

Arm of God, for Tonya, LeGrand Baker

Tonya,

I have gone through my writings and pulled out the references to God's arm. However I have left them in their larger context, so the most efficient way for you to handle these quotes would be to do a word search on "arm," then see if you want to read that reference in context.

Tonya, the prayer of the atonement is given in D&C 45, 1-5, do a word search here for "Menorah" to find how that is relevant to the idea of extended arms.

Tonya, This one may be seen as an embrace, though that is not what I was thinking when I wrote it.

The Resurrect Saviour Comes to America

In Third Nephi, the thunder, lightning, earthquake, and darkness began on 3rd day of first month of 34th year after the sign of the Saviour's birth.¹

3 And it came to pass that there came a voice again unto the people, and all the people did hear, and did witness of it, saying:

4 O ye people of these great cities which have fallen, who are descendants of Jacob, yea, who are of the house of Israel, how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you.

5 And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not.

6 O ye house of Israel whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart. (3 Nephi 3-6)

The Saviour had spoken similar words before.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (Matthew 23:37-38. See also Luke 13:34-35)

1 3 Nephi 8:5

I used to have a very vivid mental picture of that. (The picture is still vivid; I'm just not sure it's that relevant any more.) When I was a boy living on the farm, I was watching a mother hen and her dozen or so baby chicks. She would cluck and scratch the ground to find things to eat, showing them how to scratch and peck, and how to find seeds and bugs. If one became too intense on the lesson and tried to scratch in the same place as his mother – that is, if one was so foolish as to get behind her foot as she scratched the ground, the baby chick would be propelled into the air by the back of her foot, bounce six inches or so from where he had been scratching, get up, and run back to join his siblings to search the place the mother had just cleared. As I watched, I heard her cluck take on a different tone and a sense of urgency that even I could recognize. She squatted on the ground, raised her wings and did something with her feathers that made her look twice as big as she was before. The babies scampered into the shelter beneath those wings, and she lowered her body over theirs, buried her head under her wing and — I was suddenly pelted by hail that came crashing from the sky. The little balls of ice hit her feathers with a kind of hollow thud, and rolled off to the ground. I'm sure the reason I recall that scene so vividly is because I stood there in the storm, watching the hail bounce off her feathers and admiring her courage, before I ran off to the house where my own mother and her protection were waiting for me. I did not know the hail was coming, but the mother hen did. I have since learned that hens keep a close eye on the sky and will act the same way if she sees a hawk hovering near her children.

In the New Testament one could reasonably take the Saviour's words as a simple country parable, – many have – but given the circumstances under which those words were spoken in the Book of Mormon, one might rightly ask, "Why, in the darkness, would Jesus choose to speak in a farmyard parable? Was he talking about saving people from the physical dangers of the trembling earth, or was it about something else that was more important?" The question becomes even more penetrating when one sees how the "parable" is used in the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants.

1 Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great I AM, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins;

2 Who will gather his people even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, even as many as will hearken to my voice and humble themselves before me, and call upon me in mighty prayer. (D&C 29:1-2)

In the scriptures, "mighty prayer" seems to refer to a specific way of praying, and though it might seem a bit early in church history for that, I don't see any reason why it can't mean here the same as it means elsewhere.² After all, there were other pre-Nauvoo things that carried related ideas. One is important in this context. About two years before the Lord gave that revelation, he gave another in which he equated the concept of partaking of the waters of life freely with what appears to be a promise of eternal life in the Celestial Kingdom.

64 Therefore, I will unfold unto them this great mystery;

2 2 Nephi 4: 24; Enos 1:4; Alma 6:6, 8:10; 3 Nephi 27:1; Moroni 2:2; D&C 5:24.

65 For, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts;³

66 Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely. (D&C 10:64-66)⁴

There are two places in the Book of Mormon where the phrase “partake of the waters of life freely” is used,⁵ but Joseph had not translated them yet, so his frame of reference would have been to the book of Revelation in the New Testament where it is used twice, once in conjunction with the promise of sonship, the other to describe the situation of those who live in the Celestial world.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (Revelation 21:6-7)

and

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.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

....

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am

3 Joseph had not yet read Alma 12, where the hardening one’s heart is equated with not knowing the mysteries. The Lord is using the phrase here the same way Alma did there.

4 See also D&C 43:23-24.

5 Alma 5: 32-35, 42: 26-28. Also, 1 Nephi 11: 25. “And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God.”

the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22: 1-17)

If royal sonship and the promise of life in the Celestial world were what the Saviour had in mind when he talked about one's partaking of the waters of life freely, and that has to do with being gathered beneath his wings, then there is more to the latter than just a farmyard allegory.

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[Lehi about himself:] But behold, the Lord hath [past tense] redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love (2 Nephi 1:15).

Third Nephi 20:30-46 reads:

v. 30 And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fullness of my gospel shall be preached unto them;

"Fullness" is a key code word. It means "fullness" so must be read literally. The easiest way to put Isaiah or any of the Book of Mormon prophets into the pot called "too difficult to understand," and then to keep them in that pot with the lid on, is for a reader to assume he knows more than the ancients knew. If one does that, he assumes those prophets did not know all about pre-existence, fore-ordination, eternal marriage, the atonement, all of the ordinances and covenants, and all the other ideas which belong to the temple; then, when he reads Isaiah, for example, he says to himself, "Isaiah did not know such and such a thing, so he can't be talking about such concepts." As soon as one assumes that, the sacred language is closed to him, and our reader will not be able to understand Isaiah. That is equally true of Alma, Mormon, both Moronies, and all the Nephies. If a reader insists on limiting the understanding of the Book of Mormon prophets, then he will never find those concepts in the Book of Mormon, and that part of the book which is about the temple will be closed to him. But if, on the other hand, a reader assumes the prophets knew all that the reader himself knows and a good deal more besides, then, when he seeks to discover the context in which the prophet is writing, he will reach out to the very edge of his own understanding. Out there is where one will find Isaiah, along with Nephi, Alma, Mormon, and Paul, all writing in a sacred language which is simple and easy to understand.

Since there can be no "fullness" of the gospel where there is not also a knowledge of the temple, the phrase "fullness of the gospel" immediately tells the reader he has entered the sacred space of the Book of Mormon.

v. 31 And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name.

The key code word is "pray." "In" is also important. "In" means in. One of the characteristics of the sacred language is that words we often read casually speak with all their power, and by so doing, give great depth of meaning to what we habitually pigeon hole as "I already understand that, so I don't have to think about it any more."

The next verse begins with the word "then." "Then" creates a causal relationship between the prayer in verse 31 and what follows in the next verse. So the "then" tells us that the words which follow must either describe the results of the prayer, or else they must describe the method by which the prayer is said. In this case it is the method.

v. 32 Then shall their watchmen lift up their voice, and with the voice together shall they sing;

The watchmen sing in unison. Now, given the context of the "fullness of the gospel," one can easily recognize their song "together" as the ancient, sacred prayer circle, where words are spoken or sung in unison and where the movements of their dance are also in unison.⁶

Those code words, "fullness," "pray," and "together" are enough to give the initiated reader all he needs to know in order for him to understand the exact context to which the Saviour's words have taken him, and thereby the key to understand the plain meaning of this paraphrasing of Isaiah.

So who are the "watchmen"? They are, of course, those who are engaged in the sacred dance and prayer of the ancient prayer circle. They are those engaged in "mighty prayer" in the following:

Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together oft, and join in fasting and mighty prayer in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God (Alma 6:6).

And it came to pass that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in mighty prayer and fasting. And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst ["midst" means center, as in the center of a circle] of them, and said unto them: What will ye that I shall give unto you? (3 Nephi 27:1-2).

Elder McConkie commented on those verses this way,

⁶ For further explanations of the ancient prayer circle see Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1992, 313-316; others of Dr. Nibley's works; and also Donald W. Parry, ed. *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1994.

The Nephite Twelve "were united in mighty prayer and fasting...They were praying unto the Father in the name of Jesus." This is the perfect pattern for gaining revelation or whatever is needed. In this setting, the record says: "And Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said to them: What will ye that I shall give you?"⁷

for they shall see eye to eye.

"Eye to eye" may mean there is no hard feelings or disagreements among the participants. It may mean that they can look across the circle and see into each other's faces. It may mean what it meant to Alma.

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 (Alma 36:26).

v. 33 Then will the Father gather them [the watchmen who participate in the prayer] together again, and give unto them [those who pray] Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.

v. 34 Then shall they [those who are thus gathered] break forth into joy--Sing together [the gathered will participate in the prayer circle] , ye waste places [sacred spaces which had become profane, but now are sacred again] of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people,

"Comforted" is a very important code word. When an ancient Israelite wished to show his repentance or sorrow, he would dress himself in sackcloth and put ashes on his head. When he was comforted he would wash off the ashes, wash his body, anoint himself with oil, then dress himself in clean clothes.

Isaiah writes about that process as an ordinance for the dead who are liberated from the spirit prison. In a revelation which is quoted in several parts of Doctrine and Covenants section 138, Isaiah writes of the great congregation which gathered in the spirit world to meet the Saviour before his resurrection (see especially, section 138, v. 42). Isaiah described the dead's as being "comforted" in much the same way as we have just described, except the washing, anointing, and clothing are done by someone else rather than by themselves. The conclusion of their being "comforted" is that they become "the planting of the Lord," a code phrase which suggests eternal increase. (Trees make fruit, fruit have seeds, seeds make trees, *ad infinitum*.) Isaiah wrote of the Saviour,

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of

⁷ Bruce R. McConkie *The Promised Messiah*, p. 557-8.

our God; to **comfort** all that mourn;
[1] To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion [make them a part of Zion],
[2] to give unto them beauty for ashes [wash off the ashes],
[3] the oil of joy for mourning [anoint],
[4] the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness [dress];
[5] that they might be called [new name] trees of righteousness, the planting of the

LORD, that he might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3)
he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

To be redeemed may mean purchased, ransomed, or being helped by a kinsman. However in the Book of Mormon and elsewhere it often means to be brought back into the presence of the Saviour, as in the following verses:

And when he [the brother of Jared] had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed [present tense] from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you (Ether 3:9-18).

[Lehi to his son Jacob:] I know that thou art [present tense] redeemed, because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer; for thou hast beheld that in the fullness of time he cometh to bring salvation unto men. And thou hast beheld in thy youth his glory (2 Nephi 2:3-4).

[Lehi about himself:] But behold, the Lord hath [past tense] redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love (2 Nephi 1:15).

But behold, the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord. Yea, and it bringeth to pass the condition of repentance, that whosoever repenteth the same is not hewn down and cast into the fire; but whosoever repenteth not is hewn down and cast into the fire; and there cometh upon them again a spiritual death, yea, a second death, for they are cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness (Helaman 14:17-18).

v. 35 The Father hath made bare his holy arm

One who is not familiar with the encoded language might interpret this as always meaning that God will flex his muscles and exercise his strength. Sometimes it does mean that. However, sometimes it means exactly what it says: that God will show someone his arm. There is a place where that actually occurs, symbolically at least, within the environs of the sacred language. It is on the mountain where the Lord extended his hand and the Brother of Jared saw the finger of the Lord, just before the veil was parted and the brother of Jared entered into the presence of the Lord.

in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father;

and the Father and I are one.

Here the phrase "the Father and I are one" define the meaning of the phrase, "shall see the salvation of the Father." ("Salvation of the Father" might be a title which should begin with a capital S.) The word "see" means see, which is what happens when "the Father hath made bare his holy arm."

v. 36 And then shall be brought to pass that which is written: Awake, awake

You have heard those words spoken before.

again, and put on thy strength,

Strength, as we will soon be told, is the code word for sacred clothing.

O Zion [Zion is the pure in heart]; put on thy beautiful garments [that is clear enough, it means just what it says], O Jerusalem, the holy " [Holy" means complete, nothing lacking] city, for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised [those who have not the evidence of the covenant] and the unclean [those who are not ceremonially washed].

v. 37 Shake thyself from the dust;

In the creation story, man is made from the dust of the earth.

arise,

One stands to make a covenant, as in 2 Kings 23:1-3.

sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

A covenant with God is an enabling power.

v. 38 For thus saith the Lord: Ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed [brought into the presence of God] without money.

v. 39 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people shall know my name;

Sometimes, as in the story of King Benjamin and his people, when one learns the name of Christ they also take that name upon themselves. In the scriptures, new names are so closely associated with new covenants, that the words "name" and "covenant" can often be interchanged without changing the meaning of the sentence.

yea, in that day they shall know that I am he that doth speak.

As was true with Moses when he stood in the presence of God with the fire of the burning bush [veil] separating them, one can only really know the name of God when he tells

it himself. Only in sacred space can one learn, first hand, the name of God.

v. 40 And then shall they say: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings unto them, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that publisheth salvation;

That may be understood in light of what Abinadi said,

And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet! And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that are still publishing peace! And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who shall hereafter publish peace, yea, from this time henceforth and forever! And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people (Mosiah 15:15-18).

Or it may also be understood in light of Third Nephi when the Saviour came to them at the temple.

And it came to pass that he spake unto Nephi (for Nephi was among the multitude) and he commanded him that he should come forth. And Nephi arose and went forth, and bowed himself before the Lord and did kiss his feet. And the Lord commanded him that he should arise. And he arose and stood before him (3 Nephi 11:18-20).

And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him. And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears (3 Nephi 17:9-10).

that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth!

There is only one way and one place where one can know that "Thy God reigneth!" That declaration can only be made with certainty by one who has been in the throne room, the Holy of Holies, of a temple where God is.

v. 41 And then shall a cry go forth: Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence [the profane world], touch not [one would do that with a hand] that which is unclean [not ceremonially washed, etc., or not worthy of such a cleansing]; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean [ceremonially washed, anointed and clothed] that bear the vessels of the Lord.

"The vessels of the Lord" are the cups, horns, and other implements used in the temple ordinances.

v. 42 For ye shall not go out [leave the "world" to come to the Kingdom of God] with haste nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you [to lead, show you the way] , and the God of Israel shall be your rearward.

To protect you from your adversaries who would attack you when you are unaware. That is the same idea and the same context as in 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd...he leadeth me...prepareth a table in the presence of mine enemies."

v. 43 Behold, my servant [the one who was called the "Father and the Son," the Saviour himself] shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

v. 44 As many were astonished at thee--his visage was so marred, more than any man [Psalms 22], and his form more than the sons of men--

v. 45 So shall he sprinkle many nations;

In the temple ceremonies of ancient Israel, the High Priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrificial offering on the Tabernacle altar, the congregation, and on himself. This sprinkling with blood was a symbolic cleansing and was a necessary prerequisite to the other temple ordinances.

the kings

A king is not necessarily a potentate of this world. A legitimate king is one who has received the coronation rites of the temple.

shall shut their mouths at him,

This could mean to stand in awe, listen rather than talk, or know how to keep a secret. In any case, from the time the arm was revealed until now, we have been talking about whose arm it was. Now, brother of Jared like, those who see also understand.

for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. [That's straight forward enough.]

v. 46 Verily, verily, I say unto you, all these things shall surely come, even as the Father hath commanded me. Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people be fulfilled [see Moroni 10];

and then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people,

"My people" are the covenant, initiated people who constitute Zion. "Zion are the pure in heart." "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

and it shall be the land of their inheritance.

The land shall be theirs by right, and it cannot be taken from them (3 Nephi 20:30-46). (see #9 below for a discussion of "prosper in the land")

You see how powerful, explicit, and yet how exclusionary the language is. Even the explanations have to be given in code. Understanding scriptures like this is walking in sacred space, and is limited to those who already know. For such people, there is nothing either obscure or hard to understand in this paraphrasing of Isaiah's words by the Saviour.

1 NE. 19:1-14

v. 9 Nevertheless, for my name's sake [*The sake of the covenant with the name is associated. I have observed that it is almost always true that when one finds the word "name" used like this in a temple setting, one can substitute the word "covenant" for the word "name" without changing the meaning of the sentence.*] will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off. [*You will get another chance if you will take it.*]

v. 10 For, behold, I have refined thee, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. [*Christ's affliction, not theirs.*]

v. 11 For mine own sake, yea, for mine own sake will I do this, for I will not suffer my name to be polluted, and I will not give my glory unto another. [*That seems to be a reference to the same*

story as Moses 4:1-4.]

v. 12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called [*Named - to give one a name/title is the same as giving an assignment, since the covenant associated with the new name always includes the promise that one will fulfill some assignment. An example of that kind of covenant with its related assignment is found in the sacrament prayer: "O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen."*], for I am he; I am the first, and I am also the last.

v. 13 Mine hand hath also laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand [*When Joseph took his two sons to his father, Jacob, so they could receive their patriarchal blessings, Jacob crossed his hands and placed the right hand on Ephraim and the left hand on Manasseh. Joseph corrected him, saying that Manasseh was the oldest. Jacob said he knew that and continued to give the blessing. In that story, the right hand conveyed the birthright blessing on Ephraim.*] hath spanned [*The Oxford English Dictionary's second definition of "span" reads: "The hand with the thumb and fingers extended esp. as a means of measuring" Sacred space is defined by measuring.*] the heavens [*"Heavens" and "stars" are frequently used to denote the members of the Council in Heaven, as in Job 38:6-7. However in context, this seems to refer to all the spirits in the pre-mortal world, rather than only the members of the Council.*]. I call unto them [*the "heavens"*] and they stand up [*One stands to make a covenant (2 kings 23:1-3.)*] together. [*This*

is, they stand to make the covenant in unison.]

v. 14 All ye, assemble yourselves, [*They are coming to a meeting.*] and hear [*"Hear" has three meanings which might apply here. It means both to be cognizant of the words and to understand their meaning. It can also be a command with the connotation of a command to obey.*]; who among them [*Which member of the Council.*] hath declared [*Given the speech at the meeting, or born testimony.*] these things [*Perhaps "these things" are the ordinances already talked about - or since it is the Prophet Joseph who is speaking, perhaps the subject of his speech is his own mission as it is described in the next chapter. I have wondered, though there is no evidence, if the next chapters of Isaiah might me a synopsis of the Prophet's speech. The speech deals with the restoration of the temple ordinances for the living and the dead, and the gathering of Israel. Identification of the Prophet is in the next chapter, v. 8, footnote a. We will discuss that more fully when we get there.*] unto them [*Those who are at the meeting.*]? The Lord hath loved him [*We learn in v. 17 that "the Lord" is Jehovah, "thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." The person whom the Lord loves is the Prophet Joseph who is giving the speech.*]; yea, and he [*The speaker.*] will fulfill his word [*He will have both the power and the integrity to do what he says he will do.*] which he hath declared by them; [*I don't know who "them" are, but it could be the prophet's helpers who are described at the beginning of the next chapter.*] and he [*The speaker.*] will do his pleasure [*His pleasure is to convert not to destroy.*] on Babylon [*Symbol of this worldly evil.*], and his arm shall come upon the Chaldeans. [*Here the arm which comes upon them is clearly a symbol of power, in contrast of the idea of God's showing his arm is often in the context of covenant and ordinance.*]

1 Ne. 2:15; 1 Ne. 17:1, 06 Oct 97, Dil Rust

2:15. And my father dwelt in a tent.

17: 1 And it came to pass that we did again take our journey in the wilderness;
and we did travel nearly eastward from that time forth. And we did travel and
wade through much affliction in the wilderness; and our women did bear children
in the wilderness..

Implications of the Journey Motif as Applied to the Temple

And my father dwelt in a tent. [This could also be thought of as a temple. Ask LeGrand for more details.] . . . we did again take our journey . . .

Baptism: A person representing the Savior takes us in his arms and ritually immerses us in the grave/womb and then brings us forth into new life. The Savior-representative gives us his name ("take upon them the name of thy Son") and adopts/creates us as his sons and daughters (Mosiah 5:7: "ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you"). We are below the ground, and must then literally (as well as figuratively) move to the ground level in order to begin our journey.

"And the first man of all men have I called Adam, which is many" (Moses 1:34). Naming is creation (and I could write a treatise on this alone).

The exuberant romantic Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Adam in the Garden, I name the animals anew." Naming under inspiration has eternal consequences and is connected both with who we were in the preexistence and who we will be in the hereafter. One need only think of the names of John the Baptist, Jesus, and Joseph Smith to realize this; also, the renaming of Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, and Saul to Paul.

Initiatory: Here we are the prince (princess) being prepared for the journey, the test, that is the central part of the initiation experience.

Arnold van Gennep calls it the liminal part of the three-part rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood (although, of course, there are other rites of passage as well--including marriage). According to Joseph Campbell, this is the period of transformation. In the corrupted versions found in myth, legend, and fairytale, the acolyte (initiate) is given some magic talisman, article of clothing, or the like, to protect him or her in the fearsome journey ahead.

Endowment (the central and main part of the initiation): When I was in the Salt Lake Temple recently, I appreciated once again the experience of physically being on a journey, moving ever higher from the Creation room to the Garden room to the Telestial room to the

Terrestrial room to the Celestial room. While I was like a baby in the baptistry, having everything done for me, and while I was like a child in the initiatory, I move progressively through adolescence into maturity in the endowment. It is here, especially, that I moved from being First Adam to becoming like Second Adam. (Of course, this is all instructional-- and conditional.) I learn who I am and step by step learn who the Savior and his Father are.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). The highest form of knowing is identification with that person. "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:20-21).

Sealings: From the Celestial room, which represents the place where we dwell with God, we move even further upward (again, in the Salt Lake and many other temples, even physically so) when we go into the Bridal Chamber (as Hugh Nibley calls it--drawing on the apocrypha Philip). Here, men can experience an identification with Christ of the sort the Apostle Paul spoke of: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. . . . For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:25, 31-32). In the sealing room, the connections pertaining to godliness are established (again, conditionally): "Thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion" (D&C 121:46). "Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue" (D&C 132:20)

Richard Dilworth Rust

1 Ne. 10:8, 04 Nov 96, LeGrand Baker

v. 8 Yea, even he should go forth and cry in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for there standeth one among you whom ye know not; and he is mightier than I, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. And much spake my father concerning this thing.

This same reference to Isaiah 40 is found in all four of the New Testament Gospels. It is important for four reasons: 1) It identifies John as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. 2) It bears double testimony the Saviour--John's testimony, and Isaiah's testimony of the eternal validity of John's testimony. 3) It is evidence of John's foreordination. 4) It is a key to understanding the second half of Isaiah.

Of those four, the first three are self explanatory, so let me take a moment and talk about the fourth.

Isaiah is divided into two large sections. Much of the first is quoted in Second Nephi. The second section is a review of the cosmic myth or the plan of salvation. The two parts are separated, connected probably, by the account of King Hezekiah's being healed and then seeing the Saviour.

Because the second large section begins with the prophecy of John the Baptist, it would be appropriate to look at the context in which that prophecy appears. So here is a quick review of Isaiah 40:1 "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." In ancient Palestine, after one had expressed his sorrow or his repentance by putting ashes on his head and dressing in sackcloth, he would express his being comforted by washing off the ashes, anointing himself with oil, and dressing in clean garments.

In Isaiah 61, the Lord speaks of comforting the dead who were in the spirit prison (see D&C: 138:42) by using that same sequence: "...to comfort all that mourn." That sequence is:

- a. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion [make the dead a part of Zion],
- b. to give unto them beauty for ashes ["beauty" has reference to a shining headdress or crown. Before they can be so crowned, the ashes must be washed off], the oil of joy for mourning,
- c. the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
- d. that they might be called [i.e. given a new name. That new name is:] trees of righteousness [Same concept as Alma 32: trees make fruit, fruit makes seeds,

seeds make trees, and on and on and on: thus the concept of eternal increase.], the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3)

Now to return to the second verse of Isaiah 40:

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: [Notice that what follows is given as evidence that she is pardoned: note the word "for."] for [meaning: this is why] she hath received of the LORD's hand double for [meaning: in exchange for] all her sins. [As in Isaiah 61, "double" is a reference to the fact that the birthright son received a double portion of the inheritance, which included all of the blessings of Abraham. These birthright blessings are received "of the LORD's hand.]

v. 3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ["Highway" = WAY. In a temple setting like this, WAY is usually a reference to obedience to ordinances and covenants, but since this is written within the context of the preexistence, I would guess that here it has a specific reference to the Covenant of the Father, as in Moroni 10 and Ephesians 1.]

v. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: [Low places will become as temples and temples (mountains) will be low, as in available to everyone. There will be no counterfeits of the WAY.]

v. 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. [The glory of the LORD can be revealed only in sacred space, often the Holy of Holies, i.e. the throne room. However, anywhere God is is sacred space.]

v. 6-7 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. ...that the conditions of this law are these: 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....are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead. (D&C 132:7)

v. 9 O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; [temple] O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, [As in prayer. When the ancient Jews and Christians prayed, they lifted their hands toward

heaven.] be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! [If one is to see God, it must be in the temple or some other sacred space.]

10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, [Many scholars agree that this is one of those typical statements about the strength and power of the sometimes vengeful God of the Old Testament. However, it seems to me that in this context it is clearly about something else.] his reward is with him, and his work before him. For behold, this is my work and my glory--to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. (Moses 1:39)

v. 11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: [Fruit of the tree of life] he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, [embrace] and shall gently lead those that are with young.

v. 12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span....

v. 21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

v. 22 It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth....

1 Ne. 11:1, 25 Nov 96, LeGrand Baker

Job had a similar experience

Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Job replies that he doesn't know any more answers. He says he has given two answers already, but doesn't know any more. The Lord calls attention to his own arm, then tells Job to dress himself, in "majesty and excellency...glory and beauty;" and after that, the Lord promises, "Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee."

Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.... Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee. (Job 40:1-14)

After that, the Lord tells Job of his eternal power, and Job sees the Lord with his own eyes.

Nephi's experience is essentially the same as their's. And the Spirit said unto me: Behold, what desirest thou? And I said: I desire to behold the things which my father saw. And the Spirit said unto me: Believest thou that thy father saw the tree of which he hath spoken? And I said: Yea, thou knowest that I believe all the words of my father.

Mosiah 29:20, "But behold, he did deliver them because they did humble themselves before him; and because they cried mightily unto him he did deliver them out of bondage; and thus doth the Lord work with his power in ALL cases among the children of men, extending the arm of mercy toward them that put their trust in him."

1 Ne. 22:9-12, 16 Mar 98, LeGrand Baker

In the verses we are considering, Nephi seems to almost do somersaults in an attempt to get our attention so we can understand where and how that is to be done: To have made known the blessings of Abraham one must "come unto Christ" — that is to come to the veil as the Brother of Jared did when Christ extended his finger through the veil and touched the stones. I suppose that sort of thing must happen either symbolically or in fact:

v. 10 And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed UNLESS HE SHALL MAKE BARE HIS ARM IN THE EYES OF THE NATIONS.

v. 11 Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed TO MAKE BARE HIS ARM in the eyes of all the nations, IN BRINGING ABOUT HIS COVENANTS AND HIS GOSPEL unto those who are of the house of Israel.

v. 12 Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and THEY SHALL KNOW that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel.

Yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble. (D&C 3:8)

The relationship between the kingly authority of the rod and Melchizedek priesthood authority seem to be established in the 110th Psalm, which is one of the coronation psalms.

**1 The LORD said unto my Lord,
Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.** ⁸

⁸ Three times in the New Testament, this scripture is quoted to show that Jesus, who was a

- 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.**
- 3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,
in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning:
thou hast the dew of thy youth.**
- 4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent,
Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.**

In the Tanakh the “rod” of verse two is translated as “scepter.”

**The Lord will stretch forth from Zion your mighty scepter;
Hold sway over your enemies!⁹**

Nephi describes the rod as a source of power:

- 23 And they said unto me: What meaneth the rod of iron which our father saw, that led to the tree?**
- 24 And I said unto them that it was the word of God; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto**

descendant of David, was also the “Lord” (i.e. Jehovah) whom David worshiped. Two are in the gospels:

- 35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?
- 36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.
- 37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly. (Mark 12:35-37)

and

- 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.
- 43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,
- 44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?
- 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?
- 46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. Matthew 22:24-46.

Paul also used it as part of the whole series of kingship scriptures about the Saviour that he quoted in the first chapter of Hebrews:

- 13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?
- 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Hebrews 1:13-14)

⁹ *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, Jerusalem, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.)

blindness, to lead them away to destruction. (1 Nephi 15:23-24)

Notice in that scripture: Rod = word of God = defense against fiery darts.

Paul uses the word “faith” (“pistis” which is a tangible (?) token of the covenant to describe the same power:

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (Ephesians 6:16 and D&C 27:17)

In that scripture, faith (= pistis = token of covenants) = defense against fiery darts.

The Lord spoke in somewhat the same language to the prophet Joseph Smith:

Yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble. (D&C 3:8)

There, being faithful, means keeping one’s covenants: Faithful (= keeping covenants) =

“extended his arm” = defense against fiery darts = “with you in every time...”

Christ as the Tree of Life.

In Israelite tradition the most frequent symbol of the tree of life is the Olive tree. However grape vines, palm trees, and an ear of wheat were also used as symbols of the tree of life.¹⁰ The olive tree contained a full range symbols of the tree of life and the waters of life. Its fruit could depict the fruit of the tree; and its oil, the waters of life. The oil was used for cleansing, for anointing the sick, and for anointing kings and priests. As a symbol of the atonement, the Saviour’s cross

¹⁰ Ad de Vries in *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (London, North-Holland, 1974), 474. See a number of essays in Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994).

was very probably made of olive wood. In that case the Saviour himself would have represented the fruit of the tree; and his blood, the waters of life.¹¹ That symbolism accounts in part for

Alma's statement, "ye shall feast . . . even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye

thirst" (Alma 32:42) It also gives meaning to the Saviour's declaration,



51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. ...

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:51, 54)

But in the symbolism of the scriptures Christ is not the only tree of life.

Alma, in his magnificent sermon to the people of Zarahemla, told them that

they must be trees also.

33 Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you.

34 Yea, he saith: Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely;

35 Yea, come unto me and bring forth works of righteousness, and ye shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire –

36 For behold, the time is at hand that whosoever bringeth forth not good fruit, or whosoever doeth not the works of righteousness, the same have cause to wail and mourn.

Tonya, the Menorah is what one does with one's own arms.

11 Griggs, C. Wilfred. "The Tree of Life in Ancient Cultures," in *Ensign* (June 1988), 26-31. The same idea, though not explicit, is suggested in the Acts of Thomas, Edgar Hennecke, (English translation edited by R. McL. Wilson) *New Testament Apocrypha* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1965), p. 525.

When Titus destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple, he brought the temple treasures to Rome. An arch which celebrated his triumphal procession still shows the Menorah as part of the booty.

In section 45, after repeating the words of the prayer of redemption, the Saviour explained,

7 For verily I say unto you that I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the light and the life of the world – a light that shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

8 I came unto mine own, and mine own received me not; but unto as many as received me gave I power to do many miracles, and to become the sons of God; and even unto them that believed on my name gave I power to obtain eternal life (D&C 45:7-8).

Then, in a statement which is markedly similar to the conclusion of the Beatitudes,¹² he added,

9 And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me.(D&C 45:9)

His children are to be as the menorah in the Temple. Receiving light, giving light, and being light are ultimately the same thing. One cannot give without receiving, just as one cannot receive without giving. One can not stockpile the light to himself, because if he tries to capture it, hold it, and make it illuminate himself only, it ceases to shine, becomes darkness, and is not light any more. The crowning command of the Beatitudes to those who are “called the children of God” is

...I give unto you to be the light of this people. A city [Zion] that is set on a hill [sacred mountain] cannot be hid. Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel?

12 3 Nephi 12: 16.

Nay, but on a candlestick [the menorah], and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (3 Nephi 12:14-16)

It is the same principle as the second definition of “gospel” in 3 Nephi 20.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye do also; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do.

It’s all the same thing, no matter where in the scriptures one looks. The principle is very simple – and in its simplicity one finds a powerful meaning in “I give unto you to be the light of this people.”

ARM — Tonya this is not an embrace, but it is sacred protective clothing, which is a kind of embrace

The High Priests wore a two part white linen suit consisting of a long sleeved shirt and breeches “to cover their nakedness.” Above that he wore a solid blue robe with a fringe of alternating golden bells and pomegranates that were made of blue, purple, and scarlet threads. His breastplate was a kind of pouch which held the Urim and Thummim. It was supported by shoulder straps attached to an apron called the ephod. The crown was a miter, a flat hat made of fine linen with a gold plate attached. Engraved on the plate were the words “Holiness to the Lord.” Around the waist was a sash ¹³ woven from the same kind of thread and in the same colors as the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Tabernacle. (Exodus 28:4 - 42) ¹⁴

13 Our Old Testament calls it a “girdle,” in the Tanakh it is called a “sash.” Exodus 28:8

14 Exodus 28:4. Wonderful illustrations of the Tabernacle, its furnishings, and the clothing of the High Priest is found in Moshe Levine, *The Tabernacle, Its Structure and Utensils* (Published for the Soncino Press Limited, London, Jerusalem, New York by “Melech Hamishkan” Tel Aviv, Israel, 1989).

This same ritual clothing – or something very much like it – was apparently worn by the early Christians. Paul described the sacral garments as protective armor.

v. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

v. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

That is why one needs protection. The person is the temple, and Paul uses the idea of being protected by sacred clothing the way one might think of the wall around other sacred space.

v. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

v. 14 Stand therefore, [One stands to make a covenant. (2 Kings 23:1-3)] having your loins girt about with truth,

This is probably a reference to the sash which was woven from the same colors as the veil – perhaps representing the veil. The idea that the sash represented truth comes easily when one remembers that when one approaches the veil behind which God is enthroned one must speak only the truth.

and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

The High Priest wore a breastplate in which he kept the Urim and Thummim – the source of revelation. It worked on the principles of zedek – righteousness.

v. 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

“Preparation of the gospel of peace” is a key idea. One’s feet walk the way up the mountain to reach such a height. The gospel of peace is the final achievement – the place where “peacemaker” is found in the beatitudes.

v. 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

The shield of “faith” is the shield of “*pistis*” – the tokens of the covenants.

Ricks Stephen D., and John J. Sroka, “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History” in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 256-257.

v. 17 And take the helmet of salvation,

The flat hat worn by the High Priest

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

v. 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

The sword is the words of ones mouth when those words are spoken in the power of the priesthood: "I shall make your mouth like a sharp sword," (Isaiah in 1 Ne. 20:1-2) and the Lord's word is sharper than a two-edged sword (D&C 6:2 et al.) One needs to be taught how to pray. It is significant that it was to the multitude that the resurrected Christ said, "And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you. (3 Nephi 18:20)

Tonya, This uses the same language as Paul, but equates it to the Lord's arms

In that scripture, faith (= pistis = token of covenants) = defense against fiery darts.

The Lord spoke in somewhat the same language to the prophet Joseph Smith:

Yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble. (D&C 3:8)

There, being faithful, means keeping one's covenants: Faithful (= keeping covenants) =

"extended his arm" = defense against fiery darts = "with you in every time..."

"In 1968 the bones of a crucified man were found at Giv'at ha-Mivtar just north of Jerusalem.

These belonged to a man about 26 years old and 167 cm (© 5' 5 ½") tall. The heel bones

(calcanea) were still fixed together by a nail. An examination showed that the nail had first been

hammered through a piece of Pistacia or Acacia wood and then through both heel bones before

entering the cross made of olive wood. The lower leg bones were broken. There was the mark of a nail on one of the lower right arm bones (radius.)

“The nails were probably put through a plaque of wood to stop them tearing through the flesh. The weight of the body would have pulled the arm nails up the forearm to the wrist. The legs were broken against the side of the cross. All the weight of the victim’s body would be on the arms causing death by suffocation.” Peter Connolly, *A History of the Jewish People in the Times of Jesus from Herod the Great to Masada* (New York, Peter Bedrick Books, 1983), p. 51.

1. Yea, even doth not Isaiah say: Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

The story of Abinadi both begins and ends with that concept. The scripture with which the priests challenged the prophet: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,” concludes, “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” As Abinadi concludes his speech, he will quote that portion of the scripture to teach about the atonement, and about becoming a child of God. When we get there I want to say something about the relationship between the Lord’s making bare his holy arm and people seeing the salvation of our God. In the meantime, it would probably be appropriate to observe that in the verse: “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” there seems to be a close relationship between seeing the arm of the Lord and believing in the Saviour. John the Beloved apparently thought there was.

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. (John 12:37 - 41)

It seems to me that John is saying until one can see (either truly see, or symbolically see) the arm of God, one can not truly “ understand with their heart, and be converted.” Other prophets have suggested something of the same thing. Here are a few examples:

1 Nephi 22

10 And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations.

11 Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel.

12 Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel.

Psalm 98

**1 O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things:
his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.**

**2 The Lord hath made known his salvation:
his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.**

**3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel:
all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.**

One gets this same sort of picture from the final recorded interview between the Lord and Job. A highly abbreviated version of that interview would go like this:

Job 40

3 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

6 Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ...

**9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?
10 Deck [dress] thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory
and beauty. ...
14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.
1 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,
5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. (Job
40: 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14; 42: 1, 5)**

This idea is by no means unique to Job. One finds the same notion popping up several times in the Psalms. Psalm 20 ties the notion to the anointed king:

**Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven
with the saving strength of his right hand. (Psalms 20: 6)**

Psalm 45 does the same. We have already seen it in the blessing given by Elohim to the earthly king.

**Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips:
therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.
Gird thy sword upon thy thigh,
O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.
And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth
and meekness and righteousness;
and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible [awesome] things. (Psalm 45: 2 - 4)**

Psalm 48 associates that idea with the temple:

**We have thought of thy lovingkindness,
O God, in the midst of thy temple.
According to thy name, O God,
so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth:
thy right hand is full of righteousness.
(Psalm 48: 9 - 10. See also D&C 1:13 - 16, 109:23 -24, 133: 1- 4.)**

It is meaningful to me that Abinadi should have chosen the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, which is one of the most beautiful testimonies of the Saviour in the scriptures, to teach Alma about the atonement.

In the darkness, the people heard the voice of the Lord. The voice said:

O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?

*Yea, verily I say unto you, if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me.*¹⁵

In those two verses the Lord sums up all of the drama which might have been performed before in the pageantry of the festival. The most literal way to understand the phrase "come unto Christ" or "return unto me" is that it means for one to go the place where he is. The place on earth where one goes to be closest to heaven is the temple. When one gets there, and after one has received the healing power of his grace, then He extends the arm of his mercy so that one can, symbolically at least, enter his presence. The symbolism of that gesture is an invitation to its reality, as he said, "if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life."

Having said that, the Saviour introduced himself. In his words he followed with remarkable exactitude the coronation sequences of the New Year's drama as it might have been performed.

The Saviour began, "I am Jesus Christ the Son of God." In other words, "I am Jesus, the anointed

15 3 Nephi 9:13-14.

one,¹⁶ the Son of God." Then he spoke of his own pre-earth life, in the beginning when he created the heavens and earth and all things, when he was with his Father. He spoke of his humiliation and ultimate triumph, of his ownership of the Law, and thus of its fulfillment. He concluded by affirming that he is the light and life of the world, not only its beginning, but also its end.

Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.

I came unto my own, and my own received me not. And the scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled.

And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled.

I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

16 "'Messiah' (Greek, *Messias*) represents the Aramaic *Mesiha*, Hebrew *ham-masiah*, 'the Anointed One'....' Jesus Messiah', or in Greek 'Jesus Christ', were His name and His title in the speech of the community, until the term 'Christ' also came to be regarded as a personal name." Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 3. See also: Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 1.

Isaiah 61:1 speaks of the anointing of Christ in the pre-existence, and Peter testified that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." Acts 10:34-48.

The judgement with which God judges, and therefore the judgement with which man must also judge is celebrated in the Psalms as a joyous triumph of "equity" and mercy, as the 98th and 100th Psalms show:

O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. (Psalms 98:1)
