

Temple rites of the ancient Israelite New Year festival (an overview)

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The ancient Israelite New Year festival was a celebration that began with New Years Day, and continued for 22 days. Many scholars believe it was a harvest festival, because it happened in the fall (end of October - first of November) between the harvest and the rainy season. However, some scholars believe that before the Babylonian captivity, when the Jews used a different calendar system, it was celebrated in conjunction with the spring equinox, about the first of April. After the New Year's day celebration, there was a time of fasting and repentance until the 10th day, which was the Day of Atonement, when the people were made ceremonially clean. There were then four days of preparation for the Feast of Tabernacles. That lasted seven more days, during which a drama was performed that represented the whole history of Jehovah's covenantal relationship with Israel. Then, on the 22nd day, there was great feasting, after the re-establishment of God's kingdom on the earth, and a time of peace and security. (It is never called that: but I suppose that day of the Great Feast represents the millennium.)

At the beginning of the temple drama, on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Ark of the Covenant was taken from the temple, so now everything was wrong: God was not in his temple, the city was no longer sacred, the covenant between God, man, and the king, did not exist - so things were returned to their state of chaos, as they were before the world was, and before Jehovah had made his covenant with the fore-ordained nation of Israel.

The temple drama was the story of how God changed chaos to cosmos. It was a theatrical presentation of the events which occurred from before the foundation of the world until the time of the then living king of Israel presided on the throne in Jerusalem. It was the multi-leveled history of Jehovah's relationship with Israel. But it was also the king's autobiography represented in sacred time - from his fore-ordination at the Council in Heaven to his time on the earth. At the same time, it was also the representation of the eternal autobiographies of all the persons present who witnessed the ceremonies and probably made the same covenants and symbolically received the same ordinances as the king and queen who were on the stage. It was an earthly representation of a *sode* experience, where Everyman and Everywoman, saw one's own eternal Self and mission revealed anew in sacred time.

Here is a quick day by day review of the events of the drama of the Feast of the Tabernacle. (I did this before, in the earlier parts of the Book of Mormon Project, so for those of you for whom this is only a redundancy, I apologize.)

Mowinckel observed that for the king at least, the events of the New Year Festival were an "endowment" of power and peace. {1} "Seven" represents completeness, fullness, wholeness, culminating in the Feast of Tabernacle's eighth day (day 22 of the New Year festival), which was

the extra day – the one beyond the completeness of the seven. It was the a day of national rejoicing and feasting. It was one of the most joyous and sacred days of the year. {2}

During the Feast of the Tabernacles, people remain for seven days in a ‘tabernacle’, the characteristic of which is that it is a temporal abode, and that its roof should be so loosely arranged, for instance, of leafy twigs, that one can see the sky through it and the stars in the sky. Seven days on end does one live in this temporal abode not yet built on solid ground; just as man until the seventh day of the world has not got the solid house on earth. He lives in the house in which, according to tradition, biblical Israel lived, when it journeyed from Egypt to Canaan....As long as one is on one’s way to the promised land, one has no solid house here, and one has ever to be able to see heaven through the roof. In the knowledge that only *there* is the real roof, and that the roof of the earthly abode indeed can shut man from heaven, can make him oblivious of the fact that life has a purpose other than merely seeking protection on this earth.

The eighth day, however--and the feast of the tabernacles is the only one finished off by an eighth day--there is another ‘feast’. It is the feast that the seven days are past and the eighth day has come. On that eighth day one leaves the ‘tabernacle’ and goes within the house. Then the period of migrating from Egypt to Canaan is past, people have reached the coming world. {3}

During the ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles the king and queen were the chief actors, but theirs were not the only parts. In the drama, on stage and elsewhere, there were the mock battles, at least one procession around the entire city. There were many sacrifices, {4} and more than one covenant meal. There must have been many other actors as well. In addition to those main characters, there was the audience. It is likely that no one participated, even in the audience, who was not initiated or was not then being initiated into the temple rites, so the entire experience was one of making new covenants, or else of a reaffirmation of covenants already made. We do not know the extent of the audience participation, but we may surmise that parts or all of the audience sang many, if not most, of the Psalms as a part of the ceremonies. {5}

There can be no doubt that the psalms were meant to be sung. They contain a number of allusions to singing, and they are often described in the titles as ‘songs’...rendered to music, or as ‘hymns’....The word ‘song’ (singing) and ‘sing’ occur 38 times in all in the Psalms....

In many languages the word for ‘song’ originally betokened the powerful ritual word.

In the psalms we constantly hear the poet, and through him the worshiped or the congregation, declaring their intention to ‘sing’ or ‘praise’ or ‘sing and play’ for Yahweh....

We know nothing about the tunes in Israel’s temple cult. But if we are to judge from analogies in more recent oriental music, we may assume that they were quite simple....The psalms mention the tambourine, the cymbals, the horn, the trumpet, different kinds of lyre (R.V. harp and cithern), flute and castanets. {6}

Abinadi's arguments focus on the power of Christ's atonement, and on the ordinances of the king's coronation which occurred on the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles (the 21st day of the New Year festival.) However, in order to put his arguments in a meaningful context, one must know the entire festival well enough to know what led up to the coronation. In the following outline, I have presented the events of the New Year festival as understood by some of the scholars who have studied it most carefully. They know the sequence of the events of the overall New Year's festival, but they readily admit they do not know the sequence of the scenes of the drama presented during the 7-day Feast of Tabernacles. For example, the scholars know that a war in heaven was represented as part of the drama, but they do not know whether that war happens at the beginning of the story, or at the end. {7} I believe that I know the correct sequence of the scenes in that drama, and I believe you know it also. So I have arranged the *events* that the scholars know were depicted in the Feast of Tabernacles drama *in the sequence* that you and I would expect to find them.

Day 1 of 22, New Year's day. In celebration, horns were blown to announce the beginning of the festival. There were sacrifices, and with the sacrifices came feasting and merrymaking.

Days 2-9, a sober time of fasting and repentance which prepared one for day 10.

Day 10, the Day of Atonement. Two goats were selected. One was killed and its blood was sprinkled to ceremonially cleanse the priests, the temple, and the nation. The high priest placed his hands on the other and transferred to that goat all the sins of Israel, thus everyone in the nation was ceremonially clean, and could proceed in the ordinances and enter the temple. This goat – the scapegoat – was then driven away, never to return again. This cleansing of the nation was a necessary prerequisite for their receiving the ordinances of the temples – of many temples in fact, for in the course of the ceremonies that followed they were symbolically in the Holy of Holies where God holds audience with the Council in Heaven; then in the temple which was the Garden of Eden; then Sinai; and finally the Temple in Jerusalem. During the ceremonies of the next few days, the people would symbolically enter each one of those temples to receive blessings, and probably to make covenants as well.

Days 11-14, each individual family built "booths" or "tabernacles" - temporary housing – and made other preparations for Feast of Tabernacles. (In the King Benjamin story, they used tents instead of booths.)

Days 15 through 21 are the 7-day Feast of Tabernacles. These were the days of a complex temple drama as follows:

Day 15 of the festival and the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Ark of the Covenant was removed from temple and city. The Ark represented the presence of God, so when it was removed from the temple it symbolized a return to chaos. Everything was turned upside down – symbolically everything had returned to its state of primeval chaos before the creation of the world. The king was no longer king, there was no personal or national covenant with Jehovah.

Nothing was as it should be. Consequently, all things must be made right again. To make it right required a kind of recreation. To achieve that the nation reenacted the events which made everything right in the first place. Johnson summarizes that experience with these words:

Thus at the point in time represented by any one of these recurrent festal days the worshiper's gaze is directed first, in retrospect, to the beginning of time or the creation of the natural order; in the second place, to Yahweh's control of the natural world and His active concern with the behaviour of mankind on the plane of history; and, in the third place, to the prospect of the consummation of both creation and history in a universal moral order, i.e. the coming of the great 'Day' which will usher in a new era of world-wide righteousness and peace. {8}

So the most important parts of the festival, after the cleansing of the Day of Atonement, were the staging of the sacred drama and the sacrifices, offerings, and other ordinances and covenants which were performed in connection with that drama. In its presentation, but not in subject, some of it was probably presented in a manner roughly akin to the Hill Cumorah pageant, that is, performed on one side of the deep canyons near Jerusalem. (Those valleys are not as deep as they used to be. Twenty-six hundred years of repeated ruined city and rubble have been dumped there since then.)

Day 2 (16) Probably on this day, the part of the Temple drama was enacted which represented the following events in the following order: the Council in Heaven (Psalm 82 and 45), the war in heaven, the creation account, and the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden. Here, some scholars believe, the first chapters of Genesis were recited or enacted, but probably both. The king and queen were the main actors, but everyone in the audience participated. Some of the psalms were probably sung by individual performers, while others were sung by the entire congregation.

Day 3 (17) Adam (played by the king) and Eve (played by the queen) leave the Garden – but not entirely as outcasts. They are the king and queen of this world. They have received sacred garments (representing priesthood authority) to replace the garments of light they lost in the Garden, and Adam carries with him a branch of the tree of life which will be his royal scepter, representing his kingly authority. Adam is thus the first king of the world and its first High Priest. {9}

After he symbolically leaves the Garden and enters this world as Adam, the king who played himself, then Adam (Psalm 8), also plays the parts of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David, making covenants with Jehovah in each instance, and receiving appropriate authority from him. (Psalm 119) After he has been shown to receive all the necessary authority, the king plays himself again - now as the legal and foreordained head of the nation.

At some point in the drama (probably as he began to play the role of himself on the earth), the king was anointed *to become* king. {10}

Then, in a symbolic struggle with the evils of this world, everything bad that could happen happens. The earthly enemies of Israel attack. Israel is defeated, Jerusalem and its temple are destroyed. The young king is killed and his soul goes into the world of the dead. {11}

Day 4 (18) There is great mourning. The king is dead (His death, which takes place in the Temple, is shown in Psalm 119 - but the present alphabetical breaks in the psalm make it difficult to read). The city is destroyed, and the covenants are broken. (The king will remain in the underworld for three days. Psalms 7 and 143 tell of the king being pursued by an enemy even to the netherworld.)

Day 5 (19) The Saviour's atonement and our dependence on it were apparently represented in a very vivid way during the New Year festival. It may be here that the Saviour's atonement is dramatized by the reading of Psalms 22 and 34. Those psalms tell of Christ on the cross, and the conclusion of 22 takes us with him triumphantly into the spirit world.

Day 6 (20) Previously during the presentation of the drama, the city of Jerusalem and its temple had been symbolically destroyed, and the king had been killed and descended into the underworld where he remained for three days. {12} While he was there, back on the earth there were thunderings, lightning, and earthquakes by which Jehovah reasserted his own claims as King of Israel. Jehovah defeated Israel's earthly enemies, then he himself descended into the underworld to rescue the king. There Jehovah defeated the ultimate enemies of mankind – death and hell – and restored the king to life and to his rightful throne.

Day 7 (21) Probably at sunrise, the Ark of the Covenant (representing the presence of God) and the king return triumphantly from the underworld. In a great procession, the Ark, the king, and all the people walk around the city, apparently measuring it off with their steps, and redefining it as sacred space, thus the city became a New Jerusalem, its temple was restored, the people are Zion, and everything is set right again. As the people approached, the veil of the Holy of Holies was drawn back so that its sacred space reached out to enfold entire nation. (Psalm 24) In the presence of he people, the king is clothed and anointed. He then sits upon the throne of Jehovah, as his "son," and gives a coronation speech. The day concludes with sacrifices and a feast of celebration.

Day 8 (the "extra day" of the Feast of Tabernacles: and the 22nd and final day of the New Year festival) This was the day of joyful sacrificing, and of the nation's "Great Feast." Symbolically, the beginning of that "new era" commenced with the conclusion of this New Year's festival. All the covenants with Jehovah were re-established. He will bless the nation with another fruitful, prosperous, and peaceful year.

A closer look at the events of the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles

Now in that context, I would like to described the events of the seventh day in some detail.

On the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles (the 21st day of the full New Year's festival), Jehovah brought the king from the underworld to the land of the living. In a ceremony which probably began at sunrise, the king and the Ark of the Covenant (which represented the presence of Jehovah) appeared in glory before the people. There is no pre-exilic account of the ceremony of

the king's deliverance from the clutches of death and hell. But Josephus provides us with a notion of how it might have been. It is in his story of the events leading to the death of king Agrippa, the same Agrippa who imprisoned Paul.

Now when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cesarea, which was formerly called Strato's Tower; and there he exhibited shows [dramatic presentations] in honor of Caesar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons, and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of which he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theater early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another, (though not for his good,) that he was a god; and they added, "Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature." Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. {13}

Josephus does not say which festival Agrippa learned about and decided to attend, except that its object was "to make vows for the king's safety." It seems reasonable to suppose that some actor was scheduled to represent the king on the stage, and to receive those vows, but when Agrippa got there he was invited to play that role himself. It also seems likely to me that his magnificent silver coat was supplied to him as part of the festival regalia, and that the stage was arranged so that if one stood in just the right place on that specific day of the year the rising sun would shine directly on the robe and produce the desired dazzling effect. In any case, when I read that story it sounds a lot like the ancient festival where the king came from the dead, triumphant, radiant, and symbolically accompanied by the glory of Jehovah himself. So now, whether rightly or wrongly, when I envision what happened on the morning of the 7th day, I think of Agrippa, standing in a polished silver garment, a brilliant reflection of the rising sun.

But there would have been, or should have been, one major difference. Agrippa was arrogant and self-indulgent of the pretended glory, but that was not the attitude the king should have shown. In the New Year festival drama of the First Temple period the king was represented as having been restored to life by Jehovah, and he would have expressed both subservience and gratitude for what God had done for him. During the pre-exilic festival, it is likely that as the king stood on the stage with the Ark of the Covenant beside him, he may have recited or sang the 116th psalm which expresses the king's gratitude for his aliveness to Jehovah who has brought him back to the world of the living.

I love the Lord,
because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.
Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,
therefore will I call upon him as long as I live....
Return unto thy rest, O my soul;
for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

For thou hast delivered my soul from death,
mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. (Psalms 116:1-2, 7-9.)

The anointing of the king is often acknowledged in the psalms by referring to him by the title of the “messiah.” The Hebrew word translated “messiah” means “the anointed one.” In Greek, the word “Christ” also means the one who has been anointed. The significance of the anointing is described in a work of the second century A.D. called the *Recognitions of Clement*.

Then Peter began to instruct me in this manner: “When God had made the world, as Lord of the universe, He appointed chiefs over the several creatures....a man over man who is Christ Jesus. But He is called *Christ* by a certain excellent rite of religion....among the Jews a king is called *Christ*. And the reason of this appellation is this: Although indeed He was the Son of God, and the beginning of all things, He became a 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*. Thence, moreover, He Himself also, according to the appointment of His Father, anoints with similar oil every one of the pious when they come into His kingdom, for their refreshment after their labours, as having got over the difficulties of the way; so that their light may shine, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, they may be endowed with immortality....In the present life, Aaron, the first high priest, was anointed with a composition of chrism, which was made after the pattern of that spiritual ointment of which we have spoken before. He was prince of the people, and as a king received first-fruits and tribute from the people, man by man; and having undertaken the office of judging the people, he judged of things clean and things unclean. But if any one else was anointed with the same ointment, as deriving virtue from it, he became either king, or prophet, or priest. If, then, this temporal grace, compounded by men, had such efficacy, consider now how potent was that ointment extracted by God from a branch of the tree of life, when that which was made by men could confer so excellent dignities among men. For what in the present age is more glorious than a prophet, more illustrious than a priest, more exalted than a king?” {14}

Widengren quotes *Pseudo Clement* to further elaborate on the idea of an anointing with the oil from the Tree of Life. He writes,

This idea of an anointing with oil from the Tree of Life is found in a pregnant form in the Ps. Clementine writings, from which some quotations may be given. In the passage concerned, the author (or rather his original source) discusses the problem of the Primordial Man as Messiah. He is represented as stressing the fact that the Primordial Man is the Anointed One:

But the reason of his being called the Messiah (the Anointed One) is that, being the Son of God, he was a man, and that, because he was the first beginning, his father in the beginning anointed him with oil which was from the Tree of Life.

Ps. Clem. Recognitions syriace, ed. Frankenberg, I, 45, 4

Primordial Man, who had received the anointing, thanks to which he had been installed in the threefold office of king, high priest, and prophet, is then paralleled with every man who has received such anointing:

The same, however, is every man who has been anointed with the oil that has been prepared, so that he has been made a participant of that which is possessed of power, even being worth the royal office or the prophet's office or the high priest's office. *Ps. Clem. Recognitions syriace*, ed. Frankenberg, I, 47, 1-3 . {15}

In the following quotes Aubrey Johnson uses the word "messiah" to mean the earthly man who has been anointed king – a temporary messiah, if you will. Many of the psalms he sites are familiar to us because the psalms which celebrated the triumph of the earthly "messiah" were also prophecies of the eternal "Messiah" who was yet to come. There is a good reason for that: Because the crowning of the earthly king was symbolic of the creation of a New Jerusalem, Zion, and the reign of peace and prosperity, it was also symbolic of a future time when Jehovah, having subdued all enemies, would reign personally upon the earth.

This deliverance from 'Death' also marks the renewal of life or rebirth of him [the earthly king] who has proved to be the true Messiah [Johnson is talking about the legitimacy of the anointed earthly king, not the Promised Messiah]; it [rebirth] is the sign of his [earthly king's] adoption as the 'Son' of Yahweh, and issues, as one might expect, in his re-enthronement as Yahweh's viceregent endowed now with universal power. {16}

The Grand Procession

After the king appeared from his stay in the underworld, he, along with the Ark and the entire congregation, began a series of ceremonies which symbolized the final triumph of Jehovah: the creation of a New Jerusalem and its Temple, the establishment of the kingdom of God, the coronation of its earthly king, and the reign of its Heavenly King .

The re-creation of Jerusalem as sacred space was accomplished the same way sacred space is always defined – first of all by measuring it out, then by defining the encompassed area as separate from the profane space around it. {17} The ancient Israelites apparently measured the new city by using the same method my dad used when he measured where to put posts along a new fence line on our farm: he "stepped it off" – measuring the distance by the length of his stride. Similarly, the king, the Ark, and the people walked together in a triumphal procession all around the city, symbolically redefining it as sacred space, restoring its walls, and rebuilding its temple. The procession then went through the gates of the city, into the temple precinct, and then into the temple itself. {18} Mowinckel observed,

The holy way played a central role in the festival. There would take place the 'pageant of my God and King', as the psalmist would call it – the 'ascension(s)' was the technical term. The royal entry of Yahweh, at which he himself is present, symbolized by his holy

'ark', is the pre-eminent visible centre of the experiences connected with the enthronement festival:

God is gone up amid shouts of homage,
Yahweh (has come) with trumpet blasts.
Music of praise for God, sing music!
Music of praise now for our King! (Ps. 47.6f) {19}

This visual presentation of the relationship between Jehovah and the earthly king was a representation of the most fundamental concepts of kingship as understood by the ancient Israelites.

The following explanation, also by Mowinckel, is not only about pre-exilic Israel, but it provides us with a key to understanding the Abinadi story. Mowinckel is referring to the time when the Ark which represented God appeared with the earthly king on the morning of the seventh day, and of God's symbolically entering the Temple.

Yahweh's appearance as king involves a promise; he has renewed the covenant with his people, which in itself guarantees that all such things are going to happen in the coming year of grace and goodwill (Ps. 65.10; Isa. 49.8; 61.2) as faith may expect from the god of the covenant....

However, Yahweh's victory over the powers of chaos and death are also transferred to the historical conditions of Israel. His appearance also implies his victory over all the 'nations' and so guarantees that no earthly enemy shall be able to threaten his city or be a match for the people fighting in his power. Yahweh's kingdom is going to be a kingdom of peace, for Israel has already 'been justified'--has got its right granted--and shall have its rights in all conflicts with its enemies. The other nations and their gods have already been judged and 'put to shame'; 'the villages of Judah rejoice over his righteous judgments'. With the coming of Yahweh 'holiness again becometh his house' (93.5); it has again been cleansed and consecrated, and the sources of blessing may again flow from there so that the congregation

May have their fill of the fatness of thy house
And drink of thy delicious stream. (Ps. 36. 9.) {20}

At the beginning, or during the procession, while at a spring, the king was ceremonially washed in preparation for his later anointing. The significance of this washing is explained by Johnson. It is noteworthy that Johnson describes the importance of the washing in terms of both kingship and priesthood. In our story of Abinadi, the prophet is not only challenging the sacral kingship of Noah, but he is challenging his priesthood rights as well.

The fact is that it [the washing] deals in a perfectly straightforward way with the rebirth of the Messiah [earthly king], which, as we now know, takes place on this eventful day with his deliverance from the Underworld, apparently at the spring Gihon, at dawn or 'as the morning appeareth'; and this carries with it the implication that the Messiah, in all the

fresh vigour of his new-won life (which is here symbolized by the morning dew), has been elevated for all time not only to the throne of David but also to the traditional priesthood of Melchizedek. {21}

There are several psalms which seem to either represent the procession, or else were actually sung during the walk around the city. As each of the following verses show, the intent of the walk was to create a New Jerusalem with a new temple where God could come and visit his people.

Psalms 48:12 seems to describe the intent of the procession:

Walk about Zion, and go round about her:
tell the towers thereof.

Psalms 51:18 represents a rebuilding of the New city:

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:
build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Psalms 102:16 says the Lord will appear in Zion after the city is built again:

When the LORD shall build up Zion,
he shall appear in his glory.

Psalms 50:2 equates Zion's beauty with the presence of God:

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God hath shined.

Psalm 24 was among the first to be identified by Gunkel as a "Royal Psalm" – the one that was sung during the procession as the people approached the gates of the city. The psalm contains exactly the ideas one would expect to be expressed on such an occasion. The first verses are a celebration of the Lord as the God of Creation. This is especially meaningful in light of the purpose of the procession – to recreate final order out of worldly chaos and to establish a New Jerusalem.

1 The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein.
2 For he hath founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the floods.

The next verses read like a temple recommend: the people rejoice in their own worthiness as they approach the temple.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD?
or who shall stand in his holy place?
4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;

who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD,
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
6 This is the generation of them that seek him,
that seek thy face, O [God of] Jacob.

Now the gates are opened, that the people, the king, and their God might come in:

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up,
ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
8 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
and the King of glory shall come in.
10 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. (Psalm 24:1-10)

When the king, the Ark, and the people arrived at the Temple, its doors were opened, and the veil before the Holy of Holies was drawn back so the king and all the people could enter. Not everyone could get in of course, but in theory everyone could be there and the sacred space of the Holy of Holies reached out to encompass all those who participated in the ceremonies. This expanding of the sacred temple space to include the audience did not violate the sanctity of the Holy of Holies, for all had been cleansed on the Day of Atonement, and the king's washing earlier that morning probably symbolized that they were all washed as well.

The anointing of the king – his adoption as a son of God

Sometime after the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the presence of God, was brought into the Temple, Jehovah was again acclaimed King of Israel. Just how that was celebrated is not known, but the overriding truth is this: Jehovah is King – and his Kingship was absolutely central to Israelite ritual and theology. {22} Mowinckel sums up the celebration this way.

The picture seen by the poets is that of a great celebration which they present with the same features as that of the enthronement of a terrestrial monarch, only on a magnified mythical scale and with unearthly splendor. Yahweh himself 'comes' (98.9), 'makes himself known' (98.2), 'goes up' (47.6) in solemn procession to his palace, the Temple, seats himself on his throne (93.2; 97.2; 99.1) and receives his people's acclamation as king(...47.2). {23}

In another place he writes:

The enthronement psalms must be understood against the background of this festival, with all the rich experiences contained in it, experiences including past and future in a re-creating present....

There is every reason to believe that *the true enthronement hymns* in the strictest sense of the term belonged to that day in the festal complex considered to be Yahweh's own particular 'day', the day of his royal entry and triumph. They all take for granted that Yahweh has already gone up to his abode and is sitting on his throne. {24}

Widengren also concludes,

We may now state briefly the connexion between the king and the mythical ideas we have treated here. We have seen that the king acts in the ritual as the representative of the god, who is dead, but rises again, is conquered by his enemies, but is at last victorious over them, and returns in triumph to his temple, creating the cosmos, fertilizing earth, celebrating his marriage, sitting enthroned in his holy Tabernacle upon the mountain of the gods. {25}

Either soon after, or in conjunction with the symbolic enthronement and ascension of Jehovah, the earthly king was also coronated. Although there are many references in the Old Testament to king's being anointed, there is no actual description of the ceremony. Before the Temple was built, the anointings of Saul, David, and Solomon are reported in the Old Testament, {26} but there are no later descriptions which also include the temple rites. {27}

In the Old Testament, one of the king's titles is "the Lord's anointed" (I Sam. 24:6, 26:16), as such he was a vassal of God who reigned in God's stead over his people (II Sam. 6:21). In the Psalms and elsewhere "messiah" (the Hebrew word that meant "the anointed one") referred to both the then-present earthly king and the future Eternal King – for the coronation of the earthly king was a representation and foreshadowing of the coronation of the Eternal King. However, after the Babylonian captivity when the post-exilic Jews were part of the Persian, then Greek, then Roman Empires, they no longer had an independent earthly Davidic anointed king, and for either political or religious reasons (or both), they no longer celebrated the endowment/coronation rites of the New Year festival. Early in that period (perhaps sometime between 400 and 300 B.C.), someone or some committee rearranged the order of the Psalms and thereby obliterated the story they told, so their Psalter became only a hymn book. The references to the messiah in the Psalms and elsewhere came to be regarded as only prophecies of a looked-for future Messiah. So, notwithstanding this rearrangement and the apostasy that sponsored it, the idea of a future anointed earthly king who would be a descendant of David persisted long after the Babylonian exile, and the Jew's continued belief in an imminent Davidic messiah came to be viewed as "important, primarily as testimony to the dependability of God." {28}

Nevertheless, at least between the time of Solomon and Zedekiah (that is, during the First Temple period {29}), the practice of anointing the earthly king at the conclusion of the New Year's festival "was the really sacramental act in this festival ritual." It was "performed at the holy place, in Jerusalem normally in the temple." {30} So that, by virtue of this anointing, the

king was “regarded as a potent extension of the divine Personality.” {31} (As you read the following quotes, remember that this was the ides of kingship which king Noah and his priests were accusing Abinadi of challenging.)

The king is anointed. The holy garment is put on him together with the crown and other royal regalia. He is said to be radiant, to shine like the sun just as does the king-god. He is initiated into heavenly secrets and given wisdom. He is permitted to sit upon the throne, often regarded as the very throne of the god. {32}

The importance of the anointing and its association with the king's remarkable spiritual powers are described by Johnson:

The fact that the king held office as Yahweh's agent or vice-gerent is shown quite clearly in the rite of anointing which marked him out as a sacral person endowed with such special responsibility for the well-being of his people as we have already described. Accordingly the king was not merely the Messiah or the ‘anointed’; he was the Messiah of Yahweh, i.e. the man who in thus being anointed was shown to be specially commissioned by Yahweh for this high office: and, in view of the language which is used elsewhere in the Old Testament with regard to the pouring out of Yahweh's ‘Spirit’ and the symbolic action which figures so prominently in the work of the prophets, it seems likely that the rite in question was also held to be eloquent of the superhuman power with which this sacral individual was henceforth to be activated and by which his behavior might be governed. The thought of such a special endowment of the ‘Spirit’ is certainly implied by the statement that, when David was selected for this office, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. {33}

There is no description of the sequences of ordinances of the coronation ceremony in the Old Testament except the abbreviated one in Isaiah 61. {34} That one presents a problem to non-Mormon scholars because they recognize it as a coronation ceremony, but they can not figure out what it is doing there. Fortunately for us, President Joseph F. Smith gave us the key in Section 138, where he quotes the first verse of Isaiah 61 as a prophecy that the Saviour would visit the spirit world between the time of his own death and resurrection. So that provides us with a context and with the answer to the “What is it doing there?” question. Even though this coronation scene is about salvation for the dead, Isaiah 61 is important in helping us define sacral kingship. It also illuminates Abinadi’s arguments by extending in time the very nature of one’s individual sacral kingship from the Council in Heaven, through earth-time, and on to include one’s life after death. {35}

As I observed last week, Isaiah 61 with its coronation and marriage ceremonies, are the best examples in the old testament of what the coronation rites actually looked like:

3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes [removing ashes presuppose a ceremonial washing], the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

.....
10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

The king as “heir”

If the Psalms were the texts of the drama of the endowment/enthronement ceremonies of the ancient Israelite New Year festival and Feast of Tabernacles; and if that same text and those same ceremonies were known and used by the Nephites; and if the people of Zeniff had a copy of the scriptures so they could use that same text in their enthronement; then the ceremonies played out in psalms 2, 45, 82 and others were the very foundation of king Noah’s claims to both his kingly and his priesthood authority; and if the latter half of Isaiah was understood by them as a commentary on those coronation rites; and if, as I believe, the ancient audiences who participated in those ceremonies were included as symbolic participants in the endowment/enthronement rites, then those texts, rites, and ceremonies were the foundation of Abinadi’s claims that all of prophets *and their followers* were children and legal heirs to Jehovah - those who follow the prophets and accept the Saviour are the sacral kings and queens of the Kingdom. If all those things were true, and I believe they were, then it was also true that the ideas expressed in the Psalms were the basis of Abinadi’s trial, and the ecclesiastical and political backdrop of the debate between Abinadi and Noah’s priests.

King Noah’s primary claim to legitimacy – assuming, as I do, that he had used the rites of the New Year festival and the Psalms in his coronation ceremonies – was that he was the adopted son and earthly heir of Jehovah. The ancient Israelites did not consider their kings to be Gods as did the people in Mesopotamia and Egypt, but they did consider them to be adopted children of God. Hoffmeier explained,

More directly relevant are two passages in which a Hebrew king appears to have been regarded as a son of God. In 2 Samuel 7:14, Yahweh, the God of Israel, speaks to David regarding his heir: 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son.' And in Psalm 2:6-7 the psalmist quotes Yahweh: 'I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill ... You are my son, today I have begotten you.' Both passages have been used to support the adoptionist view of kingship, whereby the king becomes the son of the deity upon his assumption of the throne. {36}

There were two royal thrones in Jerusalem. One - technically the inferior of the two - was the king’s personal throne in his palace. The other was God’s throne in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Usually the king sat upon his own throne in the palace, but on the day of his coronation the king sat upon the throne of God in the Temple. There is a brief, but very important account of that in the story of Solomon’s coronation.

21 And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings unto the Lord,

on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel:

22 And did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto the Lord to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest.

23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. (1 Chronicles 29:21-23.)

That passage is important because it gives, in truncated sequence, the events of the coronation ceremony. After the king was anointed and adopted as a son, he had the right to sit on the throne of Jehovah as the heir and legal representative of God on the earth. In the sentence, “Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered,” “prospered” is the same word as is used in Elohim’s blessing to the prince in Psalm 45. It is also the word by which the Lord describes Nephi’s destiny as king and priest:

19 And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: Blessed art thou, Nephi, because of thy faith, for thou hast sought me diligently, with lowliness of heart.

20 And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands.

21 And inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

22 And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over thy brethren. (1 Nephi 2:19-2.)

Later on, in the Book of Mormon, to “prosper” is used as a code word meaning to walk in the presence of the Lord.

As I observed already, there were at least three coronations of the same king represented during the New Festival: the first was at the Council as is partly described in Psalm 45. The second was on earth, when he was a young man and anointed to become king, is represented by Psalm 72. The third was on the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles, when he was adopted as the son of God (Psalm 2), coronated king, and sat upon the throne of God in the Holy of Holies. There is also a fourth which is mentioned in the scriptures, but I think it was not portrayed in the ancient endowment nor described in the psalms. Of those who will inherit the Celestial Kingdom, the Lord said,

54 They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.

55 They are they into whose hands the Father has given all things -

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

57 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.

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

59 Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

If the word “prosper” was used in the description of Solomon’s coronation, to mean the same thing that it means elsewhere in the scriptures, that description of Solomon’s coronation in Chronicles appears to be a deliberate attempt to make that final earthly coronation of the king be a literal fulfillment of promise he received at the Council (psalm 45:4).

That coronation scene in the ancient Temple must have been terribly impressive to watch. Let me try to describe it to as best as I can recreate it from what I have read.

Against the back wall of the Holy of Holies in Solomon’s Temple, stood the great throne of Jehovah, it was overshadowed by the wings of two golden cherubim, just as God’s celestial throne was reported to be flanked by real cherubim. {37}

In that most sacred of all rooms, symbolically in the presence of God, and literally in the presence of the people, the king was ordained a priest “after the Order of Melchizedek,” as is represented by the words of Psalm 110:

The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,
Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Actually, that psalm asks more questions than it answers: Who ordained the king and when? Did the ordination occur in conjunction with his coronation, or did he have the priesthood before he became king? If he was ordained in conjunction with his coronation, was he symbolically re-ordained each year along with the annual renewal or re-affirmation of his royal coronation? Is it possible that this psalm was sung during the depiction of the Council in Heaven rather than in conjunction with his earthly coronation? It does not seem likely that the psalm would have been sung on both occasions, but is it likely that his ordination was depicted as a part of both? Who else held the Melchizedek priesthood besides the king? I don’t know the answers to any of those questions, but that’s alright, because sometimes having questions opens one’s mind more than just being supplied with all the answers. What is apparent to me is that just as the Lord himself is reported to have adopted the king as his “son” (Psalm 2), so the Lord is also represented as having been involved in ordaining the king to the Melchizedek priesthood. How and when that was done, one does not know, but it is likely that while it was done either a narrator or else the entire congregation sang the 110th Psalm.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
until I make thine enemies thy footstool. {38}
The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
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.
The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,
Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. (Psalm 110: 1-4)

Mowinckel believed the king's ordination to the priesthood was very important.

We ought probably to bear in mind these very real spiritual and material consequences when the oracle of installation in Ps.cx promises to the king that he is to be 'a priest for ever after the order of (or, more correctly, 'on behalf of', or 'for the sake of') Melchizedek'. The king made a point of securing his divine right to the priesthood, based on his being the legitimate successor and heir of the ancient king of Jerusalem, Melchizedek. {39}

The words in the psalm, "sit thou at my right hand," is literally an invitation to the king to sit next to God, implicitly to sit upon the throne of God, and is offered in conjunction with his ordination to the Melchizedek priesthood. (See also Ephesians 1: 17-23)

After his ordination and anointing, the king had become a living messiah {40} – an anointed one, a king of righteousness, and the legitimate "son" and heir of God. He was crowned with a "crown of pure gold" (Psalm 21:3.), and accepted God's invitation to sit upon the Temple throne.

... we know that Solomon had furnished the Temple with an (empty) cherub's throne, which was certainly understood to be the throne of Yahweh. In the very old Ps. 110 Yahweh is the king, sitting on his throne and offering to his 'son', the earthly king, the seat of honour at his right side. In the likewise very old Ps. 68 the worshiper calls Yahweh 'his king and his god'. {41}

Probably after the earthly king's coronation, Jehovah is represented as returning to his own heavenly Temple and his own Celestial throne. Widengren cited of Psalm 7:7. "May the congregation of the peoples surround Thee, and Thou, above it, return to the height," and took that to mean: "that Yahweh, enthroned in this congregation, returns to the height (where as we have seen He has His throne)." {42}

After Jehovah left the earthly temple, the Ark of the Covenant remained behind, and represented the authority of Jehovah. The Ark was placed in front of the throne and became the footstool of the throne in the Holy of Holies - the part of the throne by which one ascends to its heights, and the place where the king's feet are "established" when he sits upon the throne. Thus his feet rests upon the sacred box which contains the symbols of both priesthood and kingship.

This conception of the sacred Ark of the Covenant as a footstool beneath the throne of God in the Holy of Holies seems strange to the Western mind. It becomes intelligible, however, if it is viewed within the context of the thought world of the ancient Near East. There, the throne and the footstool go together so that often they may form a single article of furniture. In many instances the footstool would be richly and symbolically decorated. So important were the two appurtenances of royalty that in Egypt, throne and footstool were frequently entombed together with the mummy of the pharaoh. The reason for their extraordinary status is that they evoked notions of majesty, exaltation, preeminence, sovereignty, and power. In the Israelite Tabernacle there was no actual throne, only the boxlike Ark with its tablets of stone inside it and its cherubim on top of

it--an abiding reminder both of the invisible presence of the sovereign God and of His inescapable demands upon His people.

All this explains why the Ark was thought to assume a numinous aspect and to possess a dangerous potency. It constituted the understructure of the sacred space above it, space that was imbued with the extra-holiness radiated by the Divine Presence. {43}

The stone outcropping upon which the Dome of the Rock is now built was regarded (still is) as the connecting link (umbilical cord) between heaven and earth. The Ark apparently sat in (not on) that Rock, thus the Ark was an extension of the Rock. In its new role as the footstool of the throne, and the king's feet were "established" upon that Ark. Thus, the placement of the king's feet established symbolic evidence that his person was an extension of that connection between earth and heaven - and therefore that the king was the embodiment of God's word and the ultimate political and ecclesiastical authority in Israel. Johnson observed,

...just as the Ark is the symbol of Yahweh's Person, so Mount Zion corresponds to the divine Mount of Assembly, and the Temple itself is the earthly counterpart of the divine King's heavenly Palace. {44}

Not long ago, a renowned Jewish scholar recognized that the Ark was not simply placed *on* the floor of the Holy of Holies, but that an indentation had been carved into the Rock so that the Ark sat *in* it. He wrote,

'The Priests brought the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH to its place, in the holy of Holies of the Temple' (1Kings 8:6). That 'place' can now be identified as the rectangular depression in es-Sakhra [the sacred Rock that is covered by the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem] that measures 2 feet, 7 inches by 4 feet, 4 inches – 1.5 by 2.5 cubits – the same dimensions as the Ark of the Covenant that God commanded Moses to build in the wilderness (Exodus 25:10) and that was later housed in the Temple." {45}

Wensinck has observed that the king's sitting upon the throne of God in the Holy of Holies would have been seen as a necessary part of the coronation because, symbolically, the king was still playing the part of Adam. He had been restored to his garment of light (the king had just been clothed in a garment covered with oil so that it sparkled in the sunlight), now, as Adam (the first and the last king) he can reclaim his role of king of the Garden by sitting on the earthly throne of God.

In the Old Testament the Holy Rock [above which the Holy of Holies of Solomon's temple was built] is not mentioned; but Jerusalem as the place of the Divine Throne occurs I Chron. 29, 23: "And Solomon set himself upon the throne of Yahwe as a king, instead of David, his father." Here the royal throne is called the throne of Yahwe. Of course this expression springs from the idea that the king is the Khalifa of God; how closely God and the king are connected, appears in the idea, that the royal throne is also the divine throne or an image of it. As God in his heavenly sanctuary sits upon his throne, so the king sits in the earthly sanctuary upon his throne. The centre of the earth and the pole of heaven, both are intimately connected with the throne. We find this already in the

legends about Adam.

In the centre of the earth Adam is inaugurated by God as a king and a priest and set upon a throne. All this is meant typically of course; here the analogy is proclaimed between heaven and earth, godhead and kingship, navel and throne....

In Muslim legends about Adam some of these features are retained. Adam, the Khalifa, brought the later “black stone,” then a white hyacinth, from paradise to the spot of the Ka’ba “and it served Adam as a throne to sit upon”.... {46}

The Temple at Jerusalem represented the same concepts as the Garden of Eden. The Temple was not just sacred space, it was the navel of the earth – the counterpart of the Heavenly Temple. It was the symbolism of creation; the place of enthronement; the gathering place of men and gods; the cite of the sacred meal – and all these come together in the drama of the New Year festival. In ancient Israel, it was the Temple, the geographic and cosmic focal point, “where the corporate life of the race was thought to be renewed in the great New Year rites presided over by the king as god on earth.” {47}

If the ancient Israelite New Year festival was not only a series of ceremonies that led up to the coronation of the king, but was also a re-affirmation of the initiation rites of all those who participated as part of the audience – either by singing, or just by watching, but more probably by also making the covenants which were part of the ceremonies, as in 2 Kings 23:1-3, then the invitation to sit upon God’s throne was not just issued to the king but was symbolically issued to all the initiated as well.

In acceptance of that invitation, using the sacred Ark of the Covenant which has been placed as a footstool before the throne of God, the king, as God’s legitimate son and heir (and as token representative of everyone else who would ascend to his Father’s throne as sacral kings), stepped upon the Ark and ascended to the throne. His anointing was also a coronation ordinance where he received “a special endowment of the Spirit [which] is clearly associated with the rite” of anointing. {48} Thus the living king became as Adam, the first king and the son of God – thus the king the king became a patriarchal “father” to the then present generation. {49}

His divinity depends on the endowment he has received at his election and anointing and on the power flowing to him through the holy rites of the cult, by Yahweh’s free will, and depending on the king’s loyalty and obedience towards Yahweh’s commandments. {50}

It cannot be over-emphasized that the king’s sitting on God’s throne was a major symbolic act, an acknowledgment that he was God's legitimate son and heir. {51} Borsch explains,

In a similar context we should probably set texts relevant to the king's being *raised up* or *lifted up* on high, a notion which is to be compared rather than contrasted with that of the God or king ascending the holy mountain to be hailed as king. Mythically they represent much the same idea, and this is apparently why, as noted earlier, the king may be said to sit on God's throne, and why we find several other references which seem to indicate that the king could be thought to have a throne in heaven. {42}

Now, in his full capacity as king, in the full regalia of royalty, probably including his wearing an embroidered copy of the Ten Commandments on his person, {53} and having his feet firmly planted on the Ark of the Covenant as the root and source of this power, he delivered an address to the people which reminded them of the covenants they had made. {54}

Some scholars have suggested the king used Deuteronomy as the text of this speech. Others suggest that Deuteronomy was lost for a time then rediscovered during the revamping of the temple in Josiah's time. Still others suggest that Deuteronomy was not discovered at all, but was written by those who "found" it, so they could use it as the bases for Josiah's religious reforms. There is no sure evidence that any of these theories is correct. However, there are two examples in the Book of Mormon of this coronation speech. One is in the King Benjamin story, where the king delivered a sermon on the importance of the atonement. The other is in Third Nephi, where the Saviour delivered that version of the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. It seems to me that if one wishes to reconstruct the speech (given the probable impact of Psalm 22, and the central theme that Jehovah himself had saved the king from death and hell), it is likely that the sermons in the Book of Mormon are better examples of the king's lecture than the book of Deuteronomy.

This lecture was more than just a reminder of the law, it is also a renewal of the covenants between Jehovah and Israel.

...it is the king who plays the central role in this act of covenant making. Not only is it he who convokes the assembly, but it is he also who reads out to it the words of the book of the law, which is the basis of the covenant....Thus the king appears before us here fully exercising his duties as the real High Priest....The covenant is made in the temple.... {55}

Apparently, after the king gave his lecture, the people – still an important part of the ceremony – made covenants that they would support their king, the Kingdom of God, each other as its citizens, and God's purposes on earth.

The symbolism of the coronation can be lost in the details of the ceremony if the rites are not understood as a single event: He was washed, ordained a "priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110), clothed in sacred garments, and anointed with sacred oil, the anointing was a dual ordinance wherein he was adopted and given the new name of "son of God" (Psalm 2), and also made king of Israel. Thus he was the legitimate "son" and legal heir to the throne. He was crowned with a golden crown. Then the living king ascended to the throne of God, and delivered a speech in which he reminded the people of the reality of the ordinances and the eternal nature of the covenants they had made with Jehovah.

The "establishment" of the king's feet

Now, after all that introduction, lets get to the point: what did the priests and Abinadi understand the scripture to mean which begins, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that

bringeth good tidings....”

The sacred Ark of the Covenant, serving as the footstool to the throne of God, represented the authority of God in three separate ways: 1) it was the means by which one ascended to the throne; 2) it contained within it the symbols of kingship, priesthood, and the fruit of the tree of life; and 3) it was the place where the king’s feet were “established” after his coronation. Thus the king’s being on the throne with his feet securely planted on the Ark of the Covenant was a multi-faceted affirmation of his royal status and of his acceptability before God.

That point needs to be underscored: Throughout the ceremonies of the New Year Festival, the king had *walked* in the *way* of *righteousness* until he had come to the place where God was. Now his feet were firmly established upon the Ark of the Covenant, and upon the sacred the emblems of kingship and priesthood which it contained. {56}

I had long since assumed that the scripture, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,” had to do with the king’s feet being “established” upon the Ark – and I assumed that idea had come from my reading either Isaiah or the Psalms or both, but as I wrote this I felt that I needed to find the source of my original thinking. What I found asked more questions than it answered. There is something like what I was looking for in Psalm 40. {57} The first phrases in those verses seems to be about the time the king was saved from the underworld, the second are about his enthronement. It reads:

I waited patiently for the Lord;
and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
He brought me up also out of an horrible pit,
out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock,
and established my goings. (Psalm 40:1-2)

But I also found explicit references in two other most unexpected places. One was in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Who hath appointed Michael your prince, and established his feet, and set him upon high, and given unto him the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is without beginning of days or end of life. (D&C.78:16.)

That scripture seems to make my point. It is a clear and very powerful reference to sacral kingship or priesthood, or both. The other was once in Isaiah 49.

Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; for the feet of those who are in the east shall be established; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for they shall be smitten no more; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. (Isaiah 49:13.)

That one delighted me. As I have observed, “comfort” in Elizabethan English meant to empower, as the word is used in Isaiah 61:3 to introduce the ancient coronation rites. The nice thing is that this scripture makes Abinadi’s point that sacral kingship is available to everyone who proves

himself to be a legitimate heir – a “child” of God. The intriguing thing is that some ancient editor took that entire statement out of Isaiah, so it can only be found in the Brass Plates’ First Nephi 21 version. One wonders why it was taken out. As I have noted, there is no account of the king’s coronation rites, or of the drama of the New Year festival, in the Old Testament. One would guess that when these materials were removed from the record, the statement in Isaiah 49:13 was one of the casualties. (Bless Nephi for giving us so much of Isaiah – how I wish he had given us more!)

So my conclusion is what I expected it to be: that “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings” has to do with the temple enthronement rites, and the establishment of the king’s feet upon both the physical reality and the kingship and priesthood symbolism of the Ark of the Covenant. I assume that the Nephites in king Noah’s realm had a sacred box in which they kept the things that were somewhat equivalent to what was kept in the Ark of the Covenant, and that king Noah, his priests, Alma, Abinadi, and all the people, understood its significance – and that Abinadi spoke to that understanding. I will try to show why it is reasonable to make that assumption.

Before we go on, let me point out the interesting, and not altogether irrelevant fact that in Freedman’s article defining faith he writes this:

The Hebrew Bible [Old Testament], in fact, does not really have a word for faith....The Hebrew Bible uses the root *mn* to express what we are calling “faith.” ... In the *Qal* form it never means “belief,” but expresses the basic sense of the root “to sustain, support, carry.” ... The general sense of the word in the Hip-il form is “to be firmly set in/on something.” {58}

Freedman’s defining faith as “to be firmly set in/on something” throws an intriguing light on the meaning of the king’s feet being on the Ark. Using the New Testament word for faith, *pistis*, {59} one could say that having the king’s feet firmly established on the Ark was a token of the covenants of his kingship and of his priesthood. {60}

There is another important part of the symbolism as well. In Jerusalem, the Ark of the Covenant contained the original stone tablets of the Ten Commandments which had been written by the finger of God. That was the “Law” – the king’s securing his feet upon it was the ultimate symbol of his kingship. It also contained the rod of Aaron which blossomed when placed before the Tabernacle when Aaron’s priesthood authority was challenged. {61} So the king’s securing his feet upon those was the ultimate symbol of his kingship and priesthood. {62}

The other item in the Ark was a jar of the manna. Moses had instructed Aaron to “Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations.” (Exodus 16:33) The wandering Israelites had subsisted on the manna for 40 years in the wilderness. It not only represented God’s ability to sustain his people, but it also symbolized the fruit of the Tree of Life {63} – which Nephi understood to represent the love of God.

If one’s feet are ‘established’ on the box which contain the symbolism of the fruit of the tree of life, then symbolically, one’s person become an extension of that fruit (fruit contain seeds, as in

Alma 32), and thus one's feet become as the roots, that the person may be a tree of life. That idea is related to heirship for Christ is the Tree, and we are his branches, and in his words, it is the branches that are expected to produce the fruit. Thus, the manna in the Ark was a symbol of the king's own salvation and of his ability to be a means of salvation to others.

Sacral Kings and Queens among the People

I have alluded several times to the Ancient Israelite concept that the kingship endowment/coronation rites were "democratical." That is, that the members of the audience were initiated participants who did not just watch the proceedings but actually – or at least symbolically – performed all the ordinances and made the same covenants as the king, queen, and others who were on the stage, during the procession, and even in the Holy of Holies. There actually seems to be more concrete evidence of that in the Book of Mormon than there is in the Old Testament. But even so, several biblical scholars have affirmed that this was the practice during the period when Solomon's Temple was in use.

Several scholars who have written most extensively about the nature of Israelite kingship, have suggested that the coronation of the earthly king was both real and symbolic. It was real in that the king really was enthroned. It was symbolic because all the people who watched the drama were also initiated into the mysteries of kingship and priesthood, and, as they watched, were also made sons and daughters of God. The implications that ordinary men and women who watched the ceremonies were also participating in the ordinances and covenants, goes far beyond the notion of a vague universal royalty, for the king of Israel was the son and heir of Jehovah, so if the people participated in those same rites, they were also the sons and daughters of God.

Even though there is little evidence remaining in our version of the Old Testament of this democratization of the kingship, priesthood, and salvation rites, one may have a good glimpse at what appears to be the concluding ceremonies of the Israelite New Year's festival in pre-Exilic times in the 23rd chapter of Second Kings. King Josiah had brought the people to the temple where he gave them an extensive lecture on the Law, apparently reading the entire book of Deuteronomy. {64} At the conclusion of his reading, the king stood by a pillar of the temple and made a covenant with Jehovah. Thereafter all the congregation rose to their feet and made the same covenant the king himself had just made. {65} This is not evidence that the people also made all of the other covenants which the king may have made during the ceremonies of the New Year's festival, but it is evidence that on that occasion they made the last one. And that "one" precludes the argument that they made none, and opens the likelihood that they made others as well.

The idea that the people shared in the covenants and ordinances persisted into New Testament times. Philo of Alexandria, who lived in Egypt at the same time Jesus lived in Jerusalem, understood why sacral kingship and the high priesthood were not limited to the monarch, or the official high priest, but were available to all the people.

For there are two temples of God, I believe: the one is this universe in which indeed the

high priest is the first-born, the divine Logos; and the other is the rational soul, whose priest is the Man-in-Reality, whose sensible copy is that one who committed to put on the aforementioned tunic which closely imitates the whole heaven, so that the cosmos too may jointly offer sacrifices with mankind, and that mankind might do the same with the cosmos. {66}

The Book of Mormon adds to that body of evidence. It is occasionally true that seemingly casual remarks by Mormon and others are not only very important in understanding what is happening – providing the contextual ideas in which one can place the teachings of the prophets – but also, some seemingly insignificant side comments are very important in establishing the antiquity – and therefore the authenticity - of the Book of Mormon. Mormon’s telling us about the Saviour’s lecture in the Temple at Bountiful is one of those.

He introduces that portion of the ceremony with these words.

And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words unto Nephi, and to those who had been called, (now the number of them who had been called, and received power and authority to baptize, was twelve), and he stretched forth his hand unto the multitude, and cried unto them, saying: (3 Nephi 12:1)

That is extremely significant. Jesus had been speaking to the Twelve about things relative to the operations of the Kingdom, but when he explained the meanings of kingship and priesthood, he spoke to the entire “multitude.” In only those few words, Mormon gives us sufficient evidence that the Saviour was doing what newly coronated ancient Israelite kings were supposed to do, and in doing so, he has also emphasized the same message that was so important to Abinadi: That the blessings of sacral kingship and priesthood are not reserved to the leaders, but are available to all the Saints.

The qualities of sacral kingship.

As is frequently true with modern biblical scholarship, the more closely scholars examine the times and ceremonies of the First Temple Period in the Old Testament, the more the Book of Mormon substantiates their findings by shedding additional light on the insights that biblical scholars have. That is the case with Abinadi’s exchange with the priests of Noah.

Some of the greatest biblical scholars of the last century have affirmed that during the period when Solomon’s Temple was in use, the underlying principle of the entire Old Testament theology and history is that not just the king, but the entire nation of Israel were “chosen,” and endowed with covenantal powers and responsibilities.

The distinguished biblical scholar Sigmund Mowinckel was the first to point out that the king’s anointing was an endowment of the Spirit. I have already alluded to his use of the word “endowment” as being appropriate, now let me explain why that is so. An endowment is a gift

which grows in value with time. For example, when BYU receives an endowment of money, it invests the principle and spends only the accrued interest. Thus the original gift remains permanently intact, providing a perpetual source of income to support university programs or scholarships.

[The king's] anointing was related to his endowment with the spirit. The later tradition says explicitly that when David was anointed, 'the spirit of Yahweh leaped upon him'.

In virtue of his endowment with the divine spirit, the king is filled with superhuman power. He receives 'a new heart'; he is changed into a new man (1 Sam. x, 6, 9)....He receives a new disposition expressed, according to oriental custom, in giving to him a new name which indicates his new, intimate relationship with the god who has chosen him, and whom he represents.

Through his anointing and endowment with the divine spirit, the king also receives superhuman wisdom. {67}

Other scholars have gone further, and have recognized that if, during the kingship endowment/coronation rites, the men and women in the audience made the same covenants and symbolically performed all the ordinances as the king and queen, then the "covenant people" left those sacred ceremonies with the same kinds of responsibilities and blessings as the king.

The king must be the embodiment of righteousness. To be that, he must know and live the Law of Moses – and do whatever he could to make sure his people also knew and lived the Law. His own hands must be clean from sin, and those of his nation must also be clean, otherwise the conditions of his and his nation's covenant with Jehovah would be broken and the blessings promised would not come.

Thus the king is the supreme 'ruler' or 'judge', to whom one may go in any matter of dispute for a final 'ruling' or 'judgement' which, ideally at least, will also be an act of 'justice'. What is more, it is in Yahweh, the God of Israel, that these laws find their substantiation, for in the ultimate it is from Yahweh, as the 'Giver of Life', that the nation derives its vitality; and, this being the case, it is to Yahweh that the king is finally responsible and, indeed, upon Yahweh that he is ultimately dependent for the exercise of justice and the consequent right ordering of society, i.e. its righteousness. {68}

The Israelite king ruled over his nation as a father figure {69} – and in that capacity also, he was the chief representative of God to his people {70} – for God was also both King and Father.

This confident and warm, emotionally tuned relation of the worshiper(s) to Yahweh often finds its expression in the phrase 'our God', or 'my God' when a single person is speaking on behalf of the congregation or of himself. {71}

The king, as father, head of state, chief judge, and commanding general of the military, presided over all of the affairs of his people, defending them when they needed defending, sitting in judgement over their problems as a father would settle the troubles between squabbling children, teaching {72} and enforcing both sacred and profane law.

For the law of the Lord is not merely statutes, arbitrary regulations, commandments which might have been otherwise: it is a revelation, full of grace, of that fundamental law of all existence which lies in the plan of creation, which must be followed if one is not to collide with the basic laws of life and perish; God's moral and religious law is--to use a modern term--as essentially 'biological' law as the 'natural' laws of physics and chemistry. Hence it is a special mercy that God has revealed this law of life to Israel--'which he has not done to any other people.' {73}

The king represented as much a blessing as a power, for the people of Israel were a "chosen" people.

But election is bound up with the making of the *covenant*, which is maybe the most important innovation on the basis of the historical orientation of Yahwism. The idea in itself is not new...To Israel after the time of Moses, 'covenant' means the historical covenant which Yahweh in his goodness 'granted' to his elected people. {74}

The King's power was not only political and ecclesiastical, it was apparently a priesthood authority as well. Mowinckel and others have suggested that the king's Melchizedek priesthood authority came through the religious leaders of the Jebusites in Jerusalem after David took that city from them and made it his own. Writing of David and Solomon as the nation's religious leaders, Mowinckel observed,

This transition becomes still more easily comprehensible if, as certain things indicate, David's new priest in Jerusalem, Zadok, was descended from the ancient race of priest kings, of whom Melchizedek was a representative. David and his successors were professedly 'priests' after the order of Melchizedek ('for the sake of Melchizedek'), as we hear in Ps. 110. {75}

Thus the coronation rites of the New Year festival re-affirmed the king as the personification and upholder of the Law, the epitome of justice and mercy, and the ultimate earthly priesthood authority. In one or all of those roles, throughout the festival, the king was the focal point of all of the temple activities. That does not imply that he was exclusively the focal point, but rather that his person represented the connecting place between the events on earth and the events in heaven.

Every people required connection with the divine, and that connection was embodied in the king....It was in his presence or on his person that the most sacred rituals and the highest mysteries had to be performed, and the divine king became the gnostic *par excellence*, holding the knowledge, power, and authority upon which the welfare and salvation of his subjects depended." {76}

Not long after Lehi's colony arrived in America, the Nephites built a temple which was as nearly like Solomon's as they could make it. One cannot doubt that Lehi, Nephi, Jacob and others had the Melchizedek priesthood authority to conduct proper temple ceremonies, and there is no reason to suppose that the ceremonies they conducted were different from those of the Temple in Jerusalem – including the endowment/coronation ceremonies of the New Year festival. It is

instructive then, that at about the same time they built their temple they also insisted that Nephi become their king. It is likely that one of the major reasons they wanted him to be king was because the temple rites of the New Year festival centered around the person of the king. So they needed a king as much for religious as for temporal purposes.

About 475 years later, one can still see clear evidence of those same ancient Israelite ceremonies in the story of King Benjamin. There were some changes, but we cannot know how many. The only one we can be sure of is that they were using their tents for “tabernacles” rather than building temporary huts as their forefathers had done when they lived in the desert. {77} About 50 years after that, king Mosiah had a new constitution written which divided ecclesiastical from political authority. Unfortunately there is no record that shows how the New Year festival was altered to accommodate that division. The nearest evidence we have about that is in Alma’s address to his son Helaman (Alma 37). There he instructs Helaman to preserve the sacred objects like the Brass Plates and the Liahona. That shows us that these items were in the keeping of the ecclesiastical rather than the political authority, but tells nothing about how the festival itself was altered to accommodate the new constitution.

It is apparent to some scholars that the New Year Festival coronation was enacted because it was important that the people be able to participate. They were an indispensable part of the ceremonies. And their covenants were as important as the king’s.

When Abinadi answers the question, “who, then, are his seed?” he addresses this matter very eloquently. And his answer is the same as has been given by eminently qualified Old Testament scholars.

Frederick H. Borsch, after reviewing the symbolism of Adam's role in the ancient New Year's enthronement drama, asks,

Who, then, is the Perfect Man imaged from the one above, who yet must himself be saved by passing through the gate and being born again? Of course, in one sense it is this Adam below, but the implications are also vairy strong that this is not *really* the Primal Man on earth (for there is a way in which the true Man, or at least his counterpart, always seems to remain above). Rather is it the believer, the individual w ho himself would be saved by following in the way of the First Perfect Man. {78}

Mowinckel asserted that the congregation participated in the events of the drama through the actions of the king.

But both in Ps. cxxxii and in other cultic contexts, Israel's king generally appears as the representative of the congregation before Yahweh, not as the representative of Yahweh before the congregation. He dances and sings and plays ‘before Yahweh’, and leads the festal procession (2 Sam. vi, 5, 14ff.; cf. Ps. xlii, 5). In the cultic drama he represents David: Yahweh is represented by His holy ark, by the ‘footstool’ before the throne on which He [God] is invisibly seated....

It is the king who receives Yahweh's promises, His blessings, and His power; and he

transmits them to the community which he represents. {79}

Widengren observed, “a covenant was made between Yahweh and the king and his people, as well as between the king and his people.” When David was anointed king of all Israel, the people made a covenant with the king, thus, “the king's enthronement is coupled with the making of a covenant between him and his people. But David's election by Yahweh to be king also implies a covenant between Yahweh and David.” So the whole foundation of the Kingdom as well as the relationship between God, the king, and the people was based on the principle of obedience to the terms of the covenant. {80}

Aubrey Johnson, during his discussion of Psalm 72, “which is one of the more famous of the so-called royal Psalms,” observed,

The parallelism of the opening line makes it clear that we are here concerned with no simple portrayal of some future scatological figure (although this is not to say that the Psalm is in no way scatological), but with a prayer for the ruling member of an hereditary line of kings which bears every appearance of having been composed for use on his ascension to the throne; and the whole Psalm admirably depicts the literally vital role which it was hoped that he might play in the life of the nation....What is more, it is clear from the outset that the king is both dependent upon and responsible to Yahweh for the right exercise of his power; for his subjects, whatever their status in society, are one and all Yahweh's people. {81}

In that same study, Johnson commented on Psalm 149.

...Psalm cxlix, which apparently introduces the worshipers as themselves sharing in this ritual performance....What is more, we have to note that they are summoned to sing a ‘new song’; and this, one need hardly say, is a thought which is particularly appropriate to our festival with its exultant anticipation of a new era of universal dominion and national prosperity. {82}

The scriptures focus on the role men played in the ceremonies, but in her study of “Women in Ancient Israel,” Grace Emmerson insists that women also played a vital role.

It is commonplace to remark that male members only of the community were required to attend the three major annual festivals (Exod. 23.17; Deut. 16.16). But difference of obligation does not necessarily imply inequality, and in this case probably arose from practical considerations attendant on the birth and care of children. Certainly Deuteronomy makes it clear that women were present at the festivals, sharing in the rejoicing (Deut. 12.12), and participating in the sacrifices (Deut. 12.1`8). The feasts of weeks and booths are specifically mentioned (Deut. 16.10f., 13f.). This may well represent an advance on earlier law in the direction of equality, a feature which seems to be characteristic of Deuteronomy. This book presents women as participants in the covenant ceremony (Deut. 29.10-13), and consequently under full obligation to observe Yahweh's law (Deut. 31.12). Equally with men they could be held guilty of transgressing the covenant, for which the penalty was death (Deut. 130-11; 17.2-5). The evidence

suggests that it was deuteronomic law which first explicitly brought them within the covenant. The view that women are fully accountable before Yahweh continues in the post-exilic period (2 Chron. 15f.; Neh. 8.2).

Was there discrimination against women within the covenant community? It seems not. Although in general the male head of the household represented the family in the offering of sacrifice, where an individual offering was stipulated a woman was expected personally to fulfill the requirement (Lev. 12.6; 1 Sam. 1.24)...The exceptional consecration entailed under the Nazirite vow was open to women (Num. 6.2-21). Indeed, this passage with its single feminine reference (v.2) is a timely reminder that grammatically masculine forms may be intended in any inclusive sense, and the linguistic convention must not be misunderstood. We may compare also Deut. 29.18ff. Where women are specified inv. 18, but masculine forms are used thereafter in vv. 19f.

The one role in worship from which women were certainly excluded was the priesthood, as also were the majority of men....Female members of priestly families were permitted, however, to eat of the 'holy things' set aside for the priests (Lev. 22.13). It is open to debate whether there were women who had an official place in worship. Exod. 38.8 speaks of 'women who ministered at the door of the tent of meeting'. Although the nature of their service is not clear....Whether officially or not, women shared in cultic worship, dancing, singing and playing musical instruments (Exod. 15.20; Jud. 21.21; Ps. 68.26).

The regular involvement of women in the cult is implied by the strict regulations concerning their ritual purity....

Though the examples are few, there are several instances in the Old Testament of women in encounter with God. {83}

Robert Davidson does not mention women apart from men, but implies the same thing.

In Isa. 55.3 there seems to be an attempt to democratize this everlasting Davidic covenant and to transfer its privileges and responsibilities to the community as a whole and thus to ensure that its continuing validity was not permanently tied to the continuance of the Davidic dynasty....Unless we are prepared to see nationalism and particularism as the key to second Isaiah's thinking, the description of the purpose of this covenant in Isa. 55.4-5 may be interpreted in a universalistic sense. This is also the case with the occurrence of covenant in Isa. 42.6 where Servant-Israel is summoned to be 'a covenant of the people, and a light to the nations'. Yet this promise of a Davidic covenant for ever could also find a new and rich future within the hope of a Davidic king still to come, who would renew the old royal covenant temporarily annulled by events. {84}

Just as the Beatitudes are our best evidence that the Book of Mormon people understood the psalms as a part of their coronation rites, so is the Saviour's introduction to the Beatitudes our best evidence that those rites were applicable to all the congregation. {85} When he reaches the coronation segment of the Beatitudes (he is still speaking to "the multitude") he does not quote Psalm 2's "son," but rather takes the gender specificity out of the psalm and says,

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called [given the new king-name] the children [not “sons”] of God.

That ancient idea is expressed anew in modern revelation. The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote,

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father--That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God. (D&C 76:22-24.) {86}

FOOTNOTES to LeGrand's comments

{ 1 } Eaton, John H., *Kingship and the Psalms*, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, England, p. 113 discusses Psalm 2 as evidence that the enthronement of the king was an “annual renewal.” For a discussion of the post-Biblical celebration of the festival see: Philip Goodman, *The Sukkot and Simhat Torah Anthology* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974).

{ 2 } Deuteronomy 16:15 and Leviticus 23:34-36.
See, Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1: 120-125 for the former approach, and page 131 for acknowledgment of the latter.

{ 3 } Freidrich Weinreb, *Roots of the Bible* (Tiverton, Devon, Merlin Books, 1986), 350.

{ 4 } For a discussion of the sacrifices offered during the Feast see, Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services* (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 218-219.

{ 5 } For a discussion of how and when some of the Psalms were used, see Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, p. 2-3. Also, Johnson, A. R., “Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship,” in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 215-235.

{ 6 } Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 8-9 and n. 26.

{ 7 } The following is by no means a complete bibliography, but if you are interested in pursuing the matter, this is enough to get you started. You will find other sources in the footnotes. I have marked the ones I like the best with a *. If you are interested, I think the place to start is

Johnson's *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*.

Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967).

Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1967).

Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948).

Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship* (Oxford, 1958).

Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press).

Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954).

Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979).

Stephen D. Ricks 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).

Geo Widengren, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 1-27.

Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1951, p. 10-59.

{ 8 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 143.

{ 9 } Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1951), p. 10-59.

{ 10 } Weisman describes "two biblical patterns in the employment of the anointing for different purposes." He likens the early nominating anointings of Saul and David as king-designate to a "betrothal," and their later anointings as kings as the marriage itself. Ze'eb Weisman, "Anointing as a Motif in the Making of the Charismatic King," in *Biblica* (57 no 3:378-398).

During the Assyrian New Year festival, the heir apparent took the role of the king while his father, the real king, took priestly role of the god. "The divinization from nativity is further confirmed by the enthronement of the crown prince in the *bit riduti* and the coronation of the king. The former comprises the consultation of the gods, the summoning of the nobles, the proclamation, swearing of oaths, paying of homage, and concluding banquets....Above all he [the crown prince] can therefore, as often actually occurred, officiate instead of the king at the New Year Festival. The definitive divinization takes place with the coronation and enthronement of

the king....Especially worth observing are the facts that the king himself officiates as high priest in the ceremony....The ceremonial is indeed preserved only from Assyrian times but can with certainty be antedated. The ritual also includes a more or less symbolical withdrawing from the office. Presumably the king himself has from the beginning been considered dethroned or has even been symbolically killed, reviled or the like....” Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1967), 17.

This practice of having the crown prince serve in the role of the king, while the reigning king serves in the role of the prophet is like the one described in the King Benjamin story, where the king’s son, Mosiah, seems to be in charge of much of the formal proceedings of the event. It may be relevant to note that King Benjamin’s father Mosiah had been a prophet as well. (Mosiah 2:31)

For a detailed discussion of the anointing of Israelite kings, see: Donald W. Parry, “Ritual Anointing with Olive Oil in Ancient Israelite Religion,” in Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S, 1994), 266-271, 281-283. For a discussion of the olive tree as the Tree of Life and of the tree and its oil as symbols of kingship see, Stephen D. Ricks, “Olive Culture in the Second Temple Era and Early Rabbinic Period,” in *Ibid.*, 460-476.

{ 11 } Psalm 119 appears to have been sung by the young king at the time of this defeat, while he was in the Holy of Holies waiting to be killed. Unfortunately, the psalm is divided into 8 verse segments according to the Hebrew alphabet. Read in these segments it loses its impact, however, if one reads it as a single unit – ignoring the breaks – it becomes a most poignant and powerful poem that tells the feelings of “a young man” (v. 9) trying to steel himself against his own inevitable death.

{ 12 } Psalm 18 seems to have been spoken by the king while he was in the world of the dead, and is an account of the Lord’s saving his earthly kingdom from its enemies. The introduction to the psalm reads, “To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.” However, almost all scholars agree that those introductions were written after the Babylonian captivity, and do not necessarily reflect the interpretation or the use of the psalm during the First Temple period.

{ 13 } Flavius Josephus, William Whiston, trans., *The Complete Works of Flavius Josephus* (London, The London Printing and Publishing Company, Limited, 1876) History of the Jews - Book XIX chapter 8. p. 424-425.

{ 14 } *Recognitions of Clement*, Chapters XLV and XLVI in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1951, Vol. 8, p. 89-90.

{ 15 } Geo Widengren, “Baptism and Enthronement in Some Jewish-Christian Gnostic Documents,” in, S. G. F. Brandon, ed., *The Saviour God, Comparative Studies in the Concept of*

Salvation Presented Edwin Oliver James (New York, Barnes & Noble, 1963), 213-214.

{ 16 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 128.

{ 17 } When Captain Moroni began what is clearly described as a holy war, he defined the Nephite land as sacred space. He did so by describing its geography; he made a covenant; and he gave the land a covenant name.

17 And it came to pass that when he had poured out his soul to God, he named all the land which was south of the land Desolation, yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the north and on the south – A chosen land, and the land of liberty.

18 And he said: Surely God shall not suffer that we, who are despised because we take upon us the name of Christ, shall be trodden down and destroyed, until we bring it upon us by our own transgressions. (Alma 46:17-18)

It is interesting – perhaps significant – that the covenant name he chose was the same one which Lehi applied to latter-day America:

Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever. (2 Nephi 1:7)

Similarly, king Mosiah II said,

And now I desire that this inequality should be no more in this land, especially among this my people; but I desire that this land be a land of liberty, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike, so long as the Lord sees fit that we may live and inherit the land, yea, even as long as any of our posterity remains upon the face of the land. (Mosiah 29:32)

{ 18 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 78.

{ 19 } Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, p. 171.

{ 20 } Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 164.

{ 21 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 131.

{ 22 } Two examples are Isaiah 66:1 where God is sitting on his throne with his feet upon a footstool (symbolically, the earth): Job 21: 9 mentions him holding a scepter.

{ 23 } Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols.,

Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, : 107. The numbers in parenthesis are references to the Psalms.

{ 24 } Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1, 183. Mowinckel's footnote reads as follows: Pss. 47., 9; 93.2, cf. V. 5b; 96.13; 97.2b, 7b, cf. The description of the epiphany = procession of entry in vv. 3-6; 98.3b, 9b; 99,1.

{ 25 } Widengren, Geo, "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 198-199.

{ 26 } For Saul, I Sam. 10: 1; David, I Sam. 16:3; Solomon, I Kings 1:39

{ 27 } There were probably very good reasons why the coronations of the kings were downplayed in Kings and Chronicles. The author(s) of Kings is often credited with being so honest that he was willing to show the weak and human side of the lives of the kings, but another way of saying that is that the author did not like the kings and blamed them for all the nation's troubles. The other likely reason is that when the books of Kings and Chronicles were written (or when they went through their last major editing) the Jews were living under the Persian Empire, and it would not have been politically correct to extol the virtues of their own former kings as though they wished to return to that golden era. The upshot was that neither the coronations of the kings, nor the New Year's festival during which those coronations were celebrated and justified, are reported in either Kings or Chronicles. The two most probable descriptions are in Exodus 40:12-16 and Isaiah 61:3. I will discuss them in some detail below.

{ 28 } For a discussion of both the title of "the anointed" and its significance to Judah and Israel's kings see, Gene L. Davenport, "The 'Anointed of the Lord' in Psalms of Solomon 17," in John J. Collins and George W. E. Nickelsburg, eds., *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism, Profiles and Paradigms* (Chico, California, Scholars Press, 1980), p. 85; see pages 67-92.

{ 29 } "The First Temple Period" refers to the time when Solomon's Temple was standing – That is, from about 1000 B.C when Solomon built it, until 587 B.C. when the Babylonians destroyed it. Before Solomon built his temple, the Israelites worshiped at various shrines, including the one at Shiloh where Moses' Tabernacle was still in use. The period of time between the return of the Jews from Babylon (537 B.C.) to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans (77A.D.) is called "the Second Temple Period," even though there were actually two temples then. The first was built by Zerubbabel, but that one was torn down and replaced by Herod. It was Herod's Temple that the Romans destroyed.

{ 30 } Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 65 and 63.

{ 31 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 16.

{ 32 } Borsch, Frederick H., *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press, London, 1967, p. 96.

{ 33 } Johnson, A. R., "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship* (Oxford, 1958,) p. 207-208, quotes 1 Samuel 16:13.

{ 34 } If the ceremony of the coronation of the High Priest in Exodus 40:12-16 was the same as the coronation of the kings, then that is a second place to find the ceremony.

{ 35 } It has been said that Isaiah 61 is the only major Messianic Isaiah scripture that is not quoted in the Book of Mormon. Since it is about salvation for the dead, one might use its absence from the text as an argument that the Nephites did not understand vicarious temple work. However, that argument cannot be upheld when it is recalled that in the Beatitudes the Lord paraphrases Isaiah 61:3 without explanation – apparently knowing the people knew exactly what it was talking about.

{ 36 } James K. Hoffmeier, "From Pharaoh to Israel's Kings to Jesus" in *Bible Review*, Vol XII, No. 3, June 1997, p. 48.

{ 37 } Ezekiel 1:6-28; Revelation 4:8; D&C:77:4.

{ 38 } "In Ps. 110:1 it [footstool] is a metaphor of Davidic dominion.

"Ps. 110:1 is quoted by Jesus in his argument with the scribes and Pharisees (Mat. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:43) Peter applies the verse to Jesus as proof of his dominion and ascension (Acts 2:35), and this is precisely re-echoed in Heb. 1:13; 10:13." (*The Interpreter's dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols. [Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1991], 2:309.)

{ 39 } Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 72. See also: Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p. 110, 163; Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 53.

{40 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 14.

For a discussion of both the title, "messiah," and its significance to Israel's kings see, Gene L. Davenport, "The 'Anointed of the Lord' in Psalms of Solomon 17," John J. Collins and George W.E. Nickelsburg, eds., *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism, Profiles and Paradigms* (Chico, California, Scholars Press, 1980), 67-92. Davenport shows that the idea of a Davidic messiah persisted long after the Babylonian exile, and that the continued belief in a Davidic messiah was "important primarily as testimony to the dependability of God." p. 85.

{ 41 } Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1:125.

{ 42 } Widengren, Geo, "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 193.

{43 } Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus* (New York, Schocken Books, 1986), 210-211.

{ 44 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 75, n. 2.

{ 45 } Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, *Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount* (Washington D.C. Biblical Archaeology Society, 1998), p. 104.

{ 46 } Arert Jan Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: Johannes Muller, 1916), 54-55.

{ 47 } Nibley, Hugh W., "Ancient Temples: What Do They Signify?" in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 405.

{ 48 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 15. The Bible records the anointings of six Israelite kings: Saul: 1 Samuel 10:1, David: 2 Samuel 5:3, Solomon: 1 Kings 1:39, Jehu: 2 Kings 9:6, Josh: 2 Kings 11:12, Jehoahaz: 2 Kings 23:30. Absalom was also anointed to be king: 2 Samuel 19:11.

{ 49 } Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p. 152.

"There Adam is definitely a divine being, who came into existence before creation, as a cosmogonic principle (macrocosm), as the Primordial Soul, as the original type of the godly, righteous fulfiller of the Law...." Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 426.

{ 50 } Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1, p. 58. He cites: Psalms 89:31-33; 18:21-25; 20:4; 132:10; 2 Samuel 7:14ff.

{ 51 } "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father." (1 Chronicles 29:23).

{ 52 } Borsch, Frederick H., *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press, London, 1967, p. 120. Italics in original.

{ 53 } The king's wearing a copy of the Ten Commandments is important to the Abinadi story, so I'll wait until I get there to discuss it in full.

{ 54 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 23; Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, Leipzig, 1950, p. 24-26, 36-37; Geo Widengren, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 9-10, 13, 21, 23.

{ 55 } Widengren, Geo, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 3.

{ 56 } See Hebrews 9:4.

{ 57 } As you read this psalm, remember that the Temple sat on the sacred rock outcropping that is now under the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. In the psalm, the Lord's having "set my feet upon the rock" is a reference to that rock, as I shall point out below, it appears that the Ark was sat in that rock rather than on it, and thus the Ark became an extension of the Rock. See: Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, *Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount* (Washington D.C. Biblical Archaeology Society, 1998), p. 104.

{ 58 } Article by David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York, 1992, vol. 2 p. 744-745.

{ 59 } As I have observed before, the Greek pistis, means the token or evidence of a covenant.

{ 60 } 3 And after the second veil [of the temple], the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;
4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; (Hebrews 9:3-4).

{ 61 } 7 And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness.
8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.
9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.
10 And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.
11 And Moses did so: as the Lord commanded him, so did he. (Numbers 17:7-11)

{ 62 } Over the years some of those items were lost, so that by the time the Ark was brought into the Temple by Solomon, "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt." (1 Kings 8:9)

{ 63 } See John chapter 6 and Revelation 2:17.

{ 64 } "The annual renewal of the covenant came to include the idea of commandments in general; not only this, but also of certain specific and definite commandments....
"In this rite...we have the root of the later custom of the Jewish congregation reciting the law-book, i.e. Deuteronomy, every seventh year at the feast of Tabernacles." Smund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 158-159. For additional information on the seventh, or Sabbatical Year, see, Etienne Nodet, translated by Ed Crowley, *A Search for the Origins of Judaism, From Joshua to the Mishnah*, in (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 248 Sheffield, England, 114-

117.

{ 65 } 2 Kings 23:1-3; Geo Widengren, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 2-5, 18.

{ 66 } *De Somniis I.215*) quoted in Hayward, C.T.R., *The Jewish Temple*, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 111. Philo's idea were a mixture of Jewish religion, Greek philosophy, and Egyptian theology. For an example of a somewhat similar Egyptian idea see: S. G. F. Brandon, "The Ritual Technique of Salvation in the Ancient Near East," in S. G. F. Brandon, *The Saviour God*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1963, p. 25. For a review of similar Gnostic beliefs see: Widengren, Geo, "Baptism and Enthronement in some Jewish-Christian Gnostic Documents," in Brandon, S. G. F., *The Saviour God*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1963, p. 214.

{ 67 } Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 66. For a related discussion on the power of new covenant names see, Hermann Gunkel, (Michael D. Rutter, trans.) *The Folktale in the Old Testament* (Sheffield, England, Almond Press, 1987), 87.

{68} Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 4-7. See also Todd R. Kerr, "Ancient Aspects of Nephite Kingship in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1992, p. 93-98.}

{69} Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1, p. 52-54, 60.}

{70} Johnson, A. R., "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 205-215; Widengren, Geo, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957. For a discussion on the theoretical nature of an Israelite king see, Hermann Gunkel, (Michael D. Rutter, trans.) *The Folktale in the Old Testament* (Sheffield, England, Almond Press, 1987), 152-158. }

{71} Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, p. 103.}

{72} Widengren, Geo, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 16-17.}

{73} Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, p. 91.}

{74} Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1: 155.}

{75} Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1:133.}

{76} Gordon C. Thomasson, "Togetherness Is Sharing an Umbrella: Divine Kingship, the

Gnosis, and Religious Syncretism,” in John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *By Study and Also By Faith*, 2 vols. Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1990, vol. 1. p. 533-534.}

{77} Tvetness, John A., “King Benjamin and the Feast of Tabernacles,” in John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *By Study and Also By Faith*, V. 2 (SLC, Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), p. 197 - 237.}

{ 78 } Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p. 184.

{ 79 } Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 84. As examples Mowinckel's footnote gives Psalms 132:11ff; 82; cf. 20:8f; 21:10; and Isaiah 55:3. (The word “cult” has received bad connotations since Mowinckel wrote. It simply means an organization which employs ordinances in its ceremonies. Used that way, the Baptists with their practice of baptism are as cultic as the Mormons with their temple rites.)

{ 80 } Widengren, Geo, “King and Covenant” in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 21-22.

{ 81 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 7-8. Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 7-8.

{ 82 } Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 91.

{ 83 } Grace I. Emmerson, “Women in Ancient Israel,” in R. E. Clements, ed., *The World of Ancient Israel, Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989,371-394. This is an exceptionally insightful article which deals with many facets of the woman’s position in ancient Israel. The above quotes are taken from pages 378-379. On page 382 she writes, “Still more significantly, the imagery of marriage is considered appropriate to describe both Yahweh’s love relationship with Israel (Hos. 1-3; Jer. 2.2), and Israel’s joy when redeemed by the Lord (Isa. 62.4f.). Here is the Israelite ideal of marriage, from which in practice many no doubt fell short. The crude idea of ownership is entirely inappropriate here, as it is also in Jer. 31.32. To suggest that a wife was little better than a slave is certainly incorrect.”

{ 84 } Robert Davidson, “Covenant Ideology in Ancient Israel,” in R. E. Clements, ed., *The World of Ancient Israel, Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 342-343. Robert Davidson, “Covenant Ideology in Ancient Israel,” in R. E. Clements, ed., *The World of Ancient Israel, Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 342-343.

{ 85 } I’ll explain that more fully when we discuss the Beatitudes.

{ 86 } The same idea is expressed in Mosiah 5:7 and Ether 3:14.

