to represent "God, sitting upon his throne, clothed with power and authority, with a crown of eternal light upon his head."<sup>12</sup> The rest of the explanation for this figure implies that God is shown in the act of revealing key words of the Priesthood to Abraham, as he had done to the other patriarchs (compare also Facsimile 2, figure 7). Thus, as Abraham is relating the words of God, he is shown arrayed as if he were an actor playing the role of God.

Facsimile 3 also shows three Egyptians who constitute the audience which Abraham is addressing. The central figure in the audience is figure 5, labeled as "Shulem, one of the king's principal waiters."<sup>13</sup> All other figures in this scene face figure 5; figure 4 leads him by the hand and faces backward toward him, and figure 6 seems to be guiding or following him with both hands touching his waist. Figure 5 is also the only one in the scene who directly faces Abraham. Also note that figure 5 is larger in

proportion than all other figures in the scene except for Abraham, which heightens the sense of connection between these two figures.

Thus we have two basic roles represented in this facsimile, which we may call the roles of production and of reception. Figure 1 is the central figure in the production role, but all the figures in the scene except figure 5 are involved in this role. Similarly, figure 5 is the central figure in the reception role, but all figures except figure 1 are involved in this role. These two roles may be represented in the facsimile by the direction of the face and the direction of the body with its gestures. While all faces in the scene are turned toward figure 5, all bodies and gestures in the scene are turned toward figure 1, the only figure not standing or gesturing.

In a previous essay on the Book of Moses, I introduced the concept of *lamination* as a tool for understanding ritual narrative texts.<sup>14</sup> Lamination occurs when frames of discourse within and outside the text are collapsed, with the result that the distinction between frames becomes blurred. Lamination allows a religious narrative to serve as a “mythological precedent” for a ritual. Participants in the ritual can then experience it as if they are reenacting the narrative. Facsimile 3 is a textbook example of lamination. It collapses the roles of God, Abraham, and the Pharaoh, who are involved in the production of the discourse.<sup>15</sup> It also collapses the roles of Shulem, the principal character beholding Abraham and receiving his discourse from within the scene, and us, the external viewers who are also receiving the discourse.<sup>16</sup>

In all this, Facsimile 3 reflects the collapsed discourse frames of the book itself. In both the book and the facsimile, Abraham is addressing God’s words to an audience of Egyptians, whose role we, as the ultimate recipients of the text, occupy. Indeed, if Facsimile 3 stood at the end (that is, the far left) of the hieratic text corresponding to the Book of Abraham, as most scholars who have studied the papyri believe, then the text of the narrative may be understood visually as an extension of Facsimile 3.<sup>17</sup> The hieratic characters of the text face to the right, like the enthroned Abraham, so that one reading the text faces, as it were, each character in succession. The reader thus moves through the text toward Abraham, facing him like those on the right side of Facsimile 3.<sup>18</sup>

In short, there is a very close relationship between Facsimile 3 and the Book of Abraham itself. But how can we interpret this relationship in terms of an actual ritual performance? I would suggest that the narrative of the Book of Abraham is precisely the spoken content of the ritual depicted in Facsimile 3. The narrative is given in the form of a recitation by the ritual performer playing the double role of Abraham

and of God sitting on his throne.<sup>19</sup> The facsimile shows an initiate, the waiter Shulem, following in the footsteps of Abraham by receiving the divine revelation.<sup>20</sup> The Book of Abraham, then, would be analogous to a Christian anaphora, providing the text to be recited during a ritual performance, and the facsimiles would illustrate how the performance was to be choreographed.

## 2. Structure of the Narrative

In our current edition of the Pearl of Great Price, the Book of Abraham is divided into five chapters. These chapter divisions are not original to the text but were introduced in the 1902 edition, which was prepared by James E. Talmage.<sup>21</sup> In terms of the production of the book as evident from the manuscripts and from the 1842 publication in *Times and Seasons*, there are three major sections of the book: Abraham 1:1–2:18 with Facsimile 1; Abraham 2:19–5:21 with Facsimile 2; and Facsimile 3.<sup>22</sup> An analysis of the book's content suggests a division into sections that are different from both the original sections and Elder Talmage's chapters. The analysis is complicated to some extent by the incomplete nature of the book, but the basic outlines are clear. Basically, the extant portion of the narrative consists of two major parts. The first is Abraham's journey to Egypt as described in chapters 1–2, the first scene of which corresponds to Facsimile 1. The second part of the narrative, Abraham's sojourn in Egypt, is represented only by Facsimile 3; presumably, if we had the complete book, there would be text corresponding to this facsimile. Between these two parts of the narrative is a long section in which God gives Abraham a revelation on the cosmos and the creation. The extant text of this section is found in chapters 3–5; we cannot be sure how much more of the revelation is missing. Corresponding to this is Facsimile 2, the round image identified in Egyptological studies as the hypocephalus of Sheshonq.<sup>23</sup> The basic structure of the Book of Abraham, then, consists of an essentially bipartite narrative with a large transitional section, making three sections in all. This can be tabulated as follows:

Section	Text	Illustration
Journey from Ur to Egypt	Abraham 1–2	Facsimile 1
Revelation on Cosmos and Creation	Abraham 3–5	Facsimile 2
Abraham in Egypt	(not extant)	Facsimile 3

Abraham's respite on the border of Egypt is a mere moment in the chronology of the narrative, yet this is clearly a crucial moment, as the space devoted to it is disproportionate to the remainder of the

narrative — as if we zoom in to behold every detail, like Abraham himself. That this takes place on the border of Egypt as well as at the transitional point between major sections of the narrative suggests the concept of *liminality*. This term, developed in ritual studies by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner, comes from the Latin word *limen* “threshold.” It refers to a common feature of ritual, in which there is a transitional stage in a progression from one state to another. This in-between stage is called the *liminal* stage.<sup>24</sup> Chapters 3–5 of the Book of Abraham can be understood as a liminal stage of the narrative, as Abraham is being prepared to fill the role of God in revealing the secrets of the cosmos to the Egyptians. I would suggest this corresponds to a liminal stage of instruction in the ritual performance for which the book is crafted.

I have already described how Facsimile 3 encapsulates the performance of the Book of Abraham as a whole. This facsimile also represents the narrative structure of the book in pictorial form. The revelation of chapters 3–5, spoken by the seated figure to the audience before him, may be imagined as floating in the conceptual space between figures 1 and 4. This space is occupied not only by the hieroglyphs mentioning the recitation but also by the small offering table (figure 3) representing “Abraham in Egypt.” This offering table functions on many levels as a liminal symbol, standing between the mortal and divine spheres, the two stages of the performance, and also the two stages of the narrative. To the right of the offering table is Shulem, following in the footsteps of Abraham as he received the revelation before entering Egypt. His legs are apart, indicating movement. This corresponds to chapters 1–2 of the narrative. To the left of the table is Abraham himself, now enthroned and revealing God’s words to the Egyptians. This corresponds to a later portion of the narrative, now missing, in which Abraham is in Egypt. The facsimile thus visually expresses the book’s basic progression from a state of physical movement, through a transitional stage of anticipation and revelation, and finally to a state of blessedness.

### 3. Gestures

As mentioned above, the Book of Abraham is full of ritual gestures, many more than the biblical Book of Genesis. In fact, the portions of Genesis that are parallel to the Book of Abraham contain no references to ritual gestures at all. The one reference to a ritual gesture in fairly close proximity to these portions is in Genesis 14:22, in which Abraham describes having lifted his hand to God and entered into a covenant not to take any of the spoils of war. This statement by Abraham occurs

after the sojourn in Egypt, although he may be referring to an event that occurred at some prior time, possibly during the period covered by the Book of Abraham (I discuss this in greater detail below).

In contrast to the paucity of ritual gestures in Genesis, the Book of Abraham, including the facsimiles, contains no fewer than sixteen distinct instances of ritual gestures. These confront us from the very first facsimile, as Abraham lifts his hands in prayer from the altar on which he is to be sacrificed. Abraham's lifting of hands as shown on the facsimile complements the lifting of his voice as described in the text: "And as they lifted up their hands upon me, that they might offer me up and take away my life, behold, I lifted up my voice unto the Lord my God" (Abraham 1:15).<sup>25</sup>

These gestures belong to the ancient milieu that the Book of Abraham invokes. Many of them would appear unusual in a modern setting. Yet there is striking consistency between the gestures mentioned in the text and those depicted in the facsimiles. Some of them are identical.

These gestures, I would suggest, are also part of the ritual performance that accompanies the recitation of the book. This is implicit in the salvific role of these gestures in the narrative. Each occurs at a pivotal point in the narrative. They mark Abraham's passage from one stage of the narrative to the next. If the narrative serves as a mythological precedent for the scene in Facsimile 3, as I have argued, the gestures would have to be performed in order for the ritual to be efficacious. The book gives meaning to these gestures in terms of the narrative, so that to perform the gestures is not only to employ their inherent ritual functions, but also to act out Abraham's story. Thus the gestures within the text serve as both choreography and commentary. I will now turn to an examination of the gestures that I think are most crucial to an understanding of the book's ritual function.

### **3.1. From Ur to the Border of Egypt (Abraham 1–2; Facsimile 1)**

In Abraham 1:18, the Lord, having rescued Abraham from the uplifted hand of his enemies, gives him a promise that sets the theme for the narrative that follows: "Behold, I will lead thee by my hand, and I will take thee, to put upon thee my name, even the Priesthood of thy father, and my power shall be over thee." The ritual gesture of leading another by the hand is characteristically Egyptian, being commonly depicted in introduction scenes in Egyptian art.<sup>26</sup> Facsimile 3 shows this same gesture, as one of the participants (said to be the "Prince of Pharaoh") leads the initiate by the hand.<sup>27</sup> The performance of this gesture in the ritual, as depicted in the facsimile, may enact the very event the Lord refers to in Abraham 1:18.

In the schematic logic of the facsimile, the gesture moves the principal actor (Shulem) toward the figure representing Abraham enthroned “with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood,” which matches the sense of Abraham 1:18 (even though a human agent performs the gesture instead of the Lord himself).

In a new location, Haran, Abraham receives a second theophany and message from the Lord. Here the Lord tells Abraham the following:

For I am the Lord thy God; I dwell in heaven; the earth is my footstool; I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice.  
 ... My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning;  
 therefore my hand shall be over thee (Abraham 2:7–8).

The two gestures in these verses are parallel. The Lord first affirms to Abraham his control over the cosmos, as realized through his powerful hand gesture of stretching out the hand. Then the Lord affirms his omniscience with respect to time, and he says that his hand, likely in the same gesture, will be over Abraham. In both cases, the gesture may be understood as a sign used to accompany authoritative speech. Just as Jehovah can command the sea with the outstretched hand gesture, he will command Abraham with the same gesture, and it will be to Abraham’s benefit, since Jehovah knows the end from the beginning. In the second instance, the gesture may have an additional connotation of blessing or protection. A gesture of stretching out the hand with the palm facing outward is frequently encountered in ancient Egyptian art, often in a ritual setting.<sup>28</sup>

The Lord’s statement in Abraham 2:7–8 is thematically linked to his statement in the earlier revelation, in Abraham 1:18: “My power shall be over thee.” Just as the Lord’s power will be over Abraham, his hand will also be over him. The correlation between “power” and “hand” in these verses may be understood as a kind of exegesis of the gesture: as the Lord’s hand represents his power, his raising of the hand over Abraham to issue his authoritative command suggests that his power will be over Abraham to protect and bless him.

In Abraham 2:9, the Lord gives Abraham a promise regarding his posterity:

And thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations.

Here the Lord employs the imagery of Abraham’s seed carrying the Priesthood as if it were a physical object and presenting it to people of

other nations. This imagery recalls the characteristically Egyptian ritual gesture for presenting objects, with the hand held forward in cupping shape, the object sitting upon the cupped hand. The hand not holding the object is typically also raised, the palm facing outward. This gesture is used for the ritual known as the Presentation of Maat, in which the Pharaoh offers a small statue of the goddess of justice and truth to a deity, as well as for the offering of incense and other objects to deities.<sup>29</sup> Egyptian iconography also depicts deities offering things to humans, and humans offering things to the Pharaoh, all with the same gesture.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.2. “Near to Enter into Egypt” (Abraham 3–5; Facsimile 2)

The next gesture we encounter in the text is in Abraham 3:12. Here the Lord, while speaking with Abraham face to face, says “My son, my son,” while stretching out his hand. The Lord then puts his hand upon Abraham’s eyes, and Abraham sees the things the Lord’s hands have made. There are many interesting things about this gesture sequence in comparison with other scriptural passages. For instance, note that the contact gesture corresponds to the Lord’s explicit avowal of a father-son relationship between him and Abraham. In general, Northwest Semitic and Egyptian ritual gestures involving contact between the participants also include an element of kinship between them. There is a close similarity between this scene and that of Moses 1:1–8. There, too, the Lord talks with his prophet face-to-face, states that the prophet is his son, and shows him a vision of the cosmos. The gesture of putting the hand on the eyes is not found in Moses, but we do find this gesture in Genesis 46:4 in an instructive context. There Jacob, contemplating the journey to Egypt, receives this word from the Lord:

I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again*: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

The gesture here refers to closing the eyes of the dead. Although nothing in Abraham 3:12 suggests that Abraham dies, it is certainly significant that the gesture has this association. Note that in both cases, a *descent* (Abraham 2:21; Genesis 46:3–4) into Egypt is at hand, and just as the Lord calls Abraham his son, there is also a father-son relationship between Jacob and Joseph (although the places are reversed). Putting all this together, it could be that the gesture in Abraham 3:12 imitates a gesture performed by the nearest of kin on the body of the dead, marking a symbolic passage into the realm of the dead or into a state in which one can behold God’s creations. After all, Moses, after receiving

his vision, “fell unto the earth,” and it was “many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength like unto man” (Moses 1:9–10).

In terms of the ritual performance, we can note the obvious fact that the two participants have to be in very close physical proximity to perform this gesture. The face-to-face encounter is the quintessential liminal moment, in which the two principal participants are directly at the threshold that divides mortal from deity in ritual space and ritual sequence.

Facsimile 2 shows many ritual gestures. Most relevant to our purpose here is figure 7, which shows an enthroned personage raising his arm to the square with a compass-shaped object above the upraised hand.<sup>31</sup> The flying creature in front of this personage presents an eye in one cupped hand while raising its other hand with the palm outward; this two-part gesture, as discussed above in the context of Abraham 2:9, is characteristically Egyptian. In this case, the flying creature presents the eye to the seated figure’s mouth, which agrees with the fact that the eye (both here and in figure 3) is said to represent “the grand Key-words of the Priesthood.” One also notes that there is a close resemblance between figures 3 and 7, as also between these two figures and figure 1 of Facsimile 3. Once again, this shows the conflation of God and Abraham as part of the overall lamination of the narrative with its ritual context.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.3. Abraham in Egypt (Facsimile 3)

We have already discussed Facsimile 3 in some detail, including the leading by the hand and its possible role as a fulfillment of Abraham 1:18. It remains for us to examine the main gesture of this scene, the raising of the hand with the palm facing outward, performed by figures 2, 4, and 5. Klaus Baer, describing figure 5, says that this figure’s “hand [is] raised in adoration.”<sup>33</sup> This analysis of the function of the gesture, however, is not satisfactory. The principal Egyptian gesture of adoration is the raising of both hands with the palms outward—the *dw3* or *ibi* gesture, as we see in Facsimile 1 (figure 2) and Facsimile 2 (figures 22 and 23). There is also a one-handed gesture of respect that is sometimes performed by people, including those being led by the hand, when entering the presence of an enthroned deity. In this latter gesture, the shoulder is inclined toward the one being adored, with the arm reaching toward the ground. I am not aware of any example in Egyptian art in which the raising of one hand with the palm outward, as shown in Facsimile 3, is necessarily to be understood as a gesture of adoration. This gesture, common both in Egypt and in the Levant, is best understood as a performative marker—it accompanies speech that brings about a new

state of affairs by means of the speech itself, like saying “I hereby ...” We have already seen examples of this gesture above, accompanying the issuing of an authoritative command and the giving of an offering. These two actions have in common the fact that they are performative: one might say “I (hereby) command you ...” or “I (hereby) give you ...,” and even if the one doing the commanding or giving does not use these words, the commandment or gift is assumed to have the same force as if these words were used. Another common context in which this gesture is used is that of oath-taking. In fact, it is this gesture to which Abraham refers when he describes his oath to the king of Sodom:

And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up mine hand unto the LORD ... that I will not *take* from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take anything that *is* thine (Genesis 14:22–23, KJV).

Here Abraham may be referring to the very event being re-enacted by Shulem in Facsimile 3.<sup>34</sup> In any event, the gesture very likely has the same function of taking an oath as part of a covenant.

#### 4. Conclusion

I have argued here that the Book of Abraham presupposes a ritual context like the one shown in Facsimile 3. In this ritual, a seated person recites the text of the Book of Abraham to an audience of initiates. In the course of the recitation, the seated person takes on the role of Abraham, speaking in the first person as he narrates his adventures to the audience. When the recitation reaches chapters 3–5, at the point where Abraham is about to enter into Egypt, a shift in the roles of the participants occurs. Now the seated person takes on the additional role of God, who speaks in the first person as he reveals aspects of the cosmos, the council in heaven, and the creation. The initiates facing the seated person then take the part of Abraham, receiving the revelation as Abraham himself did. During the course of the ritual, the initiates also perform ritual gestures mentioned in the narrative, including leading by the hand and raising the hand to make a performative utterance. The latter may accompany the taking of an oath in connection with receiving the Abrahamic covenant (as described in Genesis 14:22–23), although the incomplete nature of the text precludes certainty on this. Likewise, it is possible, though not certain, that at some stage of the ritual the initiates complete the cycle of shifting roles by sitting on the divine throne.

This ritual reading of the Book of Abraham helps to place the book in the historical context of the Restoration as a follow-up to the Book of Moses and a prelude to the temple endowment. It also illuminates the Book of Abraham as an instructive example of interplay between narrative and ritual, with features such as lamination and liminality that tie the narrative to its performative context. In the particular case of the Book of Abraham, ritual gestures serve as pivots in the ritual performance, connecting the participants with the narrative.

This study also suggests a shift of orientation in our view of the Book of Abraham in relation to the academic world. Previous studies, even those which seek to defend the book, end up presenting it as a potentially embarrassing attempt at translating ancient Egyptian. But the book does not really belong in the arena of Egyptian philology. Much ink has already been spilled over the book in that arena; we have learned much about the Joseph Smith papyri in the process, but very little about the revealed text which millions of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints worldwide read as scripture. Approaching the book on its own terms as a ritual narrative, however, allows us to move the discourse to an area in which the book makes a clear contribution to scholarship. In particular, the book has great value for comparative research, for it is not only a revealed ritual narrative but an exceptionally well-documented one: we have original English manuscripts, other materials that featured in the revelatory process (including the papyri), and eyewitness accounts describing parts of the process. Nibley and others have already registered the book's astonishing similarities to the apocryphal literature of late antiquity, much of which literature may also fall in the category of revealed ritual narrative. From my own preliminary research, I am convinced that a comparison of the Book of Abraham with apocryphal literature can be instructive in building a typology of revelatory text creation. Those who study apocryphal texts, whose origins remain enigmatic, stand to gain much from comparison with a well-documented modern example. A typological project along these lines may also shed light on other religious narratives, including portions of the book of Genesis and the Qur'an. I have outlined here some aspects of the Book of Abraham's complex lamination of text, iconography, and (implied) ritual performance. To the extent that we continue to examine this book and apply its insights to the religious literature of other traditions, we will find it worthy of respect.

## Notes

1. Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, second edition (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005); Robert K. Ritner, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2013). The articles are too numerous to cite here; many can be found in the bibliographies of the aforementioned books.
2. Robert Ritner, *Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, 119.
3. Hugh Nibley, “Abraham’s Temple Drama,” in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1999), 18. Note that Nibley’s studies on the Joseph Smith Papyri touch only indirectly on the interpretation of the Book of Abraham itself, as Nibley considers the Book of Abraham to be separate from the now-extant portions of the *Joseph Smith Papyri*. See Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*.
4. Nibley, “Abraham’s Temple Drama,” 22–23.
5. Nibley, “Abraham’s Temple Drama,” 29–31.
6. Nibley, “Abraham’s Temple Drama,” 31–33.
7. Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, second edition (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2000), 451.
8. Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 382–453.
9. It is possible that chapters 3–5 are a veiled description of a ritual drama in which Abraham participated, perhaps at a wilderness shrine near the border of Egypt. But in any case, the description is presented as narrative, even though it implicitly functions as “stage directions” (to use Nibley’s term).
10. See Baer, “Breathing Permit of Hor,” 126.
11. This echoes the words of Genesis 15:5.
12. From an Egyptological standpoint, the seated figure in Facsimile 3 is identifiable as the god Osiris, the king of the netherworld. See Baer, “Breathing Permit of Hor,” 126. The divine figure in the boat in Facsimile 2, figure 3, appears to be the sun god Re. Note that according to Ritner, this figure was originally missing from the hypocephalus and was inserted from a vignette in the Book of the Dead of Ta-sherit-Min (Papyrus Joseph Smith 2). It is curious, however, that hypocephali

- do often depict divine figures in boats in this upper right portion. See Ritner, *Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, 236, 268–69.
- 13 For the central role of figure 5 in the scene, and the identification of this figure as the owner of the text, see Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 386, 450–51. In Egyptological terms, this figure is Hor, the owner of the papyrus.
  - 14 David Calabro, “Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis,” in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2016), 165–81.
  - 15 In terms of Levinson’s analysis of discourse structure, God is the Author, Abraham is the Relayer, and the Pharaoh is the Sponsor. See Stephen C. Levinson, “Putting Linguistics on a Proper Footing: Explorations in Goffman’s Concepts of Participation,” in *Erving Goffman: Exploring the Interaction Order*, ed. Paul Drew and Anthony Wootton (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 161–227.
  - 16 The collapsing of participant roles may help to explain the curious fact that those labeled as the Pharaoh and the Prince are both obviously female (this would likely have been even more obvious in Joseph Smith’s time, given the prevailing hairstyles then as compared to now). One could speculate, for instance, that the figure labeled as the Pharaoh, who stands behind the enthroned Abraham, also represents Abraham’s wife Sarah. If this is so, it would resonate with similar scenes in Egyptian art (such as the judgment scene on the Book of the Dead papyrus of Hunefer, now in the British Museum), in which Isis stands behind the enthroned Osiris, raising one hand with palm outward and saying *in ksnt = k* “I am your sister” (compare Abraham 2:24–25). On the collapsing of roles in Facsimile 3, including the apparent gender-switching, see also Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 382–453.
  - 17 For the placement of Facsimile 3 at the end of the Hor Book of Breathings, see Gee, *Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 11, 13; Ritner, *Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, 171–77. In my estimation, a careful study of the hieroglyphic columns and hieratic lines on this papyrus would reveal that the characters face toward the right and that the lines are to be read from right to left, even if the one studying the papyrus had no prior experience with ancient Egyptian texts. Joseph Smith was, however, familiar with ancient languages running from right to left, as is evident from his own statements about the Book of Mormon plates; see *History of the Church*, 1:71; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 7.

- 18 The playful interaction between text, image, and viewing audience is true to ancient Egyptian sensibilities. For a much earlier example of the same kind of interaction, see Janet Richards, “Text and Context in Late Old Kingdom Egypt: The Archaeology and Historiography of Weni the Elder,” *JARCE* 39 (2002).
- 19 The hieroglyphs above this figure’s head, as interpreted in Egyptological studies, indicate that he is giving a recitation, but they do not give the words of the recitation. See Ritner, *Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, 173. Nevertheless, Reuben Hedlock’s engravings are extremely rough, so confidence on the reading is ill-advised.
- 20 The fact that figures 1 and 5 both bear the name Osiris, as spelled out in the hieroglyphs above their heads, reinforces the connection between these two figures. The identical nature of these two sets of hieroglyphs might have been evident even to a close reader who did not know how to read Egyptian, particularly if the reader had access to the original (as opposed to Reuben Hedlock’s copy).
- 21 Brian M. Hauglid, *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2010), 16.
- 22 Hauglid, *Textual History*, 6, 22.
- 23 The content of Facsimile 2, as Joseph Smith understood it, relates directly to the visionary and cosmological content of Abraham 3, as is clear from the Explanation published with the facsimile. Although Joseph Smith’s knowledge of the hieroglyphs is a contentious issue, it can also be noted that at least part of the text on the hypocephalus may bear similarity to the creation theme of Abraham 4–5. According to Ritner, *Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri*, 272, figures 8–11 read, “O noble god from the beginning of time, great god, lord of heaven, earth, underworld, waters [and mountains,] cause the ba-spirit of the Osiris Sheshonq to live” (compare the references to “the beginning” and “the heavens and the earth” in Abraham 4:1). The hieroglyph which Ritner and others read as *nb* “lord” in figure 10 actually looks more like the eye hieroglyph for *ir* “make” (compare the instance of this hieroglyph in *wsir* “Osiris” in figure 8). The word could thus be read as a participle “he who made.” For the bracketed portion of Ritner’s rendering, he notes that “garbled traces of [*p*]*f*” from figure 2 “have been recopied to fill the end” of figure 9. However, by a remarkable coincidence, this filling-in produces a reading that could relate, again, to the text of the Book of Abraham: *ir pt t3 dw3t mw=f* “he who made heaven, earth, and the Duat—its (i.e., the earth’s) great waters.” The term “great waters”

does not appear in the creation account in Genesis, but it does appear in Abraham 4:9-10, where it describes the primordial waters out of which the land emerged. The phrase “its great waters,” with the masculine suffix pronoun referring to the masculine noun “land” (the words for “heaven” and “Duat” are feminine), could thus be understood as a gloss relating the Egyptian concept of the Duat (the netherworld, understood in Egyptian cosmology as the source of the Nile inundation) to the cosmology of the Book of Abraham.

- 24 See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 19–21, 182–84; Victor Turner, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage,” in *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 93–111.
- 25 Rotated 90 degrees counterclockwise, Abraham is doing a gesture known from Egyptian hieroglyphs and iconography as *dw3* or *i3i*, a gesture that accompanies praise as well as prayer in general. Interestingly, in the text itself the people trying to kill Abraham, rather than Abraham himself, “lift up their hands.” However, Abraham 1:17 uses the phrase “him who hath lifted up his hand against thee,” indicating that “their hands” in verse 15 means “one hand of each of them.” This accords with what Facsimile 1 shows: the priest lifts up one hand with the knife to kill Abraham.
- 26 The gesture is also frequent in Mesopotamian introduction scenes. By contrast, leading by the hand is virtually unknown in Levantine iconography and literature. Certain passages of the Hebrew Bible interpreted as references to leading by the hand, such as Psalms 63:7–8; 73:23–24, are probably referring instead to a handclasp between confronted persons. See David Calabro, “The Divine Handclasp in the Hebrew Bible and in Near Eastern Iconography,” in *Temple Insights*, ed. William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 83–97. The same gesture also occurs in D&C 112:10, a passage that likewise refers to God leading his servant.
- 27 In Egyptological terms, this figure is the goddess Maat.
- 28 Brigitte Dominicus, *Gesten und Gebärden in Darstellungen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches* (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Orientverlag, 1993), 91–93. At first glance, the gesture to which the Lord refers may be understood as a different gesture, that of raising the hand with the fist in smiting position. The Lord could then be saying that he will protect Abraham by going to battle for him against the sea,

the latter being understood as a source of evil. This would resonate with Abraham's Levantine background. In fact, the Ugaritic "Baal au foudre" stela shows the god Baal performing this gesture, while a smaller figure (perhaps a king or priest) stands beneath him, as if he is under Baal's protection. In Ugaritic mythology, Baal's foe is the god Yam, whose name means "sea." This would also connect the gesture the Lord describes with the one by which Moses parted the sea (Exodus 14:16, 21). However, this gesture is incompatible with Abraham 2:8, since it would mean the Lord will perform the gesture against Abraham. In addition, at least in the Levant, there is no evidence that this gesture was accompanied by speech, especially not a commandment as implied by Abraham 2:7. See David Calabro, *Ritual Gestures of Lifting, Extending, and Clasping the Hand(s) in Northwest Semitic Literature and Iconography*, unpublished University of Chicago dissertation (2014), 627–36. Thus Abraham 2:7–8 most likely refers to the gesture with the palm outward.

- 29 See Emily Teeter, *The Presentation of Maat: Ritual and Legitimacy in Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1997).
- 30 James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), nos. 45, 52, 551.
- 31 The V-shaped object above the seated personage's hand corresponds to the crook in Egyptian depictions of the god Min. However, the object is drawn without any detail, and what would be the handle of the crook is floating in space rather than connecting with the hand, so the object appears more like an abstract compass shape than a crook. Also note that in depictions of Min, what might be taken here as a hand outstretched to receive is actually an erect phallus. James R. Harris suggests that the phallus in the Abraham facsimile signifies "eternal virility," the promise of "eternal increase." See Harris's discussion of the facsimiles in H. Donl Peterson, *The Pearl of Great Price: A History and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1987), 54.
- 32 Joseph Smith's explanation states that the scene in Facsimile 2, figure 7, "represents God sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood; as, also, the sign of the Holy Ghost unto Abraham, in the form of a dove." There is some uncertainty here as to whether the enthroned

figure in the scene is “God sitting upon his throne” or Abraham. Note that the explanation for this figure closely resembles that of figure 3, which, according to Joseph Smith’s explanation, is “God, sitting upon his throne,” and also “the grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood, as revealed to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as also to Seth, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and all to whom the Priesthood was revealed.” As I understand the relationship between these two figures, figure 3 shows God revealing the Key-words (represented by the eye), while figure 7 shows Abraham receiving them by means of the flying creature, a seraph or winged uraeus. One may compare this scene with Isaiah 6:5–7. Here Isaiah, after seeing God sitting upon his throne, exclaims that he is “undone” because he is “a man of unclean lips.” A seraph then flies from God’s throne to Isaiah and presents a coal from the temple altar to his lips, saying that thereby he is purified from his sins. Isaiah is then able to hear the voice of the Lord and is ready to go among the people and prophesy. The words “God sitting upon his throne” in the explanation for figure 7, rather than describing the personage in this figure, refers back to the explanation for figure 3 and means that the two figures are to be understood as contemporaneous and interlinked, like split-screen cinematic depictions of two sides of a telephone conversation. I admit that this interpretation does not account for what is meant by “the sign of the Holy Ghost ... in the form of a dove.” One possibility is that this refers to the stick figure at Abraham’s feet, underneath the flying creature. It is also worth considering that what is obviously a *Wedjat* eye in Egyptological terms may actually be the dove, as the rendering of this object here and in figure 3 is as much like a dove in profile as it is like an eye.

- 33 Baer, “Breathing Permit of Hor,” 126.
- 34 Many aspects of Genesis 3:22–23 are uncertain. Abraham does not say when the gesture took place. Some interpreters assume he is actually lifting his hand to swear as he is speaking with the king of Sodom (the New Jerusalem Bible, for example, translates as “I swear by God Most High ...”); however, he may be referring instead to a prior event in which he lifted his hand to enter into a covenant, perhaps even prior to his sojourn in Egypt. In this case, the pronoun *thine* in verse 23 may refer not to the king of Sodom but to the Lord. The relative pronoun *that*, occurring twice in this verse in the phrase “that I will not take,” is not found in the original Hebrew; the word

may therefore be omitted, and the first part of verse 23 (before the word *lest*) could be read as a direct quote.



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