

## Sacred space and righteousness, LeGrand Baker

Righteousness (*zedek*), therefore, occurs only in sacred space--but remember, people are also temples – symbolically as we have discussed, through sacred geometry – but also in fact. The children of God are literally temples because they are literally sacred space.

The process of defining sacred space in this world is that God gives the plan, then the prophet measures out the space. That was the pattern with Noah's Ark, the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle of Moses, the temple of Solomon, and the temple at Kirtland, Ohio. The heavenly temples described by Ezekiel and by John the Revelator are also precisely measured.

To measure is to define the boundaries, and therefore to delineate that which is sacred from that which is not. People are defined as sacred in the same way that temples are. In Isaiah 48, Isaiah, speaking for the Lord, says,

Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called, for I am he; I am the first, and I am also the last. Mine hand hath also laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. I call unto them and they stand up together (1 Nephi 20:13).

As we have already observed, these "heavens" gather together, "stand" to make a covenant (as in 2 Kings 23:1-3), and listen to a speech of the Prophet Joseph who was chosen to gather scattered Israel in the last days and to restore the temple ordinances (1 Nephi 20-21). This statement apparently refers to the same pre-mortal time as Job 38, "when the morning stars [i.e. the "heavens"] sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy."

Similarly, in Isaiah chapter 40, in the context of discussing the fore-ordained responsibilities of the Saviour, of John the Baptist, and others, the Lord asks this question. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span (Isaiah 40:12)." This is not a rhetorical question, for a few verses later, he reminds his readers, "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.21)" In the phrase in chapter 48, "my right hand hath spanned the heavens," the "right hand" confers the birthright blessings of Abraham. (You recall in the story of Joseph's two sons, that Jacob crossed his hands to place his right hand on the head of Ephraim, thereby giving him the birthright.)

The use of the word "span" is important in both of the above quotes from Isaiah. The word itself means to extend the thumb and fingers of the hand. Thus extended, the hand becomes a unit of measure (OED, "span"). In the above verses, by placing his hand upon their heads, God measured, and thereby defined each of his children as sacred space--"temples," as Paul reminded us. In this world, we do the same kind of thing when we place our hands upon someone's head to give him or her the Gift of the Holy Ghost, ordain him to the priesthood, or give a blessing.

The idea of delineating by covering is also important in the definition of sacred space. When the Lord gave the revelations telling the prophets the dimensions of the ark of the covenant, the tabernacle, or a temple, he did not just give the floor plan. He also instructed the prophets how the sacred space was to be covered. Covering defines and protects sacred space just as the smoke covered and defined Mt. Sinai when the Lord was there, protecting it and keeping away the gaze of unsanctified eyes. When the Lord told Moses how to build the tabernacle, he instructed Moses to laterally cloth it in a garment of skins. The outer garment of

the Salt Lake temple signifies its extension into the eternities, with the Big Dipper suggesting the cosmic dance, and the North Star as a symbol of eternal invariance. People are similarly clothed with symbols of eternal constancy. Calling attention to the symbolism of eternal geometric precision, the garments with which the Lord will clothe his children are called "robes of righteousness," the root "right" having to do with a right angle or square. [ i did not put these robes of righteousness ideas with the others ]

During the coronation ceremonies which took place in ancient temples, after the candidate was washed and anointed; he was clothed in sacred, symbolic clothing; and he made covenants. Thus ancient, as well as modern revelations speak of "robes of righteousness," a "breastplate of righteousness," "a crown of righteousness," and includes the instructions that one's "vows shall be offered up in righteousness" (D&C 25:13-16, 27:15-18, 29:11-14, 59:11)."

To those who receive a crown of righteousness, the Lord gives the following instructions, Wherefore, I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it. Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things. Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day (D&C 59:5-10).

Another item of sacral clothing mentioned by Paul and again by the Lord in the Doctrine of Covenants is a pair of shoes. They are part of a list of clothing which Paul calls the "whole armor of God." The list reads like a description of the clothing worn by the High Priest who officiated at the Tabernacle. In these latter days, the Lord paraphrased Paul by saying,

Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which I have sent mine angels to commit unto you; Taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of my Spirit, which I will pour out upon you, and my word which I reveal unto you, and be agreed as touching all things whatsoever ye ask of me, and be faithful until I come, and ye shall be caught up, that where I am ye shall be also. Amen (D&C 27:15-18).

The phrase in that quote which I wish to call to your attention is "and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." As we get nearer and nearer to the center of our scriptural temple, we find that each station along the WAY offers the same promise. That is that when we come to the throne there will be peace. The physical and spiritual washing, anointing, and dressing which is represented by the word "righteousness" plant one's feet solidly on the path to peace. Righteous kings not only have it in their power to have peace, but also to give peace. Paul spoke of "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," and James testified that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace (Hebrews 12:11, James 3:18)."

In Second Nephi, if I read it correctly, Righteousness is a name of the Saviour's Father and the promise of peace associated therewith is of profound significance. It is a prophetic description of the Saviour's coming to the American people after his death and resurrection. It reads:

But behold, the righteous that hearken unto the words of the prophets, and destroy them not, but look forward unto Christ with steadfastness for the signs which are given, notwithstanding all persecution--behold, they are they which shall not perish. But the Son of Righteousness shall appear unto them; and he shall heal them, and they shall have peace with him, until three generations shall have passed away, and many of the fourth generation shall have passed away in righteousness (2 Nephi 26:8-9 capital letter added, see 3 Nephi 25:2 and Ether 9:22).

But the most powerful testimony of the righteous receiving peace is that of the Lord himself. In light of the scripture we have just read, one wonders if the word "Righteousness" in the following verse ought not also to be capitalized.

But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and the Spirit beareth record. Amen (D&C 59:22-24).  
for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

For one who hungers and thirsts, "righteousness" is the WAY by which he may return to partake of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the waters of life. The Holy Ghost not only teaches one the WAY, it also validates the ordinances, covenants, and coronation. Elsewhere in the scriptures, the Holy Ghost itself is called a washing and an anointing which cleanses and sanctifies, whereby one may have his "garments made white, being pure and spotless before God (Titus 3:5, Acts 10:38, Moroni 6:4, Alma 13:12)." It is also a promise of kingship.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever (D&C 121:46)

Paul sums up the promise of the 6th verse of the Beatitudes, "And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost," with these words, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth (Ephesians 5:9)."  
oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo