Please note: This book was never edited for publication

Abinadi, on being a child of God

by

LeGrand Baker

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It is not, and does not pretend to be,
a discussion of the official doctrines or teachings
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Outline of Abinadi, on being a child of God Draft of 28 January 2003

This manuscript has a major organizational problem – the problem is that I don't know how to make it flow well. The following outline is not so much a table of contents as it is a map to help you know where you are and how you got there. I have added this table of contents and some other things footnotes to the body of the book since I wrote this outline, so the page numbers are off slightly toward the beginning and as much as 15 or more pages off as one gets closer to the end.

This is an outline, the page numbers are way off

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Remember, notwithstanding the title, the first 500 pages of this book hardly mention Abinadi. Only the last part is about Abinadi and the importance of what Alma understood him to be talking about.

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Unsubstantiated Premises. The following are the ideas I understand to be fundamental to what I am writing. Some of them will be the focus of detailed investigation later in the book, others will not. 27

Premise 1. The ancient pre-exilic biblical Israelite temple ceremonies of the "First Temple period," and the Book of Mormon temple ceremonies were essentially the same. [I have no "proof" of that, I simply accept it as truth]27

Premise 2. The most important of those ceremonies occurred during the New Year

festival which included celebrations of the New Year's Day; the Day of Atonement. the Feast of Tabernacles (the temple drama which culminated in the king's endowment/enthronement coronation rites); and the Great Feast which concluded the twenty two day ceremonies. 28

Premise 3. The Psalms (but in a different arrangement from the one we now have) were the text of the liturgy of the festival, including the temple drama. That is: If one wants to know what words that were spoken or sung during the endowment/coronation ceremonies, one can find them in the Psalms – perhaps not in all of the Psalms, and certainly not in their present order – but in the Psalms, nonetheless. 28

Premise 4. Old Testament scholars have long since worked out the events of the ceremonies and drama of the New Year festival, and they have tried to identify which psalms were used during which events of the ceremonies. But they readily admit they have no firm key by which they can put those events together in the correct sequence 28.

Premise 5. At some point during the above sequence, but before Jehovah was represented as having descended into the underworld to rescue the king, the annual temple ceremony included a detailed presentation about the acts and the meaning of the Saviour's atonement. 30

Premise 6. Because Lehi left Jerusalem before the Babylonian exile, the religion he took with him was that of pre-exilic Israel. That is obvious enough, but it is important because it means the Book of Mormon does not reflect any of the post-exilic Jewish apostasy which colors many parts of our Old Testament.

Premise 7. A major difficulty in of our understanding Abinadi's discourse is that we do not know what he meant by "the Law of Moses." It is obvious that he meant something much more involved than just the list of dos and don'ts, and the Aaronic priesthood duties which we can glean from our Old Testament. p 32

Premise 8. Isaiah's writings, beginning with his discussion of the Council in Heaven in chapter 40, and continuing through to the end of the book, are primarily a commentary on the temple drama of the New Year festival, and therefore are also a commentary on the Psalms.

Premise 9. I find in the Book of Mormon much evidence that its authors understood that in our time, we would have the same ordinances as were presented in the ancient temples, and therefore the Book of Mormon authors wrote with the presumption that we would understand those Psalms, quotes from Isaiah, and other connotations which are found throughout the Book of Mormon in the same Israelite-temple context in which they understood and wrote them.

Premise 10. I believe the New Testament gospel writers understood the Psalms and Isaiah in the same way the Book of Mormon writers understood them. 37

Premise 11. The summation of all the above is this: my fundamental premise is that when one finds a quote or paraphrase from the Psalms or Isaiah in the New Testament or in the Book of Mormon, one can – indeed, one ought to – assume that in most instances it was intended by its author be understood as a direct reference to the sacred drama and ceremonies of the ancient Israelite temple. This premise underlies everything I have written in this book.

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This book — not just its introduction, but the entire book — is written as a very personal letter to my family and to my friends. It contains only my private opinions. I do not apologize for that, but it needs to be said up-front — and probably will need to be said more than once. I have tried to support my ideas with sound research, but even the act of selecting sources and quotes is only a way of refining or reinforcing one's opinions. There is nothing that is religiously authoritative about this work. It is not, and does not pretend to be, a discussion of the official doctrines or teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to which I belong. It is, and is intended to be, a conversation with people whom I trust to accept my opinions as nothing more than that. Unfortunately, mine is the only voice heard here. But those for whom it is written will understand that it is a discussion — not a statement of final conclusions. Those conclusions come when others have read my opinions, and weighed them against their own — and decided whether we do or do not. Unfortunately, my writing can not usually reflect that full discussion, even though that is the ultimate object of the book. ¹ If this book is read as having any other object, it will be misread, and if it is represented as being for any other purpose, it is misrepresented.

I don't read either Hebrew or Greek. I have several friends who do and they have taught me about the meanings of some words, but I do not know the grammars. The result is that I have to work from English translations of the Bible, and cannot check my interpretations by reading it in the original languages. Consequently some of my interpretations that seem to work well in the English translations would have to be abandoned if I could have read the text in Hebrew or Greek. So I make mistakes, and I don't even know how to warn you about where or what they are.

In addition to that, another problem with what I have written is that some of my arguments are based on a kind of circular reasoning. Specifically: I am convinced that (notwithstanding the writings of non-Mormon scholars who support the historicity of the ancient Israelite New Year festival) the strongest evidence I know for the historicity of the ancient temple rites and for the correctness of the principles taught through its drama, is what I read in the Book of Mormon. I believe the Book of Mormon was carefully written as a commentary on those temple ceremonies, and therefore I find references to the temple in all parts of the Book of Mormon. (The most immediately relevant example is in this book. I am writing about Abinadi's discussion of sacral kingship as it relates to the most sacred of those temple rites.) I also believe that the most

Actually, it is only technically true that these are all my opinions. I am and have always been a bit of a sponge, and have had many friends who have taught me many things which I have accepted as my own. This manuscript is itself an example of that. Several of my friends and members of my family have been gracious enough to read it, make necessary corrections, and suggest others. Sometimes I have altered what I have written because they were right in their criticisms. Occasionally, when they disagree with what I have written, I have put their comments in a footnote. (My dear friend Dan Belnap tends to disagree with me most often, so he is the one who is most frequently quoted in the footnotes.) I acknowledge with heartfelt gratitude the corrections and contributions those people have made. Sometimes I have just incorporated their ideas without giving them credit for it. I do that partly for their sakes — I don't want to make them responsible for what I write. I usually do not mention them by name because the ultimate responsibility for the ideas expressed here is my own, and while I would be perfectly willing to share the credit for the good ideas, I am not at all willing to share the blame for the bad ones.

compelling example of the temple in the Book of Mormon is in the structure and teachings of Third Nephi, and I have used what I find there to read those temple rites back into the way I interpret much of the Bible, especially the Psalms and Isaiah. Consequently, this is how I have come to some of my conclusions as I have expressed them in this book: 1) I believe many of the Psalms really were part of the text of the New Year festival drama, and that the latter half of Isaiah is a commentary on that drama, and therefore also a commentary on the Psalms. 2) In the Book of Mormon, I find strong evidence of how the drama was put together, so I transfer what I find in the Book of Mormon back to my interpretation of the Psalms and Isaiah. 3) Then, using the Book of Mormon as a key, to what the drama was like, I find even more evidence in the Bible. 4) I mix what I find in all the scriptures with what Bible scholars have written about the drama of the New Year festival, 5) Then I go back to the Book of Mormon and find even more evidence of the temple drama, and read the Book of Mormon itself as a commentary on those ancient temple rites.

However, in this book, I mostly don't tell you about the first part of the process. Rather, I tend to only explain the last part by using the mix of scriptures and scholarly sources to show you how I use the Bible to find the ancient temple rites in the Book of Mormon. I'm not apologizing, by the way, because I'm not the only one that reads the scriptures that way. For example, we use D&C 76 to explain Paul's statement, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory." (1 Corinthians 15:41) Then we use Paul's statement to show that the Three Degrees of Glory was a doctrine taught in the New Testament. I think that is OK. Another example: We use the Book of Abraham to interpret the Bible, mix that with what biblical scholars say about Abraham, then use that mix to help us understand the Book of Abraham. I'm not suggesting this approach isn't a valid way to understand the scriptures. On the contrary, I believe it is very valid. I'm only pointing out that it is rather common for people to frequently use this kind of circular logic to support our interpretation of the scriptures – and I am admitting up-front that I enjoy using that same kind of circular evidence to reach and support my own conclusions. It's a long accepted process that works fine if the relationships one discovers, and conclusions one reaches are true, but, unfortunately, it even looks like it works fine when the relationships of ideas are not correct and the conclusions are not true – and there's the rub!

The point is this: I have really tried to make this book sound reasonable, and for the most part I think it is; I have also tried to make it sound true, and I know some of it actually is true. For those parts, I hope I would be willing to burn at the stake rather than deny them — but there are a great many other parts of this work that I am so unsure of that I would recant my statements at the mere threat of a thumb screw. I have not told you which is which — and for a very good reason: You have no right to think any part of what I have written is reasonable until you have read enough other sources to check my conclusions for yourself, and you have no right to believe any part of it is actually true until the Spirit tells you it is truth. I don't claim the Spirit has told me it is all true — and let's face it, the Spirit may choose not to tell you either.

Several people who read earlier drafts of this manuscript wondered why I seemed never to actually get around to discussing the story of Abinadi, so the reason for that requires an explanation. As I understand the exchange between Abinadi and the priests of Noah, it was a

debate about the most sacred ordinances of the ancient Israelite New Year festival; and as I understand the sub-textual intimate conversation between Abinadi and Alma, it was about the meaning of those same coronation ordinances. If I am correct, then virtually everything Abinadi said can best be understood within the contest of the ancient Israelite endowment/enthronement ceremonies. If that is so, then that endowment/enthronement context has to be discussed before I can begin to discuss what Abinadi actually said.

The upshot is that about the first two-thirds of this book hardly mentions Abinadi at all. Rather, it is an introduction where I try to discuss, as fully as I believe appropriate, the ancient concepts of sacral kingship and priesthood in order to lay the foundation for our later discussion about what Abinadi actually said. Consequently, only the last third of this book is about Abinadi and the importance of what Alma understood him to be talking about.

NEW BEGINNING

When I read the confrontation between Abinadi and Noah, I do not envision an old unknown man who came wandering into the city unannounced. But rather a vigorous man—old enough to be Noah's father—but neither ancient nor infirm. In my imagination, he came into the city in disguise because he was an outcast—driven from him home and his position by the king who had discharged all of his father's priests (the royal council). He came in disguise because he was known by the guards, just as he was known by everyone else in the city. If that, or something very like it, is true, then it is probably also true that the reason he was exiled is because he had challenged the king's right to set aside the true religion of his fathers, but retain only the outward forms of the forms of the Law of Moses. If he had done that he would have been stigmatized as a heretic, or a traitor, or both. If that is also true, then his returning to the city was not an act of defiance against king Noah, but an act of martyrdom. He knew he would be killed, but he knew the law well enough to also know there would be a sham trial that would give the cloak of justice to his death.

Why did he do it. The obvious answer was to tell Noah and his counselors that they were going to hell. But their acts of apostasy had already secured that destiny. So the obvious answer cannot be the true answer. Let me propose another.

He had come with a personal message to the young prince.

There are a number of reasons, mostly circumstancial that I believe Alma was Noah's younger brother.

Zurabell language Young, – Alma 2 's birth goodly

at council assassin

listened to as one who had authority

Leader of religious community

We know he was of royal blood for two reasons. First, because he was identified by Mormon as a descendant of Nephi – that is of the royal family. Second, when he got to Zarahemla some years later when none of the sons of the king would accept the crown, Alma was apparently acknowledged as next in line for the throne, for he was given all of the governmental and religious authorities of the king.)

Abinadi had been outlawed. There was no way he could come in disguise, stay in disguise, and converse with the young prince without being observed and prevented.

Alma was a member of court The only way Abinadi could speak to Alma was to do it in the presence of Noah and all the rest of the court. When the HG teaches one what to say, he also teaches someone in the audience what is being said. So there was a sham trial that began with the priests mockingly accusing Abinadi and ended with the venerable prophet having complete control of the courtroom where he carried on his very private conversation with Alma.

That conversation was full of references to the ceremonies and the theology of the old religion that Noah had distorted, and it was because both Abinadi and the priests and whomever else was in the courtroom knew that theology that Abinadi was able to confound his accusars and to attract and hold the attention of the young prince.

Those are the premises on which this book is based. The question it tries to answer is this: What were those ceremonies to which Abinadi makes such frequent reference and why did his use of his audience's understanding of them challenge the legitimacy of Noah's kingship and impose upon Alma the responsibility of setting things right.

I belileve that the Nephites brought with them both the ceremonies and the authority to perform the ceremonies of Solomon's temple. So if one is to understand the arguments Abinadi presented to Alma, one must also know the temple rites performed by the ancient Israellites.

Fortunately some of the greatest students of the Bible of the last century have studied that question in depth. Great Mormon scholars have introduced us to their ideas. Among the latter, Hugh Nibley was the first and the greatest. Much of his genious was to distill the work of these non-Mormon scholars into language that Mormons could understand and relate to. So it is to those scholars that one must turn to discover the temple undercurrents of Abinadi's testimony and Alma's conversion.

Cosmic myth

Sode Jeremiah

New Year Festival

To my beloved family and friends,

Not long ago I was reading two books, Morton Smith's *Palestinian Parties and Politics that*Shaped the Old Testament, and Margaret Barker's The Older Testament, The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity. The theme of Smith's book is that most of the Old Testament is the product of post-exilic writers who altered the old stories and texts to fit their new religion. That process recurred several times until the canon we now have is the one adopted by the Pharisees after the destruction of Herod's Temple. Barker maintains that our Old Testament is the product of an apostate (her word) post-exilic Judaism, and that we have very few windows into the early Jewish religion. The best we have, she maintains, is the Book of Enoch, which she says was deliberately left out of the Pharisees' canon because it didn't fit their new religious ideas. As I was reading I thought, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had just one pristine manuscript which dated back to the time of the early prophets, which told us what the ancient religion really was. – WE HAVE! It's the Book of Mormon. WOW!!"

In November, 2001, I shattered my heel bone. There were complications and I did not go back to work for several months. As I sat here at home, it occurred to me that I might spend my time somewhat productively by writing a kind of commentary on Abinadi's speech. In doing so, I have examined both the content and the context of the speech somewhat differently from the way others have. That alone does not make my analysis either better or worse than anyone else's — only different. The beauty of the scriptures, like the beauty of fine cut crystal, is in its many facets — if one sits it in the light of an east window, each of those facets respond differently to the rays of the morning sun.

In the confrontation between Abinadi and the priests of Noah,² both spoke from their understanding of the significance of the ancient Israelite coronation rites. The priests emphasized the sonship of the reigning king and of his earthly authority, but Abinadi focused on the idea of sonship as a prerequisite of individual salvation. Because the ancient Israelite notion of kingship and sonship were central to both arguments, it seems to me that one ought to have a pretty good notion of what those concepts were in order to understand where the priests and Abinadi were coming from.

I wish to describe only that facet of Abinadi's story. As you know, in my view, the entire Book of Mormon (like the latter half of the book of Isaiah, the Gospel of John, Third Nephi, and many other sections of the scriptures) was carefully crafted by its authors to be a commentary on the

² There is no solid evidence about who Noah's priests were or what their authority was. However, G. W. Ahlstrom, *Joel and the Temple Cult of Jerusalem*, (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1971), p. 35 - 36 probably gives a realistic look at who they were.

In Israel we find a parallel institution and similar roles attributed to the elders. They had juridical functions, Dt. 19: 21; and decided f cases at the city gate, Dt. 25: 7. Their political functions are evident in Judges 9:2 and 1 Kings 12:6, where they act as counselors, and in 1 Sam. 8: 4, 2 Sam. 5: 3, 1 Kings 12: 1 ff., they elect kings. In the cult they represent the people, Ex. 18:12, 1 Kings 8:3, Joel 1:14, 2: 16,2 and were responsible for convoking the cult congregation, I 1 Kings 21: 8 f., Ezra 10: 8. It is clear from 1 Kings 20: 7 fT. that they! could have played some part in the decision to wage war, cf. 1 Sam.11:1, 2 Sam. 17:4, 2 Chr. 25:17.3 The elders still played some role in the late monarchic time, 2 Kings 23: 1 f. When Josiah called together the people of Judah and Jerusalem to listen to the reading of the newly discovered "law book" and to make a new covenant he called first upon the elders as the representatives of the people. This .was an official gathering at the temple, and thus a religious occasion t with important consequences for the life of the whole country, so it is noteworthy that the elders, the leaders or the clans or the cities, are called first. This argues that the system of elders was so deeply rooted in the Israelite- Judahite society that it could not be neglected or "dismissed" even in well-organized kingdoms. It was a phenomenon older than the Israelite nation itself which perhaps explains why it survived the disaster of Judah and reappears as the natural mode of representation of the people in the post-exilic period, Ezra 10:8,14. It is clear from Isa. 3: 1 ff. that the elders are seen as one of the pillars of Israelite society, 1 and the natural representatives of the people.

most sacred of the ancient Israelite temple rites – the on-stage "democratical" or participatory³ presentation of their covenants, ordinances, and drama in the Feast of Tabernacles portion of the New Year festival

A feast in the ancient Near East, and so also in Israel, was defined by Mowinckel as the mythical-sacramental dramatic repetition and re-experience of salvation, God's action, which was the source of life, of vitality and of happiness in life. The events through which God for the first time revealed himself and his power to his people were dramatically performed. They were so repeated and became again effective in reality. As it had happened the first time, so the power of God streamed into the people and again gave it life and happiness. This representation of events past was a re-creation of them for those who took part in the feast, so that they experienced here a reality which was above them and lifted them up.⁴

The festival was the ancient Israelite 22-day endowment-enthronement ceremony which some scholars believe was held annually in late October and early November, between the fall harvest and the winter rainy season. During the seven-day period of the Feast of Tabernacles (days 15 through 21 of the 22 day New Year festival), the king and his people are endowed with covenantel power. The power was ultimately made visible in both the royal authority of the king and the sacral kingship of the people. (I have said many times – and not in jest – that one of the first things I want to do when I get dead is go back in time and watch a good performance of that drama!!)

The distinguished biblical scholar Sigmund Mowinckel was the first to point out that the king's anointing was an endowment of the Spirit. His use of the word "endowment" was appropriate.

³ As I will explain below, several non-LDS scholars believe that the people who watched these dramatic presentations also participated symbolically as though they were the person on the stage, and as though they were making performing the ordinances and making the covenants for themselves.

⁴ Many of Mowinckel's early works were published in Norwegian and are not available in English. This synopsis is found in Arvid S. Kapelrud, "Sigmund Mowinckel and Old Testament Study," in *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1967), 6.

⁵ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 55.

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.⁶

Even though the annual endowment/enthronement coronation rites of the New Year festival is typically believed to have taken place in the fall of the year, some recent scholars have challenged that. Barker and others assert that the Jews changed their calender after the Babylonian captivity, but before that (that is, up until just after Lehi left Jerusalem) the New Year festival was held in the spring, about the first of April. If that is true, then the people of the Book of Mormon would also have celebrated their New Year festival with its endowment/enthronement ceremonies in early April.

Some scholars believe that the festival was absolutely central to the religion of the Jews from at least the time of David until 587 B.C. when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and its inhabitants transported to Babylon.⁷ Lehi and the other members of his colony left Jerusalem and

⁶ Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 66. For a discussion on the power of new names see, Hermann Gunkel, (Michael D. Rutter, trans.) *The Folktale in the Old Testament* (Sheffield, England, Almond Press, 1987), 87.

⁷ There are two different opinions about that. Some scholars say that the fact that the Old Testament does not give an account of the New Year enthronement festival, is evidence that there actually was no such festival practiced by the Jews during the pre-exilic period. Others say that the fact that the Old Testament does not give an account of the festival is evidence that the post-exilic "apostate" Jews simply expunged it from the historical record – and the fact that it is not in

began their journey to America only a few years before that, so it still would have been an important part of their tradition. For Lehi, Sariah, Nephi and his older brothers and sisters, Ishmael and his family, and Zoram, the ceremonies of the New Year festival would have been as much a part of their lives as Christmas is to ours – but far, far more important. Those ceremonies were an annual renewal of the temple covenants which held their families and their nation together – and which reaffirmed the covenants of Jehovah with the nation of Israel and her king; the king with Jehovah and the people; the people with Jehovah, the king, and each other. The temple rites of the festival culminated in an anointing ceremony where the king was adopted as son and legitimate heir of Jehovah. Israel's relationship with God was a covenant relationship,⁸ and the king was the living token of that covenant.⁹

But the ceremony was much more than that. While the people witnessed that was happening to the king, symbolically it was also happening to each of them as well. So the covenants between the king and Jehovah were also covenants between Jehovah and his people.

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.¹⁰
Psalm 101 may be seen as a kind of constitution which defines the powers and the responsibilities of the king. Kenik sees it as a code of conduct, and suggests it may have been

sung as a promise of the king on the occasion of his enthronement. 11

the Old Testament is primary evidence of their apostasy.

⁸ Psalms 89:27-30. Stephen D. Ricks, "The Treaty/Covenant Pattern in King Benjamin's Address (Mosiah 1-6)," *BYU Studies*, 24:2, 1984, p. 151-162.

⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, p. 50-61.

¹⁰ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 8.

Helen A. Kenik, "Code of Conduct for a King: Psalm 101," in *Journal of Biblical*

I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.

Literature 95 (1976): 391-395. Her view was challenged by John S. Kselman, "Psalm 101: Royal Confession and Divine Oracle," in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 1985, 33:45-62 He proposed that "Psalm 101 is not a monologue, the utterance of a single voice (the king's), as commonly assumed, but a dialogue involving both king and deity." Mowinckel understands this psalm to be "the king's promise in the presence of Yahweh on the day of his enthronement (his 'charter')," corresponding to the "claims and expectations" expressed in Psalm 122. Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 91.

O when wilt thou come unto me?¹²

I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes:

I hate the work of them that turn aside:

it shall not cleave to me.

A froward heart shall depart from me:

I will not know a wicked person.

Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour,

him will I cut off: him that hath an high look

and a proud heart will not I suffer.

Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,

that they may dwell with me:

he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house:

he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

I will early destroy all the wicked of the land;

that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.(Psalm101:1-8.)

Mowinckel's appraisal of Psalm 101 is as follows:

And if the official installation of the king was identical with the great new year festival..., and was celebrated every year in connexion with the latter, then king as well as people had to face Yahweh's demands at many points during the festival ritual.

The psalm of promise, Ps. 101, is the answer of the king to these demands from Yahweh, the promise made by him on the day of his election and anointing as king of Yahweh's people. It is, so to speak, his religious 'charter'. It is the counterpart of the intercession for the king in Ps. 72, to the effect that Yahweh may give him 'righteousness' and 'judgments'.... And, as already mentioned, we have reason to believe that it was repeated every year as a regular part of the great new year festival, at which the king used to play such a prominent part.¹³

In our time, when most people have never encountered a king who is a powerful ruling monarch except in a book, or in the movies, or on television, the word "king" evokes an image that tends to focus on one of two ends of an imaginary spectrum. Either he is wicked king John who fought brave Robin Hood, or a modern constitutional monarch whom some think of as more decorative than useful. But in ancient Israel a king was someone quite different from anything anywhere

Booij carefully analyses this line and concludes that this is a request for "a revelatory dream or vision of a special kind....which relates YHWH's appearing to Solomon at the sanctuary of Gibeon...." Thijs Booij, "Psalm 101:2 - 'When Wilt Thou Come To Me?'" in *Vetus Testamentum*, 38:460.

¹³ Smund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 67.

along that imaginary spectrum. Kings, like David and Solomon, who were the ruling monarchs of Israel, was, first of all, a representative of God. As such he was a "son" of God. He was not just the "head of state," he was the state personified. His decrees were the only legislation; his power was the only executive authority; his private army enforced local law and protected the nation from without; his wisdom was that of the Supreme Court's combined justices; and he also may have been considered to be the nation's highest High Priest 16 and prophet. 17

For a discussion of Israel's king as judge see, Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958), 206-207; For a discussion of Israel's pre-dynastic judges see G. W. Ahlstrom, *History of Religions* (8:2, Nov. 1968), 94-99.

¹⁴ Carlo Zaccagnini, "Sacred and Human Components in Ancient Near Eastern Law," in *History of Religions* (33:3, February 1994), 265-286. For a discussion of the Israelite government of the Old Testament see, Stuart A. Cohen, "Kings, Priests, and Prophets, Patterns of Constitutional Discourse and Constitutional Conflict in Ancient Israel," in Zvi Gitelman, *The Quest for Utopia, Jewish Political Ideas and Institutions through the Ages* (Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1992), 17-40.

^{15 &}quot;Judge," here, implies something like a supreme court, rather than "judge" in the sense that Sampson or Deborah were judges. "Like Egyptian kings, Israel's kings served as the final arbiter in judicial matters (2 Samuel 14:4-20; 1 Kings 3:16-28; 2 Kings 6:26-29." James K Hoffmeier "From Pharaoh to Israel's Kings To Jesus," in *Bible Review* (13/2, June 1997), 47.

Two examples of the king acting as High Priest are: David's officiating at the sacrifice and pronouncing a blessing upon the people in the name of the Lord in 2 Kings chapter 6; and Hezekiah's taking the letter of the Assyrians into the Holy of Holies, kneeling before the throne of cherubims and showing it to the Lord, in 2 Kings 19:14-20. "And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth." (v. 14-15) For a discussion of the king as High Priest see, Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958), 211-214. Widengren, Geo, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957 is about the ancient Israelite king's function as a high priest and mediator of the covenant. "The Davidic dynasty acted as the true heirs of the ancient king of Jerusalem, Melchizedek, at once priest and king." Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 75.

¹⁷ For a discussion of David's use of the Urim and Thummim, both before and after his anointing as king, see, Cornelis Van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim* (Winona Lake, Indiana, Eisenbrauns, 1997), 187-188, 247-250.

Still, his responsibility was singular: He must be the embodiment of righteousness. To be that, he must know and live the Law of Moses – and 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. ¹⁸

The Israelite king ruled over his nation as a father figure ¹⁹ – and in that capacity also, he was the chief representative of God to his people ²⁰ – 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.²¹
The king, as father, head of state, chief judge, and commanding general of the military, presided

judgement over their problems as a father would settle the troubles between squabbling children, teaching²² and enforcing both sacred and profane law.

over all of the affairs of his people, defending them when they needed defending, sitting in

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1, p. 52-54, 60.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, p. 103.

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

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.'23

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 Yahwesm. 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.²⁴

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. 110.²⁵

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

²³ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, p. 91.

²⁴ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1: 155.

²⁵ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1:133.

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."²⁶

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 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. 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.²⁷ About 50 years after that, king Mosiah had a new constitution written which divided ecclesiastical from

1990), p. 197 - 237.

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.

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,

political authority. Unfortunately there is no record which 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 their festival was altered to accommodate the new constitution.

The Abinadi story dates to about the same time as the King Benjamin story. Zeniff was a product of that same tradition, so when he and members of his colony returned to the original land of Nephi and rebuilt the temple there, it was natural that they would establish Zeniff as their king, and is only reasonable to suppose that in doing so they would have used the same ceremonies they were accustomed to.²⁸

²⁸ We know little about Zeniff's background or about the make up of his company. What we know is that they were returning to reclaim their original lands, in much the same way a few Jews returned to Jerusalem during the Babylonian exile. In the case of the Jews, they took with them Zerubbabel, grandson of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and probably the heir to the Jewish throne. That was important because it would give legitimacy to whatever government they established there. The only person we can identify as accompanying Zeniff was Amaleki's brother.(Omni 1:28-30) Amaleki had inherited the Small Plates and was thus the head of the house of Nephi's brother Jacob. (In medieval England, as heir to the family birthright, he might have been called Duke Amaleki of Jacob.) His brother would have been a possible heir after him, and it would be reasonable to suppose the brother had returned to the land of Nephi to regain the family property there. Zeniff may have played the same part as Zerubbabel. That is, he was a younger son of king Mosiah I (therefore a brother of king Benjamin) who represented the crown's interests when the party returned to the original land of Nephi. The best evidence that Zeniff was a member of the royal family is the way he identifies himself in his autobiography. "I, Zeniff, having been taught in all the language of the Nephites, and having had a knowledge of the land of Nephi, or of the land of our fathers' first inheritance..." (Mosiah 9:1a) A key phrase is that he was taught "in all the language of the Nephites." Lehi's colony spoke Hebrew, so Jacob's teachings on the Small Plates were probably written in Hebrew. However, the Brass Plates and at least Nephi's portion of the Small Plates were written in Egyptian. (1 Nephi 1:2, Mosiah 1:4) By Zeniff's time the Lamanites spoke a dialect so different from the Nephites that it was virtually a different language. (Mosiah 24:4) Zeniff spoke with the Lamanites so he knew their languages. There was no commercial connections between the two groups so the most likely reason he

After Zeniff "conferred the kingdom upon Noah, one of his sons," Noah perverted the religion, expelled his father's priests, and tried to murder Abinadi who escaped. (That was two years before Abinadi returned and our story begins.) Even though king Noah changed the religion so that it did not require as much repentance as before, he would not have changed the rationale which undergirded his authority, and would have supported the same endowment/coronation rites which authenticated and perpetuated his own kingship.

Unless those ceremonies had already lost most of their original meaning, they would not only have defined king Noah's authority as king and presiding priest, but would also have established the legitimacy of his kingship and priesthood. (To illustrate how strongly those ordinances persist: Just 50 years ago, when the present queen Elizabeth II of England was coronated, her government used the same formula that had been used in ancient Israel 3,000 years ago, as is described in Isaiah 61 – Elizabeth II was ceremonially washed, anointed, clothed in royal robes, given a royal name, and crowned.²⁹)

King Noah had created a religion whose requirements and whose objectives were different from

would have had to learn that language would have been for diplomatic purposes. Zeniff also knew all the Nephite languages – that would have included Egyptian and Hebrew – so we know this much about him: he had a superb education. (Mosiah 9:1) The only other people whom we know had that kind of education were the sons of king Benjamin, who were "taught in all the language of his fathers, that thereby they might become men of understanding...." (Mosiah 1:2) These circumstances lead me to believe that Zeniff was prince – a younger brother of king Benjamin. Another speculative evidence for that is that Mosiah II made Alma I the heir to his throne. Elsewhere I will explain why I think Alma was king Noah's younger brother, and therefore a possible heir to the thrones of both Zeniff and Mosiah I.

²⁹ In the case of Elizabeth II, she chose to keep her own given name and use it as her new royal name, but she was not required to do so. Another example of modern royal names is the popes's assuming a new name when they become pope.

being morally clean, "pure in heart" and a "peacemaker." In our story, as is so often so, king
Noah was claiming to be a son of God by virtue of his political and/or religious offices; then, by
virtue of his assumed special relationship with God, he claimed the right to define religious
truths, and, like other apostates, he re-defined those "truths" so that they would fit his dictatorial
ambitions and his carnal lifestyle. Nevertheless, for Abinadi to challenge either the king's
ceremonial sonship, his right to define religious truths, or his lifestyle, would mark the prophet as
a blasphemer, a revolutionary, and false prophet. In Israelite law, all three were capital crimes, so
all that remained to get rid of Abinadi was to hold a formal trial, find him guilty and carry out the
sentence of death.

King Noah's priests wanted to put Abinadi to death, but for some reason they also wanted to hold a formal trial in order to provide the cover of law to justify the murder. They apparently intended to accuse him of treason, blasphemy, or being a false prophet, or all three. Each could be demonstrated by showing that Abinadi had prophesied against the king who was Jehovah's heir and representative on earth. If they understood the endowment/coronation rites as the political and theological basis of the king's authority – and as the public definition of his kingship – then it might be expected that they would have used the general understanding of those ceremonies as evidence of his crimes – and that is precisely what they did.

So it seems to me, that if one is to begin to understand the political and theological nuances of Abinadi's story, one would do well to try to read it in the context of that temple drama and those ceremonies. By that I do not mean the drama and ceremonies might be artificially imposed upon the story; I mean it appears to me that the drama and ceremonies were the actual context from

which both the priests and Abinadi were speaking.

My intent is not to try to prove that is true, but simply to assume its truth, and examine Abinadi's story in that context – that is, to assume that Abinadi was talking about the ancient endowment/coronation temple rites, and that his listeners understand what he was saying because they also knew the temple drama, ritual, and doctrine. So, in order to provide that background for the Abinadi story, I would like to review the endowment/enthronement ceremonies with you – especially the coronation rites of the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles. To do that, I would like to do is read through Abinadi's sermon with you, much the same way we might if we were sitting in the same room together with our other friends – except, unfortunately, I will be the only one doing the talking. (It was interesting to me to observe my own feelings as I wrote that last sentence: it was a deeply personal statement. As my mind raced across the memory of you, the family and friends for whom I am writing this, I felt again the individual power of your spirits -- and my love for what and who you are again asserted itself. So that the statement was addressed to each of you individually. The human capacity to love is not a static thing, neither is it incased in a steel shell which cannot expand. For example, when one is married to a spouse whom one loves, and they have a child, that child does not have to compete for the limited lovespace in a parent's heart. Rather the heart expands so the child can fill it, and somehow the two loves together make more than the two separately. That happens again when the second, third, and fourth child is born, and somehow the loves mixe up with each other so that each separately is reinforced by the others, so each becomes greater than it was before, and greater than it could be alone. Friendships work the same way. When one meets a new friend the heart reaches out to embrace him, and to do that the heart has to grow. As time passes, the children, the

grandchildren, and the friends themselves become new people – more complex, intellectually and spiritually richer, luxuriant with knowledge and experience, more alert and alive – one's heart has to expand to embrace that growth. That kind of heart-growth is necessary if one is to stay alive: one has to embrace family and friends or the heart can not grow; it has to stretch as they mature, or it becomes stagnant; stagnancy is a kind of death – a kind I would fear more than physical death. So while this letter is gratefully addressed to each of you personally, at the same time it is also a very collective avowal of my love. For I can conceive of few greater blessings than being with you all together in time and place, reading the scriptures we love and rejoicing in the spirit of each other's insights – that, I suppose will have to wait until we are out of this world and have more control over our time and space. For the present, as we amble through the words of Abinadi together, I will try to point out to you how his ideas might relate to the most sacred of the ancient temple rites. However, just as we would if we were talking together, I will leave sacred things unsaid, because, not only would it be inappropriate to write them, but also because I understand you know them, and will recognize them just as I do – so the rule applies here that always applies: As you read what I now begin to write, please understand that I understand that some of what I will write or allude to here are the most sacred things I know – I mean truly *know* – others, though I view them as sacred, are only my present, personal, and ever changing opinion – and I have no intention of trying to complicate our conversation by telling you which is which. Therefore, you may take the following as seriously as you like, but please, until you have better evidence than just my words, do not believe it or take any part of it more seriously than I do.

Some of what I am about to write will not be new to you, and I apologize for redundancies like

the reviews of the New Year festival and the Beatitudes. The reason for my repeating here what many of us have already talked about is that my intent is that I would like to do a reasonably thorough job. I am not going to write the remainder of this for brevity, but for relative completeness – and also because I'm stuck here in my study for at least the next three months [actually it turned out to be more than 6 months] while my heel bone mends. But more importantly, I am also writing this for my grandchildren, and, who knows, perhaps my greatgrandchildren may read it some day; and it occurs to me that these ideas might not be redundant to them. So if this gets to be too long and tedious, you know how to use the "delete" button. Thank you for being my friends.

With my love,

LeGrand

Mosiah 12

18 And it came to pass that they said unto the king: Bring him hither that we may question him; and the king commanded that he should be brought before them.

19 And they began to question him, that they might cross him, that thereby they might have wherewith to accuse him; but he answered them boldly, and withstood all their questions, yea, to their astonishment; for he did withstand them in all their questions, and did confound them in all their words.

The way the priests proceeded to try to entrap Abinadi was to quote a part of Isaiah 52 and ask him what it meant. Mormon's explanations of the motives of king Noah and his priests are a key by which one may understand why they chose that passage from Isaiah to challenge him. Their purpose was "to question him, that they might cross him, that thereby they might have wherewith to accuse him." When I was young I thought that meant they picked a really hard scripture to see if he could explain what it meant, but I have long since realized that interpretation is not correct because they were trying Abinadi for his life, and the intent of their question was to set him up so they could murder him under color of law. Just choosing a hard, but otherwise irrelevant scripture, to test his academic abilities was not the sort of thing the king's council would do in order to prove cause to put him to death.

The more likely interpretation, the one I accept now, is that the death penalty had already been decided on, and that it was intended to be based on the charges of treason, blasphemy, and/or being a false prophet, and they believed those charges could easily be proven by asking his interpretation of one critical scripture. That sort of plan could only work if the scripture they chose was one whose interpretation everyone understood the same way – that is, it was not a

"hard" scripture at all, but such an easy and obvious one that it virtually guaranteed to trap

Abinadi into a confession. If Abinadi answered their question the way they expected, they could

use his own answer to show the people that his prophesying against the king had been

premeditated treason and blasphemy. It was a clever move on their part, and with it the death

penalty seemed assured. Now the first question for us is: "What is there about that scripture that

could be used to turn it into the perfect entrapment?"

The passage from Isaiah is one of the most beautiful and most frequently re-quoted of all the other scriptures. In addition to Mosiah 12-17, the first verse is quoted or paraphrased in Nahum 1:15, Romans 10:15, 1 Nephi 13:37, 3 Nephi 20: 40, D&C 128: 19, and is probably alluded to in Ephesians 6:1, D&C 27:16, and others. It reads:

- 21 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;
- 22 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion;
- 23 Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem;
- 24 The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God?

 Occasionally one encounters a short statement by one of the prophets which seems to encompass every great idea of the gospel. This passage is one of those. It is not as inclusive as the Beatitudes or the 23rd Psalm. They walk us through the entire sequence of the plan of salvation, while the Isaiah passage simply assumes much of the early parts of that sequence and focuses on the conclusion. But when presented in the context of Isaiah's commentary on the ceremonies of the temple of Solomon, this short passage says all there is to say. It places its focus where the 23rd

psalm reads: "Thou anointest my head with oil" and where the Beatitudes read: "Blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." – that Beatitude, in the New Year festival sequence, is a declaration of coronation: those who have and make peace shall receive a new covenant name, which is "child of God."

I suppose the priests of Noah expected Abinadi to admit that the Isaiah passage they quoted asserts that the king was the official "son" and "heir" of Jehovah. One can know that was their intent, because Abinadi turned the accusations on them by quoting the next chapter of Isaiah and asking something like: "What are the other qualifications: what must one *be* to *be* a 'child' and 'heir' of God – to inherit all that he has?"

It seems to me that if one is to understand the confrontation between Abinadi and the priests of Noah, one must begin by asking oneself: "What were the unspoken, but underlying premises on which their arguments about being a son and heir were founded?" One may assume that when Alma wrote the story, he knew that his contemporaries understood those premises in the same way everyone else understood them, so he told about the brilliant way Abinadi turned the argument, did not bother to include in his account an explanation of what fundamental ideas Abinadi and the priests were actually arguing about. Consequently, if we want to discover those premises we will have to go somewhere other than Alma's account in order to begin to identify the roots of their arguments. And it seems to me the ancient fundamental premises on which they based their arguments have to be addressed before one can begin a meaningful discussion of the confrontation itself. As I understand it, the premises boil down to the answers of three questions:

1) What was the ancient Israelite concept of secular and sacral kingship? 2) How did the ancient

Israelite coronation rites express that concept? (As I shall explain later, Isaiah's exclamation about "beautiful feet" are a reference to those sacred coronation rites). And 3) How did Abinadi use the concepts and rituals of sacral kingship to explain the meaning of "child of God" as he taught Alma the meaning of the plan of redemption?

Believing that, I shall, as I have already said, spend the first two-thirds of this book trying to answer the first two questions, and the last third trying the answer the last one.

Unsubstantiated Premises

This essay wants to be an oversized book, but will have to settle for being something less than that. If it were such a book, it would begin by showing why I believe the premises upon which its conclusions are built. But it isn't that kind of book, so I'll just list the premises on which my own arguments are based, and go on from there. There are two reasons why I list my premises. First, it is reasonable that you should know where I am coming from. Second, the essay is, for the most part, only a conclusion built on those premises. So if you don't agree with the premises, you may as well know from the outset that you aren't going to agree with the conclusions. The premises are these:

Premise 1. The ancient pre-exilic biblical Israelite temple ceremonies of the "First Temple period," and the Book of Mormon temple ceremonies were essentially the same. The time we are talking about a period that begins about 1,000 B.C., during David's reign. It includes all of the time when Solomon's Temple was standing, and concludes in 587 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. That destruction occurred about 12 or 14 years *after* Lehi left Jerusalem, so the Lehi/Nephi story begins within, but just at the end of the First Temple period. After the Jews returned to rebuild Jerusalem they were a part of the Persian Empire, and for either political or religious reasons — or both — they apparently never resumed practicing their pre-exilic temple ceremonies. But Lehi left Jerusalem *before* the Babylonian captivity, so the religion and the temple services he and his colony took with them were those associated with Solomon's Temple.

Premise 2. The most important of those ceremonies occurred during the New Year festival which included celebrations of the New Year's Day; the Day of Atonement. the Feast of Tabernacles

(the temple drama which culminated in the king's endowment/enthronement coronation rites); and the Great Feast which concluded the twenty-two day ceremonies.

Premise 3. The Psalms (but in a different arrangement from the one we now have) were the text of the liturgy of the festival, including the temple drama. That is: If one wants to know what words that were spoken or sung during the endowment/coronation ceremonies, one can find them in the Psalms – perhaps not in all of the Psalms, and certainly not in their present order – but in the Psalms, nonetheless.³⁰

Premise 4. Old Testament scholars have long since worked out the events of the ceremonies and drama of the New Year festival and have tried to identify which psalms were used during which events of the ceremonies. But they have no firm key by which they can put those events together in the correct sequence. Mowinckel's comment on the royal procession is symptomatic of the difficulty – impossibility, actually – of accurately reconstructing the sequence of the festival's events from only the information he and others can gather from the Psalms and other ancient New Eastern sources. Relative to the grand procession around the city he wrote,

We *may* be dealing with different parts of one and the same procession; but there may also be references to several processions on different days of the festival. Therefore it will always be a doubtful undertaking to try to reconstruct the picture of Yahweh's royal

³⁰ Clearly, not all the psalms were sung as part of the pre-exilic New Year festival, but scholars find it impossible to agree on which psalms were written when. Some of the psalms are clearly very early, others are not. For example, Psalm 137 actually says it was written after the Babylonian captivity:

¹ By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion .

^{2.} We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

³ For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

entry on the basis of these psalms. 31

I have almost unbounded respect for Sigmund Mowinckel. He was a great scholar who devoted his life to studying the Psalms and identifying them in terms of the part each played in the celebration of the New Year festival and temple rites, but he did not know — and he wrote that he did not know — how to string those parts together in a meaningful sequence. My attempts to do that and thereby reconstruct the endowment/coronation events of the festival may be no better. The difference is, I began with an assumed pattern, and fit the festival to it. To me the fit seems perfect, so I think I got it right — but my thinking so is not sufficient evidence that I did. Call it a working hypothesis if you like. In my reconstruction of the New Year's festival I used the events of the ceremonies as Mowinckel and other scholars have described them, but I have not worried about the sequence. I have simply arranged the events as they fell into the pattern which is as familiar to you as it is to me. It is the same sequence of events and ideas which is found in the scriptures: the books of Abraham, Moses, Job, the gospel of John, Third Nephi, and elsewhere. Briefly, the events of the ancient New Year festival drama, in that sequence, are these:

- 1)The deliberations and decisions of Elohim, Jehovah, the prophets, earthly kings, and others in the Council in Heaven;
- 2) A rebellion of one of the gods, and a war in Heaven;
- 3) The creation story;
- 4) The Garden of Eden.
- 5) After Adam and Eve leave the Garden, they are severely tested by the problems of this world.
- 6) Those problems are represented by a series of difficulties: Jerusalem is attacked by its enemies: the king is killed and goes to the word of the dead.
- 7) Jehovah himself goes into the underworld and rescues the king from death and hell
- 8) In a grand procession the king, the Ark of the Covenant (representing the presence of God), and the people walk around the city, redefining it as sacred space: establishing a New Jerusalem, a new Temple, and a Zion community.
- 9) In the temple the king is re-enthroned, and
- 10) the old covenants are re-established. The king and the people are again (symbolically if not literally) in the presence of God.

I will write all that in much more detail below, but what I wish to say here is that I am working

³¹ Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 170.

on the assumption that THAT is the story – and the sequence of the ceremonies represented by the Psalms is THAT story and THAT sequence. (It would be fun if we could find a way to put all of the Psalms back together in their original order, then we could recreate most of the actual text of the ancient Israelite temple ceremony.)

Premise 5. At some point during the above sequence, but before Jehovah was represented as having descended into the underworld to rescue the king, the annual temple ceremony included a detailed presentation about the acts and the meaning of the Saviour's atonement. That was the central theme of the entire drama – it was virtually the definition of Jehovah as creator and triumphant God – just as it was the central theme of Abinadi's teachings. Therefore I believe that Abinadi's teachings about the atonement both illuminate, and are illuminated by the ancient temple drama of the New Year festival. Therefore, for us, I believe the festival and its Psalms can provide insights to both the background of Abinadi's teachings and also the background by which he was understood by Alma, king Noah, and others who heard him. (I will have a good deal more to say about that hereafter).

Premise 6. Because Lehi left Jerusalem before the Babylonian exile, the religion he took with him was that of pre-exilic Israel. That is obvious enough, but it is important because it means the Book of Mormon does not reflect any of the post-exilic Jewish apostasy which colors many parts of the Old Testament. It also means that through the Book of Mormon one should be able to find much of the meaning of the pre-exilic festivals which were originally associated with the Law of Moses and its temple rites. (That last statement needs some explanation because it asks, "What were the temple rites associated with the Law of Moses?" The answer is in D&C 124:38, where the Lord is explaining why the Saints must build the Nauvoo Temple, he says:

For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was.

I take it that means the ordinances which the Saints were to receive and perform in the Nauvoo temple were the same as those of the ancient Tabernacle and later of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem.)

In the Book of Mormon, when Abinadi and other prophets discussed the atonement, I believe they did it in the context of the people's understanding of their temple rites and doctrine, as expressed in the festivals of the ancient religion. In pre-exilic times, that understanding was annually taught and reinforced in the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama. Since I believe that both God and his prophets taught the principles of the atonement in the context of the people's understanding of their temple, I also believe that was precisely what Abinadi was doing.

Premise 7. A major difficulty in of our understanding Abinadi's discourse is that we do not know what he meant by "the Law of Moses." It is obvious that he meant something much more involved than just the list of dos and don'ts, and the Aaronic priesthood duties which we can glean from our Old Testament. A hint of what Abinadi meant comes at the conclusion of his speech. As I shall discuss below, he quoted Isaiah's description of a prayer circle³² and spoke of one's seeing the arm of God. After that, in all of Mosiah 16, he address the most awesome question of them all: what really happens when one gets to the veil? Then, as a conclusion of that discussion Abinadi said:

³² See Hugh Nibley, "The Early Christian Prayer Circle," in Nibley's *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (SLC, Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), p. 45 - 99; Donald W. Parry, "Temple Worship and a Possible Reference to a Prayer Circle in Psalm 24," BYU Studies, v. 32, n. 4, 1957, p. 58 - 62.

And now, ought ye not to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved? Therefore, if ye teach the law of Moses, also teach that it is a shadow of those things which are to come — Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father. Amen. (Mosiah 16:13-15)

In the context of Abinadi's speech, it appears that not only were the coronation ordinances and the Ten Commandments a part of the Law of Moses, but the prayer circle and one's seeing the arm of God were also part of the ceremonies connected with the Law. That suggests the Law of Moses which Abinadi was referring to was much more inclusive than the apparently abbreviated version we have in the Old Testament.

My statement that we really have no idea what Abinadi meant when he said the "Law of Moses" requires some more explaining than just that.

The angel told Nephi,

Behold it [our Bible] proceedeth out of the mouth of a Jew. And I, Nephi, beheld it; and he said unto me: The book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel; and it also containeth many of the prophecies of the holy prophets; and it is a record like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass, save there are not so many; nevertheless, they contain the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel; wherefore, they are of great worth unto the Gentiles. (1 Nephi 13:23)

So a reasonable question is: What is the relationship between the contents of our Old Testament and the contents of the Brass Plates? The answer may be, "Much less than one might expect."

Much of our Old Testament was either written or edited after Lehi left Jerusalem. Some scholars believe the history books, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were written after Lehi after the Babylonian captivity. If that is so, they could not have been included on the Brass Plates. The author of Kings claims to have had access to primary sources from the royal

archives. Unless they were part of the booty Nebuchadnezzar took with him to Babylon, those archives would probably have been destroyed when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. In any case, some of Kings and other historical writings may be pre-exilic in its origin, but we cannot know how much or which parts might have been on the Brass Plates. Furthermore, much of our Old Testament pre-exilic history focuses on the kingdom of Judah, and, if the Brass Plates were the official royal record of the house of Manasseh (as I believe they were), they would have had a very different historical focus. After the kingdom of Solomon split into two parts, Manasseh was in the kingdom of Israel, and it is very likely that the Brass Plates reflected that, rather than Jewish history.

We know that the Brass Plates contained what was probably an unedited version of the books of Moses – but we do not know how to compare that with our Old Testament, because we don't know what has been taken out of or added to our version. Our Old Testament version of the Torah was severely edited by the Jews after the Babylonian captivity (a comparison between Genesis and the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price will show how severely). Some scholars see so much evidence of that editing that they assert that the five books of Moses were actually written between 300 and 200 BC (I suspect that editing accounts for the fact that the God of the Old Testament appears to be so much more harsh than the God of the New Testament). Consequently, when Book of Mormon writers refer to the Law of Moses, one cannot be sure whether they were talking about something which we have in our Old Testament, or something which has been edited out of our version.

The Brass Plates also contained at least some of the Psalms – there are enough direct and indirect quotes from the Psalms in the Book of Mormon to convince me of that. If, as I believe, the

Psalms were the text of their New Year festival, then that would be sufficient reason to believe the Brass Plates contained a full set of the Psalms – probably a more complete set than we have, excluding whichever ones were written after Lehi left. However, there is not enough evidence in the Book of Mormon for us to know how similar our Book of Psalms is to theirs. The order of our Psalms was rearranged during the period of apostasy after the Babylonian captivity, so in terms of arrangement, their Psalms would have been very different from ours. Even though I am personally sure they had a full set of the pre-exilic psalms, I am quite confident that we do not.

The Brass Plates also contained the books of Zenos, Zenock, and probably a lot of other prophets whom we have never heard of. From the Book of Mormon quotes of those sources it is evident that the Brass Plates contained a much more complete set of prophecies about the Saviour than we can find in our Old Testament.

Of the major Prophets we know about: Isaiah's writings were on the Brass Plates. Abinadi's sermon and First Nephi chapters 20 and 21 contain quotes from what scholars call Second Isaiah, so we know the latter part of Isaiah was also pre-exilic. (However, as I will explain, it is my considered opinion that Isaiah 44:28 through the changes made in Isaiah 48 written after the destruction of Jerusalem.) The evidence in the Book of Mormon is that with certain exceptions our Old Testament version of Isaiah is in remarkably good condition, and therefor quite trustworthy. I suspect there are two very simple explanations for that – 1) we need it in our time, just as the Nephites needed it in theirs, so the Lord preserved it in order to make sure we would have it. 2) It was also helpful that Isaiah wrote in *double entente*. The surface text is beautiful, if sometimes almostincomprehensible poetry, but the sub-text is a magnificent commentary on the temple ceremonies of the New Year festival. The post-exilic editors had lost the key to understanding the

temple sub-text so they did not know how to effectually change the surface text. So Isaiah stayed intact.

We learn that some of the writings of Jeremiah were on the Brass Plates, but we do not know which, if any of those writings are the same as what we have in our Old Testament.

Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel was a contemporary of Lehi, but he was in Mesopotamia, so it is extremely unlikely that any part of his writings was on the Brass Plates. Of the minor prophets, some lived before and others after Lehi, but none of those who lived before are mentioned in the Book of Mormon, so we do not know whether their writings were on the Brass Plates or not. Of course, the other Old Testament books which were written after Lehi left, such as Daniel, Ezra, and Malachi, could not possibly have been on the Brass Plates. So except for Isaiah, the Psalms, perhaps some of what we have of Jeremliah, quotes from Zenos and Zenock, and parts of the five books of Moses, we don't know what was on the Brass Plates.

Premise 8. Isaiah's writings, beginning with his discussion of the Council in Heaven in chapter 40, and continuing through to the end of the book, are primarily a commentary on the temple drama of the New Year festival, and therefore are also a commentary on the Psalms. Consequently, Isaiah's writings are not only a key by which one might reconstruct the Psalms' original arrangement, but are also our best contemporary window into the meaning of both the Psalms and the ancient Israelite temple rites.

Premise 9. I find in the Book of Mormon much evidence that its authors understood that in our time, we would have the same ordinances as were presented in the ancient temples, and therefore

the Book of Mormon authors wrote with the presumption that we would understand those Psalms, quotes from Isaiah, and other connotations which are found throughout the Book of Mormon in the same temple-context in which they understood and wrote them.

Because the Psalms were the text of their temple ceremony, and Isaiah is a commentary on the message of the temple drama, whenever the Book of Mormon prophets quote, paraphrase, or otherwise refer to Isaiah or the Psalms, it is helpful to me to understand that those Book of Mormon teachings are probably about the ancient temple rites – and about the atonement in the context of the ancient temple-drama presentation. For example, the Saviour quoted or paraphrased small portions of a number of the psalms in the Beatitudes, just as he did snippets from passages of Isaiah – but he offered no explanation about the meaning of what he was saying. The fact that those Beatitudes can best be understood in the context of the psalms, Isaiah, and the New Year's endowment/enthronement rites seems to me to be conclusive evidence that the Saviour was aware that the people understood those brief quotes in that context, and therefore they required no explanation from him. So when he made those very concise references to the Psalms and Isaiah, the people could follow the whole endowment/enthronement ordinances and covenant ceremonies in their minds, and know precisely what the Saviour was talking about. (I'll write more about the Beatitudes below.)

Premise 10. I believe the New Testament gospel writers understood the Psalms and Isaiah in the same way the Book of Mormon writers understood them. The fact that after the return of the Jews from Babylon, the Jerusalem temple and government officials seem not to have permitted the performance of those temple ceremonies cannot be taken as evidence that the faithful among the people had forgotten them. Memory of those ceremonies are not only found in the form and

structure of the gospels, but also in Jesus' sermons, and in the events of his life such as his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. After his death, the early Christians certainly knew a great deal about the ancient Israelite endowment/coronation rites. 33 Therefore, I believe that when the Gospel writers use the Psalms or Isaiah to teach about Jesus' atonement, the Book of Mormon writers would have understood those same Psalms and those same passages from Isaiah in the same way. For that reason, I believe one can use the New Testament's references to the Psalms to learn which of the psalms the Book of Mormon people would have understood to be about the Saviour's atonement.

Premise 11. The summation of all the above is this: my fundamental premise is that when one finds a quote or paraphrase from the Psalms or Isaiah in the New Testament or in the Book of Mormon, one can – indeed, one ought to – assume that in most instances it was intended by its author be understood as a direct reference to the sacred drama and ceremonies of the ancient Israelite temple. This premise underlies everything I am about to write about Abinadi.

³³ Nibley, Hugh, "Evangelium Quadraginta Dierum: The Forty-day Mission of Christ – The Forgotten Heritage," in Nibley's *Mormonism and Early Christianity* (SLC, Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), p. 10 - 44.

Along with those premises, there are some other ideas which need to be treated as premises. They have to do with the scriptures' use of "code words." There are two kinds of code words and code phrases in the scriptures. 1) There are a few technical terms in the scriptures which have virtually lost their meaning because of the way we use them in our everyday speech. Those words were clearly understood by both the writers and the readers at the time they were written, and so were never intended to be code words at all. Three examples are "faith," "redeem," and "meek" – I will explain all three later on. 2) Words which were deliberately used by an author to encode his ideas. An example where (if one knows the language of the sub-text) the encoded sub-text is actually more intelligible than the surface text is Isaiah 61. The Rosetta Stone for Isaiah 61 is D&C 138 which is about the fulfillment of the events Isaiah prophetically described. The sub-textual meaning of Isaiah 61 is almost entirely unknown to scholars because one has to know D&C 138 to be able to read the sub-text, or even to know that it is there. That Isaiah passage is all about vicarious temple work for the dead, and if one doesn't understand temple work, one cannot know what the code words stand for (I'll also talk more about Isaiah 61 later on.).³⁴ A similar example is Isaiah 49 as it is written in 1 Ne. 21. On its surface it can mean many things, but in its sub-text it is about the restoration of the temple by the Prophet Joseph. There again, one must know both the history of Joseph Smith and the language of the temple to read that sub-text. "Mountain" often means "temple." "Path," "way," "highway" all refer to the

³⁴ As I will discuss later, scholars recognize that the washing, anointing, clothing, crowning, and new name are the central rites of both ancient and modern coronation ceremonies, but the key to our understanding in is D&C 138:24 where we learn that Isaiah 61 was a prophecy which was fulfilled when the Saviour visited the world of spirits during the three days between his death and resurrection.

³⁵ For example see "Lecture 16, The Mountain of the Lord's House," in Hugh Nibley, *Ancient*

sequences of ordinances and covenants by which one "walks" through the temple, and also to the "way" one lives according to those covenants when one comes out of the temple (Also, more about that later). In those two chapters of Isaiah, the encoded sub-text actually makes more sense than the surface text – but that is only true if one knows the language of the temple sub-text.

All this business about original meanings and code words is interesting, and may be valuable, but its value must be tempered by one's individual inspiration, or revelation. No one except the Prophet has the right to assert that his own individual beliefs and ideas ought to be accepted by anyone else as either truth or as a standard by which to judge truth. There are only two standards one can rely upon: What the scriptures and the Brethren say, and what the Holy Ghost confirms. Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained,

"Those who believe the scriptural canon is closed typically approach the reading of scriptures by focusing on what was meant at the time the scriptural words were spoken or written. In this approach, a passage of scripture may appear to have a single meaning and the reader typically relies on scholarship and historical methods to determine it.

"The Latter-day Saint approach is different. Professor Hugh Nibley illuminates this in his essay "The Prophets and the Scripture." He observes that "men fool themselves when they think for a moment that they can read the scripture without ever adding something to the text, or omitting something from it. For in the wise words of St. Hilary,... 'Scripture consists not in what one reads, but in what one understands." Consequently, he continues, "in the reading of the scripture we must always have an interpreter" (The World and the Prophets, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, 12 vols., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book -Co., 1987, 3:202).

"He concludes: 'The question is not whether or not one shall add to the word of the scripture -- thousands of volumes of learned commentary have already done that -- but whether such addition shall come by the wisdom of men or the revelation of God" (ibid., p.206)..."³⁶

I believe that what Elder Oaks wrote is true, and in its light I would like to say something about

Documents and the Pearl of Great Price (Provo, Utah, Brigham Young University, Division of Continuing Education, 1986).

³⁶ Elder Dallin H. Oaks "Scripture Reading & Revelation," *Ensign*, January 1995, p.7-9.

my own writings, and particularly about what you will read below. When you read something which I have written and which you do not agree with, call it my "opinion." When you read something which you do agree with, call it my "considered opinion." If you come upon something which the Holy Ghost says is true, call it "truth." But call nothing you read "truth" without the witness of the Spirit.

Necessary reiteration

All of the above premises are defendable; some may be only possible, some likely, others probable; but none are provable. If someone wishes to show that I don't know what I am talking about, those premises have made me vulnerable enough that it will be an easy task. How can one "prove" that the Book of Mormon people understood Psalm 22 about the atonement in the same way it was understood by the writers of the New Testament gospels – when the Book of Mormon does not even quote the atonement psalms?³⁷ One can't. But if one begins with the assumption that the religious festivals of the Book of Mormon were the same as those practiced in Solomon's Temple, and if one assumes the psalms were a part of the ceremonies on both hemispheres, then lots of things in the Book of Mormon become multi-dimensional in their scope, and help make the people seem more personal than they would seem otherwise. I am going to write about many of those things, and I will base my rationale on the premises I have mentioned but which I cannot prove.

³⁷ The beginning of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is quoted in Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 to represent the Saviour on the cross. The rest end of the psalm tells of the Saviour teaching the gospel to the spirits of the dead.

Let me say again, because it needs saying again, what I am writing is not church doctrine, it is only my opinion, and as I learn more my opinions may change. Opinions are like trees. Only dead ones are firm and unmovable. Living ones are flexible and subject to change. A twig may become a branch. The branch may grow and support many smaller branches, or the branch may die. Dead branches should be pruned away. In a living tree (even evergreens which loose a third of their needles every year) there is constant change with new growth, new strength, discard, and redistribution of energy. When changes stop, the tree is dead - so is it with opinion.

What I write below contains two kinds of interwoven thoughts. One is the expression of my firm testimony of the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Only Begotten Son of the Father, and of his gospel as it was restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and is taught by the LDS church today. The other kind of thoughts are only my own deductions and speculations. Sometimes these two kinds of thoughts support each other in my mind, so that in my writing I do not differentiate between them. My testimony is true. Some of my opinions are well thought out and based on premises that are true. Some of them are flawed, and I have not yet noticed it. The flaws usually occur when the opinions are founded on an incorrect premise, or when the logic is not sound. When I write these flawed ideas, I have no desire to lead anyone astray. Indeed I believe I cannot do so unless that person accepts as untested "truth" what I have intended to be understood as only my opinion. So please read what I write with discretion.

Now, returning to the idea of code words, I would like to tell you how I understand "way," "faith," "righteousness," "secret" and a few others.

One of the reasons Isaiah's writings have survived the centuries relatively untouched by editors who might have distorted his meanings is that the editors did not know what his meanings were because thay were hidden in the sub-text of his poetry. The surface text of Isaiah's poetry is beautifully symbolic, so it can be used to mean whatever one wishes. Perhaps the greatest gift that Hugh Nibley has given to Latter-day Saints is that he has taught us that Isaiah's poetry is not just symbolic, but it is encoded – and Nibley has taught us much of the code – "Mountain" means "temple." That information alone is enough to open the sub-textual windows of Isaiah so one can look inside and begin to see what is really there. Let me give you just a few examples.

- 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.
- 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2 as read in 2 Ne 12:2-3.)

And Isaiah 35:

- 1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. ...
- 8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.
- 9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:
- 10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and

³⁸ Hugh Nibley, "The Mountain of the Lord's House," in *Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe [n.p., n.d.); Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, edited by Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City and Provo: Desert Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992).

everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35:1,8-10)
And Isaiah 49:

1 And again: Hearken, O ye house of Israel, all ye that are broken off and are driven out because of the wickedness of the pastors of my people; yea, all ye that are broken off, that are scattered abroad, who are of my people, O house of Israel. Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken ye people from far; the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. [foreordination]

2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword

That appears to be a reference to the priesthood power of the spoken word. There are a number of scriptures which equate the power of God's word to a sharp sword. Examples are: Ephesians 6:17; Revelation 1:16, 2:16, 19:15-21; D&C 6:2, 14:2, 33:1];

in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me [another reference to ordination or blessing], and made me a polished shaft [an arrow is polished by rubbing it with oil so it will not warp. This is probably a reference to one's being anointed.³⁹]; in his quiver hath he hid me;

Often, the Lord's servants are not the obviously great men and women of the earth. In that verse we have references to priesthood authority; blessings or ordinations; and a royal anointing.

3 And said unto me: Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

4 Then I said, ["I" is Israel – Latter-day Israel, as it turns out] I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and in vain; surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.

The previous chapter is about the "war in heaven" in the spirit world, this reference to "I have labored in vain" may have something to do with that.

5 And now, saith the Lord – that formed me from the womb that I should be his servant [another reference to foreordination], to bring Jacob again to him – though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.

6 And he said: It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give thee for a light

³⁹ In the dictionary at the back of James Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. #1305, it does not specify an anointing with oil. What it says is: "to clarify (i.e. brighten, examine, select: – make bright, choice, chosen, cleanse (be clean), clearly, polished, (shew self) pure (-ify), purge (out)."

to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.

That is difficult to understand because it is a date: the time when Israel is not gathered, but Israel will be appointed to gather Israel and to be a light to the gentiles. It is the same date as: "desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose;" and "in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains."

7 Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to him [the "him" in the next verse is the Prophet Joseph Smith] whom man despiseth, to him whom the nations abhorreth, to servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful.

There are two kinds of kings: people who rule nations and sacral kings who have been anointed in the temple. There are also two kinds of princes: political leaders, ⁴⁰ and sacral princes who have been anointed to become kings. One rises to make a covenant (2 Kings 23:1-3; Psalm 82). These kings and princes arise and worship because the Lord is faithful in keeping his covenants, so I suppose it is referring to sacral kings and princes rather than the world's political leaders.

8 Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time have I heard thee, O isles of the sea, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee my servant for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

If one goes to Footnote #a in verse 8, it identifies "my servant" by leading the reader to 2 Ne. 3:6-15 where Joseph Smith is identified by name. "To establish the earth" is an idea that is expressed elsewhere in conjunction with the coming of Elijah, 41 as "to inherit the desolate heritages" is the language of Isaiah 61 which describes vicarious work for the dead.

9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners: Go forth; to them that sit in darkness: Show yourselves. [Again the language of Isaiah 61 about freeing those in spirit prison by vicarious temple work] They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. ["high places are places of worship and sacrifice — mini temples]

10 They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them;

and

He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. (JS-History 1:39)

⁴⁰ For example, It is not clear who Hezekiah's princes are. They may have been his counselors, or heads of clans, or both. In 2 Chronicles 30: 1-6, 32:1-3 they are shown to be involved in making both religious and military decisions.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.(Malachi 4:5-6 and 3 Nephi 25:5-6)

for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

In Isaiah 61 the food and drink are identified as the product of the plowman and the winedresser – bread and wine – the sacrament – which are symbolic of the Saviour as the fruit of the tree of life and the waters of life

11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. [temple code words]

12 And then, O house of Israel, behold, these shall come from far; and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. [Modern Israel will gather to the temples] (Isaiah 49 as in 1 Nephi 21:1-12)

Each of the three Isaiah passages I have quoted are the same in three important ways: 1) they appear to prophecies be about the last days; 2) they all use "mountain" to represent temples; and 3) they all identify "way" or "path" or "highway" with the idea of ascending that mountain, as in: "And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted."

To "walk" in the "way" or "path" are consistently used as code words in these kinds of temple contexts. The "way," especially in Isaiah and the Psalms, often means the path by which one climbs that mountain. In other words, the sequence of ordinances, covenants, and that one learned when one participated in the ancient temple rites. But it had another meaning as well. My dear friend Jim Cannon says the most important thing one does in the temple is the very last thing one does — one leaves the building. He came in as one person and goes out as another with a new identity. One learns the "way" in the temple, and if it becomes a viable part of one's life, it also becomes the "way" or "path" one "walks" as he seeks the blessings associated with covenants

An example of the use of a code word which were not intended to be a code word is the New

Testament use of *pistis*, which is translated "faith."

The meaning of faith: *Pistis* – the token of a covenant

Not long ago I heard someone behind the pulpit say, "Even though Faith is one of the most important principles of the gospel, it is difficult to define and impossible to understand. That's why faith is something one must just *have*." I thought to myself: "Well, there's a nearly perfect example of pure hogwash!"

The speaker behind the pulpit was not trying to exude hogwash; he was simply explaining faith as his culture explains it: As the notion that whatever faith is, if one does it hard enough, one can get God to do things the way one wants them done. That is: that faith is an anonymity by whose elusive powers God may be persuaded and pleased *just now*, so if one is especially attentive *just now*, or if one says prayers and wishes or believes really hard, God can be cajoled or bribed into doing what one wants him to do. This concept probes to the heart of the great religious mystery: is God a vending machine? — and is believing-really-hard the nickle one puts in, in order to get out what one is wishing for? If the answer is "yes," then one must concede that the will of God is inconsistent and unpredictable, and can be controlled by the fervent desires of irrational humans. I am not trying to be frivolous or sarcastic. I have only restated the assessment of "faith" which was written by one of the most respected biblical scholars of the last century.

Faith is a peculiarly Christian concept. While other religious traditions have aspects of what the churches have come to name "faith," none has the specific quality of intellectual assent that distinguishes faith from fidelity. The problem of faith and the central discussion of it arises in the context of the medieval attempts to codify and integrate the Christian experience into the emerging philosophical language of the scholastics. ⁴²

⁴² Article by David Noel Freedman, "Faith," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York, 1992, vol. 2 p. 744-745.

The problem is this, as Freedman observed, most of Christianity (including some preachers behind Mormon pulpits) assume that believing is independently sufficient to get one's prayers answered the way one wants them answered – and thus "distinguishes faith from fidelity." But in the scriptures faith and fidelity often mean almost precisely the same thing, and that kind of fidelity evinces pure power. Let me give you an example of what I mean. Pretend you are an artist who wishes to create a painting depicting this verse:

For the brother of Jared said unto the mountain Zerin, Remove – and it was removed. And if he had not had faith it would not have moved; wherefore thou workest after men have faith. (Ether 12:30)

As you begin to sketch, you must decide two things: 1) is the brother of Jared kneeling or standing? And 2) does he have his fingers crossed as evidence of intense wishing, or, what is he doing with his arm? To help you with your painting let me give you two incorrectly paraphrased versions of Ether 12:30 – each representing a different meaning of "faith."

Misquote one:

For the brother of Jared said unto the mountain Zerin, Remove – and it was removed. And if he Zerin, Remove – and it was removed. And if he had not believed really, really hard it would not have moved; for notwithstanding how irrational their wish may be, thou workest after men have believed most fervently.

Misquote two:

For the brother of Jared said unto the mountain had not acted correctly according to the covenant it would not have moved: wherefore thou workest after men evoke the power of the covenant

So now, how are you going to paint the brother of Jared – what is he doing – is he praying to God or is he addressing the mountain? (It says he "said unto the mountain.") Is he kneeling or standing? What is he doing with his arm? The way you choose to paint him will be the way you define his faith. Moroni said he did it by "faith." Paul's assertion that

"faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," (Hebrews 11:1)

insists that faith is a *something* – if evidence is elusive or undefinable it is not evidence at all. Peter wrote that faith is a mechanism:

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation..." (1 Peter 1:1-5)

Again, if faith is the mechanism by which God exercises his power to save, then it is a *something*. People also act through faith, but if the faith through which one acts is elusive or undefinable, it is not power: one may perceive it as a kind of hoped-for magic, but it is not real power. The elusive concept of "faith" on which the man behind the pulpit was relying is a Mormon holdover from medieval Catholicism. During the dark ages the Catholic Church did not know what the "evidence" was about, and they had lost the "power," so they replaced both with a kind of wishing which worked better if one wished really, really hard. (If one had access to the relic of a saint, or wood from "the real cross" then it was more effectual than if one did not.) Protestants accepted part of that notion, so in Christian medieval and post-medieval theological language, "faith" became a strong belief – it didn't matter whether the belief was based on rational or irrational premises, it was its intensity which was the important thing. Therefore it could be said by the man behind the pulpit that faith "is difficult to define and impossible to understand."

In our translation of the Old Testament the word "faith" is found only twice, and in both instances it is translated from the Hebrew word that is everywhere else rendered as "trust." The word denotes one's relationship with God, having to do with one's appreciation of God's integrity in keeping his covenants – knowing that he is a God of truth who cannot lie. Trust is an

appreciation and anticipation of another's integrity. A biblical scholar who wrote about the origins of "faith" in Old Testament times, described it as the trust one would expect in a contractual or covenant relationship:

The meaning of faith must be seen in relation to the covenant.... The covenant implied a mutuality of obligation (Deut. 26:16-19). Yahweh can be relied on to keep his part of the contract, to "keep the covenant and the steadfast love" (Deut. 7-9); this is his "faith" or faithfulness. Faith on the side of his earthly partner is to be shown by keeping the "commandments and the statutes and the ordinances" (6:17;7:11)....In addition to this obligation to keep the commandments, the following words of Deuteronomy may be noted: man is to heed (lit. "hear") the statutes (4:1; 7:12); to cleave or hold fast to Yahweh (4:4; 10:20); to seek and turn to him (4:29-30); to turn, in the sense of "repent," after apostasy (30:2-10); to obey his voice (4:30); to love him "with all your heart," etc. (6:5); to fear [respect] him (6:2, 13; 10:20); to remember him (7:18-19; 8:2-3, 18-20; 9:7).

So both the concept of "trust" in the Old Testament, and "faith" in the New Testament are covenant based.

An interesting thing has happened in the evolution of English word "faith." The Middle English *feith* meant trust. Even though the New Testament's theological concept of "faith" was changed to reflect the then current Christian theology, over time its secular use retained much of its original meaning. For example, in the sentence, "I have faith that he will keep his promise," the faith is a rational trust that someone will do what he said he would do: it is founded on a formal or informal contract or covenant, and has nothing whatever to do with wishing. Similarly, in the phrase, "faithful servant," the servant is faithful because of his integrity – there is no gap between what he says and what he does. His faithfulness is defined in terms of a contract, covenant, or a mutually understood arrangement. It has to do with trust and integrity, but has nothing to do with wishing – not even with wishing really, really hard.

⁴³ Article by E. C. Blackman in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Abingdon Press, New York, 1962, vol. 2 p. 225-226.

In Paul's day, pistis was not a religious word. It was used as either a diplomatic term which had to do with treaty or covenant; or else an economic term which had to do with contract or covenant. Paul and other Christian missionaries sometimes tended not to use words that were already established religious terms to teach their new religion, 44 because the religious words the Greeks used already had meanings which were different from the Christian ideas – just as Mormons sometimes do not use some Protestant terms because they mean something which is not compatible with Mormon theology, such as "born again." That is a powerful and very important scriptural concept, but it is a phrase Mormons cannot use when doing missionary work in the South because the Baptists and others have already defined it their way. If we used the phrase it would be understood according to the hearer's prior learning, and unless we laboriously redefined it, our words would be tied to their definition, so we do not use it. Paul apparently avoided a similar problem by using diplomatic and economic terms to convey his message. For example, "redeem" meant to ransom or purchase. We use the word the same way when we buy something with a gift certificate. Paul taught that we are purchased from the powers of sin by the blood of Christ, and he used the commercial term "redeem" to describe that effect of the atonement. He, James, and others apparently chose to use pistis, which is translated "faith," for a similar reason.45

Almost every time the word "faith" is used in the New Testament, it is a translation from the Greek word *pistis* (or *pistos*, or another of their cousins). In Kittel's ten volume *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, one finds more than 50 pages discussing *pistos, pistis*, and

^{44 &}quot;Earnest" in Ephesians 1:14 is another example of a legal term being used as a religious one

⁴⁵ Another example is the legal term "earnest" as he uses it in Ephesians 1:14.

related Greek words. In his primary definition of *pistis*, he writes the following:

"Stress is often laid on the fact that this [pistis] is a higher endowment than wealth. ... Concretely [pistis] means the 'guarantee' which creates the possibility of trust, that which may be relied on, or the assurance of reliability, 'assurance.' The first use here is in the sphere of sacral law: ... [Pistis] is the 'oath of fidelity,' 'the pledge of faithfulness,' 'security.' This lends on the one side to the sense of 'certainty,' 'trustworthiness,' on the other to that of 'means of proof,' 'proof.' In particular [pistis] denotes the reliability of persons, 'faithfulness.' It belongs especially to friendship." ⁴⁶

So a *pistis* is the "means of proof" – the actual *reason* one has for trusting the honesty of an individual, or the validity of a contract or covenant. But more to the point, the connotation, "It belongs especially to friendship," suggests why James, Paul and others would have chosen the word to represent the tokens of gospel covenants. A *pistis* may be as simple as a handshake, or even a smile – but it is *something* perceivable or tangible, and an actual evidence of integrity. It is, as Paul says, "the *substance* of things hoped for" and the "*evidence* of things not seen," (Hebrews 11:1 italics added)

For example, if you and I agreed that I will buy your bicycle for \$500, we would "shake on it." The agreement would be the covenant, the handshake would be the *pistis*. A wedding ring is a *pistis* – it is not the covenant, but is a token of the covenant. The garments given to Adam and Eve in the Garden were tokens of covenants made between God and man. The garment is the *pistis*. In your imaginary painting of the brother of Jared, the fact that he is standing, the way he is holding his arm, and the words he speaks – that is the *pistis* (translated "faith"). His power to move the mountain is in the reality of his covenants as is evinced by his use of the tokens of those covenants – so the mountain moves.

⁴⁶ Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., translated by Geffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids Mich., 1964-76), article on '*Pistis*, 6: 177. p. 117. In the text "pistis" is written in Greek letters. In this quote I have written it as "pistis" with brackets around it.

Covenants are two-way contracts. If either party breaks the covenant, its terms are not binding on the other party. But covenants God makes with us are slightly different from that, because, as Moses assured the children of Israel, God's integrity is a constant – God cannot break his part of the covenant – so only human iniquity can obviate the terms of God's covenants with his children.

Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations. (Deuteronomy 7:9)

Usually "faith" means the same thing in the Book of Mormon as it does in the New Testament. So we ought to address the question: How is it that the Golden Plates contained the Greek word, "pistis?" The answer is, "They probably didn't – but no doubt they contained a word which carried the same definition. So whatever word in Reformed Egyptian expressed the concept of a symbol or token that guaranteeing a covenant would be fulfilled, that word was translated "faith." The result is that a modern reader can move easily within the scriptures and be assured that the English words mean the same thing. That assurance not only gives one confidence in reading the scriptures, it greatly facilitates one's understanding: for when an idea is identified in one book of scripture it can be understood in the others as well.

For our part, the tokens of the covenants we make with God are as numerous as the covenants themselves. Ordinances are tokens of covenants; the acts of baptism, the sacrament, other ordinances, and taking upon oneself the name of Christ. But there are other tokens which are not what one wears or what one does, but what one *is*. As Christ is the token of the Father's covenant with us, so, after much preparation and many preliminaries, we ourselves become the token of our covenant with the Father – the way one "walks" the "path" after leaving the "mountain" – forgiving, repenting, obeying God's commandments and instructions, sacrificing a broken heart and contrite spirit, loving his children – all these are "the substance of things hoped for" just as they are "evidence of things not seen."

One can learn a great deal about the meaning of faith on the last page of the Book of Mormon. There, when Moroni wrote of "the covenants of the Eternal Father," he was writing about our coming to Christ. In that covenant, for God's part, the *pistis* is the symbolism of the ordinances and the fullness of the blessings of the atonement. In the covenant of the Father, Christ – the Creator God, the Atoning God, the Loving God – *is* the covenant: He *is* the personification of the covenant – he *is* also the *token of the covenant*, and he *is* the fulfillment of the covenant of the Father. (Moroni 10:31-34) In a word, the Saviour and his atonement are the fact, the token, and the fulfillment of the Father's covenant with his children.

32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye

can in nowise denythe power of God. [Here, "deny" does not mean to claim something is false, rather it means to refuse or withhold, like denying someone entrance to a room.]

This echoes the definition of the gospel which the Saviour gave in 3 Ne. 27, "I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me." Moroni is saying: 1) Christ is the Covenant – everything represented by the covenant is personified in Christ, but more than that, without Christ there would be no covenant at all, because every promise of the covenant – including our very existence – presupposes the atonement. 2) He is also the token of the Father's covenant—the pistis. He is the evidence the Father gives that the covenant will be fulfilled, and our love for him is the evidence we give that our part of the covenant will also be fulfilled. 3) He is also the fulfilment of that covenant – through the testimony of he Holy Ghost one may have hope – to rejoice in the words of eternal life in this world, because one is assured of the fruition of that hope in the world to come. (See Moses 6:59) One can learn a great deal about the meaning of faith on the last page of the Book of Mormon. There, when Moroni wrote of "the covenants of the Eternal Father," he was writing about our coming to Christ. In that covenant, for God's part, the *pistis* is the symbolism of the ordinances and the fullness of the blessings of the atonement. In the covenant of the Father, Christ – the Creator God, the Atoning God, the Loving God – is the covenant: He is the personification of the covenant – he is also the token of the covenant, and he is the fulfillment of the covenant of the Father. (Moroni 10:31-34) In a word, the Saviour and his atonement are the fact, the token, and the fulfillment of the Father's covenant with his children.

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For many Latter-day Saints, faith in Christ is not so much the formal keeping of a contractual trust as it is in an expression of reciprocated love, – "It belongs especially to friendship." So does prayer.

For young Latter-day Saints, their "faith in Christ" is often an extension of their own integrity.

The child kneels beside his bed each morning and evening and presents God with a kind of

shopping list – because he knows God loves him, and because it is appropriate to remind God about what things will be important today. That works for children because it makes sense – in the same way that it makes sense that the child's mother should remind him to not go into the street, or to brush his teeth, or to do her homework. It makes sense to talk to God because he is rational, and he is good, and he listens. And it is important to say "thank you," because "thank you" is always important.

But with time and experience, that trust matures into something quite different from a shopping list. The following autobiographical statement by Stella Oaks (Elder Dallin H. Oaks' mother) is about her experience after her husband died, leaving her with three young children to rear. Her phrase, "I relaxed in my faith," is an important key to understanding the maturation process which moves "faith" from an expression of today's needs to an embrace – from a shopping list to walking with a true and faithful friend.

One June night I knelt alone in prayer, utterly spent, wondering at that midnight hour how humble one had to be to receive an answer to one's pleading. It was just at that moment that I felt an envelopment of the spirit of peace, a profound assurance that God is over all and that it was his will that was in command and not mine. I could finally say, "Thy will be done," and feel the peace instead of guilt. I relaxed in my faith and discovered that I had a new trust in the Lord. ... I was given to know that the Lord loved me and that I would be made equal to my mission. I felt an encircling love that has sustained me ever since that great moment of change in my life. I have had continual hardships and challenges but always the sure knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, our Redeemer, and that he sustains us through the opposition that must arise in all things. 47

The beautiful thing about that story is that it moves her prayers from something like a child's reminding God about one's needs — to "pistis," — a token of the covenant. It leads one from "saying prayers," to knowing how to pray in faith. Prayer under the tutelage of the Spirit is

⁴⁷ Stella, by Her Children and Grandchildren (privately published for her family), p. 156; also in: Stella H. Oaks, "Thy Will Be Done," in Leon R. Hartshorn, Remarkable Stories from the Lives of Latter-day Saint Women, Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1975, vol. 2. p 183-5

always a *pistis*. And her story shows the evolution of prayer from saying "thank you for this blessing this time" to "thank you for being my friend," and "I love you" – because "I love you" is always important.

The marvelous thing about *pistis* in the scriptures is that "faith" and "trust" founded in integrity have a relevance and personal meaning to everyone, no matter where one might be along the "way." Whether one's "faith" is a child's – or a child-like – confidence that God understands how important today's needs are – or whether it is the secure understanding that God keeps his covenants – the word *pistis*, as it is used in the scriptures, speaks to each individual on his own level and invites him to understand that God is a trustworthy friend. So a scripture about faith may convey one idea to one person, and another equally valid idea to another.

When I mentioned a "shopping list," I was not suggesting one should not talk with God about one's daily needs. The Saviour was quite clear about that: "Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed." (3 Nephi 18:21) Amulek taught the same thing, only with more detail.

17 Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you;

- 18 Yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save.
- 19 Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him.
- 20 Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks.
- 21 Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, midday, and evening.

- 22 Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies.
- 23 Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness.
- 24 Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them.
- 25 Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase.
- 26 But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.
- 27 Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.
- 28 And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith.
- 29 Therefore, if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out, (it being of no worth) and is trodden under foot of men.
- 30 And now, my brethren, I would that, after ye have received so many witnesses, seeing that the holy scriptures testify of these things, ye come forth and bring fruit unto repentance. (Alma 34: 17-30)

Notwithstanding all that long list of things for which one should pray, there are two key phrases that are the glue that holds it all together: "ye must pour out your souls let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually" – prayer belongs especially to friendship.

Prayer is like walking in the mountain with a friend. There are times you walk together in silence, your eyes look away and you stop alone and ponder the beauty of a columbine. You see a sunrise so expansive and glorious that it must be shared or it can only be half real. Sometimes

you talk together – your friend and you – but only briefly – a smile can say so much more. Sometimes the words flow like the confluence of two great rivers and the ideas reach out to embrace a world as big as the open sea. Sometimes you walk together quietly and say nothing, and the nothing is more profound than the words. There is no aloneness in the quiet, just as there was no aloneness when all your conscious world was only one columbine. Friendship is like that. So is prayer.

Pistis is friendship, just as it is love. Nevertheless, there are some passages of scripture that can best be understood in light of the full, almost legalistic, covenant relationship that is explicit in the technical meaning of *pistis*. In both the New Testament and the Book of Mormon "faith" is an active, doing word. It is the rationale that sustains trust, as Nephi wrote:

... for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save. (2 Nephi 31:19)

And as Moroni explained:

- 32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.
- 33 And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot. (Moroni 10:32-33. Italics added)

 There are some times when the tokens of the covenants are formalized into specific words and

physical actions. And the correctness of the words and actions validates the covenant. For example, in the covenant of baptism, the physical actions which represent the covenant must be specific:

The wording of the baptismal prayer used in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints is prescribed in the earliest compilation of instructions for Church operations (D&C 20:1). When an individual is baptized, the person with the proper priesthood authority goes down into the water with the candidate, raises his right arm to the square, calls the individual by the full legal name, and says, "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen," and then immerses the candidate. (D&C 20:73)⁴⁸

One must stand in the water with the person being baptized, then one must raise his arm to the square, say the correct words, having the correct authority, then immerse the person under the water. All those actions, along with the words one speaks are part of the token of the covenant. Here are some other examples in the Book of Mormon where the word "faith" might be understood as representing some specific words or actions. One example is the brother of Jared.

And after the brother of Jared had beheld the finger of the Lord, because of the promise which the brother of Jared had obtained by faith [because of the promise which the brother of Jared had obtained by exercising the tokens of the covenant], the Lord could not withhold anything from his sight; wherefore he showed him all things, for he could no longer be kept without the veil. (Ether 12:21)

Other examples are in the explanations which Mormon gave to his friends.

24 And behold, there were divers ways that he did manifest things unto the children of men, which were good; and all things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them.

25 Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ;

Faith in Christ is the exercise of one's reliance on the Covenant that is personified in the Saviour. One's faith in Christ increases as one begins to rely more heavily on the feelings that can be identified as the testimony of the Spirit. Those feelings are the assurance – the evidence – the *pistis* – of the divinity of Christ, of the validity of the atonement, and of the absolute integrity of the Father who first made the covenant. When one "exercises faith in Christ," one evokes the powers associated with the tokens of the Father's Covenants. There are many such tokens we give on our part. Paying tithing is a *pistis*. The sacrament is a mutual token on the parts of both man and God – so is prayer, when prayer is a conversation. Acting on the feelings of charity one has for another human being is a token of one's covenant to live the law of consecration, and thus is also an expression of faith in Christ. Love for the Saviour – experienced as reciprocated love – is the most important token of all – it is the ultimate evidence of the validity of the

⁴⁸ Article on "Baptismal Prayer" in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, (New York: Macmillan, 1992) p. 95.

covenants – both his and ours – where the *pistis* belongs especially to friendship. Because, When the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man like ourselves. And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy. (D&C 130:1-2)

and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing [as in Moroni 10, one does that with one's hand]; and thus it was until the coming of Christ. [If one understands this sequence in relation to the Beatitudes, the "coming" is a personal one.]

26 And after that he came men also were saved by faith in his name [His name is Jesus Christ, which is Joshua Messiah, which is Saviour King]; and by faith, they become the sons of God.

that is the covenant name given in the Beatitudes and also at the conclusion of the New Year festival ordinances.

And as sure as Christ liveth he spake these words unto our fathers, saying: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith [using the tokens of the covenant] believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you.

27 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased because Christ hath ascended into heaven, and hath sat down on the right hand of God, to claim of the Father his rights of mercy which he hath upon the children of men?

28 For he hath answered the ends of the law, and he claimeth all those who have faith [he claimeth all those who have the tokens of the covenant which are] in him; and they who have faith [the tokens of the covenant which are] in him will cleave unto every good thing [that means hold on tight – again, using one's hand]; wherefore he advocateth the cause of the children of men; and he dwelleth eternally in the heavens. (Moroni 7:25 - 28)

Another example is Alma chapter 32. If whatever word Alma used, which Joseph translated "faith," is to be understood as having the same meaning as "faith" in the New Testament, then the seed Alma is talking about does not just mean an abstract "belief," it means the concrete "token of a covenant" – but more probably, as the tree grows, it means a whole series of tokens of a whole series of covenants.

One more word needs to be defined in this regard. In the Book of Mormon (particularly in Moroni 7, but also elsewhere), "hope" is inseparably associated with faith, and is the connecting link between faith and charity. As "faith" does not mean wishing hard, "hope" certainly does not mean wishing with a tinge of uncertainty. I understand "faith" to mean the substantive evidence of the validity of a covenant; and "hope" to mean one is living one's life as though the covenant were already fulfilled, and the blessings associated with it are already in place:

- 41 And what is it that ye shall hope for? Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.
- 42 Wherefore, if a man have faith he must needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope. (Moroni 7:41-41)

I shall want to analyze that more carefully when we discuss Moroni 7, but for now it is sufficient to say that it is, as the Lord explained to Adam: one may "enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory." (Moses 6:59-62)

I believe that "charity" is not so much how one behaves, or what one gives, as it is what and who one *is*. Living the law of consecration and being a personification of charity are virtually the same thing. Charity is both the engine that drives the whole system and the ultimate blessing of the covenant's fulfillment. Alma said,

- faith [the token of the covenant] is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith [the token] ye hope [living as though the covenant were already fulfilled] for things which are not seen [the final realization of the covenant's promises], which are true [They are true because God's love makes the fruition of the covenant absolutely certain – I think, when one talks about the celestial world of God and the gods, truth and charity must be different ways of describing the same thing.]. (Alma 32:21b)

The Prophet Joseph Smith translated Paul's definition as "Faith is the assurance of things hoped

for, the evidence of things not seen." (JST Hebrews 11:1) There a *pistis* is both a substantive guarantee that the covenant is valid, and the visible expression of the authority that covenant authenticates.

Alma understood that.

- 28 But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering;
- 29 Having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day and enter into his rest.
- 30 And may the Lord grant unto you repentance, that ye may not bring down his wrath upon you, that ye may not be bound down by the chains of hell, that ye may not suffer the second death. (Alma 13:28-30. Italics added.)

If one reads Moroni 7 in that light, it comes out rather differently from the way it does if one does not read it that way.

- 1 And now I, Moroni, write a few of the words of my father Mormon, which he spake concerning faith [pistis], hope [living as though that covenant were already fulfilled], and charity; for after this manner did he speak unto the people, as he taught them in the synagogue which they had built for the place of worship.
- 2 And now I, Mormon, speak unto you, my beloved brethren; and it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and his holy will, because of the gift of his calling unto me, that I am permitted to speak unto you at this time.
- 3 Wherefore, I would speak unto you that are of the church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope [absolute confidence] by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until ye shall rest with him in heaven. [I take it that the people to whom he is talking already have and may again see their Saviour.]
- 4 And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable walk with the children of men. ["peacemakers" we are in the coronation scene of the Beatitudes.]

- 5 For I remember the word of God which saith by their works [ordinances⁴⁹] ye shall know them; for if their works be good, then they are good also.⁵⁰
- 6 For behold, God hath said a man being evil cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing.
- 7 For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness. [zedek]
- 8 For behold, if a man being evil giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God.
- 9 And likewise also is it counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray and not with real intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing, for God receiveth none such. 51
- 49 In both the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, where faith and works are used together it seems to mean *pistis* and ordinances:
- 17 Even so faith [pistis], if it hath not works [ordinances], is dead, being alone.
- 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith [pistis], and I have works [ordinances]: shew me thy faith [pistis] without thy works [ordinances], and I will shew thee my faith [pistis] by my works [ordinances].
- 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.
- 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith [pistis] without works [ordinances] is dead?
- 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works [ordinances], when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?
- 22 Seest thou how faith [pistis] wrought with his works [ordinances], and by works [ordinances] was faith [pistis] made perfect?
- 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.
- 24 Ye see then how that by works [ordinances] a man is justified, and not by faith [pistis] only.
- 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works [*ordinances*], when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?
- 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith [pistis] without works [ordinances] is dead also. (James 2: 17-16)
- 50 Not all ordinances are "good," as is evinced by this description of the apostasy in Fourth Nephi:
- "And it came to pass that when two hundred and ten years had passed away there were many churches in the land; yea, there were many churches which professed to know the Christ, and yet they did deny the more parts of his gospel, insomuch that they did receive all manner of wickedness, and did administer that which was sacred unto him to whom it had been forbidden because of unworthiness." (4 Nephi 1:27)
- 51 I never read that without thinking of Claudius in *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 3:
 - "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
 Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

- 10 Wherefore, a man being evil cannot do that which is good; neither will he give a good gift.
- 11 For behold, a bitter fountain cannot bring forth good water; neither can a good fountain bring forth bitter water; wherefore, a man being a servant of the devil cannot follow Christ; and if he follow Christ he cannot be a servant of the devil.
- 12 Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually.
- 13 But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.
- 14 Wherefore, take heed, my beloved brethren, that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil.
- 15 For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night.
- 16 For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.
- 17 But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.
- 18 And now, my brethren, seeing that ye know the light by which ye may judge, which light is the light of Christ, see that ye do not judge wrongfully [Psalm 82]; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged.

That is the eternal burden – either the blessing or the curse – of sacral kingship. For some, like Abinadi who gave his life for Alma, it is the key to his exaltation. For others, like king Noah who took that life, it is the key to his damnation. (See also D&C 1:9-10)

19 Wherefore, I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing,⁵² and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.

⁵² As I will point out below, Moroni also uses that phrase in the last chapter of the Book of

As I will point out below, Moroni also uses that phrase in the last chapter of the Book of Mormon. There, to "lay hold of every good gift" is what one does with one's hand in a zedek context. In the next verse Mormon asks, "...how is it possible that ye can lay hold upon every good thing?" and he answers that question by saying: "And now I come to that faith [pistis – the tokens of the covenants] of which I said I would speak."

- 20 And now, my brethren, how is it possible that ye can lay hold upon every good thing?
- 21 And now I come to that faith [pistis], of which I said I would speak; and I will tell you the way [code word] whereby ye may lay hold [with one's hand] on every good thing.
- 22 For behold, God knowing all things, being from everlasting to everlasting, behold, he sent angels to minister unto the children of men, to make manifest concerning the coming of Christ; and in Christ there should come every good thing. [There, Christ himself is the token of the covenants.]
- 23 And God also declared unto prophets, by his own mouth, that Christ should come.
- 24 And behold, there were divers ways that he did manifest things unto the children of men, which were good; and all things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them.
- 25 Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith [pistis their tokens of the covenant] in Christ [who is the token of the Father's covenant]; and thus by faith [pistis both theirs and his], they did lay hold upon every good thing [using their hands]; and thus it was until the coming of Christ.

If the earlier, "that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until ye shall rest with him in heaven," means what I think it means, then "the coming of Christ" he mentions here is an individual visit rather than a public one. (I discussed v. 25-28 above.)

26 And after that he came men also were saved by faith [pistis] in his name; and by faith [pistis], they become the sons of God. And as surely as Christ liveth he spake these words unto our fathers, saying: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith [pistis] believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you.

Mormon. There, to "lay hold of every good gift" is what one does with one's hand in a zedek context. In the next verse Mormon asks, "...how is it possible that ye can lay hold upon every good thing?" and he answers that question by saying: "And now I come to that faith [pistis – the tokens of the covenants] of which I said I would speak;

27 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased because Christ hath ascended into heaven, and hath sat down on the right hand of God, to claim of the Father his rights of mercy which he hath upon the children of men?

28 For he hath answered the ends of the law, and he claimeth all those who have faith [pistis] in him; and they who have faith [pistis] in him will cleave unto every good thing; wherefore he advocateth the cause of the children of men; and he dwelleth eternally in the heavens.

29 And because he hath done this, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased? Behold I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men.

30 For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith [pistis] and a firm mind in every form of godliness.⁵³

"And because he hath done this, my beloved brethren, have miracles ceased? Behold I say unto you, Nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men." So the Lord sends angels down. An angel means a messenger. And he says (verse 30), "For behold, they are subject unto him to minister according to the word of his command [all they do is represent Him. You don't have to see God face to face; an angel will do] showing themselves [not unto everybody] unto them of strong faith and firm mind in every form of godliness." You receive no witness until after a trial of your faith. And also firm mind. This is not for hysterical people that are liable to see visions and take drugs and all sorts of things. It's not people of that type that you can't trust, over-imaginative and excitable. No, people of firm mind and strong faith are the only ones an angel can come to. Otherwise, it will set you off your rocker. Remember, Brigham Young said, "Pray that you will never see an angel," because almost everyone who has seen one has apostatized. It's more than they can take. That's an interesting psychological aspect. Let me go on here. "And the office of their ministry [these are the men of firm mind and godliness] is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfill and to do the work of the covenants of the Father,..." They call men to repentance and carry out, enter, and fulfill the covenants unto the children of men "to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord [they who have seen the angels declare this unto chosen vessels; this is another step; the chosen vessels are the priesthood authorities, general and otherwise, who preach these things; they are the chosen vessels], that they may bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts,....." They receive the same witness that the person receives who is visited by an angel. It isn't because these people told them. They don't get their testimony from these people. They are introduced to it "that the Holy Ghost may

⁵³ The following is from: Hugh Nibley, *Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe (n.p., n.d.), lecture 21: 6) The words in brackets [] are Nibley's.

31 And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfill and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.

32 And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith [pistis] in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts [the Holy Ghost comes as a consequence of the tokens of the covenants], according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men.

So far, Mormon has mentioned a number of tokens:

The Saviour, who is the token of the Father's covenants.

The tokens one receives with one's hand.

Being 'peaceable,' and other tokens which reveal themselves by the way one lives.

The Holy Ghost, which is the assurance (*pistis*) of the Father's covenant.

"...and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men."

33 And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith [pistis] in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me.

34 And he hath said: Repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith [pistis] in me, that ye may be saved.⁵⁴

35 And now, my beloved brethren, if this be the case that these things are true which I have spoken unto you, and God will show unto you, with power and great glory at the last day, that they are true, and if they are true has the day of miracles ceased?

36 Or have angels ceased to appear unto the children of men? Or has he withheld the power of the Holy Ghost from them? Or will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man upon the face thereof to be saved?

37 Behold I say unto you, Nay; for it is by faith [pistis – tokens of the covenants] that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith [pistis – tokens of the covenants] that angels

have a place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men." So it's through the Father and the men. It's not necessarily a hierarchy, but anyone who has the spirit. Remember, when they asked Joseph Smith, "Are you a prophet of God?" He said, "Yes, and so is any other person who can bear a testimony of Jesus Christ." This can only be done by the spirit of prophecy.

That is a different sequence from the usual faith, repentance, baptism, and gift of the Holy Ghost. This sequence is "repent..., come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith [pistis] in me, that ye may be saved." I don't think the sequence is a mistake, so I don't think the baptism is the one done by water.

appear and minister unto men;⁵⁵ wherefore, if these things have ceased to be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.

38 For no man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith [pistis] in his name; wherefore, if these things have ceased, then has faith ceased also [pistis – there will be no more valid tokens]; and awful is the state of man, for they are as though there had been no redemption made.

39 But behold, my beloved brethren, I judge better things of you, for I judge that ye have faith [pistis] in Christ because of your meekness [Because you kept the covenants you made at the Council – I'll discuss that meaning of meekness below.]; for if ye have not faith [pistis] in him then ye are not fit to be numbered among the people of his church.

40 And again, my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you concerning hope. How is it that ye can attain unto faith [pistis], save ye shall have hope?

One cannot have faith unless one also has hope! That can be read "If you don't have hope first, then you can't have faith," or it may be read, "One cannot have faith unless one also has hope." Given the rest of what he says about hope, it must mean the latter: if one has the tokens of the covenants, then one must also have hope that those covenants will be fulfilled! As one reads on, one discovers that hope means much more than wishing or even trusting. As Mormon uses the word "hope" he means living one's life as though the covenants were already fulfilled. As I mentioned above, it is ultimately what the Lord described to Adam: one's enjoying "the words of eternal life in this world," and knowing he will have "eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory." (Moses 6:59-62)

41 And what is it that ye shall hope for? [for what covenant shall we live as though it were already fulfilled?] Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope [absolute

^{55 1} There are two kinds of beings in heaven, namely: Angels, who are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones –

² For instance, Jesus said: Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

³ Secondly: the spirits of just men made perfect, they who are not resurrected, but inherit the same glory.

⁴ When a messenger comes saying he has a message from God, offer him your hand and request him to shake hands with you.

⁵ If he be an angel he will do so, and you will feel his hand.

⁶ If he be the spirit of a just man made perfect he will come in his glory; for that is the only way he can appear –

⁷ Ask him to shake hands with you, but he will not move, because it is contrary to the order of heaven for a just man to deceive; but he will still deliver his message.

⁸ If it be the devil as an angel of light, when you ask him to shake hands he will offer you his hand, and you will not feel anything; you may therefore detect him.

⁹ These are three grand keys whereby you may know whether any administration is from God. (D&C 129: 1-9)

confidence] through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith [pistis] in him according to the promise [according to the covenant].

42 Wherefore, if a man have faith [pistis] he must needs have hope for without faith [pistis] there cannot be any hope Wherefore, if a man have faith [pistis] he must needs have hope.

If a man has the tokens of the covenant he must also have the integrity and the assurance to live as though those covenants have already been fulfilled. Without the tokens of the covenants, there can be no absolute confidence that the covenants will be fulfilled].

- 43 And again, behold I say unto you that he cannot have faith [pistis] and hope [absolute confidence], save he shall be meek [Later I will show that the meek are those keep the covenants they made at the Council], and ['and' means that what is to follow is to follow is different from meekness] lowly of heart [one who makes the sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit].
- 44 If so, his faith [pistis] and hope [absolute confidence] is vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart [keeps his covenants and makes the sacrifice]; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.
- 45 And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
- 46 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail [Not only must all human things fail, but faith and hope will have no meaning without charity.]
- 47 But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.
- 48 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God [sacral kings and priests]; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope [absolute confidence]; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen. (Moroni 7:1-48)

I think what Mormon was saying is that one must first have the faith [pistis], and through that

faith one acquires hope [absolute confidence], then one must also have charity – it is the charity which empowers one to become a son or daughter of God. As we continue this discussion together, the ideas we will focus on are, "And after that he came men also were saved by faith in his name; and by faith, they become the sons of God." (v.26) And, "that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure." We shall focus on those ideas because they are the ones Abinadi was most concerned with.

There is one question left to be asked: If *pistis* is the tokens of the covenants, hope is living with the absolute confidence as though the covenants were already fulfilled, and love is the power that makes it all happen, what are the covenants?

It seems to me that there is one necessarily correct answer, and another answer which is sometimes necessary. The necessary answer is this: They are those covenants one made with God at the Council before ever we were born into this world. The answer which is sometimes necessary is this: They are the covenants one makes with God in this life in connection with the principles and ordinances of the gospel. The reason the latter are only sometimes necessary in this life is that not all assignments received at the Council could fulfill during the time on earth when people had access to legitimate priesthood authority.

For those whose assignment required that they work within the context of gospel principles and priesthood authority, the phrase, "Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," must surely include the full compass of the meaning of *pistis*: Trust in the Saviour; trust in the powers of his atonement; evidence of that trust as expressed in one's own life in a thousand, thousand ways. Prayer is a

token of one's acceptance of the covenant which is personified by the Saviour. So is kindness, obedience, sacrifice, charity. Similarly, every act of repentance is a token of one's baptismal covenant – I assume that includes the kind of repentance on one's part which accepts the repentance of others. The sacrament prayers contain a virtual list of such tokens: remember, respond to the Spirit, and more. Every time one obeys the prompting of the Holy Ghost, that obedience is a *pistis*. Ultimately, if one trusts in the Lord, obeys his instructions, and endures to the end, one's whole life becomes a token of the covenants one has made in this world, and also of those covenants one made at the Council in Heaven.

But there are many people whose pre-mortal covenants had to be fulfilled at times and/or in places where there was no legitimate priesthood authority. Nephi gives us one concrete example, and suggests many others, of people who made covenants in the Council and fulfilled those covenants without the advantage of having any recorded earthly priesthood authority. He identifies Columbus, but not by name, and describes the work of men and women like Washington, Franklin, John and Abigail Adams, and many others. ⁵⁶

⁵⁶ The following is a discourse by Elder Wilford Woodruff, Sunday, September 16, 1877, *Journal of Discourses*, 19:229

I will here say, before closing, that two weeks before I left St. George, the spirits of the dead gathered around me, wanting to know why we did not redeem them. Said they, "You have had the use of the Endowment House for a number of years, and yet nothing has ever been done for us. We laid the foundation of the government you now enjoy, and we never apostatized from it, but we remained true to it and were faithful to God." These were the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and they waited on me for two days and two nights. I thought it very singular, that notwithstanding so much work had been done, and yet nothing had been done for them. The thought never entered my heart, from the fact, I suppose, that heretofore our minds were reaching after our more immediate friends and relatives. I straightway went into the baptismal font and called upon brother McCallister to baptize me for the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and fifty other eminent men, making one hundred in all, including John Wesley, Columbus, and others; I then baptized him for every President of the United States, except three; and when their cause is just, somebody will do the work for them.

12 And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land. [That was Columbus. I don't think anyone questions that,]

I have felt to rejoice exceedingly in this work of redeeming the dead. I do not wonder at President Young saying he felt moved upon to call upon the Latter-day Saints to hurry up the building of these Temples.

President Wilford Woodruff, April 10, 1898, Conference Report, p.89-90.

Brother Cannon has been laying before you something with regard to the nation in which we live and what has been said concerning it. I am going to bear my testimony to this assembly, if I never do it again in my life, that those men who laid the foundation of this American government and signed the Declaration of Independence were the best spirits the God of heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits, not wicked men. General Washington and all the men that labored for the purpose were inspired of the Lord.

Another thing I am going to say here, because I have a right to say it. Every one of those men that signed the Declaration of Independence, with General Washington, called upon me, as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Temple at St. George, two consecutive nights, and demanded at my hands that I should go forth and attend to the ordinances of the House of God for them. Men are here, I believe, that know of this, Brothers J.D.T. McAllister, David H. Cannon and James G. Bleak. Brother McAllister baptized me for all those men, and then I told those brethren that it was their duty to go into the Temple and labor until they had got endowments for all of them. They did it. Would those spirits have called upon me, as an Elder in Israel, to perform that work if they had not been noble spirits before God? They would not.

I bear this testimony, because it is true. The Spirit of God bore record to myself and the brethren while we were laboring in that way.

Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898, Typescript in 9 vols. edited by Scott G. Kenney (copy at BYU library).

August 19, 1877

I spent the Evening in preparing a list of the Noted Men of the 17 Century and 18th including the signers of the declaration of Independence and the Presidents of the United States for Baptism on Tuesday the 21 Aug 1877."

••••

16 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them.

17 And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them.

18 And I beheld that the power of God was with them, and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle.

19 And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered

I Wilford Woodruff went to the Temple of the Lord this morning and was Baptized for 100 persons who were dead including the signers of the Declaration of Independence hall except John Hancock and [William Floyd]. I was baptized for the following names: [lists names]

Baptized for the following Eminent Men: [lists names]

When Br McAllister had Baptized me for the 100 Names I Baptized him for 21, including Gen. Washington & his forefathers and all the Presidents of the United States that were not in my list Except Buchanan Van Buren & Grant.

It was a very interesting day. I felt thankful that we had the privilege and power to administer for the worthy dead specially for the signers of the Declaration of Independence. that inasmuch as they had laid the foundation of our Government that we could do as much for them as they had done for us.

Sister Lucy Bigelow Young went forth into the font and was Baptized for Martha Washington and her family and seventy (70) of the eminent women of the world. I called upon all the brethren & sisters who were present to assist in getting endowments for those that we had been Baptized for that day.

August 22, 1877

[Wilford Woodruff was] ordained 2 High Priests for George Washington and John Wesley

August 23, 1877

W Woodruff Ordained 2 High Priests One for Christopher Columbus.

March 19, 1894

I had a Dream in the night. I met with Benjamin Franklin. I thought he was on the Earth. I spent several hours with him and talked over our Endowments. He wanted some more work done for him than had been done which I promised him he should have (2d). I thought then he died and while waiting for burial I awoke. I thought very strange of my dream. I made up my mind to get 2d Anointing for Benjamin Franklin & George Washington.

by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations.

Nephi must have seen the work of a great many individuals there, two would have been George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, for without the successful efforts of those two men, America would never have become an independent nation, and the American Constitution would probably never have been written, and if it had been written, it certainly would never have been ratified.

20 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; and I beheld a book, and it was carried forth among them. (1 Nephi 13:12 - 20)

When Nephi saw the Bible, did he also see the mission of Queen Elizabeth I who put all of her political power on the line in order to provide her people with an English translation, or the men and women before she became queen who read the Bible even though they knew it might cost them their lives, or the scholars who translated the King James Bible, or the people who brought it and its religion to America, or thousands of other believing people who came before or followed after them, or did he see whole nations of people who demanded and still demand religious freedom?

The point is this: if God knew all those things would happen, he must also have known who would make them happen – who in the Council accepted those assignments by covenant, and would fulfill those covenants integrity – at whatever personal cost to themselves.

In that light, I suspect that at the conclusion of such a person's this-world experience, his final judgement may have little to do with whether his earthly political or ecclesiastical authorities designated him as a hero or an outlaw. (Abinadi was an "outlaw," so were Martin Luther and John Adams – so were the thousands of now-unnamed French Huguenot men, women, and children who were massacred in France on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572.) The designation of what constitutes outlawry is a commentary on the social, religious, cultural, and political norms or ambitions of the rulers who define it. Being an "outlaw" is only a description of one's relation to that authority, and by itself says nothing concrete about the morals or fidelity of the person so

designated. For that reason, it has occurred to me that on judgement day, whether "outlawry" will be an advantage or a disadvantage to one may not only depend on whether the person was really an outlaw, but also upon the corruption or virtue of the powers who labeled him as such. That is, if a state or culture is evil, or if it is basically good but wrong in some particular, then being an "outlaw" may be an advantage on judgement day – indeed, one's outlawry may evince the fulfillment of one's pre-mortal covenants. For that reason, among others, one ought not to jeopardize one's own salvation by judging someone else to be a sure candidate for hell.

The most important definition of faith in LDS literature is the *Lectures on Faith* which were apparently written by the Prophet Joseph Smith and were the doctrinal instructions given by him in preparation for the building and dedication of the Kirtland Temple. The endowment ceremony itself was not given until the Saints were in Nauvoo, so much of what was later given in the Nauvoo Temple was not taught in Kirtland – and that is a negative, and rather unfortunate, way of saying it – because much that was taught in Nauvoo was introduced to the Saints through the *Lectures on Faith*. That cannot be said too clearly: *The Lectures on Faith were the instructions given to the Saints in conjunction with the Kirtland Temple*. They were published in all editions of the Doctrine and Covenants from 1835 until 1921. Since then they have been republished separately by Deseret Book.

The summary I am about to give is NOT intended to replace the original, but is intended to be an invitation to you to read the original again – and again – and again! Let me emphasize that the following encapsulation of the *Lectures on Faith* is both inadequate and erroneous. It is inadequate because adequacy can only be found by reading the entire booklet. It is erroneous because, as will be obvious to you, I have selected segments from the *Lectures* which make the point I wish to

make. So even if I have not misrepresented the parts I quote, I have misrepresented its total teachings by not quoting the whole book. So again, I urge you to read the original. Having said that, here is my synopsis of the Prophet Joseph Smith's *Lectures on Faith*. All the following quotes are verbatim.

LECTURE FIRST

- 1:1. Faith being the first principle in revealed religion, and the foundation of all righteousness,...
- 1:10. If men were duly to consider themselves, and turn their thoughts and reflections to the operations of their own minds, they would readily discover that it is faith, and faith only, which is the moving cause of all action in them; that without it both mind and body would be in a state of inactivity, and all their exertions would cease, both physical and mental.
- 1:11. ...Are you not dependent on your faith, or belief, for the acquisition of all knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence? Would you exert yourselves to obtain wisdom and intelligence, unless you did believe that you could obtain them?...
- 1:12. And as faith is the moving cause of all action in temporal concerns, so it is in spiritual;...
- 1:13. As we receive by faith all temporal blessings that we do receive, so we in like manner receive by faith all spiritual blessings that we do receive. But faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or on earth. ...
- 1:15. By this we understand that the principle of power which existed in the bosom of God, by which the worlds were framed, was faith;...
- 1:16. Had it not been for the principle of faith the worlds would never have been framed, neither would man have been formed of the dust. It is the principle by which Jehovah works, and through which he exercises power over all temporal as well as eternal things....
- 1:24. Faith, then, is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things; by it they exist, by it they are upheld, by it they are changed, or by it they remain, agreeable to the will of God. Without it there is no power, and without power there could be no creation nor existence!

2 LECTURE SECOND

2:5. We shall now proceed to examine the situation of man at his first creation. We copy from the new translation: [That translation became the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price.]

- 2:6. "And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so.
- 2:7. "And I, God, said, Let them have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.
- 2:8. "And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them. And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
- 2:9. "And I, God, said unto man, Behold, I have given you every herb, bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which shall be the fruit of a tree, yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat."
- 2:15-17... "And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; nevertheless thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but remember that I forbid it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. . . .
- 2:12. From the foregoing we learn man's situation at his first creation, the knowledge with which he was endowed, and the high and exalted station in which he was placed Lord or governor of all things on earth, and at the same time enjoying communion and intercourse with his Maker, without a veil to separate between....
- 2:13. Moses proceeds: "And they [Adam and Eve] heard the voice of the Lord God, as they were walking in the garden, in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife went to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden. And I, the Lord God, called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where goest thou? And he said, I heard thy voice, in the garden, and I was afraid, because I beheld that I was naked, and I hid myself.
- 2:14. "And I, the Lord God, said unto Adam, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, if so, thou shouldst surely die? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest me, and commanded that she should remain with me, gave me of the fruit of the tree, and I did eat.
- 2:15. "And I, the Lord God, said unto the woman, What is this thing which thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."
- 2:16. And again, the Lord said unto the woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy

conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

- 2:17....This was immediately followed by the fulfillment of what was previously said Man was driven or sent out of Eden.
- 2:18. Two important items are shown from the former quotations. First, after man was created, he was not left without intelligence or understanding, to wander in darkness and spend an existence in ignorance and doubt (on the great and important point which effected his happiness) as to the real fact by whom he was created, or unto whom he was amenable for his conduct. God conversed with him face to face. ...
- 2:19. Secondly, we have seen, that though man did transgress, his transgression did not deprive him of the previous knowledge with which he was endowed relative to the existence and glory of his Creator; for no sooner did he hear his voice than he sought to hide himself from his presence. ...
- 2:21. We next proceed to present the account of the direct revelation which man received after he was cast out of Eden ...
- 2:23. "And after many days, an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him, I know not, save the Lord commanded me
- 2:24. "And then the angel spake, saying, This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth; wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest, in the name of the Son. And thou shalt repent, and call upon God, in the name of the Son for evermore. And in that day, the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son."
- 2:25. This last quotation, or summary, shows this important fact, that though our first parents were driven out of the garden of Eden, and were even separated from the presence of God by a veil, they still retained a knowledge of his existence, and that sufficiently to move them to call upon him. And further, that no sooner was the plan of redemption revealed to man, and he began to call upon God, than the Holy Spirit was given, bearing record of the Father and Son.
- 2:31. Adam, thus being made acquainted with God, communicated the knowledge which he had unto his posterity....
- 2:34. The reason why we have been thus particular on this part of our subject, is that this class [57] may see by what means it was that God became an object of faith among men

136 Behold, verily, I say unto you, this is an ensample unto you for a salutation to one another in the house of God, in the school of the prophets.

^{57 &}quot;This class" refers to the people who attended the classes in the "school of the prophets" in the Kirtland Temple. The following is about the School of the Prophets:

after the fall; and what it was that stirred up the faith of multitudes to feel after him – to search after a knowledge of his character, perfections and attributes, until they became extensively acquainted with him, and not only commune with him and behold his glory, but be partakers of his power and stand in his presence. ...

2:56. We have now clearly set forth how it is, and how it was, that God became an object of faith for rational beings; and also, upon what foundation the testimony was based which excited the inquiry and diligent search of the ancient saints to seek after and obtain a knowledge of the glory of God; and ... the inquiry frequently terminated, indeed always terminated when rightly pursued, in the most glorious discoveries and eternal certainty.

3: LECTURE THIRD

- 3:2. Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation.
- 3:3. First, the idea that he actually exists.
- 3:4. Secondly, a *correct* idea of his character, perfections, and attributes.
- 3:5. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3:12. From the foregoing testimonies we learn the following things respecting the character of God:
- 3:13. First, that he was God before the world was created, and the same God that he was after it was created.
- 3:14. Secondly, that he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness, and
- 137 And ye are called to do this by prayer and thanksgiving, as the Spirit shall give utterance in all your doings in the house of the Lord, in the school of the prophets, that it may become a sanctuary, a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit to your edification.
- 138 And ye shall not receive any among you into this school save he is clean from the blood of this generation;
- 139 And he shall be received by the ordinance of the washing of feet, for unto this end was the ordinance of the washing of feet instituted.
- 140 And again, the ordinance of washing feet is to be administered by the president, or presiding elder of the church.
- 141 It is to be commenced with prayer; and after partaking of bread and wine, he is to gird himself according to the pattern given in the thirteenth chapter of John's testimony concerning me. Amen. (D&D 88:136-141)

that he was so from everlasting, and will be to everlasting.

- 3:15. Thirdly, that he changes not, neither is there variableness with him; but that he is the same from everlasting to everlasting, being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that his course is one eternal round, without variation.
- 3:16. Fourthly, that he is a God of truth and cannot lie.
- 3:17. Fifthly, that he is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of him.
- 3:18. Sixthly, that he is love. ...
- 3:25. From the above description of the character of the Deity, which is given him in the revelations to men, there is a sure foundation for the exercise of faith in him among every people, nation, and kindred, from age to age, and from generation to generation. ...

4 LECTURE FOURTH

- 4:3. Having said so much, we shall proceed to examine the attributes of God, as set forth in his revelations to the human family and to show how necessary correct ideas of his attributes are to enable men to exercise faith in him; for without these ideas being planted in the minds of men it would be out of the power of any person or persons to exercise faith in God so as to obtain eternal life. So that the divine communications made to men in the first instance were designed to establish in their minds the ideas necessary to enable them to exercise faith in God, and through this means to be partakers of his glory.
- 4:4. We have, in the revelations which he has given to the human family, the following account of his attributes: [Knowledge, Faith or power, Justice, Judgment, Mercy, Truth.] ...
- 4:19. ... And as it is through the revelation of these that a foundation is laid for the exercise of faith in God unto life and salvation, the foundation, therefore, for the exercise of faith was, is, and ever will be, the same; so that all men have had, and will have, an equal privilege. ...

5 LECTURE FIFTH

5:1. In our former lectures we treated of the being, character, perfections, and attributes, of God. What we mean by perfections is, the perfections which belong to all the attributes of his nature. We shall, in this lecture, speak of the Godhead – we mean the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. ...

- 5:2. ... these three constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme, power over all things; by whom all things were created and made that were created and made, ...
- 5:3. ... Through the love of the Father, the mediation of Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, they are to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

6 LECTURE SIXTH

- 6:1. Having treated in the preceding lectures of the ideas, of the character, perfections, and attributes of God, we next proceed to treat of the knowledge which persons must have, that the course of life which they pursue is according to the will of God, in order that they may be enabled to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation
- 6:2. This knowledge supplies an important place in revealed religion; for it was by reason of it that the ancients were enabled to endure as seeing him who is invisible. An actual knowledge to any person, that the course of life which he pursues is according to the will of God, is essentially necessary to enable him to have that confidence in God without which no person can obtain eternal life. It was this that enabled the ancient saints to endure all their afflictions and persecutions, and to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing (not believing merely) that they had a more enduring substance. (Heb. 10:34.)
- 6:3. Having the assurance that they were pursuing a course which was agreeable to the will of God, they were enabled to take, not only the spoiling of their goods, and the wasting of their substance, joyfully, but also to suffer death in its most horrid forms; knowing (not merely believing) that when this earthly house of their tabernacle was dissolved, they had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor. 5:1.) ...
- 6:5. ...for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of God; but actual knowledge, realizing that, when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest, and be a partaker of the glory of God. ...
- 6:7. Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; ...
- 6:9. ...And in the last days, before the Lord comes, he is to gather together his saints who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice. "Psalms 50:3-5: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."
- 6:10. Those, then, who make the sacrifice, will have the testimony that their course is pleasing in the sight of God; and those who have this testimony will have faith to lay hold on eternal life, and will be enabled, through faith, to endure unto the end, and receive the

crown that is laid up for them that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ....

7 LECTURE SEVENTH

- 7:3. ... We ask, then, what are we to understand by a man's working by faith? We answer we understand that when a man works by faith he works by mental exertion instead of physical force. ...
- 7:5. ... So, then, faith is truly the first principle in the science of THEOLOGY, and, when understood, leads the mind back to the beginning, and carries it forward to the end; or, in other words, from eternity to eternity.
- 7:8. ... When men begin to live by faith they begin to draw near to God; and when faith is perfected they are like him; and because he is saved they are saved also; for they will be in the same situation he is in, because they have come to him; and when he appears they shall be like him, for they will see him as he is. ...
- 7:16. These teachings of the Saviour most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation, and what he proposed unto the human family when he proposed to save them that he proposed to make them like unto himself, and he was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings; and for any portion of the human family to be assimilated into their likeness is to be saved; and to be unlike them is to be destroyed; and on this hinge turns the door of salvation. ...
- 7:17. ... All things were in subjection to the Former-day Saints, according as their faith was. By their faith they could obtain heavenly visions, the ministering of angels, have knowledge of the spirits of just men made perfect, of the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, of God the judge of all, of Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and become familiar with the third heavens, see and hear things which were not only unutterable, but were unlawful to utter.
- 7:18. ... He says that all things that pertain to life and godliness were given unto them through the knowledge of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And if the question is asked, how were they to obtain the knowledge of God? (for there is a great difference between believing in God and knowing him knowledge implies more than faith. And notice, that all things that pertain to life and godliness were given through the knowledge of God) the answer is given through faith they were to obtain this knowledge; and, having power by faith to obtain the knowledge of God, they could with it obtain all other things which pertain to life and godliness.
- 7:19. By these sayings of the apostle, we learn that it was by obtaining a knowledge of God that men got the knowledge of all things which pertain to life and godliness, and this knowledge was the effect of faith; so that all things which pertain to life and godliness are the effects of faith.⁵⁸

Anciently, the universal application of the blessings of the Father's covenants were described in the book of Proverbs in a most interesting way. The essay on wisdom which constitutes its first several chapters of Proverbs, is in first person, as though it had been written by "Wisdom" herself. She represents herself as the essence of human good, and gives this promise:

5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. (Proverbs 3: 5 - 8)

The fun thing is, "It shall be health to thy navel," is not translated correctly. The word translated "navel" is more accurately "umbilical cord." Now that asks an interesting question – why should an adult human wish to retain a healthy umbilical cord? I suspect the answer is this: just as a healthy umbilical cord is the connection for an unborn child to its source of life, and must remain healthy or the child will die; so in an adult the idea symbolizes that one's connection with the ultimate source of human life must also remain healthy and intact or one will die spiritually. That is, it is the promise that one will not be cut loose from the powers Heaven or from the surety of the fulfillment of the covenants one made before we came here. Thus one may "enjoy the words of eternal life in this world." One might even be able to say with Lehi, "But behold, the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love." (2 Nephi 1:15)

The meaning of Righteousness – zedek and Zadok

note: Scholars and translators are not consistent in the way they use or spell the words zedek and Zadok, but usually "zedek" means righteousness, and "Zadok" is a name or name-title that means righteous.

Even though the concepts of righteous and righteousness are central to what Abinadi was teaching Alma, the word "righteous" appears only once in his story. That is when quotes Isaiah, "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Because "righteous" and "righteousness" are key ideas in many of the Psalms and Isaiah passages, and because they are fundamental to the whole concept of sacral kingship and priesthood, Abinadi's entire trial centers on the unspoken question: Is it the king or is it Abinadi who is acting in righteousness?

The word translated "righteousness" in Old Testament is from the Hebrew word "zedek." Scholars have no question about what the word means – that is they know the word's denotation. It means "just" in a legal and moral sense. In English "right" means the same thing. The easiest way to visualize the meaning of both words is to define them in a geometric sense. "Right" is "square" – a 90° angle. It is the same concept as "just," "plumb," and "correct." It is a line which does not bend, a principle of action which is in strict conformity with the laws of physics, rectitude, propriety, or reason. In the legal and moral system it is upright, virtuous, and correct – it is justice tempered by mercy. Therefore, zedek is a – perhaps *thee* – requisite quality of both kingship and priesthood.

There is no academic question about whether "zedek" has to do with correctness, but there is a

great deal of academic speculation about what the correctness is with which zedek has to do.

That is, the denotation of the word is well understood, but the connotation is a different question altogether. The difficulty arises from the fact that the righteousness of the king is often praised in the Psalms, Isaiah, and elsewhere where the context is the ancient Temple ceremonies. In that context, scholars cannot tell precisely what there was about the king's activity that was "righteous" – that is what does he do that is politically, morally, or ceremonially correct.

In that, like in other priesthood related things, Latter-day saints have keys to understanding which other scholars do not have. In this instance, major keys to the answer to that question is in the way we understand kingship and priesthood; and in the way the word zedek is identified in the LDS scriptures as well as in the Bible, but especially in what that information teaches us about how "Zadok" or "zedek" was used as part of royal and priestly name-titles.

The most important of those names is Melchizedek. In that name the "melchi" means king, and zedek is righteous. The dictionary in the LDS Bible translates it as "King of Righteousness." The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* offers an alternative, "The (my) king is righteous(ness)." In either case, it is a name-title which describes the nature of his kingship and priesthood.

Approximately 1,500 years after Melchizedek, the last Jewish king was named Zedekiah which means "The Lord (is) righteousness." For us, the significance of Zedekiah's name is that the

⁵⁹ For an in-depth study of the historical setting of the words "zedek," "Zadok," and "righteousness" see: Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 31-53.

⁶⁰ LDS Bible dictionary.

use of "zedek" in the name-titles of the king had persisted throughout that entire 1,500 year period. However, Zedekiah was an apostate king, so there is no need to look to his administration to discover the meaning of zedek. But Melchizedek's name and administration are quite different matters. Jewish tradition says that Melchizedek was the king-name of Noah's son Shem, and modern revelation suggests the same thing.⁶¹

If one may assume that Melchizedek was Shem, and that "Melchizedek" was his covenant name (like Abraham was the covenant name of Abram), then one may also posit that the name-title "Melchizedek" was a description of Shem's attributes – that he was the very personification of kingly uprightness – so we can probably learn a great deal about the word by examining his life. We know Melchizedek was a king, but what we know about him has almost nothing to do with his political administration; rather it has to do with his activities as presiding High Priest.

Modern revelation suggests the same thing:

D&C 107: 2. "Why the first is called the Melchizedek Priesthood is because Melchizedek was such a great high priest."

D&C 138: 41. "...Shem, the great high priest..."

The "Elias" who held the keys of the gospel of Abraham may also have been Melchizedek:

D&C 110:12 After this, Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.

[&]quot;In spite of his great success, Abraham nevertheless was concerned about the issue of the war. He feared that the prohibition against shedding the blood of man had been transgressed, and he also dreaded the resentment of Shem, whose descendants had perished in the encounter. But God reassured him, and said: 'Be not afraid! Thou hast but extirpated the thorns, and as to Shem, he will bless thee rather than curse thee.' So it was. When Abraham returned from the war, Shem, or, as he is sometimes called, Melchizedek, the king of righteousness, priest of God Most High, and king of Jerusalem, came forth to meet him with bread and wine. And this high priest instructed Abraham in the laws of the priesthood and in the Torah, and to prove his friendship for him he blessed him, and called him the partner of God in the possession of the world, seeing that through him the Name of God had first been made known among men." Louis Ginzberg, (Translated from the German Manuscript by Henrietta Szold) *The Legends of the Jews, I, Bible Times and Characters from the Creation to Jacob* (Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909), p. 233.

He was "king of Salem" and "priest of the most high God." Abraham paid him tithes because Melchizedek was "appointed to receive tithes for the poor." (JST Genesis 14:38) Originally the high priesthood was called the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God, but to avoid too frequent use of the name of the Supreme Being, the ancient church "called that priesthood after Melchizedek, or the Melchizedek Priesthood." "Having established righteousness [he] was called king of heaven by his people, or, in other words, the King of peace." 62

That last statement, "Having established righteousness" is especially helpful in discovering the meaning of the word righteousness or zedek. In this place, "righteousness" is a noun not an adjective. It does not say he was a righteous king, it says he "established righteousness." One finds the same thing in Abraham's autobiographical statement that "having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness." (Abraham 1:1-4) Assuming consistency, the beginning of the Book of Abraham might read: "having been myself a follower of zedek, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of zedek." In these instances zedek/righteousness is a noun – something real, if not actually tangible – something that can be established and something that can be followed.

Another important clue is Josephus' statement that Melchizedek built the first temple in Jerusalem. Josephus wrote that Solomon's Temple:

⁶² JST Genesis 14:17-40; Genesis 14:18-20; Psalm 110; Hebrews 5:6, 7:1-3; JST Hebrews 7:1-3; Alma 13: 14-19; D&C H 84: 14, 107: 1-4. I shall discuss the relationship between zedek and peace at the end of this section.

... had been laid waste by the king of Babylon, 1,486 years and six months from its foundation. Its original founder was a prince of Canaan, called Melchizedek, or "Righteous King," for such, indeed, he was. He was the first priest of God, and the first to build the temple; he named the city Jerusalem, which was previously called Solyna. 63

Since we know that Melchizedek taught repentance, established peace, collected tithes to help the poor, and built a temple, it is reasonable to believe that "righteousness" has something to do with one or all of those things.

Some scholars believe that it mostly had to do with the temple authority and ordinances. They point out that the "zedek" part of Melchizedek's name was still in use by Jebusite kings of Jerusalem when Joshua invaded Palestine. Joshua did not capture Jerusalem, but the name of its king is recorded as Adoni-zedek. The Jebusites were the Canaanite tribe who controlled Jerusalem and its environs before, and for 200 or 300 years after, the Israelite invasion. During those years, the Jebusites apparently lived in peace with the Israelites, and Jerusalem remained independent until David took it by stealth. He did not destroy the city or kill its inhabitants, but he adopted it as his capitol, and married the woman who may have been its queen. Jerusalem remained

For a discussion of Zadokite priesthood, see: John A. Grindel, "The Old Testament and Christian Priesthood," in *Communio, International Catholic Review*, Spring 1976, Vol 3, no. 1, 16-38. Ishida says the whole idea is based on indirect or circumstantial evidence. Tomoo Ishida,

⁶³ Paul L. Maier, trans. and ed., *Josephus, the Essential Writings*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988, p. 367.

⁶⁴ Joshua 10:1. The name means "Lord or righteousness" according to the LDS Bible dictionary.

^{65 2} Samuel 5:2-16. Wyatt believes that Zadok the priest may have had royal Jebusite connections, that "Araunah the Jebusite" may have been a royal title for Uriah the Hittite, that Bathsheba may have been the queen of Jerusalem, and that Solomon's rather surprising succession to the throne may have been *because* Bathsheba was queen. Nicolas Wyatt, "Araunah the Jebusite and the Throne of David," in *Studia Theologica*, 39 no. 1:39-53. Wyatt reaffirms his position, and further discusses its ramifications in "Echoes of the King and His Ka: An Ideological Motif in the Story of Solomon's Birth," Kurt Bergerhof, *et al.*, *Ugarit-Forschunge*, *Internationales Jahrbuch fur die Altertumskunde Syrien-Palastinas* (Kevelaer, Verlag Butzon & Bercker, 1987) 399-404.

postulates that the Jebusites at Jerusalem had the Melchizedek priesthood, that David got it from them, and then made it the basis of Israelite temple worship. ⁶⁶ He writes,

In any case, as we turn in the following pages to an examination of those Psalms which are to be our main concern, we shall find reason to believe that, after the capture of Jerusalem, David found in the Jebusite cultus with its worship of the 'Most High' in association with the royal-priestly order of Melchizedek a ritual and mythology which might prove to be the means of carrying out Yahweh's purposes for Israel and fusing the

"If it had been without significance David would certainly not have troubled himself to take over the Ammonite crown [2 Samuel 12:30]." Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1967), 79.

See also Zafrira Ben-Barak, "The Status and Ritht of the *Gebira*" in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1991, 110:23-34.

66 I am inclined to believe that claim may be true.

Ahlstrom maintains that Bethlehem was then a Jebusite city, and gives evidence to show that David himself may have been a Jebusite, or Jebusite subject. Even if that is not true, Bethlehem is so close to Jerusalem that David almost literally grew up in the shadow of its walls. There is no reason that David could not have received a Jebusite Melchizedek priesthood. That may not be so far fetched. After all, Moses had a Moabite Melchizedek priesthood which he got from his father-in-law. Ahlstrom also writes,

...according to the Book of Ruth, David was of Moabite descent on his grandmother's side. Moreover, during the time of his rebellious activities against Saul, he once sent his parents ovet to Moab in order to protect the, Sam 22:3f. (G. W. Ahlstrom, "Was David a Jebusite Subject?" *Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 92. Band 1980, p. 285-287.)

Ahlstrom does not mention the Moabite priesthood, but his comments do point out the possibility that David got the Melchizedek priesthood from the same people who conferred it upon Moses.

If either of those possibilities it is true it would suggest that even though the Israelites lost the Melchizedek priesthood from between the time of Moses to the time of David, there was an unconquered group of people in their midst who had not apostatized like the rest of the Canaanites, but retained a legitimate priesthood until the time of David. If that were true, it could put quite a different slant on Old Testament history during the 400 years of the First Temple period from David's time, about 1000 BC, to about 600 BC when Lehi and others left Jerusalem, and the Babylonian captivity brought an end to temple worship and culminated in a new kind of academic apostasy, and a second (?) loss of the Melchizedek priesthood.

Nephi's later questions to his brothers puts an interesting twist on possible Jebusite history.

[&]quot;Solomon's Succession to the Throne of David--A Political Analysis, in Tomoo Ishida, ed. *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon*, Winona Lake, Indiana, Eisenbrauns, 1982), 176-177.

chosen people into a model of national righteousness.⁶⁷
Although David is spoken of as having the Melchizedek priesthood,⁶⁸ the Lord did not give him the right to build the Temple at Jerusalem. Pedersen suggests that one of the reasons might have been that there was already a temple dedicated to Jehovah at Jerusalem, and David's responsibilities were to collect the resources to build a bigger one.⁶⁹ That was left to his son,

Solomon. The high priest who anointed Solomon king was David's priest Zadok (whether that

Could his reasoning be used as an argument to suggest that the reason the Jebusites were not destroyed by the invading Israelites was because they were not among those who were "ripe in iniquity?"

- 33 And now, do ye suppose that the children of this land, who were in the land of promise, who were driven out by our fathers, do ye suppose that they were righteous? Behold, I say unto you, Nay.
- 34 Do ye suppose that our fathers would have been more choice than they if they had been righteous? I say unto you, Nay.
- 35 Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one; he that is righteous is favored of God. But behold, this people had rejected every word of God, and they were ripe in iniquity; and the fulness of the wrath of God was upon them; and the Lord did curse the land against them, and bless it unto our fathers; yea, he did curse it against them unto their destruction, and he did bless it unto our fathers unto their obtaining power over it. (1 Nephi 17: 33-35)
- 67 Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 53.
- 68 Psalm 110:4.
- "We are told that David had the Ark brought to the city of David, 'And they brought it in and set it in the tent which David had pitched for it' (2 Sam. 6,17). We learn nothing about the place of this tent beyond the fact that it was in the city of David, hence on Zion, the south-eastern hill of Jerusalem, where the ancient city stood, and where David had built his new palace, his 'house of cedar'. It was from there, also, that Solomon later on had the Ark brought up to his temple (1 Kings 8,1).

"When we are told that David sought the countenance of Yahweh or 'the God' (2 Sam. 7,18; 12,16; 21,1), the obvious assumption is that it was in the tent with the Ark. Here, too, the holy oil was kept with which the king was anointed (1 Kings 1,39). But as we know, the Ark was merely a sacred object previously kept in a temple at Shiloh, and it seems likely that David set up the Ark with its tent in a holy place possession. It is inconceivable that, when he captured the city of Zion, he should not have taken possession of the sanctuary of the town. This may have been an open-air sanctuary like those described above, but according to the state of affairs then prevalent in the cities of Canaan, it seems most natural to suppose that there was a temple building in the place.

"There are, in fact, circumstances which would seem to indicate that in the days of David the city had a temple, 'Yahweh's abode' (nawe), the place where the Ark was housed, and where David after being put to flight by his son longed to see Yahweh again (2 Sam. 15,25). On his numerous campaigns David had acquired much spoil which he dedicated to Yahweh, and to this must be added the gifts of foreign princes which he likewise consecrated (2 Sam. 8,7 f. 10 f., cf.

was a personal name, a covenant name, or a title, one cannot be sure.) This Zadok had supported David during his lifetime, and after David's death he presided over the affairs of the Temple in Solomon's day. Thereafter, Zadok's descendants were high priests at the Jerusalem Temple until that office of High Priest was made a political appointment by the Maccabees. Tradition holds that for about 600 years, every legitimate High Priest who conducted the affairs of the Temple in Jerusalem was a descendant of Zadok – so "zedek" or "Zadok" was not only the thing one sought for, it was also the name of the people who presided over the way to get it. In the Dead Sea scrolls we learn of a later group of people who held tenaciously to what they believed were the correct ceremonies of the temple. They were called the "sons of Zadok," perhaps suggesting that they were connected with contemporary holders of the pre-Maccabeean High Priesthood.

However, some scholars translate the phrase "sons of Zadok" as "sons of righteousness" because Zadok and righteousness mean the same thing. 70

So it appears that the connotation of the words zedek and Zadok are temple related. The words "righteous" and "righteousness" have to do with High Priesthood authority, rectitude, and propriety. Given that circumstantial evidence, I believe the words "Zadok" and "zedek" meant

¹ Kings 7,51). Even if we must suppose that in the open-air sanctuaries such goods were placed in caves or separate buildings within the holy precincts specially devised for the purpose, it seems much more natural to assume that such treasures, here as in Nob and other places, were lodged in a temple building; and it would be very strange if David, who desired to establish a kingdom resembling the great empires, should have neglected to provide the most important thing, a temple to secure the holiness of the kingdom. Hence there is no reason to try to get round the text when we meet with the direct statement in one of the narratives that David entered 'Yahweh's house' (2 Sam. 12,20). But the temple of Solomon came to overshadow everything else by it greatness."

⁽Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: its Life and Culture*, 4 vols. (London, Oxford University Press, 1940) vol. 3-4 p. 237-238.)

⁷⁰ Robert H. Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, Element, Shaftesbury, Dorset, 1992, pp. 14,19

something like "temple things." The word represents one's doing the right things, with the right authority, in the right place, using the right words, and dressed the right way. So one may have been said to "follow righteousness" if one followed the correct procedures in temple ordinances. One might "obtain righteousness" in consequence of that correct activity. And, perhaps most important, one might "be a follower of righteousness" by living according to one's temple ordinances and claiming the blessings promised therein. The Jews' apparent conformity with correct performances and procedures may have been the rationale behind Laman and Lemuel's argument in defense of the people at Jerusalem.

And we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous [zadok] people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and all his commandments, according to the law of Moses; (1 Nephi 17:22a)

If that was the argument they were using to defend the authorities in Jerusalem, the argument's flaw was that while performances are necessary to some acts of righteousness, performances alone are never sufficient. The Saviour clarified that in the Beatitudes.

And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost. (3 Nephi 12:6)

To "hunger and thirst after righteousness" is to hunger and thirst after zedek, or to seek the highpriestly, eternal things of the temple, symbolized by the bread of life and the waters of live, and by implication to seek to be in the presence of God.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.(John 6:35)

Another important clue is that one's obtaining righteousness had to do with articles of clothing. For example, in the scriptures there are several references to "robes of righteousness" – usually a gift from God himself. Isaiah speaks of a wedding garment as a robe of righteousness. (Isaiah 61:10) Nephi talks about it as a source of protection:

O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! (2 Nephi 4:33).

He also talks about it as an evidence in eternal judgement:

Wherefore, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our nakedness; and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness." (2 Nephi 9:14)

Isaiah writes of putting "on righteousness as a breastplate." (Isaiah 59:17) Paul uses that same symbolism when he includes "the breastplate of righteousness" as a part of the whole armor of God. (Ephesians 6:14), and the Lord uses that same imagery in D&C 27:16. When Nephi sees the Saviour's apostles in vision, he describes them as "righteous forever; for because of their faith in the Lamb of God their garments are made white in his blood."(1 Nephi 12:10)

Thus it appears that the connotation of the words, 'righteous' and 'righteousness' has to do with the correctness of the ceremonies and ordinances of the ancient Israelite temples; with it the authority to perform those ordinances and ceremonies; and especially has to do with the relationship of Temple ordinances and covenants to the Saviour's atonement; and with one's being clean, as the idea of "robes of righteousness" necessarily suggests. In ancient temples, when people were adopted as children of God and anointed sacral kings and priests, the anointing was done in public and they were anointed over their clothing. As we get deeper into the Abinadi story, we shall discover that one's obtaining that sacral kingship was precisely what Abinadi was talking about. President Marion G. Romney spoke a great deal about that in the last years of his life. It is appropriate to quote some of what he said.

Eternal life is the quality of life which God himself enjoys. The gospel plan, authored by the Father and put into operation by the atonement of Jesus Christ, brings eternal life within the reach of every man. The Lord gave this assurance when he said, ". . . if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, . . ." (D&C

14:7.)

The fullness of eternal life is not attainable in mortality, but the peace which is its harbinger and which comes as a result of making one's calling and election sure is attainable in this life. The Lord has promised that ". . . he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (Ibid., 59:23.) 71

Now in conclusion, I give you my own witness. I know that God our Father lives, that we are as Paul said, his offspring. I know that we dwelt in his presence in pre-earth life and that we shall continue to live beyond the grave. I know that we may return into his presence, if we meet his terms. I know that while we are here in mortality there is a means of communication between him and us. I know it is possible for men to so live that they may hear his voice and know his words and that to receive "the Holy Spirit of promise" while here in mortality is possible. And so, in the words of the Prophet Joseph, "...I... exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves,..."

Given what the scriptures and the prophets have said, zedek was the ancient priesthood authority to function in the temple – either to administer its blessings, or to receive them, or both. Thus when the ancients were described as acting "in righteousness," it meant one was acting – either in or out of the temple – in accordance with the ordinances, covenants, and ceremonies of the temple. A king of righteousness, then, would be a king who exercised the powers of temple related sacral kingship and priesthood. "Melchizedek," probably means king of temple things, and the Melchizedek Priesthood would probably be the sacred order of sacral kingship and temple priesthood, or "the priesthood of sacral kingship."

There seems to be another likely meaning as well. It is derived from the JST Genesis 14: 36 statement,

And this Melchizedek, having thus established righteousness, was called the king of heaven by his people, or, in other words, the King of peace.

⁷¹ Marion G. Romney, *Conference Report*, October 1965, p.20

⁷² DHC, 5, 389.) (Marion G. Romney, *Conference Report*, October 1965, p.23 President Romney's talks about making one's calling and election sure are found in: *Conference Reports*, April 3-6, 1954, p. 131-135; October 1-3, 1965, p. 20-23.; April 6-9, 1967, p. 79-82; *Ensign*, November, 1981, p. 14-15.

That is strikingly like Alma's.

But Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, and received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace, for he was the king of Salem; and he did reign under his father. (Alma 13: 18)

As I shall indicate below when I discuss the Beatitudes, one of the most important code words used there by the Saviour is "peacemaker." It is the designation given to those who "shall be called the children of God." In a similar context Mormon observes that those who have already and will again see the Saviour (What he says is that they "have obtained a sufficient hope by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until ye shall rest with him in heaven.) are defined as "peaceable followers of Christ" who are identifiable "because of your peaceable walk with the children of men." (Moroni 7:3-4)

In conclusion, the ideas of zedek and Zadok (temple things) are very closely associated with the ideas of faith (*pistis* – tokens of the covenants), hope (living as though the covenants were already fulfilled), and charity (living the law of consecration) – and all of those ideas seem to come together in the concept of peace and peacemaker. Note again JST Genesis 14: 36 where king of righteousness (Melchizedek), king of heaven, the King of peace are all equivalents.

And this Melchizedek, having thus established righteousness, was called the king of heaven by his people, or, in other words, the King of peace.

That suggests another meaning of Melchizedek priesthood: "the priesthood of sacral, kingly peace."

Let me restate that those definitions of "Melchizedek priesthood" are only my opinion. I have neither the academic nor the ecclesiastical qualifications to give a definition of those words, but that is what they mean to me. It seems important to me that as you read what I am writing, you know that when I use the word "righteous," or when I read the words "righteous" or "righteousness," I think of the highest ordinances of the ancient Israelite temple services, and the greatest blessings derived therefrom.

As happened with the Christian apostasy which occurred 600 or 700 years later, it was the concept of God which was the major casualty of the 4th and 5th centuries B.C. Jewish apostasy. The foundation of pre-exilic Old Testament temple theology was the understanding that there was a Father of the gods (Elohim) who ruled over all things including the heavenly Council of the gods; and his Son, Jehovah, conducted the affairs of that Council, was the Creator God, the King of Israel and of all other nations, and was also the anticipated Messiah. But after the Babylonian exile, the apostate Jews became monotheistic, losing the identity of Elohim (much as the later Christians would lose the identity of the Father), and turning Jehovah into an undefinable one-god in much the same way that the apostate Christians turned Jesus into an undefinable Trinity. When the identity of Jehovah became clouded in Jewish thought, the divine Council over which he presided lost its significance, and is barely visible in the post-exilic books of the Old Testament. Consequently, "Our major evidence for the council motif in the Old Testament is found primarily in Israel's pre-exilic literature, especially in the Psalms and other poetic writings..." However, in those pre-exilic sources (especially in the first chapters of

Some other places where one can find discussions of the Council in Heaven are:

Kingsbury, Edwin C., "The Prophets and the Council of Yahweh," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, v. Lxxxiii, 1964, p. 279-286.

Miller, Paatrick D., Jr., "Divine council and the Prophetic Call to War," *Vetus Testamentum*. January 1968, Vol 18, no. 1, p. 100-107.

Mullen, E. Theodore, "Divine Assembly," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, v. 2, p. 214-217.

Seitz, Christopher R., "The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book

⁷³ E. Theodore Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Chico, California, Scholars Press, 1980), 116, 285-311.

Genesis, the Psalms, Isaiah, and Job) the Council of the gods played a major role, not only in the affairs of heaven, but in the affairs of men on earth as well. In fact, the very definition of a true prophet was that he had returned in vision to the Council, and there had experienced again of the covenants he made there and learned anew the message he was assigned to deliver to the people. Aubrey Johnson gives us his own translation of Psalm 89, and finds that:

The identity of the "Holy Ones" ... with the members of the council is explicitly noted in Ps 89:6-9:....

The heavens praise your wonders, O Yahweh,

And your truth in the council of the holy ones.

For who in the skies can compare to Yahweh?

Who is like Yahweh among the sons of god (i.e., the gods)?

A dreadful god in the council of the holy ones,

Great and terrible above all those around him.

Yahweh, god of (the heavenly) hosts, who is like you?

Mighty Yah(weh), your faithful ones surround you.

This passage vividly reveals the connection of the "Holy Ones" with the council of the gods.⁷⁴

Mullen writes that the "stars" were a part of the grand council. He quotes Job 38:7, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? ... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7) and adds that the members of the Council are not only God's messengers, but that they "can serve as military members of Yahweh's heavenly army."⁷⁵

The Council was responsible for the creation, and for directing the affairs of men through the prophets and the kings. But throughout the stories of the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon, perhaps the most significant role of the Council was not so much what its members did

of Isaiah," Journal of Biblical Literature, v. 109, n. 2, 1990, p. 229 - 247.

⁷⁴Aubrey R. Johnson, "The Role of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *The Labyrinth* (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1935), p. 77-80.

⁷⁵ E. Theodore Mullen, Jr. *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Chico, California, Scholars Press, 1980), 196, see also pages 186-187.

in their pre-mortal lives, but what the prophets learned when they returned to the Council and reaffirmed their covenants regarding the responsibilities they would have on this earth. In Amos' testimony, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7) The word translated "secret" is the Hebrew word *sode*. It means the secrets or the decisions of a council. Many Old Testament scholars agree that the council Amos referred to was the Council in Heaven, and that in similar contexts *sode* also refers to the decisions of that Council of the gods. What Amos says, then, is that the Lord will not do anything until after the prophet returns in vision to the Council, where he will be shown the covenants and assignments he accepted in conjunction with the decisions made by the Council, as those decisions related to the prophet's time and place on the earth. In other words, a true prophet is one who does and says on earth what he covenanted he would do and say while he was at the Council. (Later on, I shall show that the word "meek" denotes one who keeps those pre-mortal covenants.)

Cross explains,

The late H. Wheeler Robinson has stressed in a recent important article on the council of

⁷⁶ Pronounced with a long "O" like in the book of Job or the word "over." Some scholar spell it in all caps: SOD. It is spelled "sode" in the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. #5475.

^{77 &}quot;We may begin with the Hebrew word "sod" a word which is never translated in the LXX by mysterion....the word has a wide semantic area: confidential talk, a circle of people in council, secrets....When we approach the early biblical uses of "sod" with the idea of "council" or 'assembly' in mind, we find that this meaning particularly fits the passages dealing with the heavenly "sod" [when it occurs] in biblical references to the heavenly council of God and his angels....Amos (3:7) announces almost as a proverb that God will surely not do anything `until he has revealed his 'sod' to his servants the prophets.'...In the Hebrew represented by Proverbs, Sirach, and Qumran, 'sod' is used simply for secrets or mysteries." Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1968), p. 2-6.

Yahweh⁷⁸ that often in visions or auditions the prophet was enabled to view the proceedings in Yahweh's heavenly court⁷⁹ or to hear the directives which Yahweh addressed to his angelic heralds. The classical passages for the use of this imagery are Micaiah pericope in 1 Kings, chapter 22; Jeremiah's oracle concerning false prophets who did not "stand in the council of Yahweh" (Jer. 23: 18, 22); and the call of Isaiah (Isa. 6: 1-12). In the latter passage, Isaiah hears Yahweh's address to his council, "Who will go for us?" and replies himself, "Send me," subsequently receiving the oracle of God which he is to transmit to his people. 81

Robinson saw a close relationship between the *sode* experience (which he spells *sodh*), and with the appointment of a prophet. He quotes Jeremiah 23:18, 21-22; Psalms 89: 7; Job 40:8; and Genesis 1:26 as instances of the Divine Council, and writes that the prophet's being able to speak in behalf of the Council gave the prophets a "sense of 'corporate personality' with the council of Yahweh, and through it with Yahweh Himself, as His adopted representative."⁸²

No doubt, Nephi understood this principle, and perhaps for that reason began his own writings by identifying his father as a true prophet by showing that Lehi was transported to heaven where he saw God sitting on his throne, and where he received his assignment by reading it in the heavenly book which was given him by Jehovah.

The meaning of *sode* is further illustrated by a simple clause in Proverbs 3:32: "But his secret is

⁷⁸ Cross' footnote: "The Council of Yahweh," *Journal of Theological Studies*, (45, 1946) 151-157.

⁷⁹Cross' footnote: The judicial function of Yahweh's council is well known from such passages as Psalm 82 see E. G. Wright, *The Old Testament against Its Environment* (Chicago, 1950) 30-410

⁸⁰Cross' footnote: Both in Ugaritic literature and also in biblical literature, the use of the first person plural is characteristic of address in the heavenly council. The familiar "we" of Gen. 1:26, "Let us make man in our image...," Gen 3::22, "Behold the man is become one of us...,: and Gen. 11:7, "Come, let us go down and let us confound their language...," has long been recognized as the plural address used by Yahweh in his council.

⁸¹Frank M. Cross, Jr. "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (12, January - October, 1953), 274-275.

⁸²H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1946) 167-170. The quote is from pages 169-170.

with the righteous." That statement is an example of an encoded scripture which was not intended by its author to be encoded. "Secret" is *sode*; "righteous" is Zadok. So what it says is "The secret decisions of the Council in Heaven are with sacral kings and priests of this world."

The time and place where the Council in Heaven met are clearly identified for us. In his poetic version of D&C 76, Joseph Smith identified the place of the Council as Kolob. ⁸³ Ephesians 1, Isaiah 6 and others identify it even more closely as the Throne Room or Holy of Holies in the temple. ⁸⁴ The time is consistently described as "in the beginning, before the world was." (D&C 93) ⁸⁵

83 "From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth," (That line is quoted in context below.) *Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1843.

⁸⁴ Ephesians 1:20 uses the phrase "heavenly places" to identify God's throne room, and verses 3 and 4 of that same chapter uses the same phrase to describe the place where the Father "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Other accounts of the *sode* also speak of God sitting on his throne at the Council. Isaiah 6 and 1 Nephi 1 are among them.

⁸⁵ I take it that "before the world was" means before this world was created either spiritually or physically. There is something special about the earth we live on. If Abraham 3-5 is an account of the spiritual creation of this world, as it appears to be, it was the beginning of spiritual creation, yet it was not the first world to receive a physical body. According to John Taylor's statement in the Mormon quoted below, "worlds upon worlds organized and peopled" before this one, and those who have "died, were resurrected, and received their exaltation on the redeemed worlds they once dwelt upon." (*The Mormon* N.Y. August 29, 1857) Nevertheless, Michael, the commander who orchestrated the expulsion of Satan from heaven, was born on this earth. Of all the planets in the universe, during the billions of years of its existence, this earth was chosen to be the altar on which the Saviour's atonement was performed. When his body was resurrected, it was materials from this earth which made up his resurrected body.

Our best description of the proximity of the meetings of Council and their involvement in the creation is in Abraham 3 where we read that the intelligences who are organized as the noble and great spirits, met in Council, and were given assignments by God, who "stood in the midst of them and said, these I will make my rulers." The head of the Council of the gods, Jehovah, then said, "we will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell." Realizing that the plan was intended to bless those who were righteous and weed out those who were not, Satan, who was a liar from the beginning (D&C 93), and his followers rebelled, and were expelled from the Council. Thereafter the "gods" created the heavens and the earth (Abraham 3 - 5).

That section of Abraham is extremely important. No where else do we get the story in its actual sequence. That is, no where else do we learn that when the Council met the leaders were chosen, and the decision made to create the worlds. After that decision was made, Satan rebelled and was expelled, and then the earth was created. If that simple sequence were in the Bible it would save scholars' untold frustration and speculations. They know the elements of the story, but they do not know the correct sequence of the events, and consequently cannot know how to put the story together.

A parallel account to Abraham 3:22-26 is given in Alma 13, only there the story is different because its focus is different. Its scene also takes place at the Council, where "the Lord God [the Father] ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people." The difference is that while the Abraham 3 story begins at the Council

and moves on to the war in heaven and then to the creation; the Alma 13 story begins at the Council and then leads us into an account of how those who were ordained to teach, helped prepare those who would inhabit the spirit earth which the other members of the Council were creating. I suppose that the members of the Council eventually lived on the spirit earth, just as members of the Council live on our physical earth. (I'll say more about that later, but for the present, remember that's only my opinion, so take it for no more than what it is worth.)

There are many examples of the *sode* experience in the scriptures. Isaiah's is probably the most complete in the Bible. Like Lehi, Isaiah saw God sitting on his throne, and was told of his earthly assignment. Isaiah 6 reads:⁸⁶

Isaiah 6

1 In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. [The Tanakh, the official Jewish English translation, reads, "I beheld my Lord seated on a high and lofty throne; and the skirts of His robe filled the Temple."]

2 Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." (The Tanakh reads, "Seraphs stood in attendance on him." 87)

Cherubim and seraphim are depictions of heavenly creatures (probably persons) who attend God at his throne, and whose characteristics are marked symbolically as having the ultimate powers known to mankind.

An evidence that parts of Isaiah have come to us in remarkably good condition is the fact that there are no differences in substance between Isaiah 6 in the Old Testament and 2 Nephi 16 in the Book of Mormon. Inconsequential differences are found in punctuation, capitalization, and a few words – but not their meaning – in verses 10, 11, and 12.

⁸⁷ Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text (The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, Jerusalem, 1985) The Tanakh is the official English translation of the Jewish Bible.

Without the abstract tools of philosophical theory, ancient man expressed concepts like omnipotence and omniscience, as well as the Divine Presence, in concrete forms and symbols. One of these was the cherub, combining strength, procreative power, swiftness and wisdom.⁸⁸

We learn in D&C 77 that the wings are more symbolic of their ability to move than they are an actual physical description.⁸⁹ The Cherubim in Ezekiel have four faces which look in the four cardinal directions (i.e. understanding heaven and earth in all directions) Those faces are of a lion (king of wild beasts), an ox (strongest of domestic animals), an eagle (king of the birds), and man (the intellectual among the group). These cherubim and seraphim are God's messengers as well as symbols of his power, and as such, may be considered as guards of the throne. When Moses built a small prototype of God's throne on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant, he showed two Cherubim whose wings stretched over the Mercy Seat. Below the lid, in the Ark itself, he placed the stone tablets on which the Lord wrote the 10 commandments which represented all of the Law and the authority of the Law, the staff of Aaron which was a symbol of his priesthood, and a jar of manna which represented the bread of life – the law (kingship), the staff (priesthood); and the bread of life (power of salvation). The Ark of the Covenant was the portable earthly Throne of God while the Israelites had a portable temple, but when the Tabernacle was replaced by the Temple of Solomon, the Ark took on a slightly different role. When Solomon built his magnificent Temple, he also built, in its Holy of Holies, a new and

⁸⁸ Eli Borowski, "Cherubim: God's Throne?" in *Biblical Archaeology Review* (21/4, July/August, 1995), 37.

[&]quot;And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings." (Ezekiel 1:6-28) The statement in the D&C is about a reference in Revelation, rather than about Ezekiel, but the comparison is appropriate. "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Revelation 4:8) "Q. What are we to understand by the eyes and wings, which the beasts had? A. Their eyes are a representation of light and knowledge, that is, they are full of knowledge; and their wings are a representation of power, to move, to act, etc.(D&C:77:4)

wondrous Throne. In the Temple the Throne was a permanent fixture which sat between two huge cherubim. The Ark, still portable, became the footstool of the throne. The cherubim, which guarded the Ark and the Throne in the Temple, were representative of those who guard the heavenly throne of God.

- 19 And the oracle [Holy of Holies] he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord.
- 20 And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar.
- 21 So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold.
- 22 And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold.
- 23 And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high.
- 24 And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits.
- 25 And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size.
- 26 The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.
- 27 And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.
- 28 And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.
- 29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.
- 30 And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. (1 Kings

The throne was flanked by two huge cherubim whose wings stretched up 16 feet, covering the seat of the throne and spreading over the Ark like a canape.

And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.(1 Kings 8:6-7)

Isaiah 6 continues:

- v. 3 And one cried unto another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.
- v. 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

It is likely that this statement by Isaiah is a very short version of what Isaiah experienced. There are two other ancient statements which tell a similar story in much greater detail. The first is from the Book of the Secrets of Enoch. The second from the Testament of Levi. They are quoted below.

⁹⁰ The other account of the construction of the Temple is in 2 Chronicles 3. Shortly before 926 B.C., when Rehoboam ruled in Jerusalem, Pharaoh Shoshenq attacked the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The biblical report of this invasion is very brief.

²⁵ And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak [different spelling, same man] king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:

²⁶ And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

²⁷ And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house.(1 Kings 14:25-28 see also 2 Chronicles 12:1-12.

According to Ahlstrom, the historical evidence from Egypt suggests that Shoshenq never took his armies to Jerusalem, so he concludes Rehoboam himself sacked the temple to bribe the Egyptians to stay away. If that is so, and since there is no mention of the gold which covered the walls and the throne in the temple, one may assume they were not disturbed at that time. See: Gosta W. Ahlstrom, "Pharaoh Shoshenq's Campaign to Palestine, in Andre Lemaire and Benedikt Otzen, eds., *History and Traditions of Early Israel* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1993), p. 1-16.

There is a quality of almost homespun honesty about Isaiah which is simply loveable. Others who tell this same story, such as Daniel, Enoch, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, tell how they fell on their faces in reverence. (They use the word 'fear.') But Isaiah tells us how he felt, rather than what he did:

- v. 5 Then said I: Wo is unto me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.
- v. 6 Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar;
- v. 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said: Lo, this has touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

From the accounts of others, one would gather that Isaiah's experience with the burning coal was a two-part ordinance. The first part was a ceremonial cleansing of his lips. The second was placing the Lord's words in Isaiah's mouth, thus making Isaiah's words also the words of the Lord. Other accounts which are different in detail, but apparently symbolically the same, are:

Enoch in the Pearl of Great Price

And it came to pass that I turned and went up on the mount; and as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heaven open, and I was clothed upon with glory. And I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face, and he talked with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face; ... And the Lord said unto me: Prophesy; and I prophesied... And the Lord said unto me: Go to this people, and say unto them ... and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him." (Moses 7:3-4, 7, 10, 13.)

Jeremiah

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth, And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations...." (Jeremiah 1:9-10)

Ezekiel

The Lord said "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words....And thou shalt speak my words unto them open thy mouth, and eat that I give

thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat the roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. (Ezekiel 2:6 to 3:4)

Lehi

and the first came and stood before my father, and gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read. And it came to pass that as he read, he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. And he read saying...." (1 Ne. 1:11-13)

John

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. (Revelation 10:7-11)

We learn from the Prophet Joseph that John's receiving and eating this book was "a mission, and an ordinance." Presumably the ordinance he received in this life was a reaffirmation of the ordinance John received in Council. The Prophet Joseph wrote,

Q. What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the 10th chapter of Revelation? A. We are to understand that it was a mission, and an ordinance, for him to gather the tribes of Israel; behold, this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things. (D&C 77:14)

Given the above versions of what appear to be essentially the same story, the coal which touched Isaiah lips was the same in its symbolism to the finger, the books, and the scroll which touched the mouths and delivered the words of the Lord to the other prophets. If so, then the light which touched Isaiah's lips was also an ordinance associated with Isaiah's assigned mission.

In the next verse, Isaiah brings us to the deliberations of the Council itself. One imagines the conversation at the Council going something like this: "In about 720 BC, we are going to have a lot of trouble with the king of Assyria and we need someone who will take care of that."

v. 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

The "us" is plural. So it is not only a reference to God but also to the other members of the Council who were present during these deliberations. Isaiah then volunteers for that assignment. He reports,

Then I said: Here am I; send me.

- v. 9 And he [the Lord] said: Go and tell this people--Hear ye indeed, but they understood not; and see ye indeed, but they perceived not.
- v. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their

eyes--lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and be healed.⁹²

Isaiah's assignment was going to be a very heavy one. Not only was he going to have to stand off the Assyrian army, but he was also going to have to watch as the Jewish state, which he would save, officially turn away from Jehovah and adopt the worship of Baal. In the "Martyrdom of Isaiah" one reads how, after Isaiah's friend, king Hezekiah, died, Hezekiah's son Manasseh became king and made the worship of Baal the national religion, persecuting all who insisted on worshiping Jehovah. The story concludes,

And they seized and sawed in sunder Isaiah, the son of Amoz, with a wood-saw. And Manasseh and Balchira [priest of Baal] and the false prophets and princes and the people and all stood looking on. And to the prophets who were with him [fellow worshipers of Jehovah] he [Isaiah] said before he had been sawn in sunder: 'Go ye to the region of Tyre and Sidon; for for me only hath God mingled the cup.' And when Isaiah was being sawn in sunder, he neither cried aloud nor wept, but his lips spake with the Holy Spirit until he was sawn in twain.⁹³

Given Isaiah's assignment, and the sorrow associated with it, it is little wonder that when he learned of it, he replied to the Lord,

v. 11 Then said I: Lord, how long?

That simple question: How long do I have to do this? strikes me as being one of the most honest and straight forward questions reported in the scriptures. Isaiah is willing to take the assignment, but not with a whole lot of enthusiasm. (I suspect that was true of many other members of the Council also. Abinadi couldn't have been very eager to live through the prospects of his.) The Lord then explained:

And he said: Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate;

v. 12 And the Lord have removed men far away, for there shall be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

[&]quot;...lest they see...hear...understand...and be converted and be healed" seems to imply that Isaiah was supposed to teach them so they would not understand. I don't think that's what it means. But the fact is, they were not converted, and eventually they murdered Isaiah. So what I think it means is "so they will have no excuse when they chose to not see, hear, or understand." "The Martyrdom of Isaiah," 3:11-14, in R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, vol. II, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976), 2:162.

v. 13 But yet there shall be a tenth, and they shall return, and shall be eaten, as a teil-tree, and as an oak whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

These last three verses might be read in two different ways. One way is to say that Isaiah's assignment was to continue until the Assyrians wasted the cities of the Jews (except for Jerusalem itself). But that interpretation leaves a void in the latter part of Isaiah's mission, and I don't think it is correct.

The other way to read those three verses is that the Lord told Isaiah his responsibility as a prophet to these people was to continue, even after death, until the end of the world. I presume that is what is meant by, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate." ⁹⁴ If that is so, then Isaiah's mission and responsibility was to work with those same wayward people — the ones who lived in Judea about 720 BC — throughout his lifetime here on earth, then to continue working with them in the spirit world after his and their deaths. In the world of the spirits, they would wait until the Saviour came to institute missionary work among the dead. When that time did arrive (as is reported in D&C 138) Isaiah is mentioned in verse 42 as being among those present at that great meeting when the Lord came and delivered the keys for the salvation of the dead to the prophets who were also dead. (Isaiah 61 is the prophecy, and D&C 138 is the fulfillment). I would suppose after that meeting in the spirit world, Isaiah went back to those who had once rejected him, who were still under his stewardship, and preached the gospel to them again. That, at least, is the way I read the assignment given in the last 3 verses of Isaiah 6.95

Another interpretation would be that the Lord was talking about the Assyrian invasion. It that were so, then the prophecy was only partially fulfilled. Jerusalem was not destroyed, and the land was not left utterly desolate.

⁹⁵ When Gianni Santamaria read an early draft of this section he wrote:

[&]quot;It seems to me that one 'chooses' in a certain way his/her assignments on this earth. Once

Characteristics of the *sode* experience

The following is a partial catalog of characteristics of the *sode* experience as reported by various prophets. The statements in bold are the characteristics, the words after the dash are the scriptural quotes. My comments are in brackets. This is certainly not an exhaustive list of people in the scriptures who report having had a *sode* experience. It does not mention Nephi, Moroni, the brother of Jared, or a number of other important examples, but it is complete enough to describe what a *sode* experience is.

ADAM AND OTHERS, in D&C 107:53-56

They saw the Lord – the Lord appeared unto them,

They understood Adam's role in the Council – and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel. [They acknowledged, perhaps because they had seen, his role as Michael at the Council.]

The Lord defines Adam's Mission – And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever.

ENOCH, Moses 7:2-69

Enoch is on the Mountain – And it came to pass that I turned and went up on the mount; and as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open,

Enoch is clothed – and I was clothed upon with glory;

Enoch saw the Lord – And I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face, and he talked

he/she has accepted an assignment of his own free will and choice, the Lord then ordains that person to that specific assignment(s) and covenants with him/her to help fulfil it. It might not be that way, but in most of these experiences that I've read about, each of the prophets has stepped forward on his own, much like the Saviour did."

with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face;

The Lord explains Enoch's mission — and he said unto me: Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations. And the Lord said unto me: Prophesy; ... And the Lord said unto me: Go to this people, and say unto them--Repent, ...

Enoch receives the Lord's words — And so great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him. ...

Enoch testifies of the Saviour — And again Enoch wept and cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the earth rest? And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father; and he called unto the Lord, saying: Wilt thou not come again upon the earth? Forasmuch as thou art God, and I know thee, and thou hast sworn unto me, and commanded me that I should ask in the name of thine Only Begotten; thou hast made me, and given unto me a right to thy throne, and not of myself, but through thine own grace; wherefore, I ask thee if thou wilt not come again on the earth....

ABRAHAM, Abraham 3:22-4:1

Abraham identifies the members of the Council – Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones;

God makes assignments to the members of the Council – And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

Proposal for the creation – And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.

Implementation of the Plan – And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one

answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first.

Satan expelled from the Council – And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him.

The Council creates the earth – And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth. 96

MOSES, Exodus 3:1-15 (See also the first chapter of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price.)

Moses experiences the Tree of Life (?) – And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Moses hears the voice of the Lord — And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

Moses' mountain is a temple – And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moses hears the voice of the Saviour – Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Moses' expression of reverence – And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

The Lord explains the reason for Moses' assignment – And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; ...

Moses receives the name of the Lord — And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I

^{96 &}quot;the Gods" are the members of the Council. As such, the word is usually not capitalized. The footnote reads: "TG Jesus Christ, Creator," so I presume the editors capitalized it because the Saviour was one of them.

AM hath sent me unto you.

Moses receives his assignment – And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

Moses receives words from the Lord — And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. [This may not mean that Moses can't speak well, it may only mean that Moses, who was reared and educated in the house of the Pharaoh, cannot speak the language of the slaves.] And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

Moses receives priesthood powers and keys – And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs. ...

ISAIAH, Isaiah 6:1-13)

[As I observed above, Isaiah 6 is an extremely important part of this series, but since we just discussed it in some detail, I'll not repeat that here.]

JEREMIAH - Jeremiah 1:1-2:37

Jeremiah saw the Lord – The words of Jeremiah ... To whom the word of the Lord came...

Jeremiah told of his call in the Council – Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Jeremiah's expression of reverence – Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

Jeremiah receives the Lord's words – But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou

shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

The Lord explains Jeremiah's call — See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

LEHI - 1 Nephi 1:6-12

Pillar of fire – And it came to pass as he prayed unto the Lord, there came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him; and he saw and heard much;

Lehi's reverence – and because of the things which he saw and heard he did quake and tremble exceedingly. ... being overcome with the Spirit and the things which he had seen.

Lehi visits the Heavens – And being thus overcome with the Spirit, he was carried away in a vision, even that he saw the heavens open,

Lehi sees God on his throne – and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne,

Lehi sees the members of the Council – surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God.

Lehi's testimony of Christ – And it came to pass that he saw One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day. And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament. And they came down and went forth upon the face of the earth;

Lehi receives the words of God, and with it, his own assignment – and the first came and stood before my father, and gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read. And it came to pass that as he read, he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. And he read, saying ...

EZEKIEL - Ezekiel 1:1-3:24

The Lord's hand upon Ezekiel – The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him.

Ezekiel's description of the pillar of fire – And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

Ezekiel's description of the cherubim and the origins of creation – Also out of the

midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies. And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings. And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

Ezekiel's description of the throne – And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone:

Ezekiel's description of God on his throne — and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

Ezekiel's expression of reverence – And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

The Lord gives Ezekiel his assignment — And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. ... And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

Ezekiel receives God's words — And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

Ezekiel receives his assignment – And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. ...

ABINADI - Mosiah 12:3-4

Abinadi was acting according to a covenant with the Father – Touch me not, for God [Elohim] shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, ... neither have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell; therefore, God [Elohim] will not suffer that I shall be destroyed at this time.

Abinadi had received his assignment from Jehovah – for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver;

Abinadi had received the "words" he was to speak – And again, because I have spoken the word of God ye have judged me that I am mad.

ALMA - Alma 36:15-20

Alma experiences unexpressible joy – there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy.

Alma saw God on his throne – Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne,

Alma saw members of the Council – surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God;

Alma is adopted as a "son" – I had been born of God.

JOHN - John 1:1-14

John testifies of the Saviour's role in the Council, the creation, and as the source of all life — In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. ... That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

JOHN - John 1:29-34

John testifies of the Saviour – The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John describes their respective places in the Council – This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

John describes his instructions ("He that sent me...the same said unto me...") — And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

THE SAVIOUR'S INTRODUCTION TO JOHN'S TESTIMONY AS RECORDED IN D&C 93:1-17

All may have a *sode* or *sode*-like experience — Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am; And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; And that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one—The Father because he gave me of his fulness, and the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men. I was in the world and received of my Father, and the works of him were plainly manifest.

John's testimony – And John saw and bore record of the fulness of my glory, and the fulness of John's record is hereafter to be revealed.

John saw the Saviour in Council – And he bore record, saying: I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was; Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation- The light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men. The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him.

John testifies of the Saviour — And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us. And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace; And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first. And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son. And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father; And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. [It is possible that is a reference to John's seeing the Saviour's coronation at the Council.]

PAUL - 2 Corinthians 12:1-5

Paul sees the Celestial world – It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. (2 Corinthians 12:1-5)

Morray-Jones suggests this is Paul's account of his own visit to the Holy of Holies of the celestial temple.⁹⁷

The Prophet Joseph explained,

"The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the holy priesthood. It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance. Paul saw the third heavens, and I more. Peter penned the most sublime language of any of the apostles. 98

JOSEPH SMITH - Joseph Smith-History 1:15-20

Joseph sees the pillar of light — ...just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

Joseph saw the Father and the Son — It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!

Joseph receives his assignment — My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those

⁹⁷ C. R. A. Morray-Jones "Paradise Revisited (2 Cor 12:1-12): The Jewish Mystical Background of Paul's Apostolate Part 2: Paul's Heavenly Ascent and its Significance," *Harvard Theological Review*, 86:3 (1993) 265-292.

⁹⁸ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 301

professors were all corrupt; that: "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.

Joseph's expression of reverence — When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home.

Joseph's only indication that he saw the Council at that time is in a different account – Another personage soon appeared like unto the first: he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee. He testified also unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God. I saw many angels in this vision.⁹⁹

JOSEPH F. SMITH - D&C 138:55-56

Joseph F. Smith "observed" the members of the Council — I observed that they were also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God. Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.

Above, I mentioned that there are two excellent non-canonical accounts of *sode* experiences.

They are of Enoch and Levi. Those accounts follow:

THE TESTAMENT OF LEVI 5:1-3, 8:1-17

And thereupon the angel opened to me the gates of heaven, and I saw the holy temple, and upon a throne of glory the Most High. And He said to me: Levi, I have given thee the blessings of the priesthood until I come and sojourn in the midst of Israel. (5:1-3)

And I saw seven men in white raiment saying unto me: Arise, put on the robe of the priesthood, and the crown of righteousness, and the breastplate of understanding, and the garment of truth, and the plate of faith, and the turban of the head, and the ephod of prophecy.

And they severally carried (these things) and put (them) on me, and said unto me: From henceforth become a priest of the Lord, thou and thy seed for ever. And the first anointed me with holy oil, and gave to me the staff of judgement. The second washed me with pure water, and fed me with bread and wine (even) the most holy things, and clad me with a holy and glorious robe. The third clothed me with a linen vestment like an ephod. The fourth put round

⁹⁹ Dean C. Jessee, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," BYU Studies, Spring, 1969, p. 284.

me a girdle like unto purple. The fifth gave me a branch of rich olive. The sixth placed a crown on my head. The seventh placed on my head a diadem of priesthood, and filled my hands with incense, that I might serve as priest to the Lord God. And they said to me: Levi, thy seed shall be divided into three offices, for a sign of the glory of the Lord who is to come. And the first portion shall be great; yea, greater than it shall none be. The second shall be in the priesthood. And the third shall be called by a new name, because a king shall arise in Judah, and shall establish a new priesthood, after the fashion of the Gentiles [to all the Gentiles]. And His presence is beloved, as a prophet of the Most High, of the seed of Abraham our father. Therefore, every desirable thing in Israel shall be for thee and for thy seed, And ye shall eat everything fair to look upon, And the table of the food shall thy seed apportion. And some of them shall be high priests, and judges, and scribes; For by their mouth shall the holy place be guarded. (8:1-17)

The statement "The fifth gave me a branch of rich olive" is probably a reference to his receiving a royal scepter which was a symbol of kingship. If that is so, then Levi was both sacral king and high priest. ¹⁰¹

THE BOOK OF THE SECRETS OF ENOCH

- 22: 1 On the tenth Heaven, Aravoth, I saw the appearance of the Lord's face, like iron made to glow in fire, and brought out, emitting sparks, and it burns. Thus I saw the Lord's face, but the Lord's face is ineffable, marvelous and very awful, and very, very terrible.
 - 2 And who am I to tell of the Lord's unspeakable being, and of his very wonderful face? and I cannot tell the quantity of his many instructions, and various voices, the Lord's throne very great and not made with hands, nor the quantity of those standing round him, troops of cherubim and
 - 3 seraphim, nor their incessant singing, of his immutable beauty, and who shall tell of the ineffable greatness of his glory?
 - 4 And I fell prone and bowed down to the Lord,
 - 5 and the Lord with his lips said to me: 'Have courage, Enoch, do not fear, arise and stand before my face into eternity.'
 - 6 And the archistratege Michael lifted me up, and led me to before the Lord's face.
 - 7 And the Lord said to his servants tempting them: 'Let Enoch stand before my face into eternity,' and the glorious ones bowed down to the Lord, and said: 'Let Enoch go according to Thy word.'
 - 8 And the Lord said to Michael: 'Go and take Enoch from out his earthly garments, and anoint him with my sweet ointment, [Charles' footnote reads: "oil"] and put him into the

^{100 &}quot;The Testament of Levi," in R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. II, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976), 2:307-309. The brackets [] are in Charles' original.

¹⁰¹ See: Widengren, Geo, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1951.

- garments of My glory.'
- 9 And Michael did thus, as the Lord told him. He anointed me, and dressed me, and the appearance of that ointment is more than the great light, and his ointment is like sweet dew, and its'
- 10 smell mild, shining like the sun's ray, and I looked at myself, and was like one of his glorious ones.
- 11 And the Lord summoned one of his archangels by name Pravuil, whose knowledge was quicker in wisdom than the other archangels, who wrote all the deeds of the Lord; and the
- 12 Lord said to Pravuil: 'Bring out the books from my store-houses, and a reed of quick-writing, and give it to Enoch, and deliver to him the choice and comforting books out of thy hand.'
- Of Enoch's writing, how he wrote his wonderful journeyings and the heavenly apparitions and himself wrote three hundred and sixty six books.
- 23: 1 And he was telling me all the works of heaven, earth and sea, and all the elements, their passages and goings, and the thunderings of the thunders, the sun and moon, the goings and changes of the stars, the seasons, years, days, and hours, the risings of the wind, the numbers of the angels,
 - 2 and the formation of their songs, and all human things, the tongue of every human song and life, the commandments, instructions, and sweet voiced singings, and all things that it is fitting to learn. And Pravuil told me: 'All the things
 - [3-]4 that I have told thee, we have written. Sit and write all the souls of mankind, however many of them are born, and the places prepared for them
 - 5 to eternity; for all souls are prepared to eternity, before the formation of the world.' And all
 - 6 double thirty days and thirty nights, and I wrote out all things exactly, and wrote three hundred and sixty-six books.
 - Of the great secrets of God, which God revealed and told to Enoch, and spoke with him face to face.
- 24: 1 And the Lord summoned me, and said to me: Enoch, sit down on my left with Gabriel.' And I bowed down to the Lord, and the Lord spoke
 - 2 to me: Enoch, beloved, all thou seest, all things that are standing finished I tell to thee even before the very beginning, all that I created from non-being, and visible things from invisible.
 - 3 Hear, Enoch, and take in these my words, for not to My angels have I told my secret, and I have not told them their rise, nor my endless realm, nor have they understood my creating,
 - 4 which I tell thee to-day. For before all things were visible, I alone used to go about in the invisible things, like the sun from east to west, and west to east. But even the sun has peace in itself, while I found no peace, because I "as creating all things, and I conceived the thought of placing foundations, and of creating visible creation.
 - God relates to Enoch, how out of the very lowest darkness comes down the visible and invisible.

- 25: 1 I commanded in the very lowest parts, that visible things should come down from invisible, and Adoil [Charles' footnote says the name "Adoil" is from a Hebrew root meaning "the hand of God." came down very great, and I beheld
 - 2 him, and lo! he had a belly of great light. And I said to him: 'Become undone, Adoil, and let
 - 3 the visible come out of thee.' And he came undone, and a great light came out. And I was in the midst of the great light, and as there is born light from light, there came forth a great age, and showed all creation, which I had thought to
 - 4 create. And I saw that it was good. And I placed for myself a throne, and took my seat on it, and said to the light: 'Go thou up higher and fix thyself high above the throne, and be
 - 5 a foundation to the highest things.' And above the light there is nothing else, and then I bent up and looked up from my throne. 102

I have a strong personal liking for the Book of Enoch. There was a time when the Jews accepted it as scripture. The early Christians did also. In the New Testament it is quoted as scripture in Jude 1:14-16, but Jude is quoting First Enoch, not the Secrets of Enoch, so that cannot be used to show that the Secrets of Enoch was part of the early Christian canon. That's OK, I like it anyway. I am intrigued by his description of Adoil. It sounds enough like Revelation 12: 1-9 that it may be about the same thing. ¹⁰³

"THE LIGHT AND THE LIFE OF THE WORLD"

There is a relationship of the Adoil story, with its assertion that all things were created from his light, and a rather remarkable phrase used by Abinadi. He describes the Saviour as "the light and the life of the world." The thing that is remarkable is that Abinadi is the first prophet who is recorded as having used that phrase, so there is no way of tracing where he learned it. There are

[&]quot;The Book of the Secrets of Enoch," 21-25, in R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. II, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976), 2:442-445.

In Revelation, v. 3, it tells about a "great red dragon. I didn't include that in the Enoch story, but it is there, just a little beyond where I stopped quoting.

echoes of the idea in the Psalms. "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." (Psalm 36:9) and, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1) But the phrase is not there, neither can it be found anywhere in the old Testament. In the New Testament Jesus says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And, as already noted, there is a similar statement by John. (Apparently the author is John the Baptist rather than John the Beloved.)

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (John 1:1-5) 104

That testimony is confirmed by the Saviour who told the Prophet Joseph

- 1 Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;
- 2 And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;
- 3 And that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one –
- 4 The Father because he gave me of his fulness, and the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men.
- 5 I was in the world and received of my Father, and the works of him were plainly manifest.

[&]quot;...the darkness comprehended it not" does not mean that the darkness did not understand the light. "Comprehend" in this instance means to encircle or surround. So what this means is that the darkness could not get all around the light in order to snuff it out. It is a way of saying the power of the light is greater than the power of the darkness.

- 6 And John saw and bore record of the fulness of my glory, and the fulness of John's record is hereafter to be revealed.
- 7 And he bore record, saying: I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was;
- 8 Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation –
- 9 The light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men.
- 10 The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him.
- 11 And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us.
- 12 And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace;
- 13 And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness;
- 14 And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first.
- 15 And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son.
- 16 And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father;
- 17 And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him.
- 18 And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John.
- 19 I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.
- 20 For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be

- glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace.
- 21 And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn;
- 22 And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn.
- 23 Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;
- 24 And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come;
- 25 And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning.
- 26 The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth, and John bore record of me, saying: He received a fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth;
- 27 And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments.
- 28 He that keepeth his commandments receive th truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.
- 29 Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.
- 30 All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.
- 31 Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light.
- 32 And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation.
- 33 For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy;
- 34 And when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy.
- 35 The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple.
- 36 The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.

- 37 Light and truth forsake that evil one.
- 38 Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God.
- 39 And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.

40 But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth. (D&C 93:1-40)

There are a number of differences in the two accounts of John's testimony – the one in the Bible and the one in the Doctrine and Covenants, but one of the most significant is that the much more detailed one in the D&C says that John "saw and bore record of the fulness of my glory ... all things were made by him, and through him, and of him.... And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father...." That was at the least a *sode* experience, but it may have been something more. Enoch's experience, in the Secrets of Enoch, was apparently more, so is the brother of Jared's: "... there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared." (Ether 4:4b)

The statement in section 93, "The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him," evokes more questions than it answers – especially "... all things were made ... of him." Unless I misread that, it means that he is somehow the primeval substance of which all things – including ourselves, both spiritual and physical – are made. I presume that means the light which emanates from his person is that primal substance. (I can justify that with what little knowledge of physics I have. All things are made of elements, which are made of atoms, etc. Einstein's theory says matter is made of energy, and when it is made into a bomb, the visible product of that energy is light. So it seems our

physical selves are made of light, our spiritual selves are matter more refined – also light. ¹⁰⁵ So it seems reasonable to me to say we are made of the light of Christ.) As far as I can tell there are at least five places where we can get a glimpse of the very beginnings of our creation. They are Revelation 12, 1 Nephi 1, the wheels in Ezekiel 1, D&C 93. and the story of Adoil in the book of the Secrets of Enoch. By far the most complete – indeed the key to recognizing the others – is the account we just read in Enoch.

In the Book of Mormon the phrase, "the light and the life of the world" is also spoken by Alma, whose father heard Abinadi say it.

And now, my son, I have told you this that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn of me that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ. Behold, he is the life and the light of the world. Behold, he is the word of truth and righteousness. (Alma 38:9)

Other than that, in the scriptures, the phrase is only spoken by the Saviour himself. It seems to have two – but very closely related – separate meanings. The first has to do with his powers as creator; the second has to do with his powers as father – that we may become his children and his heirs.

First, let us examine its meaning in terms of creation. When the Saviour came to the Nephite temple he introduced himself this way:

[&]quot;In tracing the thing to the foundation, and looking at it philosophically, we shall find a very material difference between the body and the spirit; the body is supposed to be organized matter, and the spirit, by many, is thought to be immaterial, without substance. With this latter statement we should beg leave to differ, and state the spirit is a substance; that it is material, but that it is more pure, elastic and refined matter than the body; that it existed before the body, can exist in the body; and will exist separate from the body, when the body will be mouldering in the dust; and will in the resurrection, be again united with it." (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 207.)

- 9 And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:
 - 10 Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.
 - 11 And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning. (3 Nephi 11: 9 11)

The phrase "the light and the life of the world" obviously has a greater meaning than just the light and the life of THIS world. Rather, it clearly stretches to all ends of creation.

To the Prophet Joseph he said, "And now, remember the words of him who is the life and light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God." (D&C 10: 70) Through Moroni we find the idea expanded, so that it includes the creation from before the beginning. Moroni quotes the Saviour as saying, "For behold, I am the Father, I am the light, and the life, *and the truth* of the world." (Ether 4:12 italics added) The only way I know of explaining that statement is to begin with the Lord's words in D&C 88 and 93. Speaking of himself, the Saviour says:

- 6 He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth;
- 7 Which truth shineth. ["Intelligence, or the *light of truth*, was not created or made, neither indeed can be." (D&C 93:29)] This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made.
- 8 As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made;
- 9 As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made;
- 10 And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand.
- 11 And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;
- 12 Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of

the same thing:

13 The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. (D&C 88: 6-13 italics added)

Thus it appears that in our origins – the very beginnings – long before the Council – Christ is the light and the life of the world. And throughout all of our history, from before the "beginning" to the ends of this eternity, we are sustained by that light. However, it is apparent from the way the Saviour uses that phrase "the light and the life of the world" that it means something else as well – and that, by the way, is perfectly consistent with the context in which the phrase was used by Abinadi.

When the Saviour spoke to the Nephites during the three days of darkness, he explained:

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

18 I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. (3 Nephi 9: 17-18)

The proximity of the phrase we are considering with the idea of becoming children of God is not especially striking here, but it becomes more so when one realizes that usually, when the Saviour uses that phrase it is associated with the meaning of sacral sonship. John understood that relationship. I think I can show you more easily if I abridge John's statement:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. ... That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. ... But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1: 4, 9, 12) When the Lord spoke to Hyrum Smith in a blessing given by his brother Joseph, he said much

- 28 Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world.
- 29 I am the same who came unto mine own and mine own received me not;
- 30 But verily, Verily, I say unto you, that as many as receive me, to them will I give power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on my name. Amen. (D&C 11: 28-30)¹⁰⁶

The concept here is, as it is in John, that the adoption is made possible by the atonement, that is, by the atonement people are given "power to become" the children of God. But whether one exercises that power is an individual matter – it has been since the dawn of our self cognizance. Orson Pratt is a striking example. (He has been one of my heroes since I was a boy) He was born September 19, 1811, and was baptized on his 19th birthday in 1830. Less than two months later on November 4th, Orson received the following revelation through the Prophet Joseph.

- 1 My son Orson, hearken and hear and behold what I, the Lord God, shall say unto you, even Jesus Christ your Redeemer;
- 2 The light and the life of the world, a light which shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not;
- 3 Who so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons of God. Wherefore you are my son; (D&C 34:1-3)

The assurance "Wherefore you are my son," was probably not based on Orson's activity in the Church during the two short months he had been a member, and it certainly was not a guarantee that Orson would not have as many trials as he could handle in his lifetime. What it meant was, as the Lord said at the conclusion of the revelation,

And if you are faithful, behold, I am with you until I come – And verily, Verily, I say unto you, I come quickly. I am your Lord and your Redeemer. Even so. Amen. [That leaves unresolved the question of whether he was talking about the Second Coming, or if he anticipated a more personal visit with just Orson Pratt alone.] (D&c 134: 11-12)

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

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

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

Then, in a statement which is markedly similar to the conclusion of the Beatitudes, 107 he added,

9 And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the

world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me.(D&C 45:9)

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

...I give unto you to be the light of this people. A city [Zion] that is set on a hill [sacred mountain] cannot be hid. Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick [the menorah], and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (3 Nephi 12:14-16)

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

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

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

8 And no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care.

9 Behold, I am the light and the life of the world, that speak these words, therefore give heed with your might, and then you are called." (D&C 12:8-9)
Called to what? To light and life.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12) Mormon said it just a little differently in one of his editorial gems.

And thus we see the great call of diligence of men to labor in the vineyards of the Lord; and thus we see the great reason of sorrow, and also of rejoicing – sorrow because of death and destruction among men, and joy because of the light of Christ unto life. (Alma 28:14)

In this thing also, the heirs of the Saviour become like him:

- 24 That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.
- 25 And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you;
- 26 He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all.
- 27 Wherefore, he is possessor of all things; for all things are subject unto him, both in heaven and on the earth, the life and the light, the Spirit and the power, sent forth by the will of the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son.
- 28 But no man is possessor of all things except he be purified and cleansed from all sin.
- 29 And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. (D&C 50: 24 29)

To be a child of God, an heir, a sacral king or queen, priest or priestess, one must be like God.

For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light; mercy hath compassion on mercy and claimeth her own; justice continueth its course and claimeth its own; judgment goeth before the face of him who sitteth upon the throne and governeth and executeth all things. (88:40)

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure, Amen. (Moroni 7: 48)

In our scriptures, Abinadi was the first to describe the Saviour as "the light and the life of the world." It is a perfect description, both in denotation and connotation – and it is a perfect introduction to Abinadi's ultimate question: "and who shall be his seed" – his heirs – his sons and his daughters?

The New Year Festival in the Scriptures

II What was the ancient Israelite concept of sacral kingship?

In ancient Israel there were three kinds of kings:

First, Jehovah, because he is the Only Begotten Son he is King of the heavenly Council, and by virtue of the covenants and ordinances performed there, he was also the ultimate King, High Priest, and God of earthly Israel.¹⁰⁸

Second, there was the mortal man who ruled Israel as its protector and judge. As its protector he was its international representative and military general; as its judge he was its domestic and religious leader – as both he was the legitimate representative of Jehovah on the earth.

Third, Israel was a nation of sacral kings and priests. Moses' wish, expressed to Joshua, "would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29), was fulfilled in part, after the Temple was built in Jerusalem, and the fulness of the ordinances performed there. ¹⁰⁹ The sacral "kings and priests" were those in the "congregation"

¹⁰⁸ In the pre-exilic Old Testament, "Israel" meant all twelve tribes from the times of Moses to Solomon, then the kingdom of Israel split between Judah and Israel. I am not making that later distinction, Rather I am using "Israel" in the same broad sense it is used in the Book of Mormon, meaning the descendants of all the twelve sons of Jacob, even though after Solomon, the kings I am talking about were primarily kings of Judah.

¹⁰⁹ I remind you again of what the Lord said relative to the ordinances to be performed in the Temple in Nauvoo.

³⁷ And again, verily I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?

(nation) of Israel who had been initiated into the rites of the temple. As I will point out below, some scholars believe that the audience participated in the ancient temple rites, not just as onlookers and singers of the psalms, but symbolically as primary actors in the drama. That is, when the nation's living king played himself in that part of the drama which represented the Council in Heaven, he also represented the role of each man in the audience when they were in the Council; when the king and queen played the parts of Adam and Eve in the Garden, that represented the coming to earth of each of those who watched the drama; and when the king was anointed at the conclusion of the festival, it represented the anointing of each of those who had followed his steps through the entire ceremony. Because all the nation was thus initiated, each man and woman in the community became an adopted child of Jehovah – sacral kings and queens, priests and priestesses. Thus affirming the covenant relationship between each individual in the entire nation with the God/King Jehovah. Through these ordinances each individual affirmed that he or she would keep his or her eternal covenants, and thereby become an heir, an adopted son or daughter of God. Establishing this personal covenant relationship with Jehovah was the necessary prerequisite to individual eternal salvation. The Prophet Joseph Smith expressed a similar idea when he said,

Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council. 110

³⁸ For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was.

³⁹ Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipals, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name. (D&C 124:37-39)

110 Joseph Smith, (ed. Joseph Fielding Smith) *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), p. 365.

As I shall point out below, non-Mormon scholars have discovered suggestions of this in the Bible, but it is clearly taught in the Book of Mormon. However, if one uses the Book of Mormon to go back and read the Bible, one finds it is clearly taught there as well. In our story of Abinadi, the meaning of sacral kingship was the focal point of his entire argument.

Day by day review of the events of the New Year Festival

It may be said that in the Feast of Tabernacle the ancient Israelites enjoyed an annual seven-day endowment of power and peace. 111 "Seven" represents completeness, fullness, wholeness. The eighth day (day 22 of the New Year festival) was the extra day – the one beyond the completeness of the seven – was the a day of national rejoicing and feasting. It was one of the most joyous and sacred days of the year. 112

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

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). 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.

house. Then the period of migrating from Egypt to Canaan is past, people have reached the coming world.¹¹³

During the ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles the king was the chief actor, but his was not the only part. In the drama on stage and elsewhere there were the mock battles, at least one procession, many sacrifices, 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 rites, so the entire experience was a making of covenants and a reaffirmation of covenants already made. We do not know the extent of their 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. 115

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. 116

Abinadi's arguments focus on the power of Christ's atonement, and on the ordinances of 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

¹¹³ Freidrich Weinreb, *Roots of the Bible* (Tiverton, Devon, Merlin Books, 1986), 350.

¹¹⁴ 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.

¹¹⁵ 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.

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

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 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 during the last third of the New Year festival. I believe I know that correct sequence of the scenes in that drama, and I believe you know it also. So I have arranged the *events*, as the scholars understand them, 117 *in the order* that you and I understand.

Day 1 of 22, New Year's day. In celebration, horns were blown to announce the beginning of the

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.

¹¹⁷ 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*.

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.¹¹⁸

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

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.

After he symbolically leaves the Garden and enters this world as Adam, the king also plays the parts of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David, making covenants with Jehovah in each instance, and receiving appropriate authority from him. In the drama, the king then plays himself as the legal and foreordained head of the nation of Israel.

At some point in the drama (probably as he begins to play the role of himself), the king was anointed *to become* king.¹²⁰

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 mobles, the proclamation,

¹¹⁹ Geo Widengren, *The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1951), p. 10-59.

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).

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. ¹²¹

Day 4 (18) There is great mourning. The king is dead. 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

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.

121 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.

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. 122 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, perhaps measuring it off with their steps, and redefining it as sacred space, thus the city became a New Jerusalem, its temple was restored, 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. The king was clothed and anointed. He sat upon the throne in the Holy of Holies and gave a speech. Then followed sacrifices and a feast of celebration.

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.

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.

I would find great pleasure in tracing the events of the entire festival drama with as much detail as possible, and hope to do that some day. But for the present I must confine myself to the parts which relate to Abinadi's arguments, and therefore essentially limit this discussion to the ideas surrounding the events of the seventh day. When Abinadi stood before king Noah and disparaged his claim to legitimacy as both king and priest, the verbal exchange between them focused on the meaning of the events and ceremonies of the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, but most especially the events and ideas associated with its crescendo – the king's adoption and coronation. So I will now focus my attention on the ideas associated with the coronation ceremonies, beginning with the idea of Adam as the first king, and concluding with the ceremonies of the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the 21st day of the New Year festival.

The king as Adam

Scholars say that in ancient Israel, the nation's king was symbolically re-enthroned each year during the New Year festival. ¹²³ One of the purposes of the drama which was performed on the stage during the festival was to show that the king had been appointed by God to be king. During that stage production, the then-reigning king and queen played the roles of themselves in the first part of the drama where they were represented as participating in the Council in Heaven, the war in heaven, and creation events; then they played the roles of Adam and Eve in the Garden.

The king was thought of as the first and typical man. Thus, in Gen. i, Adam is spoken of in royal terms. The same idea is found in Ps. viii (cp. Ps. lxxx.17) and underlies Mic. v. 1ff. Traces of this Semitic myth of the Primal Man are also detected in Job xv. 7 f. and Ezek. xxvii.11ff. 124

One of the most important descriptions of Adam found in the scriptures is in Ezekiel 28 which describes the king of Tyre as though he were Adam. Widengren wrote about that, gave his own translation of that passage and comments as follows:

Thou wast a sealer of the preserved (thing),
full of wisdom and accomplished in beauty.
In Eden, the Garden of God, thou wast,
every precious stone being thy cover,
ruby, chrysolith, diamond, topaz, shoham, jasper,
sapphire, malachite, beryl, hyacinth, agate, amethyst and gold.
The works of thy settings and thy trappings on thee,
the day thou wast created they were prepared.
Thou wast a cherub, oh, what an anointed of the Shadower,
and I placed thee on the holy mountains.
A god thou wast, in the midst of stones of fire thou didst walk.
(Ezek. xxviii. 12-14

We should note in this text the following important points: in the Garden of God, situated

¹²³ See Eaton, John H., *Kingship and the Psalms*, (Sheffield, England, JSOT Press, 1986) p.113.

¹²⁴ J. A. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 1958, New Series, 9: 231. Emerton is paraphrasing Bentzen and expressing his general concurrence

'on the holy mountain', there was dwelling a divine being, anointed by God, who is called 'the Shadower', either because the godhead is overshadowing him with his wings (cf. Pss. xvii. 8; lvii. 2; lxi. 5; lxxii.8) or because the deity is thought of as a mighty tree in the shadow of which he is living (cf. Hos. xiv. 9; Ezek. xxxi. 2-9; Dan. iv. 7-9). This divine being is called a 'cherub' and an 'anointed (one)', the former epithet indicating his association with the garden as its guardian (Gen. iii. 24) and with God as that upon which the Deity rides (Ezek. x. 6ff.), the latter his royal status, because he has received his anointing from God....His garment reflects his wonderful nature, being set with twelve precious stones, and he is walking about in the midst of 'stones of fire', i.e. the stars. He was not only 'accomplished in beauty' but also 'full of wisdom', and 'a sealer of the preserved (thing)'....Actually it can be shown without difficulty that the Primordial Man wears the same pectoral as the Israelite high-priest wears in virtue of his office (Exod. xxvii. 17-20), the twelve jewels in both cases being exactly the same....By means of the possession of these Divine Tablets [Tablets of Destiny or Urim and Thummim which is worn in the pocket covered with the twelve stones 125] the Primordial Man in paradise in fact was--what he is called--'a sealer of the preserved (thing), full of wisdom'. Here another detail calls for notice. The Israelite king on the day of his enthronement received a copy of the Law, that is these same Heavenly Tablets, given by Yahweh to Moses. This is accordingly the perfect ritual counterpart of the mythical conception we have been tracing here. The Israelite king is also as the possessor of the Tablets of Law 'full of wisdom', a proclaimer of God's revealed will. 126

As the festival drama progressed, the king was no longer Adam himself, but became a "son of Man," that is, *an* Adam. He was also a son of God, but he was not a god in the sense that the Mesopotamian and Egyptian kings were gods.¹²⁷ For, like Adam, "He loses his immortality, suffers under the sentence of God and is left to wander homeless on the earth until death." ¹²⁸

¹²⁵ The words in brackets [] are Widengren's inserts. In Mesopotamian myth, the Tablets of Destiny were written at the Devine Council and contained the earthly assignments of all men and women. The god who rebelled stole the tablets and uses the information contained on them to try to disrupt the affairs of humans and thwart the purposes of the gods.

Widengren, Geo, "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 167-168.

For further discussion of the Holy Mountain and its equation with a temple see, Richard J. Clifford, "The Temple and the Holy Mountain" in, Truman G. Madsen, ed., The Temple in Antiquity (Provo, Utah, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1984) 108-124.

127 See: Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 34; Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1967, 12-15, 17-18; Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948), 299-301.

¹²⁸ Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p. 169.

Through the acts and words of the festal cult, laid down in fixed, sacred *ritual*, the reality which is to be created...is portrayed ('acted') in visual and audible form. The actualization takes place through the representation.....

The representation may be *either*, more or less realistic, *or*, more or less symbolic--more often the latter, i.e. The rites stand for something; they symbolize and represent that for which they stand.

Their inner meaning is that the powers of death are overcome by the powers of life, by the Life-giver himself, by Yahweh, the living and life-giving God. 129

This was necessary in order to ensure the legitimization of the office of the earthly king, for just as Adam was the first king, so the new king must be an Adam. Bentzen writes,

The king, then, is *Primeval Man*. The first man of Genesis 1:26-28 is described as the first ruler of the world. In the first Creation Story, the 'gospel' of the New Year, we hear the blessing spoken by God at the enthronement of the first Royal Couple of the world. Man is to "rule" over all living creatures. Man and Woman, like the Babylonian kings, are "images of God", i.e. the Royal Couple is Divine, as in the famous apostrophe to the king in the oracle for the Royal wedding (Psalm 45:7). The same idea is developed in Psalm 8, in the description of the "Son of Man", who is "little lower than God", "nearly a God". This "Son of Man", according to the evident dependence of the psalm on the ideas behind the first chapter of Genesis, is the First Man and the First King.... 130

As I mentioned above, in the drama, after they left the Garden, the reigning who had played the role of Adam now plays the roles of – and therefore received the authority of – Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and then David. So all the covenants of kingship and priesthood would now apply to him. After he had received all the necessary authority to reign, he no longer played the role of other people, but the drama took on the form of his own earthly autobiography. This was necessary, because when he reached the final coronation scenes, it had to be himself, rather than one of his forefathers, who was anointed king. Nonetheless, he is still *an* Adam, just as he is *an* Abraham and *a* Moses. In fact, each step throughout the drama had not been an independent act, but a reaffirmation of earlier ordinances and covenants whose ultimate object was to let him return to the Garden where he would be in the presence of God. In several ways his coronation represented that

¹²⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 19.

¹³⁰ Aage Bentzen, King and Messiah (London, Lutterworth Press, 1955), 117-18.

return. I will mention them briefly here and describe them in more detail as we go along. His washing made him clean – innocent like in the Garden. His anointing and clothing represented the return of the garment of light he once had in the Garden. In the Ark of the Covenant on which his feet were established were symbols of kingship, priesthood, and the fruit of the tree of life. He sat upon the throne of God as a son of God, just as Adam had been a son of God. The cherubim no longer kept him from the tree of life, but guarded him on his royal throne.

Now, let's examine those ideas more closely.

When Adam was compelled to leave the Garden, he also left behind his garment of light which had been given him by the gods, and it had been replaced by a different garment made of skins.¹³¹

When Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened, and they saw themselves naked. Their glory then fled from them, for they lost their celestial garments and angelic endowments.¹³²

During the New Year festival coronation ceremony, the king, who had played the role of the earth's first king, Adam, symbolically received that garment of light back again. One of the symbols associated with the sacred anointing oil was the light of that original garment. Peter may have been expressing that idea when he reported,

37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. (Acts 10: 37-8.)

That may mean that Jesus' baptism was also a coronation ceremony. He was washed in the water,

¹³¹ Stephen D. Ricks, "The Garment of Adam in Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Tradition," in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 705-739.

¹³² Angelo S. Rappoport, *Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel* (London: Gresham Publishing Company, 1928), 1:165.

anointed by the Holy Ghost (the phrase "clothed by the Spirit" is not found in the account, but might appropriately be inserted), and the Father announced that he was the heir, as in Psalm 2: "This is my Beloved Son." In the coronation of the Israelite kings, "son" was a royal king-name or new name. ¹³³

133 D&C 93: 15 "And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son."

A note from my journal: Sunday, January 26, 2003. I was sitting in Sunday School class listening to the teacher read a New Testament account of the Saviour's baptism by John. In my mind's eye I envisioned a white form coming down from the heavens toward the Saviour. Then it occurred to me that the words "in the form of a dove" describe the "form" but not necessarily the size of that object. And I asked, "What if this white object were the same size of Jesus himself." Is it possible that what John, Nephi, and others saw, was not a bird, but a white robe – a garment of light – having sleeves like other robes. Perhaps as it floated toward the ground, the wide flowing sleeves of the robe were extended like wings, giving it an appearance that could best be described to us as being like a bird in flight, as it floated through the air toward the Saviour. And what if the words "sat upon him" were not talking about only his shoulder but about his whole person – that when the garment of light reached him, it encompassed his whole being in its light.

If that is so, then all of the necessary elements of coronation are present in the Saviour's baptism: He was washed, anointed, clothed, and given the traditional covenant new name of the Israelite kings: "thou art my son." (Psalm 2)

I checked the scriptures and the *Teachings of the Prophet* to see if there was anything obviously wrong with this interpretation.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and [John saw, and (JST)], lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: (Matthew 3:16)

And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: (Mark 1:10)

And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. (Luke 3:22)

And John bare record, saying, [When he was baptized of me, (JST)] I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. (John 1:32)

John extended the idea of that anointing to all the Saints when he wrote, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." (1 John 2:20) The word "unction" means "anointing," so John may also have been describing one's being baptized by the Holy Ghost as an anointing.

For the Israelite kings, pouring the sparkling oil over his earthly garment seems to have represented having a garment of light restored to him again. In which case, the king's garment of light represented a renewal of the covenants and endowments of Adam in the person of the king. (I have wondered, in the phrase "the baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost," if the "fire" part is not

And I looked and beheld the Redeemer of the world, of whom my father had spoken; and I also beheld the prophet who should prepare the way before him. And the Lamb of God went forth and was baptized of him; and after he was baptized, I beheld the heavens open, and the Holy Ghost come down out of heaven and abide upon him in the form of a dove. (1 Nephi 11:27)

Wherefore, after he was baptized with water the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove. (2 Nephi 31:8)

Fig. 7. Represents God sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood; as, also, the sign of the Holy Ghost unto Abraham, in the form of a dove. (Abraham, Facsimile No. 2.)

Secondly. He [John] was entrusted with the important mission, and it was required at his hands, to baptize the Son of Man. Whoever had the honor of doing that? Whoever had so great a privilege and glory? Whoever led the Son of God into the waters of baptism, and had the privilege of beholding the Holy Ghost descend in the form of a dove, or rather in the sign of the dove, in witness of that administration? The sign of the dove was instituted before the creation of the world, a witness for the Holy Ghost, and the devil cannot come in the sign of a dove. The Holy Ghost is a personage, and is in the form of a personage. It does not confine itself to the form of the dove, but in sign of the dove. The Holy Ghost cannot be transformed into a dove; but the sign of a dove was given to John to signify the truth of the deed, as the dove is an emblem or token of truth and innocence. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.275

Perhaps the author of the hymn of the Pearl had something real in mind when he described a heavenly robe descending from the celestial world to clothe the young prince who had proven himself to be a worthy heir to his father's kingdom. (The Pearl is quoted in full below.)

another reference to the restoration of that garment of light.)

The symbolic restoration of the garments of light to the king and queen would be a necessary part of their anointing and adoption as a son and daughter of God – which declaration of heirship was, in turn, a necessary part for their coronation.

The coronation of the queen is not described in the Old Testament, but it is reasonable to assume that she played a role similar to that of her husband.

The society of Ancient Israel may have to be described as a form of patriarchy, yet Gen 3:16 does not exhibit the insensitivity that often accompanies such a system. Man and woman resemble each other in having their own particular form of humanity by which each relates to the other. When the two depart from the garden, it is not as strangers but a pair of intimates....He is her equal, not her master. 134

According to ancient tradition, when Adam left the Garden of Eden, in addition to his new garment of skins, he also took from the Garden a branch of the tree of Life. This branch became his kingly scepter and was passed down to his successor kings. Later, ownership of both the garment and of the branch would be recognized as evidence of the legitimacy of one's kingship, as in Mesopotamia, where "The king is anointed from the light/oil of the tree of life, his crown is sometimes represented as a garland made from its branches, and his scepter is a twig of that tree...."

¹³⁴ John J. Schmitt, "Like Eve, Like Adam: *msl* in Gen 3, 16," in *Biblica* (72/1, 1991), 21-22.

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

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

The kingship covenant between Jehovah and David was an "everlasting covenant." ¹³⁷ If that phrase means anything at all, it means it is everlasting in both directions of time – it reaches back to the Council of the gods, is visible to mortals in this world, and continues beyond the grave. But it also meant that the earthly royal Davidic covenant reached back to Adam, was re-affirmed to David, and would continue through David's posterity throughout all time.

I have made a covenant with my chosen,
I have sworn unto David my servant,
Thy seed will I establish for ever,
and build up thy throne to all generations. 138

Implicitly the decision about who those kings would be to the last generation had already been made by the Council before any of those kings were born on the earth. Consequently, anyone else who presumed to sit on the throne, but who was not one who had been chosen at the Counsel, was simply an usurper, and would not be acknowledged by God as king. The earthly king's personal legitimacy must be traced to the Council, but his royal legitimacy must be traced to the covenant which the Lord made with David.

Even Yahweh's covenant with David was considered to be a repetition of the covenant of Sinai itself. Therefore the covenant with David is also kept in mind at the festival of Harvest and new year, as in Ps. 132." ¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Aubrey R. Johnson, Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 14-16, 25. See also: Widengren, Geo, "King and Covenant" in Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 21-26.

Psalms 89:4. The covenant was that David's descendants would rule in Israel forever. In his last words, David referred to this as "an everlasting covenant." 2 Samuel 23: 1-5. For a discussion of the importance of the covenant see: Johnson, A. R., "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 207-216. Solomon apparently used the occasion of the dedication of the temple for the renewal of that covenant. Widengren, Geo, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 8. See also: Terence E. Fretheim, "Divine Foreknowledge, Divine Constancy, and the Refection of Saul's Kingship," in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, October 1985, vol 47, no. 4: 595-602.

¹³⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1:157.

From David, the royal covenant could be traced back to earlier and similar covenants with Moses, Joseph, Abraham, and Adam.

For the Nephites, the legitimacy of their kings must be traced to the covenant the Lord made with Nephi, because Nephi was the beginning of a new dynasty, just as David had been. That is probably why Mormon makes such a point of saying that he, Alma, and others were "descendants of Nephi." But ultimately both Jewish and the Nephite kings must root their legitimacy in the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To do that, each had to be able to declare his lineage – to show from which of the sons of Israel he was descended, and to claim the patriarchal blessing which Israel gave to that son with its attendant promises of priesthood and kingship. (I suppose that is the reason a declaration saying which tribe of Israel one belongs to is a necessary part of everyone's patriarchal blessing, and one reason why patriarchal blessings are given before one goes to the temple.)

The Psalms speak of that covenant with Abraham, just as they speak of the Davidic covenant.

He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;

¹⁴⁰ The Lord's covenant with Nephi, "I will make you a ruler and a teacher" made Nephi's claim to the throne legitimate, as the God-appointed head of a new dynasty. (1 Nephi 2:22) However, if, as it appears, Laban was the head of the house of Manasseh and Lehi was a close enough relative that he became the next heir, then Nephi's claim to the throne would have bypassed David and come directly from Manasseh. That is, I assume that Laban – and after Laban's death, Lehi – was the rightful head of the house of Manasseh, so Nephi's claim to the throne of Manasseh would have been based on his being his father's chosen heir, and therefore the tribal chief of the house of Manasseh. Similarly, David's claim to the throne Judah was first based on his having appointed the head of a new dynasty, and as such, the tribal chief and king of Judah.

And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: (Psalm 105:8-10.)

Through Abraham the covenant is traced to Adam, and ultimately back to the great Council in Heaven, the *sode*, where the covenant and duties of Adam and his successor kings and priests originated.¹⁴¹

Thus, two things were necessary to establish the legitimacy of one's kingship. In this world, one had to have appropriate family ties to a recognized king. (Or be anointed the head of a new dynasty like David and Nephi were, and even they needed the necessary family ties. The book of Ruth was written to show that David had them, the Brass Plates showed that Nephi did.) The king must have a knowledge of the *sode* and through it, the testimony given by God himself that the king was

141 Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p. 60- 64, 70, 83-84, 89, 96-97, 102-111, 125, 133, 140-142, 149-150, 157- 60, 182-188, 197.

Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament*, Philadelphia, 1968, p. 3, 15, 18, 24.

Ivan Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East, (Oxford, 1967), p. 4, 16-17.

Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship,* Oxford, 1958, p. 224.

Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 66.

John M. Lundquist, "The Legitimizing Role of the Temple in the Origin of the State" in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 212.

Geo Widengren, "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 160-162.

Geo Widengren, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 7.

Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, Leipzig, 1950, p. 30-31, 40-42.

chosen from the beginning. The king's genealogy provided the former. Symbolically, the drama presented at the New Year's festival provided the latter, but the rub was that the drama also insisted that the king judge with righteousness and charity (as shown in Psalms 45 and 82). So, for the ancient Israelite kings, legitimacy of one's kingship and priesthood was not simply a matter of being able to claim the right ancestry and a knowledge of the secrets of heaven, it was also about one's being able to honestly say that one is – and was from the beginning – a friend and confidant of God. Apostate kings, like Jeroboam, Zedekiah, and Noah, found it easier to change the religion and the rules than to conform to the old standards.

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 reverenced 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. 142

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

¹⁴² Flavious Josephus, William Whiston, trans., *The Complete Works of Flavious Josephus* (London, The London Pringing and Publishing Company, Limited, 1876) History of the Jews-Book XIX chapter 8. p. 424-425.

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

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?"¹⁴³

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

¹⁴³ Recognitions of Clement, Chapters XLV and XLVIm 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.

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, 1-3 144.

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 reenthronement as Yahweh's viceregent endowed now with universal power. 145

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, Barns & Noble, 1963), 213-214.

¹⁴⁵ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 128.

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, and coronation of its earthly king and 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. 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

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)

¹⁴⁶ 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)

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.¹⁴⁷ 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)¹⁴⁸

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

¹⁴⁷ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 78.

¹⁴⁸ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols., Abingdon, Nashville, 1962, vol. 1, p. 171.

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.¹⁵⁰

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.

¹⁴⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 164.

¹⁵⁰ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 131.

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 order out of 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.

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. 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). 152

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 recreating 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.¹⁵³

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. 154

¹⁵¹ 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.

¹⁵² 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.

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.

Widengren, Geo, "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation," in S. H. Hooke, ed., Myth,

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, ¹⁵⁵ but there are no later descriptions which also include the temple rites. ¹⁵⁶

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

Ritual, and Kingship, Oxford, 1958, p. 198-199.

¹⁵⁵ For Saul, I Sam. 10: 1; David, I Sam. 16:3; Solomon, I Kings 1:39

¹⁵⁶ 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 wold 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.

some committee rearranged the order of the Psalms and thereby obliterated the story they told, so the 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." ¹⁵⁷

Nevertheless, at least between the time of Solomon and Zedekiah (that is, during the First Temple period ¹⁵⁸), 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." ¹⁵⁹ So that, by virtue of this anointing, the king was "regarded as a potent extension of the divine Personality." ¹⁶⁰ (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.)

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.

[&]quot;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.

¹⁵⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 65 and 63.

¹⁶⁰ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 16.

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. ¹⁶¹

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. 162

There is no description of the sequences of ordinances of the coronation ceremony in the Old Testament except the abbreviated one in Isaiah 61. 163 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

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

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.

¹⁶³ 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.

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. It is important for another reason too: it pushes our understanding of the ancient Israelite concepts of Temple to the very edge of our own modern comprehension by asking, "Did the general public of the ancient Israelites understand the concept that the Saviour's atonement would provide for vicarious temple work for the dead?" My answer to that, by the way, is simple and easy to come by: So far as the general Israelite public was concerned, I haven't the foggiest idea how much they knew! The last third of Psalm 22, which speaks of the Saviour's going to the 'great congregation' after being on the cross, suggests they did know at least that the Saviour would visit the dead. However, unless I have entirely misread Isaiah 61, it is apparent that Isaiah, at least, understood it very well indeed.

If Isaiah understood it, and the psalms taught it, it is likely that Lehi and Nephi understood it also. If Nephi did, it is likely his people, including Abinadi, did also. So now, if we are going to accept Isaiah as the ancient authority by which we – and Abinadi – may define Jehovah as Creator, King, Messiah, and Saviour, it seems to me that we have to examine Isaiah 61– totally, not just the coronation verse. There are many ways to read Isaiah – people have been reading him differently for more than 2,700 years. Mine is hardly the only way. I am going to try to interpret the encoded sub-text, so there will be errors, but I offer this interpretation as a possibility you may wish to consider. 164

¹⁶⁴ 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.

Isaiah 61 and its coronation and marriage ceremony

Isaiah 61 is one of the famous "suffering servant" chapters. The servant here is usually interpreted to be the king because it speaks of his anointing in the first verse. Fortunately for us, however, that verse is quoted in D&C 138:42 as a prophecy that the Saviour would visit the dead and liberate them from the spirit prison. While listing some of the persons who were present at the spirit world reception for the Saviour, President Smith wrote,

And Isaiah, who declared by prophecy that the Redeemer was anointed to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound, were also there. (D&C 138:42)

So we can begin by knowing that the person described as the "anointed" one is Jehovah, who was anointed King at the Council. From that we may deduce that the rest of Isaiah 61 also about part of the royal responsibilities implicit in the Saviour's pre-mortal anointing – the part which deals specifically with salvation for the dead.

Isaiah 61 reads:

- 1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
- 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, 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.
- 4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.
- 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

- 6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.
- 7 For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.
- 8 For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
- 9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.
- 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.
- 11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Not long ago a friend and I read that chapter together. We began by his reading it to me. His voice went through the words but carried little meaning. When he finished I asked him what he got out of it. He said, "I picked out a few code words, but I didn't understand how they fit." About two hours later he read it to me again. This time the intonation of his voice told a beautiful story, and I knew he understood. When he finished, he said, "Reading that was almost like watching a movie." I believed him – and the movie is wonderful.

v. 1a The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;

The Saviour's anointing at the Council in Heaven is not described in the scriptures, though it was probably recreated on the pre-exilic stage of the New Year festival drama. As I point out elsewhere,

Psalm 45 took place on that stage immediately after Jehovah's anointing (his garments still smelled of the sacred perfumed oil with which he was anointed). Given that aroma, I presume the scene of the festival's play which immediately preceded Psalm 45 would have depicted Jehovah's anointing. That, of course is only a guess, because if one of the psalms told that story we no longer have it, or else it can no longer be identified for what it is. But what is not a guess is that the Saviour was anointed at the Council, as it is testified in at least D&C 138:42, Isaiah 61:1 and Psalm 45:6-8.

The people to whom the Saviour would "preach good tidings" were "the meek" among the dead. ¹⁶⁵ Elsewhere, also in the context of Psalms 45 and 25, I discuss the meaning of "meek."

- 1) They were among the noble and great ones, and therefore members of the Council. (D&C 138).
- 2) They made covenants in the Council, and keep those covenants while on this earth (Psalm 25).
- 3) They and their children will inherit the celestial earth because the earth was made for them (Psalm 25, 37; the Beatitudes; and D&C 88:17)

In Section 138, President Joseph F. Smith gives us a list of some of the people who were present, and says they were "also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God." (D&C 138:55) They were:

Adam, Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Elias, Malachi, the prophets who dwelt among the Nephites, the Prophet Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and many others who were assigned to assist in the latter-day work. (From D&C 138: 38-53)

Because of the context in which the first verse of Isaiah 61 is quoted in D&C 138, it seems to me to infer that President Smith was saying Isaiah 61 is a prophecy, and the events described in D&C 138 were the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

V 1b. he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

It is clear in D&C 138 that the "captives" in "prison" are those in the spirit prison – the ones for whom the saving ordinances will be performed. "Bound" is an interesting word. It means to be "fastened in any sense." It is usually read as "...and the opening of the prison to them that are imprisoned." but the idea of being "sealed" also has the connotation of being fastened together. I don't know of a word in the Old Testament that denotes eternal marriage, but I wonder if this might be read, "...and the opening of the prison to them that are sealed."

v. 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord

In the Old Testament, in order for something to be described as "acceptable" to God, it had to be done in righteousness: zedek: ceremonially correct: that is, it had to be done in the right way, at the right time, by someone using the right words, with the right authority, and dressed the right way. If a "time" were not "acceptable" it would be because an apostasy had left lit impossible for the ordinances to be performed correctly by legitimate priesthood authority. ¹⁶⁷ If, as Isaiah promises, the dead are to be assured that this is an "acceptable year," I presume it means that they will be taught that the vicarious ordinances performed by the living will be valid for the salvation of the dead.

¹⁶⁶ In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, # 631.

¹⁶⁷ The words "acceptable time" are used in 1 Nephi 21:8 (Isaiah 49) to describe the time of the restoration of the gospel by the Prophet Joseph. That idea is reiterated in D&C 93:51, where Sidney Rigdon is told to go on a mission and proclaim that this is "the acceptable year of the Lord"

Some translations use "judgement" rather than "vengeance." The implications are the same. The dead are given this last chance to hear and accept the gospel, then comes the final judgement.

to comfort all that mourn;

[an ordinance enabling one to transcend pain and hurt to achieve serenity]

This is the passage in Isaiah that the Saviour paraphrased in the Beatitudes when he said: "Blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The reason the dead "mourn" is because they "had looked upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage." (D&C 138:50)

So one would expect that to "comfort" them, would be to give them all the ordinances of the temple with the attendant promise of a glorious resurrection.

and that is the comfort that is promised in this chapter of Isaiah. Some of those ordinances are described in the next verse which is introduced by the phrase: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion,...." That is, the way to provide the comfort is to make them a part of Zion – and that idea is more complex than it may appear at first glance.

"Zion" is one of those words we use so frequently that one might easily become numbed to the upper nuances of its meaning. The point of view we take most often is that Zion is a congregation or community of Latter-day Saints. That use has become so common that it is almost elevated to the status of Mormon joke where "Zion" denotes Utah – often only "Happy Valley" – or else the

whimsical rebuttal, "Zion is really only in California." The quips work because they are apt. For example, the Lord used "Zion" to denote the Saints who were in Kirtland.

13 For I have consecrated the land of Kirtland in mine own due time for the benefit of the saints of the Most High, and for a stake to Zion.

14 For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments.

15 Therefore, I give unto you this commandment, that ye bind yourselves by this covenant, and it shall be done according to the laws of the Lord. (D&C 88: 13-15)

It is difficult to know, from the Old Testament, exactly what "Zion" meant then. At one time, it was clearly the name of a geographical place, perhaps the location of the "old city" of Jerusalem. Two scriptures which suggest that are:

Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion : the same is the city of David.(2 Samuel 5:7)

and

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion . (1 Kings 8:1)

However, after the Temple was built, the scriptures suggest that "Zion" referred specifically to the Temple itself, and often more explicitly to the Holy of Holies which was God's throne room.

Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings. (Psalms 9:11)

and

Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion; (Psalms 20:2)

and

In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion . (Psalms 76:2)

and

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! [If one is to symbolically "Behold your God," one would have to be in the Holy of Holies to do it.] (Isaiah 40:9)

Another important such statement is from the same chapter in Isaiah that was quoted by the priests

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. (Isaiah 52:1)

That scripture is also quoted by Jacob in 2 Nephi 8:24, and by the Saviour in 3 Nephi 20:36. It is paraphrased by Moroni in a statement which I shall describe below as a part of a highly abridged but remarkably complete review of the entire endowment/enthronement ceremony:

31 And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled. (Moroni 10:31)

Given the subtextual context of that statement, it is apparent that "Zion" meant more than just the physical city or the physical temple, and one is left to wonder why the temple – or the temple site – was called "Zion." The most likely reason may be deduced from the fact that the word "Zion" originally had nothing to do with Jerusalem at all, but dates back to the time before the Flood.

- 18 [In the days of Enoch] the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.
- 19 And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even ZION.
- 20 And it came to pass that Enoch talked with the Lord; and he said unto the Lord: Surely Zion shall dwell in safety forever. But the Lord said unto Enoch: Zion have I blessed, but the residue of the people have I cursed.
- 21 And it came to pass that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth; and he beheld, and lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Behold mine abode forever. (Moses 7:18-21)

After that, as I suggested above, Noah's son Shem (Melchizedek), reigned in Jerusalem where he

built a temple on the same site as Solomon later built his. ¹⁶⁸ If that is really what happened, then Jerusalem became a second Zion after the flood, and the designation remained until long after the time of David.

In the Psalms the notion of Zion is sometimes used to mean, not just the temple itself, but also the cultural, social, or personal results of the ceremonies performed there. For example, the coronation psalm which declares, "thou art my son," also says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." (Psalms 2:6) That may be read as simply the king reigned in Jerusalem, but it is more probably a reference to the king's sitting on God's throne in the Holy of Holies. In either case, Zion is not only the cite of the Temple, it is the place where one reigns as king and son of God. It is apparent that anciently, the word "Zion" carried with it, not only the idea of people who worshiped Jehovah, and of the place in Jerusalem where God dwelt and where the king was coronated, but it also meant the people who participated in the endowment/coronation ordinances and thus who became sacral kings and priests, sacral queens and priestesses.

Given those several definitions of Zion, it would, no doubt, be correct to simply read the statement, "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion," to mean that the dead who accept the gospel will become members of the Church. However, it may be more correct to read it differently from that.

"Zion" has a meaning which reaches the beyond the coronation of kings. One remembers that it was Enoch's "Zion," that "in process of time, was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Behold mine abode forever." (Moses 7:21b)

Paul L. Maier, trans. and ed., *Josephus, the Essential Writings*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988, p. 367. For a discussion of Sham as Melchizedek, see above.

Isaiah's description of Zion is a classic description of eternal kingship and priesthood.

16 And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people. (Isaiah 51:16 & 2 Nephi 8:16)

Lets look at it again:

And I have put my words in thy mouth, [The calling of a prophet: below I have compared *sode* experiences of several prophets and pointed out that in each instance the Lord formally formally and by ordinance, gave the prophet the words he should speak.]

and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, [ordination]

that I may plant the heavens [Usually, in such contexts, "heavens" and "stars" are references to the members of the Council in Heaven.]

and lay the foundations of the earth, [creation]

Notice the sequence so far:

- 1. Put the words in the prophets' mouths, that is give them an
 - 2. ordain them or give them blessings;
- 3. "plant" them, that is, put them where they belong in the world's history so they can fulfill those assignments;

and then:

assignment;

say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

There is a strange passage in Isaiah which is quoted by Jacob in the Book of Mormon. Jacvob said that he quoted it "that ye might know concerning the covenants of the Lord," and it is clearly that. In that same chapter, Isaiah quotes the Lord as saying,

And I have put my words in thy mouth [a usual part of a *sode* experience whlich portrays the events of the Council in Heaven], and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand [ordination], that I may plant the heavens [members of the Council] and lay the foundations of the earth [creation], and say unto Zion [those who are pure in heart]: Behold, thou art my people. [That verse starts at the Council in Heaven and goes all the way through the history of mankind, up to the time of his exaltation.] (2 Nephi 8:16 and Isaiah 51:16)

So that establishes the context of this strange scripture:

- 1 Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness. Look unto the rock from whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence ye are digged.
- 2 Look unto Abraham, your father, and unto Sarah, she that bare you; for I called him alone, and blessed him.

The thing that is strange is that is seems to be identifying Abraham as the rock and Sarah as the pit.

I now question that interpretation because it does not make sense in light of the next verse.

3 For the Lord shall comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. (2 Nephi 8:1-3 and Isaiah 51: 1-3)

It might be said that the Lord could "comfort Zion" by supporting her in her mourning, but the only way he can "comfort all her waste places" is by crowning the land with fruitful fields – an empowerment. As I read those verses, "empowerment" also comes near to describing the way he will comfort Zion. After the king was anointed (and apparently after he received the Melchizedek Priesthood), he sat upon the throne of God in the Holy of Holies, with his feet established on the Ark of the Covenant. The Rock on which the Holy of Holies was built was believed to be the connecting place between heaven and earth, and the Ark was placed *in* a shallow pit cut from that rock, so that the Ark was not sitting on the Rock, but was an extension of it, and the king (whose feet rested under the cherubim wings of the Ark) was thus an extension of both the Ark and the Rock. So the king himself is the connecting place between heaven and earth. The king actually sat there, but symbolically, everyone who watched the ceremony was sitting there also. If that rock is the "rock from whence ye are hewn," and if the pit which defines the oneness of the Rock and the Ark is the "hole of the pit from whence ye are digged," then the references to Abraham and Sarah

in the next verse are not only references to their parenthood, but also connote the priesthood birthright blessings of Abraham and Sarah that are given to each of their descendants. 169

In Section 76, among the statements describing those who will be in the Celestial Kingdom, the Lord said,

These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all. (D&C 76:66)

The reason that is true, and the key to understanding the ultimate meaning of "Zion" is found in logic trail that begins with Section 97:

Therefore, verily, thus saith the Lord, let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion -- THE PURE IN HEART; therefore, let Zion rejoice, while all the wicked shall mourn. (D&C 97:21)

With that definitive statement, one can return again to the Beatitudes to note the sequence:

- **7 And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.** [The quality of sacral kingship]
- **8** And blessed are all the pure in heart ["Zion], for they shall see God. [as shown in the scriptures just quoted]
- **9** And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. [receive the covenant/king name: son or daughter of God]

One of my friends once told me that the problem with my writing was that one has to know everything else I have ever written in order to be able to understand whatever he is reading just now. That's a valid criticism, but I don't know how to fix it. This is a good example of that problem. This passage of Isaiah seems to me to be an important scripture that talks about "comfort," not just as empowerment, but as enthronement – which is the ultimate empowerment. But in order for me to describe it as such, I have to assume a lot of things that I don't get around to explaining until much later. I can't explain it now because its too big. So big, in fact, that almost everything I have written in this book is summed in those three verses of Isaiah.

I will discuss the coronation and its connection with the Rock and the Ark in later chapters. As I will point out then, the source for the Ark's sitting in the Rock rather than on it is very credible. It is: Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, *Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount* (Washington D.C. Biblical Archaeology Society, 1998), p. 104.

Nephi wrote the same thing, but explained that more fully:

And blessed ["in the state of the gods" ¹⁷⁰] are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion [the pure in heart] at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost [note there are two: the "gift" which comes after baptism, and the "power" which, I presume, comes later]; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace [be a peacemaker], yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be [– that is, they will sit upon the throne of God in the Holy of Holies]. (1 Nephi 13:37)

So that brings us full circle, back to Isaiah 52 and the scriptures with which Abinadi met the challenge of the priests of Noah. It also brings us back where we were to the passage in Isaiah 61 which reads:

- 1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
- 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
- 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, 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.

The reason we had to spend so much time defining "Zion" is because of the pairing:

to comfort all that mourn;
To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion,

In that relationship, to comfort them, and to make them a part of Zion, are the same thing.

¹⁷⁰ I will discuss that quote below when we consider the Beatitudes more carefully. It comes from a footnote in W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *The Anchor Bible, Matthew* (New York, Doubleday, 1971), p.45. There they say that the word "blessed" in the New Testament's Beatitudes is a classic Greek word which means "in the state of the gods." Whatever Egyptian word Nephi used here in this preview of the Beatitudes, and whatever Reformed Egyptian word the Saviour used in Third Nephi, the Prophet Joseph Smith translated them both "blessed" just as the translators of the KJV New Testament translated that Greek word "blessed." So, I presume, they all mean the same thing, and can all be read the same way.

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The Abinadi book reads: what is left out is the conclusion: Isaiah 40 takes place in the Council, so the instruction to "comfort" given there is to restore to what one had at the council.

The difference between the Hebrew and English definitions is that in the 1622 citation, when the English word was nearer in time to its Latin origins, the first definition of "comfort" meant what the Latin said: "with strength." or to strengthen. It still meant that in 1787 when the American Constitution was written, and treason was defined as "giving aid and comfort to the enemy." At Dan's suggestion, I found the key I was looking for in a little book by Gary Anderson. (Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance, The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).)

This verb "to comfort" (*n-h-m*) does not connote a simple act of emotional identification. Comfort can imply either the symbolic action of *assuming the state of mourning* alongside the mourner, or it can have the nuance of *bringing about the cessation of mourning*. In grammatical terms, the former usage reflects a *processual* usage of the verb, while the latter usage would be *resultative*. (Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance, The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p.84. Italics in the original. In footnote #74)

He goes on to explain:

The latter usage, to bring about the cessation of mourning, is very common in prophetic oracles of deliverance. The famous exhortation of Isaiah 40:1, "Comfort, comfort, my people," comes to mind immediately. As Westermann noted, the term conveys "God's intervention to help and restore." Indeed, the term has this meaning in most of Second Isaiah. (Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance, The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p.85.)

Anderson's definition can account for the way the English translators used the word "comfort" to mean the bestowal of authority or power, and it also adds substiantial depth to the meaning of some scripture. For example, a scriptures where "comfort" might be read as "to give consolation" can also be read "to give power or authority":

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"Comfort" is one of the most important code words we will examine, and it must be examined within the framework of the sacral kingship which is asserted in making one a part of Zion. But the word "comfort" presents an intriguing problem.

There are many places in the scriptures where comfort implies a lessening of grief or misery by trying to calm someone or by trying to inspire them with happiness or hope. But there are other scriptures which imply ordinances, and suggest empowerment – that is, they use "comfort" very differently from our modern sense.

In the Elizabethan English of the King James Old Testament, to "comfort" meant to empower, coming from the Latin roots meaning "with strength." The word "comfort" as it is used in several places in the scriptures has caused me a good deal of tizzy about its meaning. My frustration comes from the fact that, in context, the translation in Elizabethan English seems to be a better word than the modern understanding of the Hebrew original. In modern Hebrew lexicons the concept of giving strength is in the form that means to nurture—the way we usually read "comfort" to mean to console, or to ease physical or mental pain. But in the Old Testament (and therefore in the Beatitudes) it seems to have a much stronger meaning than that. If there were just this one example where to comfort was juxtapositioned with the ideas of enthronement it could be easily ignored, but as I will point out, in at least Psalm 23, Isaiah 40 and Isaiah 61, "comfort" is used in conjunction with symbols that denote the ceremonies of endowment/enthronement — which is ultimate empowerment, as it is also ultimate nurture.

My unanswered question was: "What was there about the Hebrew word, as it was understood in England almost 500 years ago by the scholars who translated the King James Bible, that caused them to use an English word which carried such strong connotations of empowerment. The answer is, I don't know, and I can't find anyone who does. I'm not going to trouble you any more with the problem, unless you want to read the long footnote I have attached, but you need to know that I am going to treat "comfort" as though the English translators knew what they were doing – because they did it consistently – and discuss "comfort" as though it meant empowerment – and specifically the kind of empowerment that is implied in the coronation of kings, and the anointing of sacral kings and priests.

Unfortunately there is no such thing as a pre-exilic Hebrew dictionary, so there is no ultimate source one can check to ask what Isaiah meant when he used the word which is translated "comfort." The late 19th century lexicon at the back of Strong's *Concordance* defines the word essentially the same as the larger and more detailed ones I consulted. It says the Hebrew means,

5162 nacham naw-kham' a primitive root; properly, to sigh, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication, to be sorry, i.e. (in a favorable sense) to pity, console or (reflexively) rue; or (unfavorably) to avenge (oneself):--comfort (self), ease (one's self), repent(-er,-ing, self).

In contrast, the first and oldest English definitions in the OED is to strengthen, and the nearest example the OED gives to the time of the translation of the King James Bible suggests a military support.

... strengthening, encouragement, encitement, aid, succour, support, countenance.... 1622. Bacon, Henry VII, "The comfort that the rebels should receive underhand from the earl of Kildare." ¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, 2 vols. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979), 1:662.

In the Bacon quote, "comfort" is clearly about empowerment rather than consolation.

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¹⁷² Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance, The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991). In a way, this was an unlikely place to find what I was looking for. Anderson does not believe that Isaiah 61: 3 represents a coronation ceremony, but that it is about a much simpler ritual having to do with formal mourning, as for the death of a loved one. (P.85) His argument is well made, and would be persuasive if it were not for D&C 138 which says the people who are "mourning" were already dead, and that Isaiah's prophecy has to do with the redemption for the dead. Somehow Anderson sees that, but, of course, understands it to be only symbolic. On page 86 he writes, "In this text, comfort describes the movement from mourning to joy. This process could also be illustrated in the psalms of lamentation." In footnote #78 he adds,

Note, e.g., Ps 71:20-21. In this text, comfort is equated with the restoration of life and being raised from the netherworld. Psalm 86:17 begins with a petition that God hear the prayer and grant "joy" to the psalmist (v. 4). The psalmist hopes to be delivered from the underworld (v. 13).

Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance, The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p.84. Italics in the original. In footnote # 74 Anderson says examples of "the resultative state are present (Gen 37:35; 2 Sam 12:24 (for Isa see n. 77); Jer 31:13; Zech 1:17; Ps 71:20-21; 86:17."

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Anderson's definition can account for the way the English translators used the word "comfort" to mean the bestowal of authority or power, and it also adds substiantial depth to the meaning of some scripture. For example, a scriptures where "comfort" might be read as "to give consolation" can also be read "to give power or authority":

31 O Lord, my heart is exceedingly sorrowful; wilt thou comfort my soul in Christ. O Lord, wilt thou grant unto me that I may have strength, that I may suffer with patience these afflictions which shall come upon me, because of the iniquity of this people.

32 O Lord, wilt thou comfort my soul, and give unto me success, and also my fellow laborers who are with me – yea, Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and also Amulek and Zeezrom and also my two sons – yea, even all these wilt thou comfort, O Lord. Yea, wilt thou comfort their souls in Christ. (Alma 31:31-32)

In that passage, one may read "comfort" as making the missionaries feel better, or one may read the request, "wilt thou comfort their souls in Christ" as a prayer asking for their actual redemption, or at least for the spiritual power to exercise priesthood authority.

But there are some scriptures where "comfort" clearly means a great deal more than a pat on the

Gary A. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance, The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion* (University Park, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p.85. That statement is very significant. What scholars call "Second Isaiah" is the latter half of Isaiah, usually beginning with chapter 40. (Because it is different from the first half of Isaiah, they argue that it was written by a different person who lived after the Babylonian conquest. However that cannot be true because the Book of Mormon quotes from "Second Isaiah" from the Brass Plates.) Many scholars have observed the close relationship between "Second Isaiah" and the Psalms. It is my view that the last half of Isaiah is a commentary of the New Year festival drama, and is therefore on of the major keys in reconstructing the endowment/enthronement ceremonies and putting the Psalms back in their original order. If that is true, then it is very significant that the word "comfort" as is used in Second Isaiah does not mean a pat on the head, but to actually "bringing about the cessation of mourning."

head or an understanding hug.

For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. (Isaiah 51: 3 and 2 Nephi 8:3)

We will discuss this verse in a fuller context below. For the present it is sufficient to say that Zion is comforted by being redeemed – returned as to Eden in the presence of God, because her land is to be comforted by turning her wilderness into a garden of Eden. At a minimum, both ideas suggest the fulfillment of the promises of the endowment/coronation ordinances, and therefore are an important key to the meaning of "comfort."¹⁷⁵

As one would expect, in modern revelation the Lord uses that word in the same way it is used in the ancient scriptures. A simple, but telling example is in the story of the birth of Noah.

- 8 And Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and begat a son,
- 9 And he called his name Noah, saying: This son shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed. (Moses 8:8-9)

There "comfort" means empowerment in the most practical possible way. Noah's father is a man of the fields. Times are hard, and the harvests are band, and he sees in the birth of this child a son who "shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands." There the anticipated comfort is that the boy will help the family by performing hard manual labor.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, "comfort" is used to describe what appears to be a coronation

¹⁷⁵ As I will point out below, this entire chapter of Isaiah is about enthronement and temple rites, so the interpretation of "make her wilderness like Eden" to mean that land will grow plentiful crops does not fit the context at all.

ordinance.

53 Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing.

54 And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel.

55 And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever.

56 And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. (D&C 107:53-56)

I suppose verse 55 could be read that Adam wasn't feeling very good that day, and the Lord patted him on the head and assured him that things would be OK. But that seems like a terribly weak way of reading it. Rather, the way I would choose to read it is:

And the Lord administered [that word denotes an ordinance] comfort [that describes the nature of the ordinance – he is making Adam the king of the world] unto Adam, and said unto him: [and what follows is the blessing of his endowment/coronation ordinance] I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever.

That sheds an interesting light on Alma's words at the Waters of Mormon. Here again, the word "comfort" can be read as just making someone feel better, but it can be read differently as well.

8 And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

9 Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life –

10 Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you? (Mosiah 18:8-10).

A usual was of reading verse 9 is that "to mourn with those that mourn" means the the same as to "comfort those that stand in need of comfort." However, what follows "comfort" suggests something quite different from that. Anciently, one would stand to make or give assent to a covenant. If that is the meaning of "stand" in this scripture, then "to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life," may suggest that to "comfort those that stand in need of comfort" may imply the giving and receiving of ordinances and of the powers attendant thereto. That notion is made stronger by the fact that this baptismal ordinance was not a token for the remission of sins (Unless these people had completely abandoned all pretense of living the religion Nephi taught, they would have already been baptized for the remission of sins.), but that it is a token of the covenant that they would support each other and the church – it was a baptism into an order they would live in the wilderness that looks very much like they were living the law of consecration. It?

In Isaiah 61, in the statements which immediately precede the coronation ceremony, we have read: "...to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion" I have tried to establish that "to comfort" means to empower (in this instance to empower by enthronement), and that Zion is a society of redeemed saints.

¹⁷⁶ See 2 Kings 23:1-3.

¹⁷⁷ It is relevant to note here that in Brigham Young's day, people who had already been baptized for the remission of sins were baptized into the United Order.

The are two other important examples where "comfort" is used in about the same way as it is in Isaiah 61. One is in the first two verses of Isaiah 40.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. (Isaiah 40:1-2)

Here again, Isaiah used the same code words as he did in chapter 61.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

These are the beginning words of Isaiah's commentary on the temple drama which begins with chapter 40 and continues through the end. It begins with the deliberations of the Council in Heaven. We can know that because the word "ye" is plural. Frank M. Cross has shown that the persons whom God is addressing are the members of the Council. In this verse, "God" is translated from the word "Elohim." Whenever Elohim is represented as speaking to a group of people in the Old Testament, it is always to the Council, just as it is in this instance. His instructions are "Comfort ye my people." Just as in Isaiah 61, where Isaiah follows "comfort" with

¹⁷⁸ Frank M. Cross, Jr., "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Jan.-Oct.1953, 12:274-277. See also Christopher R. Seitz, "The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Summer 1990, vol. 109, no. 2, 229-247.

¹⁷⁹ See:

Stephen A. Geller, "A Poetic Analysis of Isaiah 40:1-2," *Harvard Theological Review*, v. 77, n. 3-4, 1984, p. 413-420.

Hanson, Paul D., *Isaiah 40-66, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, John Knox Press, 1995), p. 223 - 226.

Seitz, Christopher R., "The Divine Council: Temporal Transition and New Prophecy in the Book of Isaiah," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, v. 109, n. 2, 1990, p. 229 - 247.

Westermann, Claus, *Isaiah 40-66, Commentary* (Philadelphia, Westminister Press, 1969) 364 - 367.

instructions to wash, anoint, clothe, crown and give a new name – the entire coronation ceremony – so it appears that his instructions to the Council in Heaven have to do with making his people kings and priests. That meaning is made clear in the next verse.

2 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

The codeword "double" is used twice in Isaiah 61 the same way it is used in chapter 40. It is a reference to birthright blessings. In ancient Israel a double portion was given to the heir who had the birthright. For example, if one had four children, he would divide his property into five parts, giving the birthright son the double. That is why there is no tribe of Joseph. He had the birthright and received a double portion, so he is represented by two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. In terms of the priesthood, the "double" is the birthright blessings of Abraham which one receives in conjunction with other priesthood blessings. Here, in Isaiah 40, as in Isaiah 61, "double" is the double portion given to the birthright "son" (the name-title of the anointed king). So in this instance it would be the priesthood birthright blessings of Abraham, which one receives from "the Lord's hand." If one reads that phrase to be a precise description of how one receives the "double" — the birthright blessings of Abraham — then the meaning of to "comfort" the people takes on great significance because it is about conferring the powers of sacral kingship and priesthood. That description could not be more explicit — but then, if one does not know how to read the code — neither could it be much more obscure.

The other example where comfort is used with an endowment /enthronement connotation is Psalm 23:4. I will discuss that in greater later on, but will now only note the phrase "...thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." In the context of that psalm, the rod a symbol of kingly authority, and

of Priesthood authority – as in the rod of Moses and the staff of Aaron. ¹⁸⁰ So what the verse says is "I am empowered by the symbols of kingship and priesthood."

There is one more important idea that I think needs to be expressed here: To be comforted may not mean to bring about an end to sorrow, but it may mean to bring about an end to one's vulnerability to sorrow. To explain that, I need to try to tie a bunch of ideas together by relying on the sequence found in the Beatitudes...

- 1) Those who are comforted are Zion
- 2) Zion is the pure in heart
- 3) The pure in heart see God (are redeemed)
- 4) Those who have seen God are peacemakers (have received, and therefore can give, peace)
- 5) Peacemakers receive the new name: child of God (that is the conclusion f the coronation rites)
- 6) Theirs is the kingdom of heaven (It is theirs they are its kings and queens, not its subjects.) 7) What follows is
 - a) persecution but the persecution cannot bring one to mourning,
 - b) become a missionary (salt)
 - c) become a blessing to the Kingdom of God (a light to this people)¹⁸¹

180 B. H. Roberts, "Seventy's Council Table: Question from One of the Quorums.— 'Did Aaron hold the Melchizedek Priesthood?'" *Improvement Era*, 1908 Vol. Xi. January, 1908. No. 3. Elder Roberts reasons that:

No man, the revelations of God inform us, can see the face of God and live, without holding this higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood. (Doc. and Cov., 84: 19-22.) Aaron, before being assigned to the duties of the "Aaronic Priesthood," (Exodus xxiv; compare verses 1 and 11) saw God, and all this happened, as I say, before the "Aaronic Priesthood" was given, an account of the giving of which priesthood is to be found in Exodus, chap. 28: 1, 2, et seq.

181 Those who are comforted are Zion – Isaiah 51: 3, 61:2-3; 2 Nephi 8:3.

Zion is the pure in heart – D&C 97:21

The pure in heart see God -3 Nephi 12:8

those who see God are redeemed – Ether 3:13; Mosiah 5:7; 2 Nephi 1:15, 2:1-4

Those who have seen God are peacemakers – 3 Nephi 12: 8-9

(have received, and therefore can give, peace) – Moroni 7: 2-4

Peacemakers receive the new name: child of God – 3 Nephi 12:9

receiving the king name "son of God" is the conclusion of the coronation rites – Psalm 2

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven (It is theirs – they are its kings and queens, not its subjects.)

- 3 Nephi 12:3 (to become kings); 12:10 (having been named "children"

What follows is

It seems to me that it is not until one has worked one's way through that sequence that one can come to understand the relationship between: "comfort," "Zion," and "bringing about the cessation of mourning." In other words, as I read the scriptures, the ones that use "comfort" in the strongest possible way, use it to indicate the fulfillment of promises one received during endowment/enthronement ceremonies of the ancient temple. 182 As I understand those scriptures, they teach that when one reached that end, one had not reached a place where the world is a bed of roses – and the cessation of mourning does not imply that there is nothing left to be sad about. Rather, it means one had a hope 183 that would override uncertainty, which is the foundation of one's sorrows, and replaces it with a reality that moderated mourning. Perhaps it would be better to say that "comfort" was to bring about the cessation of one's being subject to mourning. Given the context in Psalms 23 and Isaiah 40 and 61, but more especially the Beatitudes, "comfort" could not mean the cessation of sorrow, but it could mean a cessation of being incapacitated by grief.

So, assuming consistency in the use of the word (I assume the words in the scriptures mean the same thing in similar contexts in all the scriptures. If that were not true one would float bout the texts without a sail or a rudder), "comfort" in Isaiah 40:1-2, 61:1-3, and Psalm 23:4 would all

a) persecution – 3 Nephi 12:10-12

persecution cannot bring one to mourning – they are comforted – 3 Nephi 12:12

b) become a missionary (salt) – 3 Nephi 12:13 (Ensign, April 1999, p. 53-54)

c) become a blessing to the Kingdom of God (a light to this people) – 3 Nephi 12:14-16 (menorah – a light in the temple)

That is true even though the Beatitude "Blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," is at the beginning of the sequence. That is true because that Beatitude is a paraphrase of Isaiah 61, so it is also about the need for the living to do vicarious work for the dead. That is, in terms of the living, it is near the beginning of the sequence, but in terms of the dead it represents the coronation promised in Isaiah 61.

¹⁸³ I use *hope* the way I read it in Moroni 7. That is, as I will explain later, it is nothing like wishing hard, but is having the absolute assurance that the Lord will fulfill his covenants, and therefore being able to live as those covenants were already fulfilled.

mean empowerment through the endowment/coronation rites, to bring about the cessation of one's vulnerability to mourning. 184

It may be important to note that the same scholars who used "comfort" to suggest coronation and empowerment in the Old Testament, used "comforter" to mean the Holy Ghost, and "another comforter" to mean the Saviour himself. In that instance, "comforter" could – in fact does – imply consolation, but it also means to achieve that end through eternal ordinance:

Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. [And the Lord adds,] I, even I am he that comforteth you: (Isaiah 51:11-12a)

It seems to me that when one receives all the blessings associated with baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, the empowerment one receives is that which is symbolized by Paul's "whole armor of God." This would be so because the Spirit is an armor against sin, and therefore against the sorrow that results from sin. Another example would be the mourning that comes as a result of the death of a loved one. The Spirit can bring one's thinking to an eternal perspective, and laterally free one from the sense of mourning altogether (I know that, first hand.)

And it seems reasonable for me to suppose that in the case of the Second Comforter one' worldview would change so completely that not only would one have a better understanding about what things were really important, and what were not, but that one's sense of reality would also

I will explain each of those passages in detail later on. For the present let me simply say that in Isaiah 40 "comfort" means receiving the birthright blessings (of Abraham) from the Lord's hand. In Isaiah 61, "comfort" introduces the coronation sequence itself: to be washed, anointed, clothed, and given a new name. In Psalm 23 one is comforted by God's rod and staff, which are symbols of kingship and priesthood.

¹⁸⁵ Ephesians 6:11-20, and D&C 27:15-18.

change, so one would understand what is real and what is only ephemeral. In such a reality, one would rejoice in that which is real, but would not be weighted down with mourning because of things which were not real.

I'm not expressing these ideas very well, because I don't know how. But I know three scriptures that say what I want to say. The first is one of Jim Cannon's favorite, because it describes Amulek's sense of what is important, and because of what it says about Alma and Amulek's friendship.

16 And it came to pass that Alma and Amulek, Amulek having forsaken all his gold, and silver, and his precious things, which were in the land of Ammonihah, for the word of God, he being rejected by those who were once his friends and also by his father and his kindred;

7 Therefore, after Alma having established the church at Sidom, seeing a great check, yea, seeing that the people were checked as to the pride of their hearts, and began to humble themselves before God, and began to assemble themselves together at their sanctuaries to worship God before the altar, watching and praying continually, that they might be delivered from Satan, and from death, and from destruction –

18 Now as I said, Alma having seen all these things, therefore he took Amulek and came over to the land of Zarahemla, and took him to his own house, and did administer unto him in his tribulations, and strengthened him in the Lord. (Alma 15:16-18)

The second is one of everyone's favorites, because it expresses the Saviour's understanding of reality just before he was arrested and taken to the cross.

- 31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?
- 32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.
- 33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 16:31-33)

And the third is one of my favorites, because it expresses Joseph Smith's understanding of reality just before he died, and because of what it says about Jesus' friendship, and therefore the ultimate meaning of "comfort." I read it to say:

Joseph leaped from the window, and was shot dead in the attempt, exclaiming [to the Saviour who had come to be with him in his moment of triumph] *O Lord my God!* (D&C 135:1)

In Isaiah 61:3 there is a sequence of promises which follows the words, "to comfort all that mourn." That sequence constitutes the best description of the ancient Israelite coronation ceremony that can be found in the Old Testament. Non-Mormon scholars who do not understand the concept of salvation for the dead, and therefore cannot understand the overall meaning of Isaiah 61. Consequently they do not know why the coronation ceremony is in that chapter, but they recognize it for the ceremony that it is. Even though the context of verse 3 is about salvation for the dead, I wish to analyze the ceremony separately, as a description of the ancient royal temple coronation rites. That is, I wish to treat it as though it were a description of the coronation of living kings – that, after all, is our reason for discussing Isaiah 61 in the first place.

v. 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion

The first condition of this act of empowerment, or "comfort," is to make its recipients a part of "Zion" – Zion is the "pure in heart." (D&C 97:21) In terms of the enthronement sequence of the Beatitudes, becoming "pure in heart" follows implies a whole series of principles and ordinances which prepare one to be a child of Christ and to receive the additional ordinances of the coronation.

The Isaiah 61 coronation ceremony itself consists of four steps. They are:

- 1) a washing preparatory to receiving a crown: "to give unto them beauty for ashes,"
- 2) an anointing: "the oil of joy for mourning,"
- 3) ceremonial clothing: "the garment of praise"
- 4) new king name: "that they might be called

trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." Now, let's analyze that ceremony one step at a time.

to give unto them beauty for ashes

Several scholars have pointed out that the reference to ashes is also a reference to a ceremonial washing. Each year the ancient Israelites would sacrifice a red heifer. They would burn the entire animal and save the ashes so that in the course of that year, whenever anyone seriously repented, or was in great sorrow, that person could get some of that ash and put it on his or her head. Sometimes one would also dress oneself in sackcloth, thus the phrase, "sackcloth and ashes."

¹⁸⁶ The commentaries I am using for Isaiah 61 are:

Margaret Dee Bratcher,"Salvation Achieved, Isaiah 61:1-7; 62: 1-7; 65:17 - 66:2," *Review and Expositor*, v. 88, 1991, p.177 - 188.

Jan Fekkes, III, "His Bride has Prepared Herself": Revelation 19-21 and Isaiah Nuptial Imagery," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, v. 109, no. 4, 1990, p. 269-287.

Michael Goulder, "The Anointed," in Steve Moyise, ed., *The Old Testament in the New Testament, Essays in Honor of J. L. North* (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) p. 66 - 74. [He shows that the first three verses of the Beatitudes are derived from Isaiah 61]

Hanson, Paul D., *Isaiah 40-66, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, John Knox Press, 1995), p. 223 - 226.

Knight, George A., *The New Israel, A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 56-66* (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ., 1985), p.50 - 57.

Miller, Merrill P., "The Function of Isa 61 1-2 in 11Q Melchizedek," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, v. 88, part 4, 1969, p. 467 - 469.

Morgenstern, Julian, "Isaiah 61," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, v. 40-41, 1969-1970, p.109 - 121.

Westermann, Claus, *Isaiah 40-66, Commentary* (Philadelphia, Westminister Press, 1969) 364 - 367.

Later, at the end of the period of repentance or sorrow, the person would remove the ashes with a ceremonial washing. Those scholars assert that this reference in Isaiah 61 to replacing the ashes with "beauty" necessarily presupposes that there has already been a ritual washing.

The word "beauty" is from a Hebrew word which means the beauty of a hat or turban, rather than a direct reference to the hat itself. Some translations accept the connotation and use a word denoting the hat, often "diadem" for crown, rather than the more literal of "beauty" as is found in the King James Version. In either case, the implication is that the ashes are removed during a ceremonial washing, and then are replaced by a crown. ¹⁸⁷

Just as the Old Testament contains no historical account of the royal coronation ceremony, it has no description of the royal crown or robes. What it gives us, instead, is a careful description of the robes and crown of the High Priest. Some scholars believe that the description of the high priest's ceremonial clothes and crown were the same as – or perhaps were originally – the description of the clothes and crown of the king. In Israel, king's held both priesthood and civil responsibilities. Before Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple at Jerusalem, the Jewish kings performed the functions of both king and High Priest at the temple. Since most of our thinking about the Jewish temple relates to the time of the Saviour, we tend to think that only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies. That was true when the Jews had no legitimate Davidic king, but it was not so during the First Temple period when there was a king.

There are a number of instances in the Old Testament where the king acted as ecclesiastical head

Ricks Stephen D., and John J. Sroka, "King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History" in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 241-243.

of the kingdom. One of the earliest accounts of David's using priesthood authority was when he sought to receive a revelation from the Lord, apparently received it, and followed its instructions.

6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

8 And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.

In that story, David, as the Lord's anointed, seems to have had more ecclesiastical authority than the priest who kept the ephod. The ephod was part of the High Priest's clothing. Apparently it was a kind of apron whose shoulder straps held the Breastplate in place. The Breastplate, in turn, held the Urim and Thummim. (Exodus 28) It is probable that it was not the ephod only, but the Urim and Thummim associated with it that David was asking for, and from which he received his revelation.

Another important example is the story of David's bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem.

And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. (2 Samuel 6:2)

The Ark had stayed at the house of Abinadab, and during the procession that brought the Ark to Jerusalem one of Abinadab's sons "drave the new cart." One of those sons,

Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day." (2 Samuel 6: 2-8)

It is often assumed that Abinadab and Uzziah were priests because of their connection with the Ark, but there is no other evidence that is so. David had a brother named Abinadab, and it may have been him. (1 Samuel 16:8) And that might account for why David was so angry when Uzziah died. (David's nephew?)

After Uzziah's death, David was afraid to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, so he left it at the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, until he was sure it was safe.

- 12 And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.
- 13 And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.
- 14 And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. ...
- 17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.
- 18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.
- 18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.
- 19 And he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. So all the people departed every one to his house.
 20 Then David returned to bless his household. (2 Samuel 6:17-20a)

Unless Abinadab and his sons were understood to be priests, there is no mention of priests at all in that account. The entire affair was conducted by the king. He brought the Ark to Jerusalem, offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, blessed the people, and furnished them with what was probably a sacral meal.

We see another example of the king's priesthood authority in the story of his obtaining the Rock as a building site for the Temple. The prophet Gad instructed David to "Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite." David then went to Araunah to purchase the threshingfloor. Araunah offered to give it to David, saying, "Let my Lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him." David refused to accept it as a gift and "bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings." (2 Samuel 24:18-25) To our study, the important thing in that story is that there is no priest mentioned anywhere. A prophet told David to make an altar and offer sacrifices. David, the king, purchased the property which ultimately became the Temple site, built the altar "and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings." It is difficult to read that story and not conclude that David was acting as his own High Priest.

Another example is when king Solomon saw the Lord and received the promise from him that as king he would have both wisdom and riches. The King James Version implies that Solomon sinned by sacrificing at the high places, but the Jewish translation explains the situation quite differently.

The people, however, continued to offer sacrifices at the open shrines, because up to that time no house had been built for the name of the Lord. And Solomon, though he loved the Lord and followed the practices of his father David, also sacrificed and offered at the shrines.

The king went to Gideon to sacrifice there, for that was the largest shrine; on that altar Solomon presented a thousand burnt offerings. (Tanakh, 1 Kings 3:2-4)

Admitted, it is possible that the story may be incomplete, and the author may have just left out the part that the priests played in this royal sacrifice, but as the story is written, Solomon himself officiated at the altar. The King James translation affirms that: "a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar."(1 Kings 3:4)

In another instance of Solomon's exercising priesthood power, the account of the dedication of the Temple does contain a mention of the priests and the Levites, but no mention of the High Priest. As this story is written, the king blessed the people, offered the dedicatory prayer, and performed the sacrifices.

- 1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. ...
- 4 And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.
- 5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

Here also, there is no mention of priests performing the sacrifices. That could be an oversight by the author, or it may not have been. It seems to me that it is possible that with the introduction of the priesthood temple rites, Israel had become nation of sacral priests and kings: perhaps each family head performed their own sacrifices, as did Lehi for his family some 400 years later.

6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into

the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

7 For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. ...

9 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. ...

The Ark, you will recall, had been captured by the Philistines just prior to David's reign.

Apparently they looted it of everything that had been in it except the stone tablets which were of no monetary value to them. So at that time, the Ark did not then contain the staff of Aaron and the jar of manna as Paul later said it did (Hebrews 9:3-4), but it had originally, and the present lack did not alter the fact of the symbolism that it and its contents represented the law, priesthood, and the fruit of the tree of life.

14 And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;)

Here Solomon delivered a sermon in which he briefly recounted the history of the building of the Temple.

- 22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:
- 23 And he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: ...

[Verses 23 through 53 are the dedicatory prayer.]

- 54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.
- 55 And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, ...

[Verses 56 through 61 are the blessing]

62 And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the Lord.

63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord.

64 The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that was before the Lord was too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

65 And at that time Solomon held a feast, ... (1 Kings 8:1-66)

This feast over which the king presided was a sacral feast which would have included sacrifices, for the sanctification of the food that would have been presented to the Lord before it was eaten by the people. After the feast, which lasted twice seven days, "even fourteen days," then,

... he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people." (1 Kings 8:66)

That story is very similar to the one that described David's bringing the Ark into Jerusalem. There are priests in this account, however their activity is limited to placing the Ark in the temple. As the narration reads, the entire dedication ceremony was performed under the direction of, and by the ecclesiastical authority of the king.

Some scholars believe that after the Babylonian captivity, when there was no more Jewish king — about the time the editors removed the accounts of the coronation rites from their scriptures and rearranged the order of the Psalms — the High Priest assumed the roles the king had played in some of the ceremonies and functions of the temple — and that the books of Moses were edited to reflect the High Priest's new role. For example, kings like Solomon and Hezekiah obviously had full access to the Holy of Holies, but in the days of the Saviour, when there was no Jewish king, no one

Returning, now, to the coronation ceremony in Isaiah 61. After the phrase, "to give unto them beauty for ashes" which implies a ceremonial washing, the scripture continues

For a discussion of the king as High Priest and prophet see:

Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p.79-129.

Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1967, p. 10-15, 62-63, 78-81, 104-105.

Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, Chicago, 1948, p. 299-231, 340-344.

Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 207-232.

Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 13-18.

John M. Lundquist, "The Legitimizing Role of the Temple in the Origin of the State" in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 212.

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, p. 260-263.

H. H. Rowley, "Ritual and the Hebrew Prophets," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 237.

Geo Widengren, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, Leipzig, 1950, p. 13-33.

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

¹⁸⁸ For a description of the High Priest's service in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement see: Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1994, p. 249-251.

The anointing itself is described in Exodus 40– but it is represented there as being only the anointing of the High Priest rather than of the king. That seems reasonable when that Israel did not have kings from Joshua until Saul. But it still has some big problems: For one thing, it doesn't make sense when one recalls that Moses was a king in every sense, but there is no account of his formal coronation as such. For another, the account of the coronation preserves only the first ordinances of the coronation ceremony – washing, clothing, and anointing, but stops short of the culminating ordinance which is the covenant new name.

- 12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.
- 13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.
- 14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats:
- 15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.
- 16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he. (Exodus 40:12-16)

In ancient Israel, the anointing was done with olive oil. The olive tree was representative of the tree of life and the oil of the waters of life. The recipe for perfuming the anointing oil for the High Priest is found in Exodus 30:22-33. The recipe was sacred and the Lord prohibited oil perfumed that way to be used for any other purpose.

31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations.

Universitets Arsskrift, 1951, p. 10-59.

- 32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.
- 33 Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people. (Exodus 30:31-33)

Anointing was also a sacred ceremony for the early Christians. In a letter to the members of the church, John explained its significance.

- 20 But ye have an unction [anointing] from the Holy One, and ye know all things.
- 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth

••••

- 24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.
- 25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

•••

- 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.
- 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.
- 29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him (1 John 2:20-29).

the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;

The coronation ceremony consisted of several integral ordinances, including that of being clothed in sacred garments. Even though the clothing and anointing of the king are not described in detail, the same evidence (that is, the description of the High Priest's anointing) suggests he was first dressed in holy clothing and then anointed by having the sacred perfumed oil poured over himself

and his garments. This is described in the psalms.

- 1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!
- 2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;
- 3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

(Psalm 133:1-3)

Some of these scholars believe that the descriptions of the High Priestly garments are also descriptions of the royal robes, and the miter hat was the crown used by the king in the coronation ceremony. Widengren believed that all of the ceremonial clothing of the High Priest, including the breastplate which held the Urim and Thummim, was an adaptation of the earlier sacral clothing of the king. This seems reasonable to me, so I will now discuss the High Priestly garments on the assumption that it is also a discussion of the royal coronation robes of the pre-exilic kings.

The High Priests wore a two part white linen suit consisting of a long sleeved shirt and breeches "to cover their nakedness." Above that he wore a solid blue robe with a fringe of alternating golden bells and pomegranates that were made of blue, purple, and scarlet threads. His breastplate

Ivan Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East, Oxford, 1967, p. 62-63.

Geo Widengren, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 21.

Ricks Stephen D., and John J. Sroka, "King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History" in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 254-57.

Ricks, Stephen D., "The Garment of Adam in Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Tradition" in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1994, p. 705-739.

Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p.185, 194.

¹⁹⁰ Widengren, Geo, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1950, p. 25.

was a kind of pouch which held the Urim and Thummim. It was supported by shoulder straps attached to an apron called the ephod. The crown was a miter, a flat hat made of fine linen with a gold plate attached. Engraved on the plate were the words "Holiness to the Lord." Around the waist was a sash ¹⁹¹ woven from the same kind of thread and in the same colors as the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Tabernacle. (Exodus 28:4 - 42) ¹⁹²

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

- v. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- v. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

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

- v. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
- v. 14 Stand therefore, [One stands to make a covenant. (2 Kings 23:1-3)] having your loins girt about with truth,

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

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

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

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

and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

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

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

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

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

The shield of "faith" is the shield of "pistis" – the tokens of the covenants.

v. 17 And take the helmet of salvation,

The flat hat worn by the High Priest

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

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

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

Here are Paul's words again, without so many interruptions:

- 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

- 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth [the sash], and having on the breastplate of righteousness [source of revelation];
- **15** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace [that one may "walk" in the "way."];
- 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith [tokens of the covenants], wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
- 17 And take the helmet of salvation [head plate], and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God [priesthood power]:
- 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints [prayer]; (Ephesians 6: 10-18. It is also in D&C 27:15-18)

It seems to me that what the Book of Mormon says about sacred clothing is very significant, however, to read it requires a re-definition of one word. In contemporary LDS language "garments" (plural) has a different meaning from the way it is used (also in the plural) in the Book of Mormon. The High Priest's (and I assume the king's) sacral clothing consisted of two parts: the white linen suit, and the blue robe which went over it. I assume that the consistently plural "garments" refers to the combination white suit and the blue robe.

Our first encounter with the "garments" of the Book of Mormon is in the story of Nephi and Laban:

And after I had smitten off his head with his own sword, I took the garments of Laban and put them upon mine own body; yea, even every whit; and I did gird on his armor about my loins. (1 Nephi 4:19)

The sword was a very valuable ceremonial sword. It is likely that the garments Laban wore were consonant with the sword he carried – that is they were also ceremonial clothing. Laban was probably the commanding general of the Jewish army, ¹⁹³ so he may have been wearing a dress

Hugh W. Nibley, "Two Shots in the Dark," in Noel B. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon*

uniform. However, Zoram apparently believed Laban had been with "the brethren of the church." (1 Nephi 4:26) If that is true, then it is likely that his sword and garments were religious in nature. Laban had in his possession what appears to have been the official genealogy of the royal house of Manasseh, which suggests he was the legitimate head of that tribe (The duke of Manasseh, or something like that.) Nephi may have taken Laban's clothes only in order to appear to be Laban, but his saying that he took them "even every whit" suggests that having all of the clothes was also important to Nephi. If that is true, it is likely that when Nephi rejoined his family, he was wearing the royal ceremonial garments of the house of Manasseh, carrying the sword which represented their kingly authority, and had in his possession the royal genealogy – he had all the regalia of a king!

Garments are not mentioned again until we see Jacob acting in the official capacity of his "holy order." During his speech, which was an explanation of the atonement and a call to repentance, Jacob said this:

O, my beloved brethren, remember my words. Behold, I take off my garments, and I shake them before you; I pray the God of my salvation that he view me with his all-searching eye; wherefore, ye shall know at the last day, when all men shall be judged of their works, that the God of Israel did witness that I shook your iniquities from my soul, and that I stand with brightness before him, and am rid of your blood. (2 Nephi 9:44)

That statement only makes sense if he were removing his official priesthood regalia, and, given the significance of that clothing, it would have been a very powerful demonstration of his priesthood authority. His reason for doing that is explained in a revelation given to Thomas B. Marsh: "Cleanse your hearts and your garments, lest the blood of this generation be required at your

Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins, p. 115-119.

Hugh Nibley, Approach to the Book of Mormon, p. 126.

Jacob understood that doctrine very well. In a later official speech he said,

Now, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine office with soberness, and that I might rid my garments of your sins, I come up into the temple this day that I might declare unto you the word of God.(Jacob 2:2)

King Benjamin said the same thing:

I say unto you that I have caused that ye should assemble yourselves together that I might rid my garments of your blood, at this period of time when I am about to go down to my grave, that I might go down in peace, and my immortal spirit may join the choirs above in singing the praises of a just God. (Mosiah 2:28)

It is significant, for our purposes to note that Benjamin's father had separated himself from the Nephites and their political system, and that Benjamin seems to function as king, prophet, and high priest – just as Solomon did in the Old Testament.

Another important example of the use of garments in the Book of Mormon is Alma's speech to the people of Zarahemla.

21 I say unto you, ye will know at that day that ye cannot be saved; for there can no man be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins.

22 And now I ask of you, my brethren, how will any of you feel, if ye shall stand before the bar of God, having your garments stained with blood and all manner of filthiness? Behold, what will these things testify against you? (Alma 5:21-22)

This implies that the people in the congregation also had sacred ceremonial clothing.

The story of Captain Moroni is full of covenants, covenant names, and sacral clothing.

12 And it came to pass that he rent his coat

That appears to be his outer garment.

and he took a piece thereof, and wrote upon it [the following chiastic poem:]

In memory of our God,
our religion,
and freedom,
and our peace,
our wives,
and our children

and he fastened it upon the end of a pole.

13a And he fastened on his head-plate [high priest's flat hat?], and his breastplate, [a part of the armor, or the pocket that held the Urim and Thummim?] and his shields, and girded on his armor about his loins; and he took the pole, which had on the end thereof his rent coat, (and he called it the title of liberty) and he bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God for the blessings of liberty

I think that should be read: he called it the title of "liberty," because the poem he had just written is the new covenant name of "liberty." The blessings of "liberty" are the blessings mentioned in the poem.

- 13b to rest upon his brethren so long as there should a band of Christians remain to possess the land
- 14 For thus were all the true believers of Christ, who belonged to the church of God, called by those who did not belong to the church.
- 15 And those who did belong to the church were faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ who should come.

There is another covenant name.

- 16 And therefore, at this time, Moroni prayed that the cause of the Christians, and the freedom of the land might be favored.
- 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.

Here the land is defined – measured, if you will, and declared to be sacred space, and a land of "liberty," which is the covenant name that has just been defined by the words of the poem.

18 And he said [here is the covenant]: 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.

19 And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the rent part of his garment in the air,

Here he uses the word "garment" rather than "coat." This is the only place in the Book of Mormon where the "garment" is singular rather than "garments," plural. If Mormon was wearing the High Priest's ritual clothing, then "garments" would denote both the white suit and the outer coat, but the part was torn from only the "garment," probably suggesting the outer garment.

that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent part, and crying with a loud voice, saying: [here is another covenant]

- 20 Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, and enter into a covenant that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them.
- 21 And it came to pass that when Moroni had proclaimed these words, behold, the people came running together with their armor girded about their loins, rending their garments in token, or as a covenant,

As Moroni had torrn his garment as a token of the covenant, they also tore theirs.

that they would not forsake the Lord their God; or, in other words, if they should transgress the commandments of God, or fall into transgression, and be ashamed to take upon them the name of Christ, the Lord should rend them even as they had rent their garments.

22 Now this was the covenant which they made, and they cast their garments at the feet of Moroni, saying [now the covenant is made formal]: We covenant with our God, that we shall be destroyed, even as our brethren in the land northward, if we shall fall into transgression; yea, he may cast us at the feet of our enemies, even as we have cast our garments at thy feet to be trodden under foot, if we shall fall into transgression.

(Alma 46:12 - 22)

Again, their garments are the tokens of the covenants. Later on, we see a similar pattern with the children of the converted Lamanites who became "the sons of Helaman."

...they [the boys] called themselves Nephites. [covenant name] And they entered into a covenant to fight for the liberty [if "liberty" is being used with precision it is also a covenant name] of the Nephites, yea, to protect the land unto the laying down of their lives; yea, even they covenanted that they never would give up their liberty, but they would fight in all cases to protect the Nephites and themselves from bondage. Now behold, there were two thousand of those young men, who entered into this covenant and took their weapons of war to defend their country. (Alma 53:16b - 18)

Elsewhere in the scriptures, Isaiah had envisioned that the sacred clothing worn by God might also be military attire.

For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke." (Isaiah 59:17)

This is reasonable, for Jehovah, as Lord of Hosts, is primarily a military leader. The Nephites may have picked up on that, for they seem to have designed their military defensive clothing after the pattern of the sacral garments – if not, at least they gave its parts the same names as the names of the priesthood garments.

... the more vital parts of the body being shielded from the strokes of the Lamanites, by their breastplates, and their armshields, and their head-plates.... (Alma 43:38b) Military clothing was a new invention among the Nephites, when the Lamanites saw them dressed that way, they were taken quite by surprise. One wonders about the names of the military clothing they wore. This was a holy war, it was clearly defined as such by the priesthood prayers and covenants associated with the Nephite activities during the war. It may be a strange notion, but it has occurred to me that all they would have had to do is make the breeches, breastplate, ephod, and miter out of heavy leather, add something to protect their arms, and they would have a formidable defensive armor. It makes sense that they would do that because they clearly considered their

defense as sacral acts – and how better to protect one during a holy war than to wear sacred clothing made from heavy leather. 194

Five hundred years later, another Moroni took his ritual clothing very seriously. For like other prophets, Moroni's garments were a symbol – an evidence – of his own righteousness.

37 And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.

38 And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood.

39 And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things; (Ether 12:37-39)

Another evidence that Mormon's son Moroni may have had a complete set of the sacred clothing is the description of what he placed in the box on the Hill Cumorah. Moroni told the Prophet Joseph that in addition to the plates the box also contained:

... two stones in silver bows——and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim——deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted "Seers" in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. (DHC 1:12)

The breastplate mentioned here appears to have been the same as that of the High Priest's clothing, that is, it served the same function. It contained a Urim and Thummim, but not the same one mentioned in the Old Testament. The Lord later promised the Three Witnesses that they would see:

....the plates, and also of the breastplate, the sword of Laban, the Urim and

Of all the speculations I have written, this one may be the most far out. When Dan read this paragraph he wrote, "This..... I don't know what to say. You've got to be kidding!"

Thummim, which were given to the brother of Jared upon the mount, when he talked with the Lord face to face, and the miraculous directors which were given to Lehi while in the wilderness, on the borders of the Red Sea. (D&C 17: 1)

The most interesting instance of an individual wearing "garments" is in Third Nephi. To explain the significance of that, I need to go on another sidetrack and talk about the word "robe." In the Book of Mormon it is the word used to describe the clothing angels wear. Lehi was conducted through at least part of his Tree of Life vision by "...a man, and he was dressed in a white robe."(1 Nephi 8: 5) When Nephi saw that John the Beloved would write the book of Revelation, he was shown John as "a man, and he was dressed in a white robe." (1 Nephi 14: 19) When the Saviour came to the Nephites, "...as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them." (3 Nephi 11: 8a)

Joseph Smith's description of Moroni's robe is more detailed

31 He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom. (JS 1:31)

(Because that white robe appears on both angels and God, I am inclined to suppose that even in its simplicity it might be the most prized of all the ceremonial clothing, that is, the "robe of righteousness" promised to the saints who achieve celestial glory.)

Now to return to our discussion of the "garments" (plural). I assume that the Book of Mormon was both written and translated with a great deal of care and attention to detail – that the words in the

book are the words that are supposed to be there. For that reason I am intrigued that on the second day of the Saviour's visit to America – the day he was officiating in certain ordinances – he did not wear the white robe he had worn the day before, but he was now dressed in priesthood "garments." The account reads:

And it came to pass that Jesus blessed them as they did pray unto him; and his countenance did smile upon them, and the light of his countenance did shine upon them, and behold they were as white as the countenance and also the garments of Jesus; and behold the whiteness thereof did exceed all the whiteness, yea, even there could be nothing upon earth so white as the whiteness thereof. (3 Nephi 19:25)

I would love to be able to comment on the significance of his change of clothing, but I haven't the foggiest idea what intelligent thing to say!

that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified.

"Called" – given a new king-name – this is the conclusion of the coronation rites. Those who had been washed, anointed, and clothed now receive a new covenant name.

In this instance, the new king-name is also a promise of eternal life: "trees of righteousness – zedek, temple things – the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified." Symbolically, "trees" can have multiple referents, including the Tree of Life and eternal increase (trees make fruit, fruit make seeds, seeds make trees, *ad infinitum*). Nibley completes the story:

These five things you have asked me about (the Lord tells the apostles after his resurrection, in the Kephalaia) appear very small and unimportant to the world, but they are really a very great and holy thing. I will teach you the mysteries now. These tokens (semeia) go back to the ordinances of the first man, Adam himself. He brought them with him when he came out of the garden of Eden, and having completed his struggle upon the earth, he mounted up by these very same signs and was received again into the Aeons of Light. The person who receives these becomes a Son. He both gives and receives the signs and the tokens of the God of truth, while demonstrating the same to the Church--all in hopes that some day these things may become a reality. So the apostles realized that these things are but forms and types, yet you can't do without them. You cannot do without analogues. For us they may only be symbols, but they must be done here, the Lord says.

They may be but symbols here, but they are indispensable steps to the attainment of real power. "In fact", say the Pistis Sophia, "without the mysteries one loses one's power. Without the ordinances, one has no way of controlling matter, for such control begins with the control of one's self. The ordinances provide the very means and the discipline by which light operates on material things. "You don't understand this now," it continues, "but your level, or taxis, in the next world will depend on the ordinances you receive in this world. Whoever receives the highest here will understand the whys and the wherefores of the great plan." "You can't understand it now, but you will. Your faith is being tested here. It is through the ordinances that one makes this progress in knowledge, so that those who receive all available ordinances and teachings here shall pass by all the intermediate topoi and shall not have to give the answers and signs, nor stand certain tests hereafter." 195

The new name in Isaiah 61, "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified" seems to epitomize all that "zedek" stands for: the highest and eternal ordinances of the ancient temples. The intriguing thing about this new name-title is that it has a double meaning. I will discuss the tree of life later in more detail, but for now let me just point out that it is symbolic of being both a father and a son. In Alma 32 one receives the seed, it grows in ones soul until it produces fruit and one becomes a tree of life. This new name is like that. It is "the planting of the Lord," but it is also a tree which produces fruit. In the same way "son" or "daughter" implies both the dependence of youth and the potential of parenthood. So this new name in Isaiah 61 is not substantially different from the one in Psalm 2: "thou art my son."

As Adam was the first king, so symbolically, the then-present earthly king of Israel, Judah, the Nephites, or king Noah in the Nephite colony, Nephi, now reigns in Adams place. The king is adopted as a son of God, and as such becomes the legitimate heir of both Adam and God, and can sit on the throne of God in the Holy of Holies in the earthly Temple. If he were not an adopted son, his assuming the throne would be an act of usurpation. "Son" is not just a statement of relationship, it is also a royal name-title that means "heir," and has the connotation of present and

¹⁹⁵ Hugh Nibley , *Temple and Cosmos* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Company, 1992,) p. 310-311.

future kingship. The declaration of one's kingship must be made by God himself, and during the coronation ceremony the king affirmed that this had actually happened. At the king's coronation, "son" is the name which is given to the king by God himself.

It is generally believed that Psalm 2 was sung at the time of the king's anointing. Like many other psalms it was apparently sung by several voices.

The first part of the psalm may have been sung by a narrator or chorus, but I think more probably by the entire congregation:

WHY do the heathen rage,
and the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord,
and against his anointed, saying,
Let us break their bands asunder,
and cast away their cords from us.
He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh:
the Lord shall have them in derision.
Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,
and vex them in his sore displeasure.

The proclamation by God

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

The testimony of the king

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me,
Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,
and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Response to the king's call and anointing, perhapps sung by the congregation.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Psalm 2)

The most important statement in the psalm is the affirmation by the king that God said, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Here "son," "my son," and in other places "son of God" and "Son of God" (There is a tremendous difference between "son of God" and Son of God"!) are not just a statement of adoption or of genealogy, but are royal name-titles which signify "heir" or "king." ¹⁹⁶ Whenever the Father introduces the Saviour, he uses that name-title which define both his literal relationship and his status as heir to whom all must do obeisance. Examples are Christ's baptism, his appearance to the Nephites, and Joseph Smith's first vision.

Several scholars have discussed the evidence for the ancient Israelite use of sacred king-names.

The religious practice of giving and receiving a new name, "is based upon the belief that the name is or symbolizes the self or soul, and that an alteration of the name will effect or symbolize and perpetuate an alteration of the self; on this supposition a man whose name has been changed is no longer quite the same man, for he has been cut off from his own past, or from certain aspects of it, and the future belongs to a different being." ¹⁹⁷ Mowinckel wrote,

The mention of the king's 'name' [in Psalms 7:18] contains an allusion to the fact that the oracles and 'decree' really contained those names of honour which the deity gave to the king on the day of his anointing, his 'regnal-name' which expressed both his close relation to Yahweh and the promise of the happiness and honour he was to gain for himself and for his people. We know this to be the case in Egypt, and both in the East generally and in Israel the custom prevailed that the king should take a new name at his accession. ¹⁹⁸ Probably also has to be interpreted to the effect that David's son Jedidiah as king took the name Solomon. ¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ In the context of covenants and treaties, "son" denotes vassalage rather than heirship.

¹⁹⁷ A.M. Honeyman, "The Evidence for Regnal Names Among the Hebrews," in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 67, 1948: 13.

¹⁹⁸ In a footnote he adds: See 2 Kgs 23.31 (Shallum-Jo'ahaz); 23.34 (Elijakim-Jehoiakim). 2 Sam. 12.24-25.

¹⁹⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 63 and n. 86. See also: James K Hoffmeier "From Pharaoh to Israel's

And

"The account in II Sam 12:24-25 of the birth of Jedidiah-Solomon imputes the former name to the prophet Nathan under divine inspiration and the latter to Bathsheba or David. ... Solomon is the throne name and Jedidiah the private name.... The slayer of Goliath was Elhanan the son of Jesse of Bethlehem, (II Sam. 21:19) Elhanan can be none other than he who reigned as David."²⁰⁰

So it appears that "David" (which is was not an Israelite name) became the covenant king-name of Elhanan, a man who grew up in Bethlehem, only a few miles from the Jebusite city of Jerusalem.

A new name is a kind of statement of fact – it is a *pistis* – a formal token of the covenant it represents. It can be a name which evokes memories of covenants made in the past, or it may be ongoing and current in the present, or it may project one's covenants into the future.

Some covenants guarantee the fulfilment of other covenants. Prophecies about the future are one example. On a more personal level, Ephesians 1:13-14 is a covenant made at the Council, guaranteeing one's opportunity for redemption when one finally get out from under the burdens of this life. The verses read,

13 In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which [sealing] is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

An earnest is an enabling contract – one that guarantees another contract in the future: "I promise you that you can buy my bike when I get a new one" is a simple and informal form of an earnest. I'll discuss that in more detail below. In a very broad sense, a new name, like "son," is an earnest

Kings To Jesus," in Bible Review (13/2, June 1997), 48.

²⁰⁰ A. H. Honneyman, "The Evidence for Regnal Names Among the Hebrews," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1984, v. 67, p 23-24.

because it is not only an acclamation of who one is, but is also an avowal of who one is becoming. In the course of one's life here – and most probably in the course of one's full existence – one accumulates a large number of covenant names. For example, in the king's name-titles, one might find the whole history of the king's final ascension to the throne.

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 recreating present....²⁰¹

Nibley explained that the ancient Egyptians had the same concept. In ancient Egypt one received a number of names, some of which were symbolic of where and what one is doing just now, others with one's role in the Council and creation, still others with promises for the future. The name with which one evoked God for blessing or information was determined by the sort of information or assistance one wished.

When Re says to the gods, "I have many names and many forms; in me Atun and the youthful Horus are addressed," he signifies that he may be conjured either as the Ancient of Days or the Newly-born, depending on the name employed and the situation in which his presence is desired.... 202

Nibley expands on that idea by explaining that the name of Atum (the Egyptian Adam) was changed when he left the realm of the gods and came to the garden.

Atum and Re stick close together in creation contexts. *Re "comes down"* to be with Atum, or, as in the passage just cited, when he comes down he *is* Atum. "Re comes down to me in his evening," says a Coffin Text that forcibly calls to mind God's walking with Adam in the evening, especially when we read what follows, "and we walk about *(dhn.n)* and stroll around (orbit, *phr.n)* the heaven" (C.T. 160, 11, 385). The setting fits, too, in the next Spell, when "Re takes the arm of NN" (the candidate) and places him in his Garden of Reeds, and

²⁰¹ 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.

Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, and Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1975), p. 40-41.

puts him "in charge of the plants, of which he freely eats" (C.T. 162,11, 393-94). It is Re who is concerned with what goes on in the garden: "The Great God, who breathed (into the) creatures (*irw*, shapes, forms) within his verdant gardens, who explains (wd' mdw) the secret matters of the vestry (of Re)" (C.T. 75, I, 359f). But the one he deals with is Atutn, he who comes down to earth and changes his name in doing so. The classic instance of this is Re himself, who is known by the name of *Atum* when he descends to earth, as attested by our Books of Breathing. This name changing is clearly indicated in C.T. 80, II, 40: "I am the living one ... whom Atum made as (to be) Neper (the corn-raiser) when he sent me down to this earth . . . when my name became Neper (or Osiris) the son of Geb (Earth)." When he moves from a heavenly to an earthly role his name is changed accordingly.²⁰³

The reason it was important to have many names was because one's existence covered an enormous span of time, and during that time one played many roles with covenantal responsibilities.

Every name is an epithet designating some peculiar attribute or function of an individual. That is why it is possible for persons even in our society to have more than one name, each name calling attention to a different aspect of the individual: for to have many forms and functions is to have many names.... ²⁰⁴

Examples he might have given of our current use of multiple name-titles are bishop, scoutmaster, mother, teacher. These are all name-titles, some, like mother and father, are a kind of statement of rank assigned by one's culture. Others, like Relief Society President and High Counselor are names which denote called responsibilities, and the name-title will is no longer effectual after one is released. In ancient Israel there were some names that were much more significant than others, especially those given by formal ordinance and covenant. The most important example was the formal bestowal of the king's names in connection with his coronation. Such names were of the utmost importance to the Egyptians because "the name is a person's essence. If his name perishes,

Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, and Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1975), p. 133.

Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, and Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1975), p. 40

he himself does not exist any more."²⁰⁵ Some names are secret, known only to the king on whom they were bestowed, because the name represented his past or future eternal Self.

The importance of these names, even the secret one, is expressed by the fact that "To possess knowledge of another's name is to hold some power over him, even if it be the high god himself." A modern legal example is that if two people agree to something their agreement is not legally binding until the agreement is written and their signatures attest its validity. The agreement is nothing without the names.

In ancient ceremonial covenants, there need have been no written contract, only the spoken covenant and a verbal exchange of names which related exclusively to that covenant. Let me give you a very simplistic example. Two persons make a covenant. Sam covenants that he will remember his friend Tom, and Tom covenants that if Sam still remembers five years from now he will give him \$100. They exchange covenant names. Sam has the covenant name of Green, and Tom has the new name of Blue. Both are now larger and more complex individuals than they were before. Tom has two concurrent identities: "Tom" and "Blue." Blue must keep \$100 in reserve, because if he fails to pay, Blue will cease to exist, and that part of Tom will be lost forever. Similarly, the extension of Sam who is Green must remember his friend. If he does not remember, then Green will cease to exist, and that part of Sam will be lost forever. Five years pass. A young boy knocks on Tom's door. He says, "I represent Green. Your name is Blue." Because the boy knows the names, he has power over Blue. Blue must surrender the \$100 to the boy or Blue will

Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, and Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1975), p. 139.

Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, and Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1975), p. 140.

cease to be. However if Blue does pay, his covenant is fulfilled, the friendship is renewed, and both Blue and Green live forever. By keeping the covenant the friends have created a new entity whose name is Sam/Green/Tom/Blue. The new "person" may not be perceivable by others in space, but it exists in the dimension of time. All you have to do is recall when you met a friend whom you had not seen for years, and recall how the distances of time and space melted away in the instant of the renewed friendship, and you will understand what I mean. Now Sam/Green and Tom/Blue are fuller, more complex, and more complete persons than they could have ever been without the covenant and the names associated with it. That example is extremely simplistic, but the idea is very complex. If the covenants and names identify one in terms of assignments and friendships sealed in the Council in Heaven, then they have eternal consequences, and the idea of one's existence being expanded as one takes on more covenant names becomes a very complex idea indeed.

The Israelite kings may have been given several covenant names during the course of the New Year festival. (One representing the time he was at the Council, one for when he came to this earth, one representing his kingship, one representing the promises of eternal life – that sort of thing.) We know of two: One was "son of God" (or simply "son"), and the other was the royal name by which he would be known during his administration. For example, when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem the first time, he took the Jewish king to Babylon and left his uncle to rule in his place. The account reads, "And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah."(2 Kings 21:17) So now Mattaniah has at least two names: his given name, and the name which denotes his royal administration and represents his covenant to be a subservient king to Nebuchadnezzar. If Zedekiah breaks his covenant with Nebuchadnezzar, king

Zedekiah will cease to exist. That, by the way is exactly what happened. Zedekiah rebelled, and Nebuchadnezzar came a second time to conquer Jerusalem. He captured Zedekiah and his sons; dethroned the rebel king, killed the sons, and blinded the father. As a footnote to that story, Whiston wrote,

Burder remarks, this was done with the intention of rendering the king incapable of ever re-ascending the throne. Thus it was a law in Persia, down to the latest time, that no blind person could mount the throne. Hence the barbarous custom of depriving the sons and the male relatives of a Persian king, who are not to be allowed to attain the government, of their sight. Down to the time of Abbas, in 1642, this was done by only passing a red-hot copper plate before the eyes, by which the power of vision was not entirely destroyed, and person blinded still retained a glimmer of sight.²⁰⁷

Josephus records that the blind man spent the rest of his life in a Babylonian prison. Mattaniah was no longer king, and could never again be king. It was the blind man named Mattaniah who was the prisoner, not the king Zedekiah, because the king who had once had the covenant name of Zedekiah did not exist any more.

Perhaps the best working example of the significance of sacred covenant names is found in the 1 Nephi 20 version of Isaiah 48. The unique thing about that passage is that while we are not told what the covenant was, but we are told the names, and the names are sufficiently explicit that one can guess the broad outline of the covenant. In the Bible, Isaiah 48 contains more more phrases which suggest "in the beginning" and "before you were born" than any other chapter in the Old Testament except the creation story, and those reference to the pre-mortal existence are supposed to be about Cyrus.²⁰⁸ However, in the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 20 is probably our most detailed

William Whiston, trans., *The Complete Works of Flavious Josephus* (London, The London Pringing and Publishing Company, Limited, 1876) p. 213 footnote.

²⁰⁸ In the Old Testament, Isaiah 48 is the end of the section which deals with Cyrus, king of Persia. The Cyrus passages are a major problem in the study of Isaiah because they are written is a different style and are one of the major reasons the latter half of Isaiah is attributed to a different

account of the war in heaven, and concludes with the role played by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Below, I have extracted those parts of the chapter which deal with new names and covenants and have left out those parts which describe the apostate state of those who had rebelled in the "war in heaven." (I left them out because they get in the way of what I wished to point out about sacred covenants and covenant names, but I suggest you read the entire chapter on your own.) In the story,

author whom the scholars call Second Isaiah. After Cyrus captured Babylon, the Jews took to Cyrus a statement which I believe they added to Isaiah to show that in the pre-existence Jehovah had chosen Cyrus to be king, so he could defeat Babylon and let the Jews return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple. Josephus tells the story this way:

- 1. In the first year of the reign of Cyrus ... [he proclaimed that] he would restore them [the Jews] again to the land of their fathers, and they should build their temple, and enjoy their ancient prosperity. And these things God did afford them; for he stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write this throughout all Asia: "Thus saith Cyrus the king: Since God Almighty hath appointed me to be king of the habitable earth, I believe that he is that God which the nation of the Israelites worship; for indeed he foretold my name by the prophets, and that I should build him a house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea." [This was not unique Cyrus was also letting other people return to their homelands and rebuild their temples to their gods.]
- 2. This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: "My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the Divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God...."(Flavious Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI, Chapter 1.)

The Cyrus passage begins with Isaiah 44:28, and continues through Isaiah 48. Isaiah lived about 200 years before. The fact that this "secret vision" had been unknown for that long , and was "found" in Babylon after Jerusalem had been destroyed and its people deported, leaves one asking, Where did they find it? It was "found" at the right time and in the right place so it could be taken to Cyrus to help convince him to let the Jews return to Jerusalem and rebuild their city.

In the Old Testament, the Cyrus passage concludes by merging itself into an already existing Isaiah 48. (See footnote in LDS Bible: Isaiah 48:14a, which reads: "Cyrus will do his desire, or wish.") Fortunately, Nephi gives us the Brass Plates' version of chapter 48, (1 Nephi 20) and there are important differences between his version and the one we have in the Old Testament. The Brass Plates' version shows some things were left out of the Old Testament version, and other things were added. On the Brass Plates version, as quoted in 1 Nephi 20, that chapter is an introduction to the

as Isaiah tells it, we are not told what the initial covenant was, but we are told the two covenant names associated with it.

The setting of Isaiah's revelation is the war in heaven. It begins with the Lord is chiding "Israel" for not keeping their covenants. The Lord describes their apostasy, but I will delete most of the details of their apostasy because they complicate the story, and I wish to call attention to the covenants and covenant names, so I and shall italicize those parts.

- 1 Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel [Israel is the covenant name], and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, or out of the waters of baptism, who swear [covenant] by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, yet they swear not in truth nor in righteousness. [they are making covenants, but not in zedek]
- 2 Nevertheless, they call themselves of the holy city [they claim to be Zion], but they do not stay themselves upon the God of Israel, who is the Lord of Hosts; yea, the Lord of Hosts is his name.
- 3 Behold, I have declared the former things [the names and covenants] from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them. I did show them suddenly [without hesitation]
- 5 And I have even from the beginning declared to thee; ...
- 6 Thou hast seen and heard all this; and will ye not declare [teach or testify] them? And that I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them....

next chapter which is about the mission of the Prophet Joseph, and has nothing whatever to do with Cyrus.

I do not believe the Cyrus passage was written by Isaiah for the following reasons: 1) Even in translation, it is in a different style from the rest of the latter half of Isaiah. 2) If, as I believe, the latter half or Isaiah is a commentary of the Feast of Tabernacles drama, and on the Psalms, the Cyrus passage is out of place because it does not fit the context. 3) I think Josephus was correct, that it was not in the original writings of Isaiah, and was unknown until the Jews discovered it in Babylon. 4) the critical passages which support the idea of a Second Isaiah were not in the Brass Plates version. 5) The next chapter (Isaiah 49 / 1 Nephi 21) is about the restoration of the gospel by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon's 1 Nephi 20 provides a perfect introduction to that by telling of Joseph's role in the pre-mortal world. The Bible's Isaiah 48-49 jumps from Cyrus to Joseph Smith without any conjunction or sense of continuity whatever.

- 8 Yea, and thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time thine ear was not opened; for I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.
- 9 Nevertheless, *for my name's sake* will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off.
 - 10 For, behold, I have refined thee, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.
 - 11 For mine own sake, yea, for mine own sake will I do this, for I will not suffer my name to be polluted, and I will not give my glory unto another.

That sounds like:

And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying--Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor. ... and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down; (Moses 4: 1-3)

At this point in the chapter, Isaiah, continuing to speak in first person representing Jehovah, says he has called a meeting. Those who are invited are called "the heavens" – i.e. the stars – so these are members of the Council.

- 12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and *Israel my called*, for I am he; I am the first, and I am also the last.
- 13 **Mine hand hath also laid the foundation of the earth** [that helps define the setting as the Council in Heaven and the creation], *and my right hand* [covenant hand] *hath spanned the heavens*. I call unto them and they stand up together.

To "span" means to measure. It is the distance between the end of the thumb and the end of little finger when the thumb is extended. ²⁰⁹ The "heavens," of course, denote the "stars" who are the members of the Council, so this appears to be a reference to an ordination.

I call unto them [the heavens, stars, members of the Council] **and they stand up together**. [As in Psalm 82 and 2 Kings 23:1-3, one stands to make a covenant.]

14 All ye [the stars, apparently they are those whose covenant name is Israel.²¹⁰], **assemble**

²⁰⁹ Oxford English Dictionary

²¹⁰ In the Old Testament, this may appear to be a reference to the creation, and the stars actual stars. There the next sentence asks, "which among them...." But in the Book of Mormon the stars

yourselves and hear; who among them hath declared these things unto them?

The answer is given in the next chapter. It is the Prophet Joseph Smith who gave this speech. See footnote 1 Nephi 21:8a.

The Lord hath loved him [Joseph]; yea, and he [Joseph] will fulfill his word which he hath declared by them; and he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall come upon the Chaldeans.

Joseph will replace the kingdoms of this world with the Kingdom of God. The next chapter says how he will do that. It promises he will restore the temple ordinances and that Israel will be gathered to the temples.

- 15 Also, saith the Lord; I the Lord, yea, I have spoken; yea, I have called him [Joseph] to declare [to make this speech], I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. [A comment on Joseph's integrity.]
- 16 Come ye near unto me; I have not spoken in secret; from the beginning, from the time that it was declared have I spoken; and the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me.
- 17 And thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I have sent him [Joseph], the Lord thy God who teacheth thee to profit, who leadeth thee by the way thou shouldst go, hath done it. (Isaiah 48:1-17 as in 1 Nephi 20: 1-17 italics added)

That is the context, now let's look carefully at the covenant names.

"Hearken and hear this, O house of Jacob, who are *called by the name of Israel....*" Israel means either "let God prevail," "God will prevail," or one who acts or speaks in God's behalf, depending on the dictionary one uses.²¹¹

"....the God of Israel, who is the Lord of Hosts; yea, the Lord of Hosts is his name." Lord of Hosts means simply master of the armies. So the covenant names are: For Jehovah, "Master of the Armies." For the people something like "God will prevail" or "I work in God's behalf" – both are

are personified and the question is "who among them..."

²¹¹ I used the dictionary in the LDS Bible, and *The Interpreter's dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols. (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1991).

fundamentally the same idea. If those are the covenant names, then we can guess what the covenant was. That is, the people who were called "Israel" covenanted to assist Jehovah, "The Lord of Hosts," achieve his purposes.

It is interesting to me that in this chapter, the word "swear" (covenant) is used in conjunction with the new names, but after the names are given, the references are not to the covenants, but to the names.

Nevertheless, for my name's sake will I defer mine anger, I will not suffer my name to be polluted, and I will not give my glory unto another.

The point is: new names represented covenants and were evidence of their validity (a *pistis*). When a person receives a new name, both the name and the covenant become a part of the individual. If one breaks the covenant and loses the name, he has violated that part of the law of his own being, and becomes less than he would be otherwise. God cannot break his covenants, so that leaves us entirely free to define our own destiny. Only we can shrink or expand our Selves by breaking or keeping the covenants we have made with him.

That concept probably accounts for much of the ancient Egyptians' belief about their judgement after death. As the spirit of the dead person approached the gods who guarded the way, the Egyptian was stopped by a gatekeeper god who demanded a sign before he would give permission for the person to pass. The individual would then give the correct name and assert that he had not broken the covenants. Those names and the covenants could only be known if the individual had performed certain rites on earth. So salvation required three steps: 1) making the covenants, 2)

Coincidentally, Brigham Young taught essentially the same thing:

Let me give you a definition in brief. Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell. ²¹³

To return now, to the coronation sequence in Isaiah 61, the royal king name is "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified." Symbolically, that is the promise that one will become a tree of life (as in Alma 32), but that is not all. Trees make fruit, fruit make seeds, seeds make trees, *ad infinitum*. The new name that is given to the dead in the coronation scene of Isaiah 61 promises not only eternal life but also eternal increase.

There seems to have been an important correlation between the idea of king names and the symbolism of one's body parts, but I'm not quite sure what it was. Feet, in the code word "walk" and in the idea of having one's feet "established;" hands, especially the right hand, and others. What follows is my wonderings about the meanings of heart, and mind. Quite frankly, I don't know what I am talking about, but I feel that if I did know it would be important. This morning I have read all the scriptures which contain the words "heart and mind," "heart, mind, and strength," "heart, mind, and might," "might and strength," and "heart, might, mind and strength." This is what I found: In the Old Testament, the heart was the seat of both the emotions and the intellect. For example,

Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, and Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1975), p. 221.

²¹³ Teachings of Presidents of the Church, Brigham Young [Melchizedek Priesthood Manuel] (Salt Lake City, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), p, 302. From Discourses of Brigham Young, p.416

26 I say unto you, wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord.

27 Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise. Therefore, what teach ye this people? (Mosiah 12:26-27)

Elsewhere in the scriptures the heart thinks, comprehends, hates, contrives, is happy, glad and sad. All the things we associate with the heart (emotion) plus all of the things we associate with the brain (intellect), the ancients associated with only the "heart" – except one: charity – the qualities of mercy and love that causes one to hurt when one sees other people hurt – the pity and empathy which enables one to be a righteous judge. That quality was associated with the place where one felt it – in the pit of one's stomach – "the bowels of mercy." For example Abinadi used that phrase when he described the Saviour's atonement:

Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice. (Mosiah 15:9)

My question was what did the ancients mean when they used the words "mind" and "heart"? But more especially, if the intellect and the emotion were contained in the heart, and mercy was in the pit of the stomach, what did they mean when they used the word "mind." They did not mean "brain." The ancients had no idea what the brain was for. When the Egyptians mummified people, they took the brain out of the head and threw it away because they didn't know what good it was. Besides that, when one "felt" enthusiasm or distress about ideas, emotions, or love, one never felt them at the top of the head, it was either in the chest or the pit of the stomach. So mind meant

something different from brain. Let me show you some examples of what I found:

Jacob spoke to "you that are pure in heart" and said "Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith." (Jacob 3:1) There, prayer was a function of the mind, not of the heart – one did not think prayers in the same way one thought other kinds of mental images or ideas.

Moroni's description of who could see angels is most interesting in this regard:

- 30 For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness.
- 31 And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfill and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.
- 32 And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men. (Moroni 7:30-32)

There the qualification of one who sees angels was that they have "strong faith and a firm mind"—there again, it was the mind rather than the heart. One finds the same idea in king Limhi's teaching that if the people would "turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart" and they would "serve him with all diligence of mind."(Mosiah 7:33) That seems not to be a redundancy. What it seems to be saying is that when one turned to the Lord with full purpose of intellect and emotion, then one could serve him with all diligence of mind—and "mind" was different from intellect and emotion.

Nephi equated the phrase your "might, mind, and strength," with one's "whole soul." He wrote:

And now behold, I say unto you that the right way is to believe in Christ, and deny him not; and Christ is the Holy One of Israel; wherefore ye must bow down before him, and worship him with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul; and if ye do this ye shall in nowise be cast out.(2 Nephi 25:29)

Similarly, Alma said his son must "lead away the hearts of no more to do wickedly" (assigning their wickedness to their hearts), but that he must "turn to the Lord with all your mind, might, and strength (assigning his spirituality to his mind rather than to his heart.)(Alma 39:13)

When Moroni explained the brother of Jared's vision of the Saviour, he contrasted "hardness of heart, and blindness of mind" with "a broken heart and a contrite spirit," (Ether 4:15) suggesting that "mind" and "spirit" might be the same thing. Then in the last chapter of the Book of Mormon he suggests that one's mind, rather than the heart, the place where one loves God.

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. (Moroni 10:32)

Other scriptures suggest that as the "heart" is the emotional and intellectual seat of the body, so the "mind" is the emotional and intellectual seat of the spirit. The mechanism through which they communicate with each other is also implied. Perhaps the most interesting is Alma's account of his conversion and *sode* experience.

15 **Oh, thought I**,[We are introduced to his thinking at this point, so that is a function of the heart.] **that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body** [His making a distinction between his body and his soul may be important here.] **that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds.**

16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul. [His body was unconscious, but his soul that was racked.]

17 And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed

up by the memory [another variety of thought] of my many sins, behold, I remembered [still thinking] also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

18 Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought,

He seems to be making a distinction between the place where the thought originated, which is the "heart," and his "mind's" catching hold on that thought. If he is making that distinction, he is attributing the thinking to the man Alma, and the catching hold of the thought to the spirit Alma.

I cried within my heart [Now the man Alma can understand.]: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death.

19 And now, behold, when I thought this [still the function of the heart.], I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

20 And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain! [His "soul" was filled with joy, not his heart or his body.]

Alma now very briefly describes the beginning of his *sode* experience.

- 21 Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy.
- 22 Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God; yea, and my soul [not heart] did long to be there.
 - 23 But behold, my limbs did receive their strength again, and I stood upon my feet, and did manifest unto the people that I had been born of God. (Alma 36:15-20)

In that account, Alma dids not tell his son what he learned when he returned to the Council and saw God sitting on his throne, but he did use language of adoption and kingship when he came back and reported, that he "had been born of God."

It is interesting to me that, just as the intellect and the emotions were located in one part of the body

— the heart; and the feeling of mercy and love were located in another — the pit of the stomach; so

the mind and soul were identified with the head – but not the brain – rather they were identified with the perceptive power of the eyes and ears, and expressive ability of the mouth. It was the eyes that see, the ears that hear, and the mouth that speaks. In Alma' vision, his heart got involved with spiritual things, but not immediately, first his heart had to be pure so it could know the things of the spirit. That same idea was expressed in the psalms.

For with thee is the fountain of life:
 in thy light shall we see light.O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee;
 and thy righteousness to the upright in heart. (Psalm 36:9-10)

The scriptures are replete with the idea that for the natural man, eyes do not see and ears do not hear, but none of these are a reference to physical blindness or deafness. Moses accused the Israelites.

Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." (Deuteronomy 29:4)

Jeremiah echoed that condemnation.

Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not. (Jeremiah 5:21)

During Isaiah's *sode* experience, the Lord described the people whom Isaiah would work with this way:

Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. (Isaiah 6:10)

He used the same language when he spoke to Ezekiel about the people of his generation:

Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house." (Ezekiel 12:2)

The Saviour described the people of his time in that same way:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (Matthew 13:15)

In contrast, when Isaiah spoke of a time of spiritual enlightenment, he promised,

And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. (Isaiah 32:3)

When the Saviour spoke of the Twelve he said,

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. (Matthew 13:16)

And when the Lord spoke to Brigham Young through a revelation given by Joseph Smith, he said,

Let him that is ignorant learn wisdom by humbling himself and calling upon the Lord his God, that his eyes may be opened that he may see, and his ears opened that he may hear. (D&C 136:32)

That is significant to me. The perceptions of one's body were symbolic of both the covenants one made, and of one's capacity to fulfill those covenants. The eyes and ears seem to have been used jointly by both the body and the spirit, and were the connecting place between the heart, which was the intellectual and emotional seat of the body, and the mind, which was the intellectual and emotional seat of the spirit.

With that in mind, lets return to the matter of the relationships between body, soul, covenant, and name. It is in the chest area where one "feels" the exuberance of one's intellect, the excitement of a new idea — or anger, or joy, and other emotions. The mid-section is where one feels mercy, compassion, and love — where charity resides. The eyes and ears instruct both the body and the soul. Symbolically — sometimes in fact — the death of any of those parts of the body would bring death to

the whole. Symbolically, the death of any part would also darken one's soul, curtail one's capacity to think and to feel, and paralyze one's ability love. So in that regard, the death of the body might be symbolic of the death of the soul. But if the soul exercised the power of its "mind" to see, hear, love, and understand, and if the soul had its own covenant names, and therefore an identity that was independent of the physical body, then the soul's power to live would transcend the death of the physical body. (If the king's name was Hezekiah, but his soul's covenant name was "son," then the soul could live even if the body died.) But if the soul did not have its own name-identity, then what would be its identity when the body was dead. Abinadi's statement, "little children also have eternal life," (Mosiah 15:25) exempted them from the implications of that question, but otherwise it seems to suggest a simplistic rationale for why all humans who reach the age of accountability must experience the ordinances – either personally or vicariously – so he or she may receive and embrace, or discard and reject, the covenants and the names associated therewith.

As so often happens, All my rambling on a subject pales in the light of a single statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

I want to talk more of the relation of man to God. I will open your eyes in relation to your dead. All things whatsoever God in his infinite wisdom has seen fit and proper to reveal to us, while we are dwelling in mortality, in regard to our mortal bodies, are revealed to us in the abstract, and independent of affinity of this mortal tabernacle, but are revealed to our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all; and those revelations which will save our spirits will save our bodies. God reveals them to us in view of no eternal dissolution of the body, or tabernacle. Hence the responsibility, the awful responsibility, that rests upon us in relation to our dead; for all the spirits who have not obeyed the Gospel in the flesh must either obey it in the spirit or be damned. Solemn thought!—dreadful thought! Is there nothing to be done?—no preparation—no salvation for our fathers and friends who have died without having had the opportunity to obey the decrees of the Son of Man?²¹⁴

After the coronation scene in Isaiah 61:1-3, and beginning with verse 4, we find what appears to be a discussion of the relationship between the living who do vicarious temple work, and the dead for whom it is done. The speaker is addressing those who are dead, so the word "ye" (plural form of you) refers to the dead people spoken of in D&C 138, while words like "they," "strangers," "alien," and "gentiles" refer to people who are alive in our world – these are the people who are going to do the temple work for the dead. But we learn in verse 9 that these living people are not gentiles at all, but "they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" – they are, in fact, of the covenant seed of Israel – those who will do family research and vicarious work for their ancestors.

4 And they [the living] shall build the old wastes,

That phrase brings to mind "If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (Moroni to Joseph Smith in JS-H 39),

they shall raise up the former desolations and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

A "city" can be either its buildings or its inhabitants. It is easy to read this verse as a restoration of the physical cities, but the further one gets into the text, the clearer it becomes that what Isaiah is talking about is repairing damage to the people "for many generations," which is what vicarious work for the dead is all about.

v. 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,

One stands to make covenants. For example when king Josiah began his religious reform. "The king stood by a pillar [of the temple], and made a covenant before the Lord . . . and all the people stood to the covenant." (2 Kings 23:1-3) What these "strangers" will feed them is immediately explained.

and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

In ancient Israel the primary food crop produced by "plowmen" was grain from which they made bread. "Vinedressers" produced wine. So the food associated with the covenant was bread and wine – the sacrament.

v. 6 But ye [addressing the dead] shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call

you the Ministers of our God: [So the dead will be given the priesthood, and priesthood-associated covenant names.] ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

v. 7 For your shame ye shall have double;

In this verse "for" means "in exchange for" – so, "in exchange for your shame ye shall have the double." In the Old Testament, the son who received the birthright received a double portion. If one had five sons, he would divide his property into six portions and give the birthright son the double portion. For example, there was no tribe of Joseph in Israel because Joseph received a double portion, so there were tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. If one was talking about priesthood birthrights, "the double" would be the full birthright blessings of Abraham which were associated with the concluding blessings and covenants of the temple. So this says that not only will the dead have the priesthood, they will also have the birthright blessings of Abraham. The gentiles who will perform those vicarious ordinances will have the same blessing:

and for [in exchange for] confusion they [the gentiles] shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

The gentiles who do the temple work for the dead will also have the birthright blessings of Abraham.

v. 8 For I the Lord love judgment [divine law²¹⁵], I hate robbery for burnt offering;

I suppose that means the sacrifice of a burnt cow won't do any more. Now, even from the dead, the Lord requires the sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit.

and I will direct their [living] work [genealogy and temple work] in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

A covenant with the gentiles – they cannot do temple work for the dead unless they have first done it for themselves.

v. 9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.

So these strangers and gentiles are not aliens at all, but are in fact the descendants of Israel.

At this point in this chapter of Isaiah there is a sudden voice change. Jehovah is no longer talking to the dead about the gentiles who will do the genealogical research and temple work. Instead we hear

²¹⁵ In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, # 4941, suggests a number of meanings for the Hebrew word translated "judgement.". "Divine law" seems to me to be the most likely.

a hymn of thanksgiving spoken or sung by a man and a woman who are dead and who have received those coronation ordinances and blessings. The ceremonies which began in verse 3 with a washing, anointing, clothing, and naming of those who are to become made a part of Zion, now concludes with a marriage ceremony.

v. 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.

and the promise of their ultimate resurrection.

v. 11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Those final words are significant for two reasons. Not only are they a testimony of the resurrection, but they are also about returning to the paradisaical garden where the whole story began.

Here is Isaiah 61 again, for you to read without interruption:

- 1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
- 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
- 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, 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.
- 4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.
- 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.
- 6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

- 7 For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.
- 8 For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
- 9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.
- 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.
- 11 For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

From the Old Testament we learn very little about the ancient coronation ceremonies. However we do know that before Solomon's Temple was built. Saul and David were chosen and anointed by the prophet Samuel. Solomon was anointed by Zadok the priest. Thereafter, Jeroboam was chosen by the prophet Ahijah; and a priest was responsible for making Josiah king. 216 The fact that the kings were anointed and/or chosen by ecclesiastical authority was important because it emphasized that the king was also chosen by God. In the case of Saul and David, their callings were a matter of direct revelation, but in Judah at least, beginning with Solomon, the crown was passed to the birthright son of the reigning king. So the king was no longer chosen by revelation to men on earth, but by right of birth. If God were involved in the choosing, his involvement must have occurred before the prince was born so that the boy's spirit was assigned to be born into the reigning family. That choosing would have taken place at the Council in Heaven. The doctrine of this fore-choosing and a subsequent foreordination was fundamental to both the political philosophy and the theology of ancient Israel. The foreordination of the king was affirmed and represented on the stage during the New Year festival by acting out Psalm 45. There the king-to-be and his queen-to-be received blessings which indicated their royal callings on earth and prepared them for their earthly assignments. Psalm 45 is, so far as I know, the only place in the scriptures where the Mother of Heaven is represented as speaking. Her words, appropriately, are a blessing to her princess daughter who will soon go to the earth and be Israel's queen. (I will discuss Psalm 45 in detail in the next chapters.)

²¹⁶ I Kings 1:39; 1 Kings 11:29-40; 11 Kings 11: 12.

There were probably three coronations represented during the New Year festival. The first was at the Council in Heaven (Psalm 45). The second was probably, when as a young man, the heir apparent was anointed to become king (analogous to Saul and David's first being anointed to become king, before they were actually anointed king). This anointing of the prince to become king may be represented by Psalm 72.²¹⁷ It reads in part,

Give the king thy judgments, O God,

and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

He shall judge thy people with righteousness,
and thy poor with judgment.

The mountains shall bring peace to the people,
and the little hills, by righteousness.

He shall judge the poor of the people,
he shall save the children of the needy,
and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure,
throughout all generations.
He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass:
as showers that water the earth.
In his days shall the righteous flourish;
and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. (Psalms 72:1-7) 218

The third coronation of the king was either performed or reenacted on the 7th day of the Feast of

²¹⁷ For Mowinckel's analysis of the 72 Psalm see: Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 67--70.
218 Traditions survive for many centuries, especially when those traditions help assure the legitimacy of a ruling monarch. For example: Carolly Erickson, *The First Elizabeth* (New York, Summit Books, 1983), p. 20-21 tells the story of the infant baptism and anointing of the first Queen Elizabeth of England.

[&]quot;The christening could hardly have been more elaborate if the child had been the hoped-for prince. The chief nobles, the leading churchmen and the Lord mayor and aldermen stood by as the dowager duchess of Norfolk carried the baby to the church, with Thomas Boleyn behind her bearing the long train of the purple velvet christening mantle. Hangings of cloth of gold and bright tapestries draped the interior of the chapel, and soft thick carpets covered the floor. A heavy scent of incense and perfume filled the air, disguising the strong odor of coals burning in a brazier near the font; the brazier provided warmth for the baby while she was undressed behind a curtain, then handed to the bishop of London who immersed the back of her head and her heels in the holy water. Before her purple mantle was put on again she was anointed on back and breast with the holy oil sacred to royalty, and given her name."

Tabernacles – but the legitimacy of that third coronation was based on the presumed reality of the first one which had taken place at the Council in Heaven. Ultimately the king's earthly authority was established by his foreordination at the Council and his coronation on the earth was a kind of reaffirmation of that coronation. That re-enactment probably occurred in conjunction with the presentation on stage of Psalm 45. If that were so, one may assume that the enactment of Psalm 45 was one of the major events of the festival.

The beginning of Psalm 45 is about the relationship between Jehovah and the member of his Council who was appointed to go to the earth and reign as Israel's earthly king. The psalm contains the best succinct definition of both kingship and queenship that I know of. So, since Abinadi's primary argument the spiritual foundation of king Noah's royal prerogatives, and asserts that all the prophets and all their honest followers are heirs of Jehovah – that they are kings and queens in their own rights – it seems to me that we must carefully go through the 45th psalm to discover what Abinadi was talking about. (I should note here that Abinadi did not use the 45th psalm as part of his argument, but if, as I presume, the psalm was used in the New Year festival to show that the king and queen were chosen in the Council, that psalm certainly would have been an important part of the background of the debate between Abinadi and the priests of Noah. As observed above, in an apostasy religious doctrines which explain and support the ceremonies may change, but ceremonies remain long after the truth of their spiritual significance is forgotten.

PSALM 45:

In ancient Judah, kings were not chosen from among the masses, but kings were the sons of former kings. (That pattern is also evident in the Book of Mormon.²¹⁹) For that reason, in the ancient Near East, the whole question of God's having chosen the new king had to rest upon the notion of his foreordination – the assumption being that the heir apparent was born into the king's family because he had been chosen at the Council to be the son and heir of the reigning king and queen.

During the New Year festival, the foreordination of the king and queen were apparently established by the enactment of Psalm 45. As far as I know, that psalm is not cited in the Book of Mormon so I have no primary evidence that Abinadi knew it. But it's significance to me virtually insists that he did know it, and that Noah and his priests knew it also. Even if an apostate king like Noah diluted the New Year festival drama to redefine its religion, the part he would not have removed would

Even Alma's lineage is made clear to us. When he is introduced to us as a member of king Noah's court, we are told, "But there was one among them whose name was Alma, he also being a descendant of Nephi." (Mosiah 17:2) To me the statement "he *also* being a descendant of Nephi"implies that he had a legal claim to the throne. For that reason I have assumed that Alma was Noah's younger brother. That, I suppose, is the reason, when Noah wished to get rid of him, he chose assassination rather than a public trial. But an even stronger argument is that Alma could not have been made heir to king Mosiah if he had not been of royal blood. Mormon's introduction to the book of Third Nephi seems to make that doubly clear: "Third Nephi, the Book of Nephi, the son of Nephi, who was the son of Helaman. And Helaman was the son of Helaman, who was the son of Alma, being a descendant of Nephi who was the son of Lehi, who came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, the king of Judah."

Mormon identifies himself the same way: "And I, Mormon, being a descendant of Nephi," (Mormon 1:5a) It seems to me that Mormon's statement identifying himself in terms of his own legitimacy as the lawful heir of the first king was important because it established his right to have the plates, as well as his right to lead the people.

have been the dramatization of his own foreordination. So, I believe the ideas in the 45th psalm were fundamental to the thinking of everyone in king Noah's palace when Abinadi was speaking. But even if that were not true, we would still have to examine the psalm very closely because it is the most succinct, but definitive, statement of the Israelite concept of sacral kingship that I can find anywhere in the scriptures.

Psalm 45 is only three scenes of the very long, very complex, multi-act play performed during the Feast of Tabernacles of the New Year's festival. The setting of these scenes of the play is the Council in Heaven. To understand that setting, and the king's role in it, one must first understand the Council. So to provide some of that background, there are a few things we need to read first. One is by the Prophet Joseph.

The first scripture I wish to examine before returning to Psalm 45 is parts of D&C 76. In February 1843, at the request of W. W. Phelps, the Prophet rewrote the Vision which is the 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants in poetry form. It was published in the *Times and* Seasons, February 1, 1843, and republished in the Millennial Star, in August, 1843. At first reading it just seems like Section 76 but worded differently, then one begins to notice major differences. The most striking difference is that section 76 is written in first person plural -"we." It is an account of an experience shared by Joseph and Sidney Rigdon. But the poem is written in first person singular - "I". It is about Joseph's experiences and contains bits of information which elaborate greatly on the D&C version. One could account for those differences by saying that Joseph just included things in the poem which didn't get put in the D&C. Or one might account for the expansions in the poem by suggesting that they are a record of a composite of Joseph's personal experiences, which included, but was not limited to, the vision he shared with Sidney. It appears to me that the latter option is the most probable. 220 If it is, then what we have in this poem is Joseph's personal testimony perhaps a composite of multiple *sode*-like experiences.

Philo Dibble suggested that by the time Joseph and Sidney had the vision which is Section 76, Joseph had enough of these kinds of revelations that he was accustomed to them.

On a subsequent visit to Hiram, I arrived at Father Johnson's just as Joseph and Sidney were coming out of the vision alluded to in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, in which mention is made of the three glories. Joseph wore black clothes, but at this time seemed to be dressed in an element of glorious white, and his face shone as if it were transparent, but I did not see the same glory attending Sidney. Joseph appeared as strong as a lion, but Sidney seemed as weak as water, and Joseph, noticing his condition smiled and said, Brother Sidney is not as used to it as I am." ("Philo Dibble's Narrative" in *Early Scenes in Church History, Faith-Promoting Series, no.* 8 [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 188], p. 81.)

D&C 76

5 For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end. 6 Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

7 And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

8 Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.

Joseph Smith's poetic version

For thus saith the Lord, in the spirit of truth, I am merciful, gracious, and good unto those That fear me, and live for the life that's to come:

My delight is to honour the Saints with repose,

That serve me in righteousness true to the end; Eternal's their glory and great their reward. I'll surely reveal all my myst'ries to them --The great hidden myst'ries in my kingdom stor'd;

From the council in Kolob, to time on the earth,

And for ages to come unto them I will show My pleasure and will, what the kingdom will do

Eternity's wonders they truly shall know.

Great things of the future I'll show unto them, Yea, things of the vast generations to rise; For their wisdom and glory shall be very great, And their pure understanding extend to the skies. 12 By the power of the Spirit our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God——

13 Even those things which were from the beginning before the world was, which were ordained of the Father, through his Only Begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, even from the beginning;

14 Of whom we bear record; and the record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the Son, whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision.

19 And while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about.

20 And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;

21 And saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshiping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever.

22 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! 23 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—24 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.

I, Joseph, the prophet, in spirit beheld, And the eyes of the inner man truly did see Eternity sketch'd in a vision from God, Of what was, and now is, and yet is to be.

Those things which the Father ordained of old, Before the world was or a system had run; Through Jesus, the Maker and Saviour of all-The only begotten (Messiah) his son.

And while I did meditate what it all meant, The Lord touch'd the eyes of my own intellect.

Hosanna, for ever! They open'd anon, And the glory of God shone around where I was;

And there was the Son at the Father's right hand,

In a fulness of glory and holy applause.

I beheld round the throne holy angels and hosts.

And sanctified beings from worlds that have been,

In holiness worshiping God and the Lamb, For ever and ever. Amen and amen.

And now after all of the proofs made of him, By witnesses truly, by whom he was known, This is mine, last of all, that he lives; yea, he lives!

And sits at the right hand of God on his throne.

And I heard a great voice bearing record from heav'n,

He's the Saviour and only begotten of God; By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all

made,

Even all that careen in the heavens so broad.

Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,

Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons

By the very same truths and the very same powers.

There are three especially relevant points made in those extracts from the Prophet's poem:

1) The biography of the Saviour and his position as Creator-God began a very, very long time before the Council.

Those things which the Father ordained of old, Before the world was or a system had run; Through Jesus, the Maker and Saviour of all-The only begotten (Messiah) his son.

- 2) The Council took place on Kolob. Abraham explained that Kolob is nearest the throne of God (3:9-16). On the earth the nearest place to God is the temple, and that has nothing whatever to do with its physical location. To say that a temple is the nearest place on earth to God, says nothing about the geographical location of either the temple or God. Similarly, the Lord's statement to Abraham that "Kolob is the greatest of all the Kokaubeam that thou has seen, because it is nearest unto me," need not be a geographical designation, rather, it may simply mean that Kolob is the temple of the universe, system, or "age" of which we are a part, and as such, it is the nearest place in our universe to God. In either case, it was the place where the Council met before this earth and presumably before any other earth was created. When a prophet has a *sode* experience, he is returned in time and space to Kolob where he meets or sees himself meeting with the Council which was assembled in God's throne room.
- 3) The extent of Jehovah's domain and the powers of the atonement reach forever in time and

space:

By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,
Even all that careen in the heavens so broad.
Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons
By the very same truths and the very same powers.

It may be that both time and space are defined in terms of the system over which Kolob presides. If that is so, then it may be that after all things within this system were created spiritually, the "big bang" put in motion the beginnings of physical creation. In that context, one wonders about this little, seemingly insignificant earth, floating about in space, out here on the edge of a galaxy that is hardly in the center of things. Our earth was, if one reads the book of Abraham as it seems to have been intended, the first of all the worlds created spiritually. And after its physical creation our world became the home of Michael who commanded the forces that defeated Satan in the war in heaven. This earth is the heavenly altar upon which the atonement was performed, and from its physical substance the elements of the Saviour's celestial body were refined. There are so many things to wonder about, and so many things one does not know!

There is one more question about the *sode* experience that needs to be addressed. "If it is so important, why is it reserved for only the prophets?" I have two answers which I suspect are probably valid: 1) Prophets need to know. The Old Testament idea that a prophet cannot presume to know how to direct the affairs of the people of his time unless he knows the plans and purposes of the gods, seems very reasonable to me. 2) If others of us had that kind of experience it would probably defeat the very purposes of our lives. For example: How could one learn to

love in this environment that is so in conducive to hate and greed, if one could remember the world from which we came? How could one choose between the values of the abilities and talents which he might develop in this world, if he could remember the abilities and talents he had already perfected in the world before? How could one limit oneself to the fulfillment to what might appear to be a relatively insignificant assignment in this world, if he had a full recollection of his capacitydo to so much more? How could the lame rejoice in walking, if crippled by the memory that he could once move through both time and space? I suspect that unless one is perfectly in tune with his own reality, this earth experience would be an unbearable frustration and a waste of time and effort if it were encumbered by a reminiscence of one's eternal past. Through the atonement, our pre-mortal mistakes do not come with us into this life as to hobble our progression here. Similarly, because of the veil which separates our earthly experience from our eternal memory, we are not diverted from the significance of our missions here by the taunting shadow of the greater things we once had the power to do. Consequently, I believe, while it is exceedingly important that the prophets have a *sode* experience, it is equally important that the great majority of us do not.

Psalm 82

The other scripture I wish to examine in conjunction with Psalm 45 is Psalm 82. It was a scene in the same play as Psalm 45, and also takes place in the throne room of the celestial temple. The occasion represents the time when Elohim met with the members of the Council – when "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods." To "judge" means the

same in our language as in Hebrew: i.e. it may mean to condemn, or it may mean to justify, or to choose (like in an apple pie contest). The story is familiar to us because of the Abraham account which reports, "God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers..." (Abraham 3:23a) They are the same story, except in the psalm we find more detail than we do in Abraham. In fact, one can drop the 82nd psalm into the Book of Abraham at that point without breaking the rhythm of the Abraham account. (I'll show you that later on.) Lets first read the psalm, then analyze it.

Like Psalm 45, 82 is introduced by a narrator (or a chorus, as in a Greek play.) In the first verse, the narrator or chorus describes what is happening, then Elohim speaks to the members of the Council, then, in the last verse, the Council responds. In my imagination, I am not sure how this was presented, but it seems like there are two likely possibilities. Either there were persons on the stage who represented the Council, or else the audience represented the Council. In the latter case it would have been the audience who made the covenant in verse 8.

The 82nd psalm reads:

Introduction by the narrator or chorus:

1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

Instructions given by Elohim:

- 2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?
- 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
- 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
- 5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
- 6 I have said, Ye are gods;

and all of you are children of the most High.7 But ye shall die like men,and fall like one of the princes.

The members of the Council respond by making a covenant with Elohim:

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

Now let's look at it more carefully. In the first verse of Psalm 82, our narrator is on stage again explaining what is happening.

1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

The Hebrew word here translated "God" is Elohim, who is the Father of the gods who are the members of the Council. They are called the noble and great ones in Abraham 3, and "the gods" in Abraham 4 and 5.

After the narrator's introduction, the Father of the gods gives his sons instructions about how they are to conduct themselves when they go to the earth. He begins by warning them of a major danger they will face when they come go down to this world. As children, they will grow up in societies where they will be taught to pay homage to wealthy and powerful people. Human cultures teach that prestige, money, education, and fancy toys are evidence that one is in good with God. He warns them that they must shake off that teaching before they can fulfill their priesthood assignments.

2. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?

The language implies they have already judged unrighteously, but if, as I believe, this was

instructions about how they are to conduct themselves in this world, then implicitly what it says is this: "When you get to that earth your culture will teach you that you should judge people by the correctness of their speech, their wealth, and education, but you must learn that is not the way to judge." If this psalm was a part of a stage presentation, and represented instructions given at the Council in Heaven, then, for the audience, it would have been a symbolic *sode* experience. In that case the question, "How long will ye judge unjustly," may have been designed to evoke a response like Isaiah's "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." (Isaiah 6:5) As I will discuss in detail below, to be a righteous judge is the greatest power and most lasting obligation of sacral kingship. These members of the Council were kings already – they are called "rulers" and "gods." But when they get to the earth they will be as vulnerable as everyone else that worldly values will get in the way of their righteous judgements. In addition to the warning about how not to judge, the Father instructs his sons that they must judge in mercy, kindness, charity. Those are the things everyone must do, but for the gods, no matter what other specific individual assignment they might have, to judge righteously is the most important of all.

3-4. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

After the instructions came the reason: the gods will be expected to be spiritual and political anchors to the people, and as such they must first of all be servants. Like everyone else on the earth, the people whom they serve will have forgotten their glorious past in the pre-mortal world. They will stumble in the darkness of forgetfulness, and some will deeply resent the help the noble and great ones seek to give. But that resentment will not excuse the gods from doing their duty. The people on earth must be helped – but not just helped – helped with great compassion.

The Father reminds his sons,

5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

Being one whose primary function is to show compassion can be scarey – in fact it can be really dangerous. Elohim reminds his sons that in our world they will be subjected to persecution – even death – but their suffering those things may be an integral part of their assignment. They are gods, but they will all die: some will use up their lives in the service to others; while others, like Abinadi and the Prophet Joseph, will die like princes in battle, sealing their testimonies with their own blood.

6-7 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

At this point in the play on the great stage on the hill near Jerusalem, those representing the Council respond. They invite their Father to stand as a token of the covenant they are about to make.²²¹ Then, in unison they each swear to fulfill his own assignment in order that the Father's purposes may be accomplished among all people. They say,

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

It is possible, perhaps probable, that speaking those covenant words was not limited to the people who represented the members of the Council on stage. There is no sure evidence, of course, but it seems likely that the people in the congregation who were participating rather than just watching, also spoke the last words of the psalm. If so, that covenant would have been made between God

For an example of the practice of standing to make covenant see 2 Kings 23:1-3.

and every individual man – perhaps every individual person – in the congregation.

In review, here is the 82nd psalm.

The narrator speaks:

1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

Elohim speaks:

- 2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?
- 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
- 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
- 5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
- 6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.
- 7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

The members of the Council respond:

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

The contextual stage setting of Psalm 45 is the same as the setting of Abraham 3 and Psalm 82, only it focuses only on the roles of the man and his wife who have been chosen to go to the earth and reign as king and queen in Israel or Judah.

The 45th psalm is presented as a mini-play in three scenes. The setting is in the throne rooms on Kolob before this world was created. The key to reading the psalm is in the fact that it is written as a play that was intended to be performed on a stage. However, reading it is a bit like trying to read Hamlet without any of the stage directions, that is, using only what is said to try to figure out who is speaking and what is happening on the stage. But with a little thought one can sort that out. Let me show you how. As you visualize the play, remember that the then reigning king of Israel – David, Solomon, Hezekiah, king Noah, or whomever – plays the part of himself as a prince in the Council of Heaven, and his wife, the queen, plays the part of the princess who is being betrothed to him.

The first scene, on one side of the stage, takes place in Elohim's throne room – the Holy of Holies in the temple on Kolob. On this side of the stage are Elohim, Jehovah, and the man who is to go to the earth to become the mortal king of Israel – the one whose character is played by the living king himself. That is important because this is the story of his own foreordination. In our psalm, no other member of the Council is mentioned as being present on the stage, but given the importance of the events described, some people representing the other members of the Council would also have been there – or else – and this seems to me to be more probable – or else it was understood that all the men in the audience represented the members of the Council. In that case, just as the original members of the Council would have watched and borne witness to these events as they actually happened in the pre-mortal world, now the audience of the play – in theory, the whole nation – watched and could testify to the re-enactment of those events and of the foreordination of their king. It also seems very probable that in the audience – the

initiated on earth, now acting as the Council in Heaven – that each individual also understood that what was happening on the stage to their king and queen was also a representation of what had happened to his subjects as well – was symbolic of one's own individual foreordination before the Council. (I'll show evidence of that as we get into the play itself.)

Scene 2 takes place on the other side of the stage in women's quarters, probably in the Queen's reception hall. There were other women on the stage in addition to the women who played the Mother- Queen of Heaven and princess who is being betrothed to the prince. (Her part was played by the real queen just as the part of the prince was played by the real king.) However, if the men in the audience represented the members of the Council, then the women in the audience would have been symbolically in the Queen's entourage as well.

Scene 3 begins on the women's side of the stage. Then the narrator describes to us how they walk across the stage and join the men in Elohim's throne room.

The list of characters:

Elohim, who, in pre-exilic Israelite theology, is the Father of the gods.

Elohim's wife, who is identified as the Queen dressed in gold.

Jehovah, who, in pre-exilic Israelite theology, is the President of the Council of the gods, and the eternal King of Israel.

The prince who is being appointed to be a reigning king in earthly Israel, and who is being betrothed to a princess. As mentioned, the part of this prince is played by the then-reigning king, so these scenes of the play are intended to represent his foreordination at the Council.

The princess who is being appointed to be a reigning queen in earthly Israel, and who is being betrothed to a prince. The part of the princess is played by the then-reigning queen, so these scenes of the play are intended to represent her foreordination also.

Since the text does not identify the speakers in the play, let me give you a quick overview of the play, demonstrating how one may know who the speakers are.

Please remember that the following interpretation of Psalm 45 is as much a product of my imagination as of my scholarship. I do not read Hebrew and am dependent on the English translators of the King James Version for what I read in this psalm. The idea that the psalm was a play performed on the stage is my own; I am aware of no Old Testament scholar who has presented that as a valid interpretation. By now, I have read the psalm this way for so long that I no longer remember whether it first appealed to me because it taught me so many things, or because it was a way of confirming things I already believed. In either case, I do not pretend what I am about to write is "eternal truth," but I like it well enough that I am willing to admit that if this isn't the way the psalm should be interpreted, I think it ought to be. I should also point out that the official Jewish English translation of this psalm is written in such a way that it does not support the idea that the psalm was intended to be enacted on the stage. ²²² In short, I cannot prove that my interpretation is correct, so I'm not going to try. But for what it's worth, here it is

Scene 1

Verses 1-2: In Psalm 45, like in the 82nd Psalm, a narrator or chorus directs the audience's

²²² Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text (Philadelphia, Jerusalem, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.)

attention to different parts of the stage and explains what is going on. He is the first to speak. He addresses the audience and then concludes with "therefore God has blessed thee forever."

The next voice we hear, verses 3-5, is that of Elohim who gives the promised blessing to the prince.

Verses 6-8 begin, "Thy throne, O God..." so that is a new voice. The prince is addressing first Elohim then Jehovah. We can know he is speaking to Jehovah because the prince says: "therefore God, thy God [Elohim is Jehovah's God], hath anointed thee [Jehovah]..."

Scene 2

In verse 9 the narrator speaks again. This time he directs the attention of the audience to the other side of the stage where the "king's [Elohim's] daughters are among thy honorable women," and where the Queen (Elohim's wife) stands dressed in gold.

In verses 10-12 the Queen speaks. We know it is she because her words begin: "Harken, O daughter..." (It can't be Elohim talking to his daughter because he is still on the men's side of the stage) The Queen gives a blessing to the princess who is being betrothed to the prince. That is, so far as I know, the only place in the scriptures where the Mother in Heaven is represented as speaking. Appropriately, what she says is a blessing to her daughter.

Scene 3

In verses 13-15 the narrator speaks again, and describes what is happening on stage. The women leave the Women's Court, cross the stage, and "enter the king's palace."

Verses 16 and 17 appear to be an additional blessing to the prince. It is about family, and it was probably important that the blessing was given while the princess was present.

So the full text of the psalm looks like this:

Scene 1.

The narrator speaks, directing our attention to the men's side of the stage:

- 1 My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king [the earthly king]: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.
- 2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

The blessing which Elohim gives to the prince:

- 3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.
- 4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
- 5 Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

The prince addresses Elohim:

6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.

The prince addresses Jehovah:

- 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
- 8 All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

Scene 2.

The narrator calls attention to the other side of the stage where Elohim's wife, daughters, and other women are.

9 The king's daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

The blessing given by the Mother to her daughter:

- 10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;
- 11 So shall the king [earthly king] greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.
- 12 And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

Scene 3.

The narrator tells us the women are crossing the stage to Elohim's throne room:

- 13 The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.
- 14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.
- 15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

Elohim's blessing to the king.

- 16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.
- 17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

Now let us examine the play in considerable detail.

The narrator has two functions. First, he tells what is happening on the stage – in this his role is the same as the chorus in a Greek play. Second, he is the official recorder of the proceedings of the Council.

Verse 1: My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

The narrator has identified himself to the audience as the spokesman and scribe who will keep the record of these events – there had to be a record, for this was a legal matter of the utmost importance. Then the narrator turns to the prince – the Israelite king who is playing the part of himself as a member of the Council – and says,

2a. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips:

An ordinance seems to have been just performed which may have included his drinking something. This ordinance may have involved only the prince or the entire audience may have participated—there are no stage directions that say. It is apparent that prior to the prince's blessing, Jehovah had just been anointed King (evidence of that is given in the next few verses), so it is possible that their drinking something was a covenant-related ordinance by which all of the members of the Council (that would be both the prince and the members of the audience) acknowledged Jehovah as King and Messiah.

That is one interpretation, but there may be a better one.

There is also the possibility that the words, "grace is poured into thy lips," did not refer to drinking at all. It may have been an ordinance of a different kind. Let me give you some examples of what I mean. There was an ordinance performed at the Council, whereby the servants of God were given the words which they were to speak when they come to represent God on the earth. That ordinance is described in several different ways.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and

it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. (Revelation 10:1-9)

That passage is explained by the Prophet Joseph this way:

Q. What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the 10th chapter of Revelation? A. We are to understand that it was a mission, and an ordinance, for him to gather the tribes of Israel... (D&C 77:14)

It is apparent that the person who gave John the little book was the Saviour, just as it is apparent that the Saviour gave a similar book to Lehi.

....the first came and stood before my father, and gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read. And it came to pass that as he read, he was filled with the Spirit of the Lord. (I Ne. 1:11-12)

Like John, Ezekiel was shown a book and asked to eat it.

And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll [scroll], and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll." (Ezekiel 2:9 - 3:2) Jeremiah gave a different account of the ordinance. He wrote,

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." (Jeremiah 1:9)
Isaiah also wrote of his lips being touched, but he represents it as a spot of light.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. "(Isaiah 6:6-8)

So it may be that the phrase in Psalm 45, "grace is poured into thy lips," is a reference to "a mission, and an ordinance" representing the words he was to teach, and which was a specific assignment to the prince to represent God as his servant upon the earth. If the audience symbolically received the same ordinances they saw the king receive, then each person in the audience was symbolically given an assignment which they were to perform on the earth. (In our time, we can go to our patriarchal blessings to discover a great deal about our individual assignments. I wonder if they might have had something similar to that?)

The narrator continues his address to the prince:

2b. therefore [That is, because you accepted this ordinance] God hath blessed thee for ever.

The blessing given to the king by Elohim

What follows is one of the most amazing blessings ever recorded. It is only three short verses, but it is an almost definitive statement of the nature of sacral kingship and of the king's priesthood.

- 3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.
- 4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
- 5 Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

That blessing incorporates into its few words every important concept of sacral kingship and priesthood – except one – the blessing of a righteous posterity. That blessing is reserved to the end of the psalm where it is given by Elohim in the presence of the princess who is betrothed to the prince.

It is now time for another long diversion from our main subject. I wish to discuss the nature of sacral kingship and priesthood, as it is defined in those three verses. After that, we will return to the place where the blessing is given to the prince. This diversion is necessary because many of the words of the blessing must be defined in order to understand the impact of the blessing itself.

In ancient Israel, to be "king" is to be chief executive, legislature, commander-in-chief on the one hand, and High Priest and chief judge on the other. "A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment."(Proverbs 16:10) As chief priest and judge, it is also his duty to be the primary expert and teacher of both the law and the theology. Those roles are frequently given separate names. "King" often refers to his duties as governmental leader, while "priest" refers to his ecclesiastical roles as teacher and judge.

As king and priest, his primary functions were two. 1) As "king" he was the defender and protector of his people. That meant he must assure there was peace and prosperity at home by making just and equitable laws, and through the use of police powers. In international affairs, he must represent his people to leaders of other nations, and if negotiation failed, he must be the commanding general of their armies. 2) As priest, he was the ecclesiastical head of the kingdom, as such, he was the chief judge. (In LDS terms it might be useful to think of "judge" as a bishop in pioneer Utah. In those days the bishop not only presided over the church as "the common judge in Israel," but he also frequently was called on to settle civil disputes among his neighbors.) As "priest," the king was also responsible for making sure the people understood the law and the religion, so he was also the nation's teacher. It is significant that when the Lord promised Nephi he would be a king and a priest, the words he used were "thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over thy brethren." (1 Nephi 2:222) Mowinckel wrote,

Thus the king is the saviour to whom the people look for salvation, both in the negative sense of deliverance from enemies, danger, and need, and in the widest positive sense of good fortune and well-being.²²³

There was no place in the theory of Israelite kingship for a tyrant, as Mowinckel further observed.

Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 69. Moshe Weinfeld, "The King as the Servant of the People: The Source of the Idea," Journal of Jewish Studies, v. 33, ns. 1-2, 1982, p. 189 - 194.

The king did not receive his office in order to exalt himself, to act arrogantly, to emulate the grandeur of great despots, or to oppress his fellow-countrymen (his 'neighbors'), but in order to prove by his actions that he 'knew Yahweh'.²²⁴

The king's position as judge and religious leader was not just theoretical. In the Old Testament, as in the Book of Mormon, there was only a fine, sometimes invisible, line between who was king and who was prophet. Saul assumed he could preside over the army's sacrifices contrary to Samuel's instructions. ²²⁵ Van Dam shows that David used the Urim and Thummim. ²²⁶ The "wisdom" Solomon sought from the Lord was the understanding to know how to judge his people in righteousness. Both Solomon and Hezekiah saw the Saviour (2 Chron. 1:7-12, Isaiah 38. ²²⁷). In the Book of Mormon, Nephi, Benjamin, Mosiah all fit the ideal Old Testament pattern. ²²⁸ The

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "all the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God himself." Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), p. 181. Rather than assuming the Prophet was referring to a *sode* experience, or making a reference to a pre-mortal ordination at the Council, Joseph Fielding Smith took the Prophet's statement to mean that the reason God ordained

²²⁴ Sigmund Mowinckel, *He that Cometh* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), 92.

²²⁵ Samuel 12:1-35.

For a discussion of the use of the Urim and Thummim by kings and prophets of the Old Testament see, Cornelis Van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim, A Means of Revelation in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Indiana, Eisenbrauns, 1997), p. 187-88, 247-250, 266-69.

The account does not actually say Hezekiah saw Jehovah. There is a first person account purportedly written by the king himself, in which he says that when he was ill, and expected to die. "I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living." He did not want to die at that time, and the reason seems to be that he wanted to see the Saviour before his death. The Lord heard his prayer and Isaiah promised him that he could live another 15 years. After that Hezekiah wrote, "What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it...for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." (Isaiah 38: 11, 15, 17) That last statement is the kind of assertion that is often associated with a *sode* experience.

There is an interesting problem here that I am not sure how to resolve. The Doctrine and Covenants says that Moses and the Melchizedek Priesthood were taken from Israel but that the lesser priesthood continued until the time of John.(see D&C 84:25-27) However there is abundant evidence that during part of that time (from David to Lehi) there was a significant number of people who had the Melchizedek Priesthood. The New Year festival endowment/enthronement ceremonies suggest that there may have been a window of time when a majority of the people had those temple blessings. If Solomon and Hezekiah saw God, then they must have had the Melchizedek priesthood. (D&C 84:19-22) Hezekiah was a friend of Isaiah, who also saw God – so there are at least two contemporaries who had the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Temple at Jerusalem was next to the king's palace, and some have suggested it may have been used by the kings as a royal chapel. An evidence that the king was the presiding High Priest is that when Hezekiah received a letter from the Assyrian king threatening to invade Israel, he walked into the temple, took the letter into the Holy of Holies, "spread it before the Lord," and essentially said, "Read that and tell me what I am supposed to do about it." It is also important to note that when Hezekiah was so sick he thought he was going to die, it was Isaiah through whom the Lord answered the king's prayer. That is an important story because it shows that while we know many things about the Old Testament religion, there are many things we do not know about the relationship between the king and the prophet, and how the church was organized. ²³⁰ Them was that there was no living human who had the authority to do so. He wrote:

Let us not lose sight of the fact that all through the history of Israel until the coming of our Redeemer, the blessings of the Holy Priesthood were restricted. It was not given universally to the tribes, but of necessity there had to be some faithful men upon whom the Melchizedek Priesthood was conferred. All of the prophets held the Melchizedek Priesthood, but the Prophet Joseph Smith has informed us that in each case it was by special divine appointment. There was never a time in Israel when there was not a prophet with divine authority with power to confirm and perform other ordinances. . . . So other prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah. Ezekiel, and Daniel were blessed with the Melchizedek Priesthood. They could officiate among the people, but there was no universal bestowal of authority among the tribes, from the time of the entrance of Israel into the promised land, until the coming of our Savior. When he came, the fulness of the gospel and of divine authority was restored." *Answers to Gospel Questions.*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1979), 4:159-160.

D&C 124:36-40 says the Nauvoo temple was to be built so the people could have the same ordinances that were performed in Moses' Tabernacle and in the Temple at Jerusalem. Those ordinances would have required that the participants have the Melchizedek priesthood. But however long in time that window of priesthood ordinances and covenants may have been, it is clear that the Jewish apostasy that preceded the Babylonian captivity, and the even more complete apostasy that followed it, brought an end to both the temple ordinances and to the people's holding the priesthood that was requisite to those ordinances.

229 2 Kings 19: 14-19. The way I wrote it is a far cry from being an actual quote!

Seven hundred years later, in Jesus' time, tradition says that only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies. But by then there was no Jewish king and the High Priests had assumed much of the authority of the pre-exilic kings.

230 Except for a number of references to a group of people who are called "the prophets," there

One thing we do know is that the king's paramount ecclesiastical duty was to preside over his nation as its righteous teacher and judge. Solomon understood this.

7 In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

8 And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

9 Now, O Lord God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.

10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?

11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

12 Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like. (2 Chronicles 1: 7-12)

A judge upholds his society and helps it function peacefully. To do that the judge has four primary responsibilities: 1) He may find guilty, condemn, and punish those who do wrong. 2) He may exonerate or justify those who are wrongfully accused. When one is found "not guilty,' that judgement removes both the accusation and the stigma of the supposed crime. 3) He acknowledges, commends, and sometimes rewards, those who do right. He is an arbitrator; he chooses among options and sometimes decides what actions others will perform. 4) His authority is the umbrella under which the society functions. With that authority he both reinstates and

is no evidence of an organized church in the Old Testament. However, Nephi's comment when he was pretending to be Laban, that Zoram "supposing that I spake of the brethren of the church," (1 Nephi 4:26) supports the proposition that there was such an organization, at least at the end of the First Temple period.

sustains the innocent who have been accused; and with his authority he provides the environment which protects those who do right. A righteous – even an honorable society – can only exist if its judiciary is independent and free of bribes and corruption. In America, for example, the independent and powerful legal system, more than any other of our other institutions, has been responsible for preserving our freedom. In the ancient world, where the king was the supreme court, the integrity of the whole society rested upon the integrity of the king.

That two-fold nature of kingship – to be king/protector and priest/teacher/judge – was as true of the King Jehovah as it was true of the earthly king. Jehovah had covenant name-titles which represented those responsibilities. For example, as commanding general he was "Lord of Hosts," that simply meant "master of the armies." As High Priest, he had a number of names including El Elyon (the Most High God), the God of Abraham, the Eternal Judge, the Saviour, the Redeemer, the advocate with the Father. As the deliverer of Israel and teacher of Moses, he was I AM, – the One who is sufficient unto himself – in that name-title he is both King and Priest.

In the end of time, when all the enemies of good are defeated, I suppose Jehovah's role as commanding general will become inoperative, but his functions as Judge – to uphold the righteous – will remain forever. Similarly, even though the earthly king's military duties might be temporarily central for the preservation of his nation, they were ultimately tentative. But his duties as judge remained constant. Abinadi suggests that when a king is brought before Jehovah to be judged it will be on his worthiness in his role as a judge. In terms of the ultimate meaning of this life, being a righteous judge may be the most fundamental principle of all. One finds it in the 82 nd Psalm where it is explained as the reason the members of the Council are to be sent to the earth; in

the Beatitudes where it is called "mercy"; in Moroni 7 it is called "charity"; in the D&C and elsewhere it is called "the Law of Consecration"; and in section 76 it is called being "just" in a context that describes it as the primary characteristic of the resurrected gods. ²³¹

A good way to understand mercy is to liken it to the Law of Consecration. The Law of Consecration is not about giving or receiving, just as mercy is not about patting someone on the head, or letting them off the hook this time. Both are a simple acknowledgment of truth – of reality. I will talk about the Law of Consecration and leave it to you to apply its principles to the Laws of Mercy. There is a giver and a receiver, but the Law of Consecration cannot be about giving or receiving, because it cannot be about subservience, superiority, or indebtedness. It is about acknowledging and filling honest needs. The need may cost the giver his substance or his time, but what it costs is never determined by the generosity of the giver: it is always – and only – determined by the needs of the recipient. The widow may accept the neighbor's offer to mow her lawn, then she may sit beside a stranger in the park and just listen because the stranger's soul hurts and needs to weep. In the Law of Consecration all give and all receive – and no one keeps track. There is a story told in the diary of a Mormon Pioneer in Spring Valley, Nevada. That winter the Saints had suffered a great deal from sickness and hunger.

One of my children came in, said that Brother Newton Hall's folks were out of bread. Had none that day. I put . . . our flour in sack to send up to Brother Hall's. Just then Brother Hall came in. Says I, "Brother Hall, how are you out for flour." "Brother Millett, we have none." "Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you were out." Brother Hall began to cry. Said he had tried others. Could not get any. Went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett. "Well, Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back if the Lord sent you for it. You don't owe me for it." You can't tell how good it made me feel to know

²³¹ The verses I have in mind were 76:50-70. They contain almost every idea of sacral kingship and priesthood that is found elsewhere in the scriptures. I will quote them as a conclusion to my discussion of Psalm 45.

That has long been one of my favorite stories. I told it once when I was teaching Education Week in Arizona. Afterward a young couple came up and introduce themselves to me. He was a descendant of Joseph Millett and his wife was a descendant of the Brother Hall who had received the flour. So now the families are sealed together. That seems to me to be the perfect ending to the story – and one might rightly ask: Who received the greater blessing, Brother Hall or Brother Millett?

The qualities of Kingship in Psalm 45

Now, after all that diversion, let us return to the 45th psalm where Elohim is giving a blessing to the prince. The blessing emphasizes both aspects of sacral kingship: to be king and priest – defender and judge. The blessing begins by calling attention to his duties as king – as protector of the homeland against international threats: diplomatic leader and military commander.

3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

That is an obvious reference to his role as a military leader, and to preparation for war. The king's earthly wars were considered to be holy wars where the struggles between Israel and non-Israel on earth were lesser versions of simultaneous struggles between good and evil – cosmos and chaos. The king's role as military leader was, from a practical point of view, very important and many of the Psalms speak of it. However, it has little to do with our discussion of Abinadi, except to note

²³² Quoted in Eugene England, "The Dawning of a Brighter Day: Mormon Literature After 150 Years" (*BYU Studies*, vol. 22, 1982), Number 1 - Fall 1982.)

that Abinadi prophesied the downfall of Noah's kingdom, and the priests flattered the king that he was militarily invincible.²³³

But the verse is about more than military prowess. To understand what it says, one must also ask: "In the sentence, 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty,' what does 'with thy glory' mean? and what was 'thy majesty'?"

Perhaps the easiest way to address those questions is to talk about "majesty" first, then come back and see how "glory" fits into the pattern.

The next verse also uses the word "majesty." It begins, "In thy majesty ride prosperously..." Both verses seem to suggest that "majesty" does not mean the dignity of his office, but rather that the word refers to something the king is actually wearing. That idea would be consistent with others in the Old Testament, where the word "majesty" sometimes refers to sacred clothing. Here are three examples:

In Psalm 93 "majesty" seems to refer to royal garments which Jehovah wore. Its use of the phrase, "established of old" is apparently a reference to the pre-mortal existence; and "the world also is stablished" is a reference to the creation, so we may assume that the context in which this clothing is described is the Heavenly Council. The first two verses of that psalm read:

²³³ For discussions of the king's duties as a military leader see: Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958), 205; 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. 87-90; Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, "Fighting the Powers of Chaos and Hell -- Towards the Biblical Portrait of God," in *Studia Theologica* (39, no. 1, 1985), 21-38.

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The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty;

the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself:

the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

Thy throne is established of old:

thou art from everlasting.

Notice there are two: he is clothed with majesty and with strength.²³⁴

Psalm 104 also speaks of Jehovah being "clothed with honour and majesty." and this is also spoken

in connection with the creation, when God "stretchest out the heavens like a curtain." Jehovah's

garment is described the same way Adam's was before the fall - a garment of light. The first two

verses of that psalm read:

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great;

thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment:

who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: (Psalm 104:1-2)

Again there are two: honor and majesty.

The third example is at the conclusion of the book of Job. As Job approaches the veil, he is told

that he must put on royal garments before he can know the answer to God's final question. The

Lord's instructions to Job are: "Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency: and array thyself

with glory and beauty."²³⁵ After giving final instructions about the necessity of being a righteous

judge, the Lord adds, "Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee."

(Job 40: 10-14) This time the two articles of clothing are apparently described twice: "majesty and

I am aware that Hebrew poetry sometimes employs repetition, but I am also aware that some

places in Isaiah and the Psalms can best be understood as the expression of two similar and parallel ideas, and not repetition of the same idea. Probably the most generally accepted example among

members of the Church is from Isaiah 2:3. "...for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word

of the Lord from Jerusalem." I believe these descriptions of royal clothing are examples like that.

235 In this example there is repetition of the same idea, but both parts of the doublet contain two items of clothing.

excellency," and "glory and beauty." The important thing is that there are always two articles of clothing, and they both seem to represent royal or priestly authority, and with rare exceptions, they are always worn together. In the Doctrine and Covenants, two, "perfectness and peace," are joined together as "charity."

125 And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.

126 Pray always, that ye may not faint, until I come. Behold, and lo, I will come quickly, and receive you unto myself. Amen. (D&C 88:125-126)

Returning to the words in Psalm 45:3. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty." It would be consistent with the pattern if "glory and majesty" referred to the sacred clothing which represented his kingship and priesthood.

The next verse (Psalm 45:4) condenses to 6 simple ideas all that ever has to be said about the priestly functions of a sacral king. The verse reads:

4. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

The first idea, "in thy majesty," is about wearing sacred clothing. That is important. It symbolizes the garment of light worn by Jehovah and once worn by Adam, who was the first king. If a king or priest cannot now wear such a garment, then he must wear one which symbolizes the ultimate restoration of that garment of light.

To examine the other qualities of kingship, I would like to rearrange the sentence without changing its meaning, then discuss its ideas as they appear in the new arrangement. As the verse is written, the king's riding prosperously was the consequence of his already having truth, meekness and

The clothing described in the Hymn of the Pearl is another example.

righteousness, so I will just put that idea at the beginning rather than in the middle. The new arrangement would read, "because of truth and meekness and righteousness, ride prosperously in thy majesty, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible [awesome, wonderful] things."

I arranged it that way to emphasize that the criteria for one's riding prosperously are truth, meekness, and righteousness; and the consequence is learning awesome things by using one's own right hand. The words which constitute that blessing are overflowing with meaning – so much so that it will require a major diversion to adequately discuss each one of the ideas separately. So lets begin, and discuss those three criteria one at a time.

Defining sacral kingship in terms of the blessing given to the king in Psalm 45:4.

The meaning of Truth

I take it that "truth" meant then the same thing then that it means now, so the definitions in the D&C would be as valid then as they are now. In Section 93 the Lord has given us two apparently conflicting, but in fact infinitely insightful definitions of "truth."

Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come. (D&C 93:24)

And

All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.(D&C 93:30)

In the first, truth is not "things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." Rather truth is *one's knowledge of* "things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." So truth is

defined, not as all reality, but as that portion of reality that one knows. In that context, the definition of the Saviour's godhood is that he "received a fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth." (D&C 93:26b) The concept that truth is the part of reality that one knows strikes me as being incredibly simple, yet absolutely profound. One can have a great deal of what this world calls knowledge without having much truth at all. Indeed, most of what one learns in this world is not truth. Science is the study of pragmatic theory. Science can teach us what works, sometimes one can observe how it works, but rarely can one understand the more fundamental question of why it works History is the study of snippets of the past which are filtered then rearranged in the mind of an historian who may or may not admit his biases. At worst history is a covert distortion of the past in order to make a point about the present; at best history can only approximate the way things were. Literature and art are the study of how words or form and color may be used to convey ideas and emotions. Arithmetic and mathematics seem to come nearer truth, but numbers can be juggled to misrepresent reality as easily as words can. Knowing things like science, history, and literature can be very important for making one's life easier, richer, and more enjoyable, but the realities of this world are so tentative, ephemeral, ²³⁷ and culturally oriented that people's perception of their relative truth changes with every generation – or even more frequently than that! It seems to be increasingly so in our well educated society that we are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 3:7)

We are so accommodated to living in a world of approximations that even the notion that one

²³⁷ Ephemeral is a good word. I learned it in the library where it refers to published material that is meant to be thrown away. For example a paper that is tacked onto a telephone pole advertising a high school play. Its value ceases to be after the play is over, and no one cares if it is blown off by the wind, dumped into the gutter by the rain, or tossed into someone's garbage when it litters his yard. "Ephemeral" describes the permanence of most of the things in this world that we so diligently purchase with our time, and with physical and emotional energy.

might somehow be able to grasp an absolute, non-relative, unchanging bit of reality is awesome to contemplate. Yet, that is how the Lord defined "truth" – truth is a knowledge of reality, past, present, and future.

From the statement, "All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself...." one may gather that not *all* truth is available in *all* spheres of existence, but in each sphere where some truth is available it is independent of all external disregard or disbelief. For example, in our world the laws of physics and chemistry work whether humans have any understanding of them or not. The same holds with moral and religious truths: some things bring happiness, others bring sorrow. Social norms or cultural morality may seek to invalidate moral or religious truths, but cannot change them or their consequences. The truths are there, whether or not an individual or an entire human culture neglects, or denies them. Truth is independent – it is *thee constant*. Humans may conform to, or violate its principles, but whether for good or evil, they cannot change it.

Philosophically, one may question whether it is ever possible to have a knowledge of absolute reality. Certainly our minds cannot reach that far now – but with the help of the Spirit, it is possible to latch onto some portion of absolute reality, and knowledge of even a portion of such "truth" is the foundation Rock on which one can build one's entire life.

Ultimately, the Saviour is that Rock. He explained himself to Joseph Smith by saying,

26 The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth, and John bore record of me, saying: He received a fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth;

27 And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments.

28 He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things. (D&C 93:26-28)

One's knowing the Saviour is knowing one has eternal life. Lehi expressed that truth:

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

In that instance knowledge is truth, and the truth is in the knowing.

Human life is so multifaceted – physical and chemical interactions in a living organism so labyrinthine and interactive – mental and spiritual actions and reactions so complex and constantly changing that one would have to have a simultaneous grasp of all the interplay of all those facets of one's life in order to comprehend the reality of only one person for only one given moment. From our perspective in this world, such a knowledge of even oneself is impossible: the greatest and most relevant mystery in the universe for each one of us is the answer to three questions: "Who am I?" "What am I?" and "Why am I?" The most important truth one can know is the answers to those questions, and yet they sometimes seem entirely beyond our reach. Yet, there is a way available to each one of us: The Saviour said that one of the functions of the Holy Ghost is to "bring all things to your remembrance." (John 14:25-26) I presume that high on the list of those "all things" is a knowledge of who one is, what one's assignment was, and in what way one should serve others. One receives an ever-widening understanding of one's own reality as one listens to the Spirit. The Holy Ghost will open to one's understanding: personal insights on the scriptures, the meanings of one's own Patriarchal Blessing, and the significance of personal experiences – even negative experiences. Through the tutelage of the Spirit one can know who one is, why one is here, and what one must do to fulfill the covenants made at the Council.

I suppose their being out of our reach is a necessary part of our being here. Let me try to explain. Sometime between 10 and 20 billion years ago, there was a big bang which marked the beginning of physical creation. Somewhere in time, long before that, there may have been another big bang to mark the beginning of spiritual creation – all things were created spiritually in preparation for their being created physically. We were there! We have been around for a long, long time. And in the course of that time we developed full and powerful personalities. We chose between good and evil, and a third of us chose to follow Satan, while the other two thirds of us chose to come to this (or another) earth. When we came, we came as innocent babies without any of the baggage that represented our former experiments when we sought to discover the relative advantages of good and evil. Our sins were wiped away by the atonement, and we were clean. As babies, the experiences of this world crowded out our memories of the past one, and it was as though we had no eternal past at all – suggesting this world is all there is! Yet, I believe, we brought three things with us, and we are able to hold on to those three things even in the fog of our memory loss. (By the way, one of those is not free agency – that is simply a fundamental part of what we are – without it, we would cease to be.)

The first is our testimony of the Saviour. For those whose assignments takes them to other times and places, when they have no opportunity to know the gospel, that testimony is often expressed in one's reverence for the rights of other people, for this beautiful earth, and for the "Providence" who made it all happen. But for those of us whose assignment permitted us to have the gospel in our mortal lives, that testimony can also be expressed in our love for him.

I believe the second thing one brings into this world is one's own integrity – and that may be the scarey part, for the "truth" of this world provides a perfect litmus test to discover the value system on which one's integrity is built.

I believe the third thing one brings into this world is a memory of one's friends – including family who are also friends – I believe that some relationships made firm there are sealed by family covenant here; and that others were sealed by the bonds of eternal friendship – to the end that,

- 1 When the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man like ourselves.
- 2 And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy. (D&C 130:1-2)

I believe we recognize our former friends when we meet them here. The reason I believe it, if because I am sure if it that were not so then life would be unbearable dreary, hard, and desolate: "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, [would] Seem to me all the uses of this world!"²³⁸

If, in this world, one is to discover eternal *truth*, it seems to me that discovery must be made within the context of the law of one's own being – the honesty of one's relationship with the Saviour, and of one's relationships with family and friends, and of the nature of the other tangible and intangible things one admits to love.

If this world was designed to give us the opportunity to define ourselves to ourselves, it was perfectly designed – because everything in it that is tentative pretends to last forever. This world offers prestige, authority, and power aplenty that can be won through any deception – but only temporarily. There is wealth here that one can take at any cost – but it cannot last. In this darkened Hamlet, act one, scene 2.

world, the eyes of our bodies and of our temporal understanding cannot perceive eternity, so they insist on interpreting what one accumulates here as reality. Thus, Faust-like, those who seek power, prestige, fame, wealth, or popular acclaim may find them here – may devote their lives to obtaining them – and thereby may uncover their own emptiness. Notwithstanding – or perhaps because of – the illusions of possession and grandeur that present themselves as this world's reality, it is in this environment of half-light that pure testimony, integrity, and love can cause one's eyes to penetrate the temporary, just as one might see through a darkened glass, and thereby move through the maze of the illusionary and come to the place where one may find to know one's Self – the greatest treasure of them all. But if one's eyes cannot see to distinguish the illusionary from the real, one will never discover one's Self among the rubble.

The only absolute truth one can grasp and hold on to in this world is the beginning of the answer to the third question: "Why am I?" That answer has to be found in the context of ones relationship to the Saviour, and in the tokens and the fulfillment of the covenants one made before and at the Council, and again here on earth. To teach one what those covenants are and how to fulfill them is what the Holy Ghost is for. To know the love which is an integral part of one's relationship with the Saviour, in the past, present, and future, – and to define oneself in terms of that love – *is truth*.

If truth is to be definable in terms of charity, then its knowledge is not only academic, but also experiential:

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. (John 3:21 - italics added)

27 And no man receiveth a fulness unless he keepeth his commandments.

28 He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified

in truth and knoweth all things. (D&C 93:27-28)

As one might expect, ultimately, knowing truth, doing truth, and becoming a light of truth are all inseparably tied to knowing and keeping the covenants one made at the Council – as those covenants are renewed and confirmed upon one in this world.

- 44 For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.
- 45 For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
- 46 And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.
- 47 And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.
- 48 And the Father teacheth him of the covenant which he has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for your sakes only, but for the sake of the whole world.(D&C 84:44-48)

Meaning of Meekness

I have a friend who describes meekness as the ability to accept offence without being offended. That is a fun perspective, and it works well in many scriptures. However there is another meaning of "meek" which makes it one of the most significant words in the sub-textual language of the scriptures. It is one of those "code words" which I suspect was never intended to be a code word, because that meaning of "meekness" is clearly explained in the Scriptures. In Psalm 37:11, we learn, "The meek shall inherit the earth: and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." The Saviour paraphrased that psalm when he spoke the Beatitude, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (He tied its meaning to another Beatitude when he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called [given the covenant name of:] the children of God."] In D&C 88:17 he explained much the same thing, that the earth was created so "the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it." Those ideas are all amplified in the place where one finds the most complete discussion of what meekness means, the 25th psalm.

Psalm 25 expands the blessings of meekness to the doctrine of an eternal family – it promises that not just the meek, but also the children of the meek, will inherit the earth. It is that psalm which gives us the best definition of "the meek" by explaining who the meek are.

Psalm 25 is an intensely personal statement. The speaker may have been a single individual, or the psalm may have been sung by everyone in the congregation.²³⁹ The reason I like this psalm so

Whether the psalm were sung by one person or the entire congregation would not change the very personal nature of the hymn. The Lord's statement, "For my soul delighteth in the song of the hart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12), can be true whether one is singing alone, with a congregation, or just listening.

much is that the individual who sings it (even if there are many who sing simultaneously) is so very human. Most other scriptures that talk about the Council in Heaven make it seem very distant and detached because they are about supermen like Abraham, Isaiah, or Lehi. Psalm 25 may also be about the king, but there are two things in it that seems to bring the Council home to the fireside and make its covenants a central part of the ordinary daily lives of Everyman and Everywoman. The psalm is a prayer. Ancient Jews and early Christians lifted their hands toward heaven when they prayed, in this psalm, one lifts one's soul. In the prayer, the person unabashedly exposes his inner Self, making himself naked to all those who can know the meaning of his words. He is one who has unbounded faith in the Lord – one who knows he had made some very serious covenants in the Council – and one who is trying to keep those covenants while muddling through the darkness that is life in this lonely, dreary world.

The Meek in Psalm 25

- 1 Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
- 2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.
- 3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.
- 4 Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.

"Ways" and "paths" are both code words which connote how one climbs the mountain – it is the sequence of ordinances in the temple.²⁴⁰ In the next verse, "lead" and "teach" have that

^{240 &}quot;I would say 'ways' for the temple would be the 'ways of holiness,' not every reference meant temple. Sam as us for today. We say that we should walk in his footsteps, but that doesn't mean the temples." – note by Dan Belnap.

connotation

5 Lead me in thy truth [knowledge of reality], and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; **on thee do I wait all the day.** [To wait is to serve, as waiting a table.] 6 Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.

Here is another example of where the phrase "of old" is a reference to the Council. The author is saying that God's kindness "in the beginning" is unchanging – is the same now as it was before we left home to come here.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. 8 Good and upright is the Lord:

therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

Here again, "the way" refers to the sequence of the ordinances, and connotes the "way" or "path" by which one climbs the "mountain," (temple) and/or the "way" one lives after one leaves the temple. "In the way" implies the introductory ideas taught to the initiate in the temple. There is a subtle, but I think very real difference between teaching "sinners in the way," and teaching the meek "his way," as appears in the next verse. "Sinners," I assume, are people who have yet to be taught to understand – Adults who are repenting, or young adults who typically have been so absorbed in growing up in this world that their pre-mortal covenants were not only lost from memory but also from seeming importance. As they mature such "sinners" must be taught "in the way." Now the focus of the prayer moves forward. It is almost as though the singer recounts his own maturation. In that, we begin to understand the meaning of "meek." The one who prays is no longer taught "in the way," but is taught God's way – which is a declaration that he has learned how to judge "mercy and truth," and therefore can be taught what he otherwise could not know.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. 10 All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth

unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

In the phrase, "the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth," "mercy" is a reference to his powers of judgment; "truth" is the criteria upon which the judgement is made. These are also two of the imperative criteria for kingship as found in the 45th Psalm, which we will discuss below.

"Covenant," we will soon be told, is another reference to the covenants made at the Council – as revealed during a *sode* experience.²⁴¹

Scholars are not quite sure what "testimonies" mean. But it seems to be a physical testimony (a *pistis*) of God' covenants with man. Some (Mowinckel, Johnson and others) have suggested that it may have been an embroidered copy of the Ten Commandments which the king wore on his person.²⁴² If that is correct, it appears the meek are those who keep the covenants they made at the Council (and that they may re-make here), and also keep the commandments they receive in this world. One gets the same idea from psalms, where the "testimony" is related to the experience on Sinai: "He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them." (Psalm 99:7) Keeping the commandments associated with the testimony seems to be a kind of authorization or ratification on the part of men and women, so that God can bless them according to those covenants.

11 For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

²⁴¹ If one can assume that the Feast of Tabernacles drama was intended to represent one's relationship with God, then it seems likely that those parts which represented one's pre-mortal life may have represented that ultimate earthly relationship: returning to the Council, as in Psalm 82and 45.

²⁴² This is significant to the story of Abinadi when he "read" the Ten Commandments to king Noah and his priests. Footnotes and quotes about that are included below in my discussion of that part of the story.

"For thy name's sake" is another instance of the covenant-name's being used to represent the covenant itself. The meaning of that phrase would remain almost the same if the word was changed so it read: "For thy covenant's sake."

It is significant to me that at this point in this psalm which celebrates man's eternal success, there is an expression of one's total dependence upon the principle of repentance and the Saviour's atonement. The feeling of the entire psalm, but these lines in particular, reminds one of the sentiment in Nephi's psalm.

12 What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

That reads: "What man is he that feareth [honor, respect] the Lord? him [the man] shall he [the Lord] teach in the way [same temple codeword as path] that he [the Lord] shall choose."

Here, "in the way" is no longer the generic teachings, ordinances, and covenants taught to "sinners." Rather it is, the "way" the Lord "shall choose" – it is individually specific – teaching designed to enable one to fulfill the covenantal assignments he made at the Council. ²⁴³

13 His [the person's] soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

This is the promise of eternal family. Here is the covenant that the seed of the meek, rather than just the meek themselves, shall inherit the earth. The new name given to the dead in the coronation passage of Isaiah 61 is another example of the Old Testament teachings of eternal increase.

14 The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

^{243 &}quot;Of course the word is also 'counsel' and not just 'council." – note by Dan Belnap.

That reads, "The secret [Hebrew word used here is *sode*] of the Lord is with them that fear him ["Fear" means respect or honor. Those who honor the Lord will know the secrets of the Council]; and he [the Lord] will shew them [the meek] his [the Lord's] covenant [That is, he will show them the covenants they made with him at the Council – again, the idea of *sode*]."

The whole meaning of the 25th psalm focuses on that single verse. Indeed the whole meaning of the New Year festival drama may also do so. Those words define the "meek" and put everything else in the 25th Psalm into its proper context. Verse 14 fits well with the ideas in verse 10 where one learned, "All the paths [codeword] of the Lord are mercy [being a righteous judge] and truth [knowledge things as they were, are, and will be] unto such as keep his covenant [the covenant made at the Council]." The word "secret" is translated from the Hebrew word *sode*. A *sode* experience, as I have mentioned above, is when an individual has a vision in which he re-visits his prior experience in the Council. One returns to the Council to be re-taught about the assignment he received when he was a member of the Council, and to re-affirm the covenants he made there. But, as the scriptures make repeatedly clear, the Lord need not take Everyman and Everywoman back to the Council in order to teach them their covenants – that was what the drama of the New Year festival was for; and of course, among other things, that is what the Holy Ghost is for.

The meek, then, are defined as those who keep the covenants they made at the Council. In that definition, the ordinary meaning of the word "meek" is not lost, but in its context, "meekness" has only to do with being meek before the Lord, and has nothing whatever to do with being meek before men. Thus it was written of the prophet who defied Pharaoh and all the armies of Egypt, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." (Numbers 12:3) What that meant was explained by the Lord to Miriam and Aaron, in the next few verses. The King James Version gives a somewhat muddled translation of that explanation, but the

Tanakh (the official Jewish English translation of the Old Testament) makes that explanation very clear:

The Lord came down in a pillar of cloud, stopped at the entrance of the Tent, and called out, "Aaron and Miriam!" The two of them came forward; and He said, "Hear these My words: When a prophet of the Lord arises among you, I make Myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is trusted throughout My household. With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the Lord. How then did you not shrink from speaking against My servant Moses!" ²⁴⁴

The important statement is that Moses "is trusted throughout My household." The "household" of God would be the same as the "household" of a king. That is, it would consist of not only his immediate family but also his official entourage – the inner circle of his counselors and court leaders. In the case of God, his "household" would be the members of the Council in Heaven. So the Lord's statement that Moses "is trusted throughout My household" is a references to the fact that Moses was originally called – and is presently sustained – by the other members of the Council. So the statement that "Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth," simply means he kept the covenants he made with God.

When I think of a prophet who was truly meek, I think of Abinadi standing before king Noah, saying "you will not have the power to kill me until after I have delivered the message the Lord sent me here to deliver!"

To return to Psalm 25; the verse we are discussing reads,

14 The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and will shew them his covenant.

Numbers 12:5-8, in *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, Jerusalem, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.)

"I like this, but it can refer to Israel, his 'house' (since Israel elsewhere is his sons and daughters." – note by Dan Belnap.

To me, that says this: "The secret decisions of the Heavenly Council – made, sanctioned, and sealed with covenant in the presence of the Lord – is known to those who honor the Lord; and the Lord will shew them what that covenant was. By the power of the Holy Ghost one may be led to understand the intent of the covenant he made when at the Council. Then, with the help of the Holy Ghost, one may know what to do and how to live to fulfill that covenant."

The best illustration I know is a personal one, told to me by a dear friend.

At the end of World War II, Jean Wunderlich was called to be the first post-war mission president in West Germany. His assignment would be to find the remnants of the Saints there and help them make the church a viable organization again. After receiving the call, Jean and his wife traveled to Salt Lake City, where he was to be set apart by President McKay. When they entered his office, the prophet stood, came from behind his desk, welcomed his guests, and invited them to sit down. Sister Wunderlich sat in a chair by the door. Jean sat in one which the prophet had brought to the center of the room. President McKay placed his hands on Jean's head and began to give him a blessing. Here, Jean stopped his narrative, looked at me, and said, "When the prophet has his hands on your head, you listen — and I listened!" However, Jean said that President McKay had spoken only a few sentences when he gave a command which introduced Jean to the most powerful spiritual experience of his life. He saw a beautiful light, and other things which he did not describe to me. Jean said he became aware of the prophet and the room only when he felt President McKay's hands lift from his head and the blessing was finished. Jean told me that was the most significant experiences of his whole life, and his telling me became one of the most significant

conversations of mine. He said he was not telling me a story, he was giving me a gift. The gift he gave me was the words of the command which the prophet spoke, which initiated Jean's profound experience. Those words were these: "Be true to the Law of your own Being." When Jean told me the words, he commented that in LDS theology, "law" has an eternal connotation, and the command to be true to that law suggests that one might also apostatize from it – that one may be at variance with what one really is. Since that day, I have thought a great deal about what Jean told me, and have concluded that sin is simply one's acting or being in violation of the law which is one's Self – defying the eternal law of one's own being. There are some things which none of us can do without doing violence to our Selves, such as stealing, blaspheming, and hurting other people. These generic sins are all covered by the basic commandments. But there are also things that are specific sins to only one individual, and are not sins to everyone else. I believe that the chief function of the Holy Ghost is to help one bring his earthly life into perfect accord with the law of what one really is — to make us one with the law of our own being by teaching us what that law is and helping us live it.

My favorite example is my friend Jim Cannon, who is a world class mathematician. I know Jim very well. To him theoretical math seems to be the balance between art, poetry, and music. I suspect if Jim had chosen to not be a mathematician that would have been a great sin. Now, I, on the other hand, can barely get by in arithmetic – never mind theoretical math. If, in my admiration for Jim, I tried to be a mathematician like him, I would not only be a failure, I would have to deny everything I am to try to be something I am not. That would also be a great sin. (Actually, I admit to finding some comfort in the notion that for me math would be sinful! :-)

I believe that "the law of one's own being" is simply what one IS – the individual personalities we each have developed and nurtured since we were intelligences. And I believe the assignments we received at the Council were consistent with our eternal personalities – the laws of our individual beings. But I also believe that there is one common foundation upon which every assignment given at the Council was predicated. Earlier I pointed out that the ancients thought of the "heart" as the seat of both our emotions and our intellect, and I concluded that the Book of Mormon's use of the word "mind" was a reference to that part of one's spirit with which one's "heart" can communicate. Abinadi makes a great point of that idea, and I'll talk about it more in the context of his speech. For the present let me simply suggest that a natural man is one who is controlled by his "heart" – his physical, academic, and emotional world. Consequently such a one is not equipped to keep the covenants he made at the Council until he lets that physical Self communicate with, and be directed by his "mind" – his spiritual Self which inhabits his body. If that is correct, then one would expect that the assignment given at the Council would have been consistent with the desires, interests, and talents of one's "mind." And that one's responsibility to fulfill those assignments is seated, not in the "heart" (The place we call the brain), but in the mind – that is, the fulfillment of the covenants are the responsibility of one's soul. It's like this:

I look around the world and see other people whom my eyes and ears testify to my brain are real. Experience has taught me to accept the testimony of my eyes and ears, and I believe the people are real. I can interact with them, as well as see, hear, and touch them. All of those sensations are in the "heart" — the place where the ancients assigned both one's emotions and one's intellect. But the heart/brain is not designed to be able to give its owner absolute proof of anything. (Food that tastes good may not be good for the body, people who look beautiful may not be kind.) All that I

see, hear and feel are only my brain's interpretation of electronic impulses. I get much the same kind of electronic information when I sit in a movie theater as when I watch a live theatrical production on the stage. Although I believe the latter is the more real, I have no better evidence than what my body and my experiences have taught me to accept. In fact, I have no compelling evidence at all. If one projects that argument to its logical conclusion, I have no absolute evidence that any of my family or friends even exist. That's an age old philosophical question and I suppose I could go back to the primary question and suggest that I have no absolute evidence that I am real — I write that, and I suppose it sounds rational, but it is really quite silly. To begin with, I know that I am – not for the classic reason: because I think, but because I love. I know love is real because I know – really know – that Jesus is God: I have experienced his love for me and mine for him. That love IS reality – it is the ultimate experience which finds confirmation in the combined testimony of both my body and my soul. My having experienced that love is the only absolute proof I have that I am. I know that I am, because I know that He is. I see my family and my friends, and I love them. I know that kind of love is also real because it is like the love I have for my Saviour. They receive and reciprocate, therefore I know that they are real also. Through those experiences, I am also assured that the people whom I love, but who do not reciprocate, are also real. In that knowledge – the sure knowledge that I have the capacity to both love and be loved – is absolute proof that God is, that I am, and that other people are. In the knowledge of the reality of eternal love, is embedded in the foundation of the law that is me – the law of my being – just as it is embedded the foundation of the law that is you. Within the context of that knowledge – the knowledge of our relationship with our Saviour – and the knowledge of our relationships with other people – one may begin – in this life – to re-discover the eternal nature, quality, and origin of the laws of one's own being. As one comes to know oneself, one discovers a window through

which he can learn what truth is. The window is formed within the perimeters of one's own truth — the law of one's own being. It is there where one sealed the covenants made at the Council, and it is there that one must keep those covenants one made at the Council. The implication is, if that is true then perfection is simply the maturation of what one is — the self-defined — and God approved — law of one's own being. Sin is being something other than what one is; really serious sin is the maturation of what one is not. As I write that it occurs to me that it would be easy for someone to take that statement out of context and make it a self-justification for almost anything one wishes. But that won't work — it is the "God approved" part that restricts one's definition of one's Self to the principles of righteousness. So sin is simply the functioning, or seeking to function, outside the righteous law of one's own being.

If one is to talk about one's identity in the Council, and about one's living to that identity in this world, one has to begin, as Abinadi insisted, by seeking to understand the intimate relationship between the Saviour and oneself. For that reason, before we go on, we must discuss some of the scriptures that will help one open that window and begin to see.

The phrase "law of one's own being" is not found in the scriptures, but the concept is there, and the word "law" is used in connection with that concept. It seems to me if one is to comprehend the law of one's own being, one must first seek to understand its origin, objective, and primary consequences – its relationship to the preliminaries of one's foreordination; its relationship to one's keeping the laws and commandments of the Lord while we were intelligences, then spirits, now in this life, and again in the next. Lets begin by looking at the origin of the law.

Warning: You are about to enter a dangerous area in which I freely express my opinion on highly speculative matters. It is about our eternal nature, and it begins with a discussion of our origins as intelligences. I believe it is basically correct – but even that belief is only my opinion. Proceed at your own risk!!

There is no unanimity of opinion in the Church about what an intelligence is. The early history of the discussion about intelligences is briefly this:

Orson Pratt published a work called the *Great First Cause* (I read it for the first time when I was in the 8th or 9th grade and thought he must have been one of the smartest men who ever lived — that opinion has not changed, but I am not as sure about his ideas as I was then) He wrote that there were two fundamental elements: intelligences (plural) and matter. Intelligences were cognizant, which he defined as being at least able to tell the difference between me and not-me. This awareness of self and others developed into the ability to tell the difference between good and evil based on the relationships between one's Self and others, and that developed into the ability to love. The person who was the Great First Cause became the Father-God who learned how to love and to teach others how to love. He also learned that his powers of Self increased dramatically if he could unite himself with matter — therefore he devised a celestial body for himself and devised a way so other intelligences could obtain bodies also. That plan was the Plan of Salvation. It integrated the principles of love, progress, experience, and repentance, and consequently required an atonement by a Saviour who was as perfect as the Father himself.

B. H. Roberts wrote the next important essay about intelligences in a lesson manual which was used by the Church's quorums of seventy. (I read those at the same time I read the First Great Cause). Elder Roberts did not try to answer the question, "Where did the first God come from?" but limited his question to, "Where did people come from?" He said intelligences were individuals who had free agency as an integral part of their being. They were capable of making choices and therefore of progressing. He said God wanted them to have bodies like his own so they could experience joy like he does, so he and the Mother in Heaven provided spirit bodies which were made from spirit matter in much the same way as the next step was accomplished, which was for mortal parents to provide those same intellligences/spirits with mortal bodies. Under Roberts' definitions: if one is an intelligence, he is an unembodied individual. If one is a "spirit" he is an intelligence who was born a child to God and in consequence of that birth has a body made of spirit matter. If one is a mortal he is an intelligence with a spirit body who has been born into this world and now has an additional body which was made from less refined matter than the spirit bodies – the physical bodies we have now. When one dies he temporarily loses that physical body - but not his spirit body. So a dead person is a "spirit" again that is, an intelligence with his spirit body. At the resurrection, that spirit person regains his physical body – only now in a purified form. The resurrection is the sealing process which permanently unites the intelligence and his spirit body with his physical body. So a resurrected person is a fully cognizant intelligence who is permanently clothed with a body made of spirit element; and that, in turn, is permanently clothed in a body made of physical element — which intelligence, spirit and physical bodies have been purified and empowered through the atonement of Christ. For some, that purification and empowerment includes the capacity to live in the Celestial Kingdom with God.

Elder Roberts' ideas about the pre-mortal world dominated that part of church thinking for about half a century until Elder McConkie suggested a much more simplistic version.

Abraham used the name intelligences to apply to the spirit children of the Eternal Father. The intelligence or spirit element became intelligences after the spirits were born as individual entities. The intelligence or spirit element became intelligences after the spirits were born as individuals.²⁴⁶

President Hugh B. Brown, First Counselor in the First Presidency, seemed to harken back to the earlier ideas.

At a time far antedating Eden, the spirits of all men had a primeval existence and were intelligences with spirit bodies of which God was the universal Father."²⁴⁷

My object in presenting the differing beliefs of the brethren is **not** to set up a conflict where one gets to flip a coin and choose a church leader to follow. I simply wish to point out that there is no unanimity of opinion on this matter. I also wish to emphasize that even though I happen to believe what I write, no one else has the right to believe it because I write it, **and no one will have the right to assert that I wrote the following claiming that it is church doctrine.**

Now let me explain myself: I don't agree with Elder McConkie as I understand what he wrote, but I needed to quote what he wrote, so as not to give the impression that what I am writing is an overview of the universally accepted, or even generally accepted, idea of what an intelligence is.

My own ideas about the origins of man are products of my youthful – and continued – acceptance of the basic ideas of Orson Pratt and B. H. Roberts – and of my thinking a great deal about it since

²⁴⁶ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1958), p. 354.

²⁴⁷ Conference Report, October 1963, p. 92.

then. Please remember as you read the following, that even though it is decorated with many scriptural references, the way those scriptures are put together and my interpretation of them is still only my personal opinion.

As I understand what Elder McConkie wrote: God used a quantity of a material called "intelligence" to make individual spirit persons who – for the very first time in their existence – had the capacity to think and act independently. I cannot accept that theory because it can not be used to address these two fundamental questions: "Why was Jehovah the First Born?" and "If he did not exist as an individual before he was born as a spirit, what had he done, while he was only a part of the universal element, to prove that he could be trusted?" To me, the fact that it is not possible to use Elder McConkie's theory to answer either of those questions exposes the most obvious weakness of his argument. With all due respect to Elder McConkie, my primary problem with his idea is that the Jesus I worship is far too big to squeeze his entire pre-mortal existence into the finite mold Elder McConkie suggests. If the atonement is infinite and eternal, it seems to me that it must have been accomplished by someone who was also infinite and eternal. If persons first became cognizant when they were born as spirits, then both Jesus and those for whom he performed the atonement would have had a beginning and the atonement could only be infinite and eternal in one direction – which is a logical impossibility. Conversely, if the atonement of Christ is infinite and eternal, then Christ's person, personality, and cognizance must also be infinite and eternal – so must the people for whom the atoning sacrifice was performed. Let me give you just one example of the problem: John's testimony is "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3, D&C 93:9-10) It seems to me that testimony could not be true if Christ had an origin as late in the history of "all things" as his birth as a spirit.

It also seems to me that the only way one can approach the question, "Why was Christ the Firstborn," is by first addressing the question "How had he proven himself so that he qualified to be the Firstborn." Whatever else the answer to that question entails, it seems to me that it must include: "For all eternity he had never sinned, so was clean, so had proven himself entirely trustworthy, so was qualified to enter his Father's presence as the Firstborn." (That is such an understated synopses of his early life that I apologize for even writing it, and ask that you consider it to be only my weak words, blundering their way through the single most deeply felt truth I have ever experienced.)

As I read the scriptures, when one considers the Saviour, ²⁴⁸ there are many indications that his

But that reading is more difficult with statements like Lehi's: "he hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon. And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man, (2 Nephi 2: 14b-15a) It's the "eternal purposes" that gets in the way. One has to put bounds and limits on "eternal" just as one puts them on "all things" in order to make it fit a Jehovah who did not exist as an individual before his spirit birth.

D&C 29:30- 35 is another one.

John's testimony in John 1 and D&C 93; Isaiah 40:25-26; Ephesians 3:9; Revelation 4:11, 10:6; Mosiah 4: 2,9, 5:15, and many others say that the Saviour created "all things." That would insist that he not only had personality, but that he also had untold authority before "all things" were created. (I suppose that would include Kolob, for it is a part of this system*) Those who wish to limit Christ's cognizant existence to the time after he was born a spirit, may read "all things" as "all things since the Council." For example Colossians 1:16 says, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." One might read that to be a reference to the creation that was accomplished by Jehovah and the Council and is described in Geneses, Moses, and Abraham.

³⁰ But remember that all my judgments are not given unto men; and as the words have gone forth out of my mouth even so shall they be fulfilled, that the first shall be last, and that the last shall be first in all things whatsoever I have created by the word of my power, which is the power of my Spirit.

³¹ For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal

personality and his inclination to serve God go back a very long way in his individual history as an intelligence. Some scriptures suggest that was true of others of us as well. As children of God, each of us are fundamentally an intelligence who is an individual with the ability to think, to love, and to hate, and therefore the ability to do good and do evil.

For example, Abraham 3-4 tells of a succession of visions (or a succession of scenes in the same vision) in which he was shown intelligences, spirits at the Council in Heaven, the expulsion of Satan and his followers from the Council, then the creation of the earth by that same Council. That sequence is found no where else in the scriptures.²⁴⁹ In Abraham's creation story the members of the Council are called "gods." One of those was Abraham himself who came to this world, suffered

To me "eternal" and "all things" preclude drawing a line in time when Jehovah received his spirit body, and saying that neither his personality nor his power existed before that line. To me that would be as irrational as drawing a line in time when Jesus received his mortal body and saying that neither his personality nor his power existed before that line.

³² First spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work; and again, first temporal, and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work——

³³ Speaking unto you that you may naturally understand; but unto myself my works have no end, neither beginning; but it is given unto you that ye may understand, because ye have asked it of me and are agreed.

^{*} Kolob is described by the Lord as "near unto me," and "set nigh unto the throne of God." Abraham 3:3,9) I suppose that could be talking about geography, but I doubt it. A temple (which is geographically not close to God at all) should be described in precisely that same way. My assumption is that Kolob is the "temple precinct" of this universe or "age." That is, it and the temple on it are the connecting link between our universe (both the spiritual and the physical creation) and the place where God the Father dwells. If that is true, then Kolob and its temple would be among the "all things" created by Jehovah. Don't get upset with that idea. I warned you I was going to do some speculating. If you don't like that idea, disregard it as only that.

249 The information contained in that sequence alone makes the Book of Abraham one of our most precious documents. It was first published in the March 1 & 15 issue of the *Times and Seasons*. About two months later, on May 4, 1842, Joseph gave the first endowments of this dispensation to James Adams, Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney, George Miller, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards

as other men, but lived his life in strict accord with the revelation he received. He died "and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne." (D&C 132: 29) That sequence is the same as the personal history of all who were righteous members of the Council.

Unless "star" is intended to be an actual description (and it may be), there is no physical description of intelligences in the scriptures. I suppose, if one were going to describe what an intelligence looked like, I would probably use the word "illuminare," or perhaps a "spot of light," or a "star." In D&C 93 the people whom he was talking about seem to be divided into three categories: "ye" (members of the Council), man, and intelligence.

Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth...

Man was also in the beginning with God.

Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. (D&C 93: 23, 29-30)

That statement about the relationship between intelligence and truth seems to be very important:

As I understand it, it reads:

All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, [Truth is the knowledge of reality, and this seems to say that reality cannot be altered by disbelief or extenuating circumstances], as all intelligence also [Free agency comes into play here: An intelligence is a cognizant entity who is capable of knowing truth. His decision to know and to act on truth determines the quality of his greatness.]; otherwise there is no existence.

Elsewhere the Saviour said,

6 He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth;

7 Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. (D&C 88: 6-7)

The words remind one of the Secrets of Enoch, which describes a creation "before the very beginning." If that is so, it may be talking about Jesus as an intelligence. One wonders if Lehi also saw "before the very beginning" as Enoch had done:²⁵⁰

9 And it came to pass that he saw One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noonday.

10 And he also saw twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament. (1 Nephi 1:9-10)

The relationship between light, truth, and intelligence seems to be inseparable, as suggested by such phrases as: "Intelligence, or the light of truth," and "Which truth shineth." Truth is not a fact in the abstract. It is defined in that same revelation as "And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." (D&C 93:24) Knowledge cannot exist on its own—there has to be an intelligent entity who knows it—it is the knowing that constitutes knowledge, without someone to know, knowledge cannot exist. Implicitly, without someone to know, truth cannot exist either. Apparently, knowing truth is what makes the intelligent entity shine (That may be as true in this life as when we were intelligences—only our eyes can't see the light any more.). So it appears that an intelligence is an individual who knows truth, and who shines by virtue of his knowing. That description sounds like a "star" to me.

As I understand it, some intelligences sought and received more truth so shone more. In time the great illuminaries were born to heavenly parents, and by that birth, received bodies made of spirit matter. The very first to receive such a body was the Saviour. Others who received their spirit bodies early on in the history were the noble and great ones. As members of the Council, their

²⁵⁰ See the Secrets of Enoch, 24:2 as quoted above.

primary purpose was to help others:

24 And there stood [past tense] one among them that was like unto God, and he said [past tense] unto those who were with him: We will go down [future tense], for there is [present tense] space there, and we will take of these materials [future tense], and we will make an earth [future tense] whereon these may dwell [future tense];

25 And we will prove them herewith [with the earth – future tense], to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them [still in the future];

26 And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon [that's also in the future]; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate [that's in the future]; and they who keep their second estate [that is the same kind of future tense, using exactly the same words as "those who keep their first estate" – both estates are in the future from the prospective of this story] shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever [still future]. Abraham 3: 24-26)

As "gods" they created the earth, and in the process of time came here to receive physical bodies. When they die their physical bodies return to the earth, but the intelligence and its spirit body remain intact. It was they, as spirits, who gathered to await the Saviour to come to them during the three days between his death and resurrection. (D&C 138, Psalm 22, Isaiah 61) After an appropriate time, those noble and great ones who had lived on the earth and died, regain their own physical bodies in the resurrection. Then the intelligence, his spirit body, and his glorified physical body are fused together, never to be separated again. It is that individual intelligence, now empowered with spirit and resurrected physical body, who enters the celestial kingdom to dwell with his Heavenly Father forever.

If that scenario is correct, then one must look to the time we were intelligences to discover the origins of our personalities and the laws of our own beings. The first place to look is in the book of Abraham.

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; (Abraham 3:22a)

Definitions work because they describe something in a large category in terms of its uniqueness from other things in that category. For example, a chair is a subset of furniture, distinguished by the fact that a chair is intended to be sat on. If all furniture were to be sat on, the "chair" distinction would be meaningless. One finds that same kind of distinction at the beginning of Abraham 3:22, "Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was." From that we know Abraham is not talking about all intelligences, but only that subset of intelligences who were organized before the world was. So it appears Abraham has identified at least three groups of intelligences: One is the large category of all intelligences, another is the subset: "intelligences that were organized before the world was." Implicit in that distinction is the suggestion that there were also intelligences who were organized after "the world was."

The group he is most interested in telling us about is the group who were organized before the world was. He will soon tell us these organized ones were "spirits" – which means they had spirit bodies, which means they were at that time spirit children of our heavenly parents.

and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; (Abraham 3:22b)

He has now identified three more subsets of intelligences. He says that among all the organized spirits there were many (but not all) of the noble and great ones. So the noble and great ones were divided into two groups: (1) the "many" who were among the organized spirits, and implicitly, (2) the remainder who were not among those who were organized spirits, so must have been among the intelligences who were not yet organized. That is important, because it says there were individuals among the unorganized intelligences who could be identified as noble and great before they were born as spirits. That would not be so, of course, if "intelligence" was simply the base

element from which all spirits were made.

The organized intelligences were also divided into two groups. If "many" of the noble and great ones were *among* the organized spirits, then there must have been some organized spirits who were not noble and great. (These are soon identified to us when we learn that Satan and his followers were also in attendance in the initial meetings of the Council.)

Perhaps I could be clearer if I organized it into a kind of diagram.

All of the intelligences are divided into two groups:

- (1) unorganized intelligences,
 - (1a) among whom are some of the noble and great ones
- (2) organized intelligences, spirit children who are also divided into two groups.
 - (2a) "among them" were "many" of the noble and great ones
 - (2b) The "them" who are not noble and great. (Satan and followers)

and God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good.... (Abraham 3:22-23)

If he stood in the midst of these spirits, that probably means in the middle or center (not just milling about among them). If he were in the midst or middle of them, then they were probably standing in a circle surrounding him. These he appointed to be his rulers, and thereafter Abraham refers to them as "the gods." It is the same story as Psalm 82. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods."

One finds another version of that same story in Alma 13, where we learn how the noble and great ones came to be that way. Alma spoke of the time when they were ordained by our Father in Heaven to the priesthood "which is after the order of his Son." Alma does not mention that they

are members of Council in Heaven, but all other indications suggest the ordinations he talked about took place at that Council, so I presume the setting of Alma 13 and Abraham 3 is the same, and that each is simply a different version of the same story – except that Alma 12 and 13 tell us more about intelligences – much more detail about who we were *before* we were spirits in the Council – than any other scriptures I know about.

- 1 And again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people.
- 2 And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.
- 3 And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.
- 4 And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren
- 5 Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared –
- 6 And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest –
- 7 This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things -
- 8 Now they were ordained after this manner being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy

order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end—

9 Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen.

Let us now examine that very carefully:

And again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, (Alma 13:1a)

This is the setting: The first OED definition of "forward" is the first or earliest part of a period of time. So even though Joseph Smith's translation does not use the phrase "in the beginning," it uses the correct word to take us there. This is the time and place when the Father – the Lord God, Elohim – ordained priests. We know it is talking about Elohim because he "gave these commandments unto his children," then "ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son." In Abraham we are told that the Father chose the "noble and great ones," who were at that time "spirits." To be a spirit one must have received a spirit body from heavenly parents. Thus, "children" and "spirits" are the same thing. So Alma 13 is the same story as the same as Psalm 82, and the same as Abraham 3. "The Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son." – "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods," – "and he said: These I will make my rulers." Alma said that the purpose of the ordination was so the "children" could teach the commandments of the Father to the "people."

to teach these things unto the people.

²⁵¹ Oxford English Dictionary: The first meaning of the word "forward." The definition reads: "The front part of (any thing material); the first or earliest part of (a period of time. etc.)."

Now the question is, Who are the "people," and why are they not also called "children"? The answer seems straight forward enough: If "people" are different from "children," and the children are those who have already received spirit bodies from their heavenly parents, then the "people" must be intelligences – those individuals who have not yet been born into spirit bodies. If that is so, then the purpose of the teaching would have been to prepare the "people" to enter the presence of God and be born as "children." That interpretation is substantially strengthened as we continue in the passage.

And those priests [the "children'] were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people [intelligences] might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.

If the non-children – the "people" – are intelligences, then this sermon by Alma gives us great insight about the meaning and extent of the atonement – about what it means to say that the atonement is infinite and eternal. That insight is this: Intelligences are represented here as being self cognizant, capable of learning and of interacting with others. They have free agency and are therefore capable of error. If they are capable of error – sin – they become unclean while they were still intelligences. Since no unclean thing can enter into the presence of God, no intelligence who had ever made a wrong decision could enter his presence to become one of his spirit offspring. (Only Christ had never sinned, so only Christ could – by right – enter the presence of God to become his Son. Therefore Christ was the "Firstborn" and "Only Begotten.") However the intelligences could enter the presence of God on the same principles that one has always been able to do so. That is, because Christ's atonement is infinite and eternal it has the power to reach back in time to where intelligences could be redeemed and brought into the presence of God. If I read

Abraham 3 and Alma 13 correctly, some intelligences qualified to become spirit children of Heavenly Father before others qualified. Those who qualified first became members of the Council (Satan, who was a liar from the beginning, qualified by knowing the requisite things and performing the requisite performances, but when he was presented with a plan which would send him to earth where he would be judged by charity rather than performance, he realized he could no longer lie his way through the system, and tried to mess everything up.)

Abraham 3-5 tells about the Father's spirit children (the gods) who created the earth, while Alma 12-13 tells about the Father's spirit children who were ordained to teach the unorganized intelligences about the atonement. Of those members of the Council, Abraham wrote, "God saw these souls that they were good." Alma was much more explicit:

And this is the manner after which they were ordained – being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God,

Alma then says that "foreknowledge" was a projection of the past into the future – that is, God knew their works in the past; he knew their integrity, and therefore he knew their future.

being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works;

That says that because of their faith (pistis – tokens of the covenants) – and good works (in James, Paul, throughout the Book of Mormon and many other places in the scriptures, "works" refer to ordinances.), that they were called and prepared. That should come as no surprise, because that is always the criteria God uses. The surprise may come in the next phrase which answers the question, When?

The phrase "in the first place" has one of two meanings: either it is a colloquial expression that is just stuck in there, or it means precisely what it says: "in the *first* place." If it is only a colloquialism one can make the chapter mean almost anything one wishes. However if it does mean "in the *first* place," then these statements describe the noble and great ones as intelligences, and tell why and how they qualified to be among the earliest spirit children born to our heavenly parents. In this chapter, the phrase, "in the first place" is used twice. I take them to mean exactly what they say: in the *first* place — as intelligences they were free to choose good or evil —

therefore they [the intelligences] having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith [in Christ],

In this verse these "children" are described as having "exceeding faith and good works" and "exercising exceedingly great faith." If "faith" means belief, that speaks highly of their conviction. However, if "faith" means the same as *pistis* – tokens of covenants – that helps us understand how truly great these illuminaries must have been. Alma says that they –

are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.

"Preparatory redemption" is another key phrase which helps us determine the time this was happening. "Redemption" is coming into the presence of God. In terms of this life, to be redeemed is to be brought back into his presence. (Ether 3:13-14, Helaman 14:17, 2 Nephi 2:2-4, 2 Nephi 1:15). The final redemption is being brought into the Celestial Kingdom where one may reside with God.

"Preparatory redemption" does not mean "preparing for a redemption," it means a redemption which prepares one for something else – a redemption which is "preparatory." In this case it would preparing intelligences to be redeemed the first time – that is, to be brought into the presence of God as his spirit children. It is preparatory because it is not permanent. ²⁵² As children we must leave his presence again when we come into this world. When we return to his presence to stay, that will be a permanent redemption. So the first redemption when we became his spirit children is "preparatory" because it looks forward to the final redemption.

4 And thus they [the "children" – members of the Council] have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith [in Christ], while others [intelligences] would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts [That phrase is defined in Alma 12: 9-11 as refusing to know the "mysteries" of God.] and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this [their refusal to know] they [the "people"] might have had as great privilege as their brethren [the "children"].

That may be the most important concept in the scriptures. For, as the next verse makes it clear, the noble and great ones were not noble and great because they had some special advantages, but "on account of their exceeding faith and good works" – because of the way they exercised their free agency, their advancement as intelligences was an entirely individual matter. (Abraham 3:18-21 seems to confirm that.)

5a. Or in fine, in the first place ["In the first place" – when they were intelligences] they [the "people"] were on the same standing with their brethren [the "children"];

That is, at some point in time – in the very distant past – the intelligences who are here identified

^{252 &}quot;Preparatory ... 1. That prepares or serves to prepare; preliminary; introductory, 2. Undergoing preparation, or preliminary instruction, ..." (Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language [Cleveland, World Publishing Company1959.])

as the "people" were on the same standing as the intelligences who are here identified as "children." There was nothing arbitrary about the selection of the noble and great ones. They were not noble and great because they were the among the first to be born to our Heavenly Parents, but they were among the first to be born to our Heavenly Parents because they were noble and great.

5b. thus this holy calling [the ordination mentioned in verse one] being prepared from the foundation of the world [that always means at or before the Council] for such as would not harden their hearts [when they were intelligences], [This priesthood calling] being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared –

If I read that correctly it says that in the very beginnings of our beginning we were free to choose. Those who chose to have faith in Christ and follow him did so; those who chose not to, did not do so. To accept that notion, one must also accept the idea that the atonement reaches back forever ("Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be." D&C 93:29), and continues forever into the future. I accept that as truth. But in my imagination, I cannot conceive of our origin being so two dimensional as to simply assert that one only accepted Christ or not accept him. My notion is that by the time one had matured sufficiently as an "intelligence" to be ready to be born a child in the world of the spirits, one had not only developed one's inclination to love the Lord and his children; but one had also fully, or very nearly, developed the whole complex system of preferences and non-preferences which we call personality. I suppose also, that all the other attributes of personality were subsets of the most important one, which was (still is) charity – one's love for the Father and his children.

The first commandment is to Love the Lord. The second is to love your neighbor. If our thisphysical-life experience was designed to see if one will love in an environment which is not conducive to love, then it was designed very well indeed. The farmer who beats his dogs and children, and indiscriminately uses his chickens for a football is, at his core, not substantially different from the tyrant who over-taxes his people and oppresses them with unjust laws. Similarly the impoverished housewife who feeds the hungry neighbor child is not substantially different from the middle class Latter-day Saint Relief Society sister who looks after her ill neighbor because she chooses to rather than because she feels it is her duty. It seems to me that earth's experience was designed, not to show if we will obey, but to show why we obeyed – that is, so we can have sufficient opportunity to confirm to ourselves and all creation whether we obeyed in the spirit world because we knew which side our bread is buttered on, or whether we obeyed because we truly love the Lord and love his children.

In the Gospel of John, the beloved disciple, quotes the Saviour as saving,

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (John 13: 34-35)

This does not imply that the command to love one another was never given before that time. In his letters John explains that the commandment is "new" because it is renewed in this world, but it was first given in the pre-mortal existence. He used the phrase, "from the beginning" four times in these few verses. (Later, I shall show how "new and everlasting covenant" has the same connotation.)

- 4 He that saith, I know him [God], and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
- 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

- 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.
- 7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.
- 8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.
- 9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.
- 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. (1 John 2: 4-10)

and

- 1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;
- 2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.
- 3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.
- 4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.
- 5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.
- 6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. (2 John 1: 1-6)

If the object of our earth life experience was designed to that end, then human and individual history takes on a whole new meaning. Whether in the extreme of poverty and utter obscurity, or in great wealth and reputation – or somewhere in between – the purpose of life is the same for everyone – only the specific assignment is different – in this life and, I suppose, in the spirit world which follows. Since "where much is given, much is required" is a true principle, for the rich and the poor, the well educated and the ill-educated, the opportunities for doing good in this life

(and/or in the next), are ultimately worked out on a level playing field.

An example is one of the most moving autobiographies I have ever read. Martha Cox's parents were among the first settlers in St. George, Utah. All of her life she was very poor. Near the end of her autobiography she wrote something like this: "I have always been grateful to the Lord that I had no money. I have noticed that rich people cannot give to poor people without the poor people being reluctant to accept, because they think the rich people are being condescending. But I have always been so poor that I could help whomever I wished, and they were always able to accept whatever I had to give." 253

I believe that one's charity (in combination with other personality attributes) and one's priesthood authority, as they are described as a single unit in Abraham 1:2-4, constitute the 'law of one's own being.' (As I consider it, I think that the phrase "priesthood authority" is the right concept there, but as we use the words, probably not the right phrase – though I have no idea what a better one would be. Considering the grand sweep and eternal scope of Abraham's statements, I think the concept is far too big for our gender oriented "priesthood authority" to say all that is necessary to say. But as I observed, I haven't the foggiest idea what a better phrase would be.)

²⁵³ I apologize that I no longer have the exact quote or the precise citation. The original is in the Church Historical Department in SLC; a xerox copy is in Special Collections at BYU library. Her statement is somewhere near the end of her autobiography.

As I read the story, Alma's purpose was to teach Zeezrom that the political coup he was preparing had not been approved at the Council, and therefore could not be valid. So at this point in his speech, Alma moves his discussion from the pre-mortal life to the callings of the members of the Council when they come to this world.

6 And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest –

It sounds to me like that says the "children" are given the same assignment in this world that they had in the last one – that is to teach – earlier he had said they were to teach the "people," now he says they are to teach the "children of men." I think that, given the way he uses those words, he is making a very careful distinction about when and were the teaching was performed – both in time and in space. Alma concludes his statement by summing up the eternal nature and authority of the priesthood.

7 This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things –

8 Now they were ordained after this manner – being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end –

9 Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen.

The "Amen" concludes Alma's comments about the eternal nature of priesthood and priesthood callings. He continues his sermon by moving on to the next question, which is about priesthood

Now lets re-read the first part of Alma 13 without interruption:

- 1 AND again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people.
- 2 And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.
- 3 And this is the manner after which they were ordained--being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.
- 4 And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren.
- 5 Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared--
- 6 And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest--
- 7 This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things--
- 8 Now they were ordained after this manner--being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end--

9 Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen. (Alma 13:1-9)

Before we leave Alma, there is one more question which ought to be addressed: In verse one he says:

And again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people.

Our question is, what were "these commandments" which the "children" were ordained to teach the "people." For the answer we have to go back to the commandments Alma had just talked about in chapter 12. The commandments have to do with accepting the atonement, and the context in which he places those commandments is the Adam and Eve story.

- 22 Now Alma said unto him: This is the thing which I was about to explain. Now we see that Adam did fall by the partaking of the forbidden fruit, according to the word of God; and thus we see, that by his fall, all mankind became a lost and fallen people.
- 23 And now behold, I say unto you that if it had been possible for Adam to have partaken of the fruit of the tree of life at that time, there would have been no death, and the word would have been void, making God a liar, for he said: If thou eat thou shalt surely die.
- 25 Now, if it had not been for the plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation of the world, there could have been no resurrection of the dead; but there was a plan of redemption laid, which shall bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, of which has been spoken." (Alma 12:23-25)

He follows that concept all the way to the final judgement, then he again goes back in time and tells how the "plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation of the world" was taught to the people.

Remarkably, the verses which follow may be read as a condensed version of the drama of the New Year festival. If read that way, "these commandments" mentioned at the beginning of chapter 13 are the endowment/enthronement principles set in the context of the Adam and Eve story. (It may be useful at this juncture to remind ourselves Joseph Fielding Smith used Ephesians 1:1-4 to show that there had been priesthood ordinances in the pre-mortal world. ²⁵⁴) Alma said.

- 28 And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man, behold, then he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them;
- 29 Therefore he sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory.
- 30 And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them according to their faith and repentance and their holy works.
- 31 Wherefore, he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal, and becoming as Gods, knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good –
- 32 Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption, that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death, which was an everlasting death as to things pertaining unto righteousness; for on such the plan of redemption could have no power, for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God.
- 33 But God did call on men, in the name of his Son, (this being the plan of redemption which was laid) saying: If ye will repent and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine Only Begotten Son;
- 34 Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these

Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Genealogical Society of Utah,1949), p.50-1; and also his *Doctrines of Salvation*, Salt Lake City, 1954, Vol. 1, p. 66

shall enter into my rest.

35 And whosoever will harden his heart and will do iniquity, behold, I swear in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest.

Lets go through that carefully. Alma began at the Council.

28 And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man, behold, then he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them;

That is almost exactly the way he began chapter 13. After it was decided how and by whom these things should be taught to "man," the Father ordained priests to "teach these things unto the people." (As far as I can tell, "man," here, is a generic plural term, meaning the same thing as "people" means in the next chapter. If the teachers are the same in both instances, then "people" and "man" who are taught are probably the same, so "man" in these verses is also a designation for the unorganized intelligences. If that is correct, then we are about to read the commandments which were taught by the "children" to the "people."

29 Therefore he [the Father] sent angels to converse with them ["man," people," "intelligences"], who caused men to behold of his glory.

The Father sent angels to converse with them and to teach them how to come into God's presence – how to receive their "preparatory redemption." These angels appear to be the "children" ordained to that purpose in chapter 13.

30 And they [the intelligences who accepted the teachings] began from that time forth to call on his name; [Presumably, the angels taught the people how to pray.] therefore God conversed with men [God himself spoke to them – either symbolically or in fact. In the New Year festival drama, God's speaking to them would have been symbolic.], and made known unto them the plan of redemption [The plan that would enable them to come into his presence.], which [plan] had been prepared from the foundation of the world [at the Council]; and this he made known unto them according to their faith [tokens of their covenants] and repentance [repentance is always requisite to coming into the presence of God] and their holy works.

As already observed, in the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and elsewhere, "works" usually refer to the ordinances. In this instance that is rather obvious as God is using their "holy works" as a means of instruction.

31 Wherefore, he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal

"Temporal" has to do with time. (We often use "temporal" to mean time on this earth, but that is not necessarily so. Time is a way of defining sequence, so whenever our existence is sequential, we are in time.) It appears that somewhere in the beginnings of time these intelligences had transgressed the first commandments they received. (On the other hand, – it was probably keeping those early commandments that helped make the noble and great ones noble and great.)

and becoming as Gods, knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good—

That brings our attention back to the Adam and Eve story which appears to be the setting for these events. (That statement requires an explanation: The primary function of the New Year festival drama was to give the participants a sense of Self – as one's Self related to Jehovah. One way it accomplished that was by giving them a way to orient themselves. That was taught them by their participation in the stage play which was technically about the king, but which was also about each person who watched the drama and internalized it. The orientation was achieved through the drama's teaching the initiate: first – this is who and where you were; now, this is who and where you are; later, this is who you are going to become and how you are going to get there. It is apparent to me from Isaiah 61, Psalm 22, and elsewhere, that the ancients believed that after death, spirits would still need that same kind of orientation, and that it would be taught

by using the same stage play. It seems reasonable to me that spirits before birth, who are about to embark on the adventure that is this life, would also need that kind or orientation. And it appears to me that in Alma's discourse, if "these things" are what they appear to have been, then intelligences also received that same kind of orientation: that is, I suppose they would have been taught something like this: "This is who and where you are; this is where you are going next; this is where you are going after that; and these are the steps you will take to get there." An essential part of that orientation is the fact that in each step along the way, each individual is "independent" – free to make one's own decisions about how one will respond to those instructions – just as Adam and Eve were free. That, I suppose, is one reason the Adam and Eve story is symbolically the autobiography of every individual who sees it and applies it to an understanding of his or her own autobiography.)

32 Therefore God gave unto them [the intelligences] commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption [how to enter his presence], that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death, which was an everlasting death as to things pertaining unto righteousness [being everlastingly cut off from things pertaining unto zedek – temple ordinances, covenants, and powers, and the full blessings associated with them]; for on such the plan of redemption could have no power [the object of the New Year festival drama was to teach people how to come into the presence of God. If one rejects those teachings, then one will not be clean, and will not know how to enter God's presence], for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God. [There is no provision made for the unclean to be in the presence of God – otherwise the place where God is would be unclean. (1 Nephi 15:33-34)]

If these are the commandments which the "children" taught the "people," then their version of the Feast of Tabernacles drama extended in time from where they were as intelligences all the way to the final judgement. That is, it taught them the plan of salvation as it was introduced to the Council and as it would be played out in each of their lives in their future world as spirit children of God, in their mortal lives, and beyond.

33 But God did call on men, in the name of his Son, (this being the plan of redemption which was laid) saying: If ye will repent and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine Only Begotten Son;

34 Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest.

That is very important. In the same speech in which Alma asserted that they were once on the standing with their brethren (ch. 13), he quoted God as promising that there can be no external impediments to their ultimate salvation if they will repent and accept the blessings of the atonement. That was the conclusion of the portion of Alma's speech which began with the Adam and Eve story.²⁵⁵

Another window on those same ideas about how one came to be chosen to be a member of the Council is found at the beginning of Abraham's autobiography.

Because Abraham began the way cosmic myths and epic dramas almost always begin – with his need to find a new home – it is reasonable to suppose that the way he expressed that need was a symbolic beginning of the cosmic autobiography he was about to tell.

1 In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residence of my fathers, I, Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence;

2 And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to

Alma introduced his next idea by reminding his listeners of the content of the 95th Psalm. The background of the psalm is that when the people of Israel were gathered at the foot of Mt Sinai, the Lord invited them to come into his presence and they refused. In the psalm, their refusal is called their provocation. Paul quoted the psalm, using it the same way Alma did, in Hebrews 3: 7-19. Jacob paraphrased it when he invited his people to "come unto Christ."

be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

- 3 It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me.
- 4 I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.
- 5 My fathers having turned from their righteousness, and from the holy commandments which the Lord their God had given unto them, unto the worshiping of the gods of the heathen, utterly refused to hearken to my voice;

One of the keys to understanding this passage is the distinction Abraham makes between "the fathers" and "my fathers." He speaks of "my fathers" in verses one and five, but verses two, three, and four are about his relationship with "the fathers."

v. 2 And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same;

This is one of those not-so-rare verses which simply says everything there is to say. A personal note: My trying to organize my thoughts while writing this little treatise has been an exceedingly difficult thing for me. If you have been troubled by my wandering all over the place and not sticking to the point, please know your frustration has not been any greater than mine. Take this verse as an example. If one were going to make a thorough comment about what it says, one would have to say everything there is to say about everything. Let me give you a quick overview to show you what I mean.

"finding"

suggests intelligent forethought, calculation, and study, the determination to exercise agency, personal and intellectual growth, and that whole business about the formation of individual personality. If one were to know the full meaning of "finding," one would have to understand the discriminating process by which an intelligence learned truth and assimilated its light.

"there was greater"

"greater" is relative. It says he was already happy as he was, but had the wisdom to know that more happiness was available. Again, we are seeing the most fundamental principles in the formation of personality – something far more sophisticated than just the creation of a considered opinion.

"happiness"

Happiness is probably the most evocative of all human emotions — not just because it must be experienced in the present in order to be real, but also because its continuance in an ever expanding present is perceived as the ultimate state of fulfillment. "Men are that they might have joy" defines the objective and consummation of one's existence — and to achieve that end was Abraham's first stated objective.

"peace"

I have chosen to delay a careful discussion of "peace" and "peacemaker" until I go through the Beatitudes with some care. Suffice it to say here that peace was both the object and the product of all of the ancient coronation rites, and is therefore the ultimate blessing of kingship and priesthood. (More about that later)

"rest for me"

To "rest" is to be in the presence of God. (D&C 121:28-32) That happens when one is born a spirit child of God, it may happen again intermittently before the resurrection, and

it is the crowning glory of those who have become like him. (Moroni 7:47-48)

"I sought"

To seek is to be actively engaged – not just do the things one must do, but also be the person one must be.

"for the blessings of the fathers and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same;"

That is very important. The blessings he sought were the power and authority to both receive and give . The power to give some of those blessings is a legitimate function of an institutional structure. Blessings given in that manner are very important, but they may also be very hollow. For example, baptism and the authority to baptize are necessary, but one's just being baptized is meaningless unless it initiates a fundamental change in one's heart and mind, and more especially the empathy and charity attributed to the pit of one's stomach. In other words, the ordinances are enabling and validating, but only if they become the springboards for actualizing the blessings promised – otherwise they are nothing. One has is the power to bless others in accordance with covenants already made; to be kind in one's judgement; pure in one's heart; to be a peacemaker – the very personification of charity; to endure hardships without transferring the pain to others; to introduce the gospel to those who do not know – and to be a light to those who do. In order to give such blessings, one must first receive.

That is only the barest sketch of the ideas that verse suggests to me: the full breadth and the depth of the words in that short verse are altogether too big for me to stretch my mind around.

And finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same;

Abraham's use of "the fathers," as opposed to "my fathers," is the key to the way one looks at our story. This difference in terminology is not only a difference in perspective, it is a way of distinguishing times. When Abraham was describing the vision in which he saw the Council and the creation (ch.3), he first referred to the participants as the "noble and great ones," and then as "the gods." But here he is telling his own history: he tells how he sought to be one like them, and he speaks of them with an almost subservient reverence.

having been myself a follower of righteousness [zedek – temple things], desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness [there are gradations of zedek!], and to possess a greater knowledge,

The grades of zedek seem to be associated with gradations of truth = knowledge = light - one is saved no faster than he gains knowledge - and one gains knowledge no faster than he is saved.

and to be a father of many nations,

That is the same as the blessing he ultimately received in this world – but it is also consistent with the blessings expressed in Psalms 25 and 45, which extend those blessings beyond this time.

a prince of peace

The apex of the beatitudes reads "blessed are all the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." As I shall explain below, "the children of God." is simply a plural form of the royal covenant name of the king's heir, "son of God." So "a peacemaker who is a son of God," and "prince of peace" apparently mean exactly the same thing.

In Alma 12, instruction came "according to their faith and repentance and their holy works." If one is to, first, "receive instructions" and then "keep the commandments," it is likely that the instructions and the commandments are much the same thing. In other words, he was not necessarily talking about a desire to keep generic commandments, but to keep those commandments that were specific to the instructions he wished to receive. One gets the same idea in the sequence the Lord gave the Prophet Joseph.

Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am. (D&C 93:1)

That can be read as a list, but it was probably intended to be read as a sequence: the conclusion which precedes redemption is: "obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments."

I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

Abraham achieved his goal and became "a rightful heir," that is, he became a prince of peace. He also became a high priest. Thus he obtained both the sacral kingship and priesthood – "holding the right belonging to the fathers."

- v. 3 It [the kingship and priesthood right belonging to the fathers] was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me. [that reference to Adam will come up again later when he talks about the Council near the end of chapter 3.]
- v. 4 I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.

"The appointment of God": if this translation is consistent with the Old Testament, "God" is

Elohim, so it reads: "according to the appointment of Elohim unto the fathers." That appointment occurred at the Council. It is the story in Abraham 3, Alma, 13, Isaiah 6, Psalm 45, 82, 1 Nephi 1 and every other scripture that talks about the *sode*. The last phrase, "unto the fathers concerning the seed" must contain all implications of the earlier phrase "a father of many nations." That was the prize on which Abraham set his eyes from before the beginning – it includes the blessings of family in this world, then Celestial exaltation and eternal increase. Here is the entire text:

- 1 In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residence of my fathers, I, Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence;
- 2 And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.
- 3 It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me.
- 4 I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.

It appears to me that this is Abraham's autobiographical account of his desires and preparations to receive blessings at the Council. I suppose that would make the earlier part of that account our only first-hand description of one's progression as an intelligence. If this is Abraham's pre-mortal autobiography, as it appears to be, and if ours is even remotely like his, then our progression here is only a reflection of what has come before – adding additional light to Joseph Smith's statement,

Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council." ²⁵⁶

I suppose that when we became spirit children of our Father, and received his commission in the Council, our individual assignment reflected our individual abilities and interests. In other words, the assignment one received at the Council coincided perfectly with the law which is one's Self. Thus, one's foreordination, and the covenants which were an integral part of it, became the product and consequence – the blessing and challenge – of the law of one's own being – and that suggests that the law of one's own being was acknowledged as good, (sanctioned and legitimized, if you will) by the ordinances and covenants which were associated with one's calling at the Council. (I suppose the phrase, "calling and election made sure" is talking about that calling – projected into this world and made sure by one's works here – resulting in one's election being made sure also.

In the scriptures cited above, the Saviour and the prophets say a good deal about their own individual callings at the Council, but there is also much said about the general nature of those assignments without specific reference to individual callings.

D&C 132

One of the most misunderstood passages of scripture (a misunderstanding that the polygamous fundamentalists base many of their claims on) is the first 15 verses of D&C 132. What it is NOT is a statement about polygamy. What it IS, is an affirmation that God keeps the covenants he made at the Council.

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines –

It is misreading that verse that causes the problems. Joseph's question was not about polygamy, it was about the *justification for* specific individuals having had more than one wife. So the Lord is now going to answer the question – the question is "wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants...." Verse 15 begins with the word "wherefore." That is a conjunction which divides the rationale from the conclusion. So in the first 14 verses the Lord explains the rationale – giving the reason for the justification – and beginning with verse 15 he begins to apply that rationale to the principle of eternal marriage. That rationale is based on Covenants made at the Council in Heaven, and he talks about the importance of those covenants.

2 Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter. ["This matter" is the question about their justification.]

A word about justification: It is a legal term that means circumstances get in the way of normal lawful accountability. For example, in law, murder is a criminal act, but killing someone in self defense is justified. In the gospel there are two categories of justification: justification before the act, and justification after the fact. Both are dependent upon the atonement and on the Saviour as our "advocate with the Father." Justification *after* the fact relies on repentance: If one sins, then repents, the Saviour takes the burden of the sin and leaves one as though the sin had never been committed. Thus one can learn by experience and observation about the differences between good and evil, and not have to spend eternity outside the presence of God became those experiences made one permanently unclean. Justification *before* the act is also dependent upon the Saviour's atonement, but does not require repentance. The classic example is Nephi's cutting off Laban's head after a conversation with the Spirit in which Nephi learned that he would not be held responsible for Laban's death. As far as I know that kind of justification is *very* rare – yet throughout history most crimes committed by religionists have been self-excused based on their claim of that kind of justification. The Spanish Inquisition and the present atrocities in the Near

East are only two examples. So are the less overtly bloodthirsty crimes of intolerance and gossip. One's self-justification based on religions claims are very dangerous because it leaves one blind to his own need to repent and vulnerable to repeated sin. Claiming that kind of justification without having it affirmed by revelation from the Lord is a sure way to open the gates of hell and jump in.

In Section 132, What the Lord is about to explain to the Prophet Joseph is that the Patriarchs' having multiple wives was a matter of prior justification, and that justification was based on assignments they received, and covenants they made at the Council in Heaven. So in the next few verses, it is the nature and importance of the law-of-pre-mortal-covenant that he talks about.

3 Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

"This law," as he is about to explain, is the law derived from one's eternal covenants.

4 For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.

When the Lord says "no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory," that is serious business. If he were talking about polygamy, we would all be in bad trouble. But he is not, he is talking about the individual covenants we made at the Council. The covenants he is talking about are "new" because they are renewed in the world, and they are "everlasting" because they were made before we came here and their consequences reach into eternity.

On that same page in the Doctrine and Covenants, but in the previous section, one reads,

- 1 In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;
- 2 And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; (D&C

It is easy to transfer that statement found in section 131 to section 132 where the latter reads "new and everlasting covenant" so that 132 is changed to read, "meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage." But to make that change distorts the meaning of section 132. For example, the whole of D&C 22 reads.

- 1 Behold, I say unto you that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning.
- 2 Wherefore, although a man should be baptized an hundred times it availeth him nothing, for you cannot enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses, neither by your dead works.
- 3 For it is because of your dead works that I have caused this last covenant and this church to be built up unto me, even as in days of old.
- 4 Wherefore, enter ye in at the gate, as I have commanded, and seek not to counsel your God. Amen. (D&C 22:1-4)

There, baptism is a new and everlasting covenant. That is easy to understand because baptism (either in person or vicariously performed) is a necessary prerequisite to justification. The point is that in the D&C there are three different pre-mortal covenants which are called "new and everlasting:"

- 1) baptism D&C 22
- 2) "of marriage" [but not necessarily of plural marriage] D&C 131
- 3) the "law" spoken of in section 132

To confirm the meaning and origin of the "law" which cannot be broken, the Lord ties it to the covenants made at the Council in Heaven

5 For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world.

In the next verses he explains what this "new and everlasting covenant" is.

6 And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

7 And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

That is one of the most legalistic passages in the scriptures. If one temporarily sets aside the legal language and the part about there being only one prophet at a time on the earth who holds the keys, those verses read this way:

6 And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

7 And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, ...that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise ... are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead. ["unto this end" means mortal actions must accord with the pre-mortal covenants]

Then the Lord explains why that is so.

- 8 Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.
- 9 Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name?
- 10 Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed?
- 11 And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was?

This is the way I read those last four verses. The Lord will not consider what one does in this world to be "good," and therefore as "acceptable," unless what one does it in accordance with the covenants one made with the Saviour and his Father "before the world was." And the Lord will require nothing of us in this life except those things which are inherent in those same covenants.

12 I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord.

If he is still talking about the same law, it is one's keeping those individual covenants which people made before they came here that qualifies one for the celestial world – that is, it is the meek who shall inherit the celestial earth.

13 And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God.

None of these new and everlasting covenants are generic, but are all tailored to specific individuals. Even baptism, which is a universal commandant is an individual matter. The fact that these new and everlasting covenants were made in Heaven does not preclude one's free agency on earth. Rather, keeping those covenants must be an exercise of one's agency. One of the reasons we came to this earth was to discover whether we will keep those covenants in an environment which is not conducive to our keeping them – indeed, which offers rewards for our ignoring or violating them. Notwithstanding the covenants one made there, one has the option of not keeping them here – the rewards of not doing so are ephemeral – but they wear the cloak of reality. They include the whole catalog of wealth and power to exercise are all sorts of governmental, commercial, institutional, and individual authority in the lives of other people. But all such advantages are tentative, and their only eternal consequence is the permanent loss of their temporary gain.

14 For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed.

God keeps his covenants but he will not be mocked. The terms of the covenant are negated by anyone who does not do their part, then they cannot receive the blessings which were guaranteed by the covenant.

After that introduction, the Lord opens the subject of latter-day celestial marriage.

15 Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world....(D&C132:1-15)

"Therefore" is the conjunction between the principle of covenantal justification, and the specific question of why the ancients were justified in their practice of celestial marriage. The Lord, having established the principle of the importance of foreordination, will now show how that principle is applied to the question of how those men were justified in having more than one wife. The justification is simply this: that decision was made at the Council and was a part of their individual new and everlasting covenants. Implicit in that justification is another principle: if that arrangement was not part of one's pre-mortal covenants, and if a man takes multiple wives anyway, he is in very bad trouble.

One more word about keeping one's "new and everlasting covenant." Over the years I have heard many young friends wonder out loud: "How am I going to know what the Lord expects me to do in this life?" The consequences of one's not knowing and not doing are very severe, yet we wonder about in this world of darkness, going through life half awake, and uncertain about where and how to walk. After much thought and a good deal of watching other people, I have found an answer to that question which I believe is true: One should seek to be happy -- that means live according to

the law of one's own being – be your Self and cover that Self with no facade which prevents family and friends from filling one's life with companionship and joy – find a profession which gives one a sense of fulfillment, or if that is not possible (as it was not for my own father who was a laborer in a steel factory), then do what he did: use the fruits one's labors to bless the lives of other people – find joy in seeing others discover their own sense of Self – and live close to the Spirit.

The reason I believe that is the correct answer is this: I do not believe the Lord would give us an assignment which conflicts with the fundamental law of our individual personalities – consequently, I believe our assignments were each designed to bring us maximum happiness, and at the conclusion of our lives, maximum fulfillment. (I can say from personal experience that when one reaches a critical juncture where one must make a life changing decision, the Spirit will tell one which path to take – sometimes with a still, small voice, sometimes with the proverbial 2x4 at the side of the head – but by whichever means, it will be sufficient for one to know what one must do.) I believe that by the time one gets out of this life, 257 if one can define one's Self in terms of charity and faithfulness, then the final "judgement day" will be a time of fulfillment – a time of rejoicing and of renewal.

3 Nephi 27

To me, the most important thing one can learn about individual "new and everlasting covenants" is what the Saviour says about his own. He did not use that phrase, but the Saviour spoke of the

²⁵⁷ That statement can only work if "this life" is considered to be all of our experiences between the time of physical birth and the time of our final judgement. Our "this life" must include both our life in this body and the one that follows when we are spirits waiting for the resurrection.

principle in the following words:

- v. 13 Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you--that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.
- v. 14 And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—
- v. 15 And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.
- v. 16 And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.
- v. 17 And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father. (3 Nephi 27:13-17)

As I understand that passage, it says the Gospel is that the Saviour came to do the will of his Father. Everything else – his mission at the Council, the creation, his life on this earth, the atonement and the scope of its powers – are subsets of that. Because the Saviour did his Father's will, whoever of the rest of us will repent, be baptized, be "filled," and endure to the end, will be held guiltless before his Father at the last day. That concept: "I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me," might be called the Saviour's "new and everlasting covenant."

After explaining the law of the gospel, the Saviour explained another law, which he called "the word." He said:

v. 18 And this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words.

v. 19 And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end. (3 Nephi 27: 18-19)

My understanding is that the "word" has to do with the validity and power of the priesthood and its ordinances to cleanse and prepare one to enter the presence of God. So one's inclination to obey "the word" is also a fundamental part of the law of one's own being. I suspect there is another implication as well. All priesthood functions are accomplished by words (some audible, some not). Here obedience to the "word" and being clean from sin are closely associated, as priesthood ordinances and being clean are also associated elsewhere.

The Saviour then explained the "commandment."

v. 20 Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

In the examples given above the word "commandments" referred to specific instructions rather than generic commandments. Given that the people he talking to are already members of the Church, it is likely that the baptism he is talking about is not the baptism by water.

After defining the "gospel," the "word," and the "commandment," the Saviour did something quite unexpected. He defined the gospel again, only this time differently from before:

- 21 Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do;
- 22 Therefore, if ye do these things blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

Here, it seems, he has defined the gospel in terms of us, rather than in terms of himself, but he insists that both definitions are the same.

I think what the Saviour is saying is that if there is a law of the gospel which can be defined in

terms of any human life, it should be the same as that law defined in terms of his own life — "that I came to do the will of my Father because my Father sent me," And if one lives one's own gospel — "that I *also* came to do the will of my Father because my Father sent me," in the light and by the power of Christ's gospel — if one is successful in that — then one can be "filled." He will endure to the end, and receive and accept all of the blessings of the atonement. Then it can be said that one has been true to the law of his own being — that one is wholly one's Self — complete, perfect, pure — "holy and without spot." I believe that the cohesive power that makes that possible is the Saviour's love for each of us, coupled with our individual love for him and for each other. This is not Nirvana. There is no merging of personalities here. Each is the unique individual — the Self — one has created and nurtured through the eternities. The law of one's own being is as sacred as it is nonpareil. Whatever else the bright and shining facets of one's personality may be, ultimately the signet of one's salvation will be this: "I came to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me, and through the atoning power of Christ I kept my covenants and remained true to the law of my own being."

Returning to the text of Psalm 25

The springboard for that very long diversion was this verse in Psalm 25:

14 The secret [sode] of the Lord is with them that fear him; and will shew them his covenant.

I may have overstepped the bounds of my credibility, but I wanted to tell you what I think it means, that the Lord "will show them his covenant." I believe that for each individual that

covenant is different, and for each individual the meaning and expanse of that covenant is the biggest idea in the eternities. The meek, according to this psalm, are those who keep those covenants.

15 Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

The net would be the things which seek to entangle one's feet to prevent one from following the "way" and from keeping his covenants. Those impediments are very real, and once again, in this psalm which is a celebration of the blessings of eternal life, one is brought face to face with the difficulty of just muddling through this lonely, dreary world.

Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

The troubles of my heart are enlarged:
O bring thou me out of my distresses.

Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.
O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. (Psalm 25:16-22)

In the 25th psalm, a meek person is one who knows and keeps his eternal covenants, notwithstanding the difficulties which beset him. If that idea can be transferred to the 45th psalm, the statement that the king will ride in meekness must mean that the king will keep the covenants he made at the Council. If that is correct, in the phrase, "because of truth and meekness and righteousness" – "truth" refers to what one learns in the Council and, of that, what the Spirit teaches here; "meekness" refers to one's keeping the covenants one made at the Council; "righteousness" is zedek, and refers to how one keeps those covenants. Thus, all the powers and

responsibilities of sacral kingship and priesthood are effectually expressed in only those three words: Truth, Meekness, and Righteousness!

There are two more scriptures we need to read in order to capture the idea of individual pre-mortal covenant, and to even more tightly tie one's ability to fulfill those covenants to the reality of the atonement. Even though these scriptures are not a part of the Old Testament and would not have been known to Abinadi, they throw great light on the idea of eternal covenant. For Paul and Moroni each make the same argument that Abinadi was making, except rather than talking about an eternal kingship as Abinadi was, they talk about an eternal priesthood and eternal life – which, as far as I can tell, are all the same thing. The first of those scriptures comes from Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians, Chapter 1

The text reads:

- 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:
- 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
- 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
- 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
- 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
- 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according

- to the riches of his grace;
- 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
- 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
- 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:
- 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
- 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
- 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
- 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.
- 15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,
- 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;
- 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:
- 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
- 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
- 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
- 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
- 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
- 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1:1-23)

That chapter tells us more about our relationship with our Father in Heaven than any other scripture I am aware of. Lets read it carefully together.

- v. 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:
- v. 2 Grace [The word "grace" often suggests the power of the light/love which emanates from the presence of God.] be to you, and peace ["Peace" in the Beatitudes, is the quality of those who are called "the children of God.], from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- v. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who [the Father] hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Verse 20 identifies "heavenly places" as the place where Christ sits on the throne to the right of his Father. That would be the throne room or the Holy of Holies, in the temple on Kolob. So in verse 3, where Paul says the Father "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places," he has once again brought us back to the time and place of the Council in Heaven. That becomes more evident as he continues.

- v. 4 According as he [the Father] hath chosen us in him [the Son] before the foundation of the world [i.e. before the Council created the world], that [chosen to the end that] we should be holy [complete, perfect] and without blame [Moroni says "holy and without spot," clean, redeemed] before [in front of another reference to the throne] him [the Father] in love [Charity is the ultimate qualification for eternal blessings even before the foundation of the world]:
- v. 5 [the Father] Having predestinated [foreordained] us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself [the Father], according to the good pleasure of his [the Father's] will.
- v. 6 To the praise of the glory of his [the Father's] grace, wherein he [the Father] hath made us accepted [to the Father] in the beloved [Son].
- v. 7 In whom [the Son] we have redemption through his [the Son's] blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his [the Father's] grace;
- v. 8 Wherein he [the Father] hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
- v. 9 [The Father,] Having made known unto us the mystery of his [the Father's] will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
- v. 10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he [the Father] might gather

together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him [the Father]:

When the Prophet Joseph quoted and explained this verse, he said,

Now the purpose in Himself in the winding up scene of the last dispensation is that all things pertaining to that dispensation should be conducted precisely in accordance with the preceding dispensations. And again, God purposed in Himself that there should not be an eternal fullness until every dispensation should be fulfilled and gathered together in one, and that all things whatsoever, that should be gathered together in one in those dispensations unto the same fullness and eternal glory, should be in Christ Jesus; therefore He set the ordinances to be the same forever and ever, and set Adam to watch over them, to reveal them from heaven to man, or to send angels to reveal them. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" ("Heb. 1:14.)²⁵⁸

- v. 11 In whom [the Father] also we have obtained [past tense: a reference to the blessings one received in "heavenly places"] an inheritance [If one can inherit, that designates one as an heir another reference to sacral kingship.], being predestinated [foreordained] according to the purpose of him [the Father] who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

 [1 Ne. 7:12: "...The Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men...."]
- v. 12 That we should be to the praise of his [the Father's] glory, who [the Father] first trusted in Christ. ["first" means FIRST, and as Enoch points out, refers to before the every beginning before there could even be a Council."²⁵⁹]
- v. 13 In whom [the Son] ye also trusted [Way back then, before the foundation of the earth--the trust which brought you to the "heavenly places"], after that ye heard the word of truth ["in the first place"], the gospel of your salvation: in whom [the Son] also after that ye believed, ye were sealed [past tense, again a reference to the experience in the Heavenly Places] with that holy Spirit of promise

The phrase, "Holy Spirit of promise" appears twice in the D&C, and, as here, both have to do with being sealed. In section 76, it refers to those who shall attain the Celestial Kingdom, "And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true." (V, 53) Section 132 says for an eternal marriage to be valid, it must be "made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise" (v. 7)

v. 14 Which [sealing] is the earnest of our inheritance [in the future Celestial world] until the redemption [coming back into the presence of God] of the purchased possession [another meaning of redemption], unto the praise of his [the Father's] glory.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 167-8.

²⁵⁹ See the Secrets of Enoch, 24:2 as quoted above.

²⁶⁰ In the Joseph Smith Translation of First John, the concept of having received the holy Spirit of promise is equated with becoming a child of God. It reads, "Whosoever is born of God doth not

In this instance, an "earnest" and a *pistis* are the same thing. In law, an earnest is an enabling contract, such as when one gives "earnest money" to ensure that he may purchase a house at an agreed price in the near future. It is a preliminary contract which guarantees that a more permanent contract will be made later. So when Paul says that we were "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" he is saying that we came to this world with the promise that if we do not mess up here, the our opportunity for salvation is absolutely guaranteed. That preliminary covenant (earnest) is the pistis (token of the more permanent covenant) which gave us the confidence to risk this earthly experience. That guarantee is not the same as predestination. "Predestination," the word which is actually used in the King James translation, means that God has predetermined who will go to heaven and who will go to hell. In contrast to that, Paul's "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance" acknowledges the culmination of eons of individual growth and faithfulness. It is the sealing of the Father's covenant that we can come down into this really scary world without having to wonder if we can ever go home again. In the D&C the Lord repeats that covenant: "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise. (D&C 82: 10)

A new paragraph begins at this point in Paul's letter. The first part of the letter was an introduction in which Paul reminded his readers about our pre-earth-life relationship with the Father and the Son. That introduction is, as far as I know, the most complete description to be found in the scriptures of our pre-mortal relationship with our Father in Heaven. The covenants referred to took

continue in sin; for the Spirit of God remaineth in him; and he cannot continue in sin, because he is born of God, having received that holy Spirit of promise. In this the children of God are manifest...." (JST 1 John 3:9-10a.) Elsewhere, the promise of being sealed by the holy Spirit of promise is equated with the promise that one will receive eternal life. See D&C 76:50-60; 88:1-5; 124:123-124; 132:1-14.

place in the Temple (v. 3) before we came here – in the same throne room where Abraham 1 & 3, Isaiah 6, 1 Nephi 1, Psalm 45 & 62, Jeremiah 1, Ezekiel 1, and many other *sode* experiences occurred.

Paul continues his letter by explaining why he wrote so much about pre-mortal covenants, and why they are so important in the life we now live.

v. 15 Wherefore I [Paul] also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus,

"Faith," here, is translated from the word *pistis*. It matters little whether he is talking of the tokens assigned to the covenants as they were made, or whether he is talking about the continuance of one's living in accordance to those covenants. He began his letter by addressing it to "the faithful in Christ Jesus," and is reiterating that here. When one understands one's relationship with the Saviour, and the power of one's independence when he realizes that his total freedom is dependent upon the Saviour's power, then one's life becomes an expression of the tokens of those covenants. I think that's what it means to have "faith in Christ."

and love unto all the saints,

Charity in this world is the same law which, in v. 4, enabled us to come to the Father's throne in the first place.

- v. 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;
- v. 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him [In this context, "knowledge of him" apparently means *knowing him*]:

v. 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened [Because they have been ceremonially prepared to see, now they can see with understanding]; that ye may know ["know" means *know* ... Know what?]

Paul continues by listing three things which he prays the true followers of Christ will learn through personal revelation. His words seem difficult to follow, but his meaning is extremely important. He has just introduced the intent of his prayer by giving us one of the scriptures' most detailed accounts of our pre-mortal relationship with the Father. Now in that context he says he prays "that ye may know" the three following things: 1) what assignment one was given at the Council, 2) what blessings await one who fulfills that assignment, 3) that God has the power to make it possible for one to succeed. Paul's words are these:

that ye may know

FIRST: what is the hope of his calling

The Greek word which is translated "calling" is a verb which implies the act of speaking, or issuing an invitation, or an assignment. Thus the "calling" Paul is talking about is the assignment given by the Father to the person who was foreordained, and sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise. That portion of Paul's prayer is not just that one will know what his calling (noun) is, but that one will know what his calling (covenantal assignment) is. He goes further and prays that one may know "the hope" of that calling. I suppose that may have to do with one's understanding one's own worth, and with finding satisfaction in knowing one's calling is important. If so, such a "hope" usually comes to one slowly, over many years, as one keeps his earthly covenants and seeks to follow the instructions of the Spirit. There is also the very real possibility that the meaning of "hope," as we find it here and in others of Paul's writings, but especially as it is used in Moroni 7, is this: That one knows Jesus as the Christ, and in that knowledge one comes to understand what one must do to be faithful to the covenants made with our Father in Heaven; one

also trusts that God will do his part assisting in the fulfillment of those covenants. Thus, "hope" is living in full anticipation that one can fulfill one's covenants with God, and being so sure that God will fulfill his covenants that it is as though they were fulfilled already -- that one may "enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come...." (Moses 6:59)

SECOND: what the riches of the glory of his [the Father's] inheritance in the saints,

"Inheritance" is the operative word. It carries the same connotation as "heir," and is the same promise as sacral kingship and priesthood. That is, that even in this world, one may knowledgeably anticipate the rich blessings which are promised to those who fulfill their covenants. If one understands that, there is no reason to be either bribed or intimidated by the glitters and powers of this world, but one can walk in the peace and assurance which Paul and Mormon call "hope." The extent of those blessings is explained by the Lord to Moses, "For behold, this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39)

THIRD: what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

- v. 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places [that same throne room, the Holy of Holies, in the celestial temple],
- v. 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
- v. 22 And [the Father] hath put all things under his [the Son's] feet, and gave him [the Son] to be the head over all things to the church,
- v. 23 Which is his [the Son's] body, the fullness of him [the Father] that filleth all in all.

 The third part of the prayer is that one may know, by the Spirit, that the God of Heaven has sufficient power to guarantee that one will not be prevented from fulfilling that covenant.

Let me give you a very simplistic example: A man and a boy make a covenant. They covenant that if the boy moves a board before nightfall the man will give the boy \$10. The boy is capable, and agrees to move the board. For his part, the man promises that nothing will prevent him from being able to do so. A third person comes along and puts a huge rock on the board. The boy is strong enough to move the board, but not the rock. The boy's responsibility has not changed. He is only responsible for moving the board, and there is nothing in the man's covenant which says he must help move the board or make it easier for the boy to do so – but he is covenant-bound to make sure no external power prevents the boy. So it is the man's responsibility to move the rock out of the way, and to do it in time that the boy can fulfill his portion of the covenant. The man moves the rock, and prevents every other obstacle that is in the way, then it is entirely up to the boy to do what he said he would do.

I think Paul was saying something like that. One has accepted an assignment by covenant, and one is expected to fulfill that covenant no matter how difficult it seems. Similarly, God has covenanted that no external force – no power on earth or in hell – will be able to prevent one from fulfilling the terms of the covenant or receiving the blessings attached to it – no one except one's Self. And even that difficulty is mitigated by the sustaining power of the Holy Ghost and the blessings of the atonement.

To say it more simply, Paul prays that his friends may:

- 1. know the covenants they made during their pre-mortal existence
- 2. know the blessings awaiting them as they keep those covenants
- 3. know that God has the power to remove any obstacle which might stand in the way of

Once again, the full text reads:

- 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:
- 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
- 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
- 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
- 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
- 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;
- 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
- 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
- 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:
- 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
- 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
- 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
- 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

- 15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,
- 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;
- 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:
- 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
- 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
- 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
- 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
- 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
- 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1:1-23)

Moroni 10

The other scripture which echoes Abinadi's teachings is Moroni's farewell address in the Book of Mormon. The last chapter of the Book of Mormon is also about eternal covenants. Like many places in the scriptures it is written in the dual languages of the covenants — "the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians." One can read scriptures on many philosophical levels and find all sorts of meaning, just as one can read Shakespeare the same way, but I am not talking about philosophic "levels." I am talking about the actual sub-text whose language is as definitive as the surface text — So that if two people know the language of the sub-text they will read it the same way — just as, if they know the language of the surface text they will read that the same way. In this scripture the sub-text is about the covenants one makes here as enabling actions on our part,

- 27 And I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust?
- 28 I declare these things unto the fulfilling of the prophecies. And behold, they shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the everlasting God; and his word shall hiss forth from generation to generation.
- 29 And God shall show unto you, that that which I have written is true.
- 30 And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing.
- 31 And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.
- 32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.
- 33 And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.
- 34 And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen.

Beginning with Moroni 10:28 and reading to the end:

28 I declare these things unto the fulfilling of the prophecies

The scriptures usually use "prophecies" to mean any truth spoken under the direction of the Spirit.

Frequently those things have to do with the future, so we think of prophecy as being about the

future, but that restricts the meaning of the word more than is necessary. "Prophecy" and "prophet" are essentially the same word: prophets speak by the Spirit, but not always about the future. So, "unto the fulfilling of the prophecies" may be about the future, but I suspect it is about a much broader truth.

And behold, they [the truths] shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the everlasting God;

He will speak the words himself, or, as in the drama of the New Year festival, he will be represented as speaking them – and they will always be the same, from generation to generation.

and his word shall hiss forth from generation to generation.
29 And God shall show unto you, that that which I have written is true.

"Show" is a visual thing. God may use a vision to "show," or again, as in the drama of the festival, God was represented as showing things to the congregation. Or "show" may simply represent the way the drama is presented – visually.

30 And again I would exhort you that ve would come unto Christ

There are three ways that can happen. 1) Either one must go to the place where he is – as did Enoch, the Brother of Jared, Lehi, Alma and others. 2) To enter the Holy of Holies and talk with God, as when king Hezekiah went into the Holy of Holies show God the Assyrian letter and ask what he should do about it. 3) or it may happen symbolically, as in the Second Temple period when the High Priest ceremonially passed through the temple veil to be in the presence of God.

and lay hold upon every good gift and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing.

That is not necessarily an entirely figurative statement. One lays hold of something with his hand. In Psalm 45 the king is promised, "and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible [awesome] things." Similarly, the Lord told Job, "thine own right hand can save thee." (Job 40:14)

31 And awake, and arise [those are familiar words] from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments [so are those], O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever

To me the words "strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever" imply eternal marriage and eternal increase. That idea comes because it is written in conjunction with the covenants of the Father.

that [in order that] thou mayest no more be confounded, that [in order that] the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled. [Elsewhere, the covenants of the Father are always associated with the covenants he made at the Council. Moroni seems to be explaining how those covenants may be fulfilled. To "come unto Christ" is, of course, the fundamental key.]

Returning to Psalm 45

Meaning of "Prosperous"

I warned you that the diversion from Psalm 45 would be so long you would wonder if I had forgotten we were ever there. I hope you have not forgotten. All that diversion was to try to describe the meaning of just four concepts in the blessing Elohim gave to the prince in Psalm 45:4.

And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of *truth* and *meekness* and *righteousness*; and thy *right hand* shall teach thee terrible things.

- 1) "Truth" is knowing reality: as it was in the Council, as it is in the present, and as it will be in the eternities beyond. 2) "Meekness" is keeping the covenants one made at the Council first keeping them in the spirit world and now in this world, that the Father may keep his part and bless his children according to the covenant.
- 3) "Righteousness" zedek performing temple ordinances with High Priestly propriety, and living temple precepts with perfect rectitude. 4) The hand the symbol of giving and receiving

both power and peace.

Now I will give you another opinion: Two statements in the Doctrine and Covenants suggest to me that the powers of a king as described in Psalm 45 closely parallel the powers of the Melchizedek priesthood. These passages are not the same as the statement in the psalm, but the messages seem to be the same. They emphasize the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood in terms that sound very much like "truth, meekness, and righteousness," as I have tried to describe them here. The first one reads:

And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries [in the Old Testament "mysteries" would probably be *sode*] of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God [knowing the truth]. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof [In Isaiah, the word "ordinances" would probably appear as the code words "way" or "path"], the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live [a *sode* experience]. Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God;" (D&C 84:19-23)

The second reads:

The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church - To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven [truth], to have the heavens opened unto them [sode experience], to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn [Council in Heaven], and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. (D&C 107:18-19)

As I said, that is not precisely the same wording as the blessing Elohim gave to the king in Psalm 45, but it seems to me that the ideas are very close.

Another similarity is found in the connotations of the word "prosperous." The blessing says, "And

in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness."

"Prosperous" is also a codeword.

When the Lord promised Nephi he would be a ruler and a teacher, he used the word "prosper" to convey that promise. I presume the reason was that Nephi was familiar with Psalm 45, and the Lord simply used language Nephi associated with the blessings of kingship and priesthood. "Prospered" suggests a deliberate play on Psalm 45 where Elohim blesses the pre-mortal prince that he will "prosper" (same Hebrew word) when he becomes the earthly king Israel. That assertion may not be as reckless as it sounds. One cannot know what Hebrew word was used in the Book of Mormon, but the word used in Psalm 45 is only used three other places in the Psalms and four places in Isaiah, and all of them have a similar connotation to the promise given to Solomon. The Hebrew word translated 'prosperously" has the connotation of success rather than of wealth. ²⁶¹ It is found in Isaiah, including the passage quoted by Abinadi, "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand,"and in only three others places in the Psalms. ²⁶² One of those, Psalm 1, uses it

One of those is Psalm 37:7. That psalm, which I shall discuss in detail later, identifies the "meek" as those who keeps the covenants they made at the Council in Heaven.

The other Psalms I did not quote is 118:24-24, which was made famous by Queen Elizabeth I when she heard that she and Protestantism could reign in England because her half sister "Bloody" Mary had died. and that now

This is the day which the Lord hath made;

In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, #6734.

[&]quot;Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Isaiah 53:10; Mosiah 14:10. The next two chapters in Isaiah also use the word: Isaiah 54:17, 55:11. It is also found in Isaiah 48:15 and 1 Nephi 20:15, which I shall show below is a prophecy of the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. "Also, saith the Lord; I the Lord, yea, I have spoken; yea, I have called him to declare, I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous."

in conjunction with the promise that reminiscent of the blessings associated with the tree of life.

- 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
- 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalm 1:1-3)

When the Lord first used the word "prosper" in his promise to Nephi,

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. 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. And inasmuch as thy brethren shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher [king and priest] over thy brethren.(1 Ne. 2:19-22)

Here, to prosper is not just an economic blessing, but a spiritual one. Being cut off from the presence of the Lord is the opposite of prosper, so one may deduce that prosper means being brought into the Lord's presence. That idea is used the same way elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, but there the phrase is "prosper in the land" One example is Lehi's explanation,

For the Lord God hath said that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; and inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence. (2 Ne. 4:4)

There is also an intriguing statement in the autobiography of king Noah's father Zeniff.

5 And I did cause that the women should spin, and toil, and work, and work all manner of fine linen, yea, and cloth of every kind, that we might clothe our nakedness; and thus we did prosper in the land – thus we did have continual peace in the land for the space of twenty and two years. (Mosiah 10:5)

The thing that makes it intriguing is that in almost every other instance that the phrase "prosper in the land" is found in the Book of Mormon it has to do with either literally or symbolically being in the presence of God. Here he says: "that we might clothe our nakedness; and thus we did prosper in the land" That is almost the same phrase the Lord uses when he instructs Moses about the priests' ordinance clothing: "And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness."

(Exodus 28:42) There, the clothing has to do with symbolically coming into the presence of God.

In both the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon, prosperity is an important part of the kingship covenant between Jehovah and Israel. God promises if they will serve him he will cause their flocks and fields to prosper. And it is also a part of the covenant that if they will serve him he will be their God and always be with them. Thus, if they prosper as a nation, that prosperity may be an outward evidence that God is with them. But it is equally apparent from the way Alma uses the phrase that he understands its meaning quite literally. He began his testimony to his son Helaman with these words, "My son, give ear to my words; for I swear unto you, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land." and he ended his testimony with these words:

But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence. Now this is according to his word." (Alma 36: 1, 30. see also Alma 9:13 and 50:17)

If that meaning of "prosper" holds true in the 45th psalm, then the phrase: "And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness" literally means something like this: "In thy royal, priestly robes ride in the presence of the Lord, because you know the truth of the Council, you keep the covenants you made in the Council, and you keep those covenants in the

correct highpriestly manner."

and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

It was not unusual for a blessing to contain both an admonition and a promise. In Elohim's blessing to the prince, the admonition, "in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness," was followed by several promises. The first of those was "and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible [awesome] things." That is the same promise which the Lord gave Job: "thine own right hand can save thee." (Job 40:14) After giving that promise to Job, the Lord taught him the answer to the final question, and Job responded, "I have heard thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." (42:5)

In Psalm 45, after Elohim gives the prince the blessings of kingship and priesthood, he concludes the blessing with this final promise:

5. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

It is my opinion that this third part of the blessing is not a returning to the first idea of the sword and war, but it is a new idea, not expressed before. There are two kinds of enemies in this world, one challenges the earthly concerns of kingship, the other (a holdover from the previous world) challenges the powers of one's righteousness and priesthood. It appears to me that this verse is intended to be an absolute assurance that the Lord guarantees that no power on earth or in hell can prevent one from keeping his covenants and enjoying the blessings derived therefrom. I see it as a promise that as the king rides in truth, meekness and righteousness, even though he finds himself surrounded by enemies, he will (like Abinadi and the Prophet Joseph) remain invincible until his

covenants are fulfilled and his mission accomplished. It is the promise that he will be a king among other kings. It is the same idea which concludes the first chapter of Ephesians, after Paul wrote about our relationship with our Father in Heaven, and the covenants and instructions we received before we left home.

Now consider the impact of that entire blessing as a whole.

- 3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.
- 4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
- 5 Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

Wow!

If this is what the blessing means: 1) the powers of political and military kingship, 2) the priesthood powers to be a righteous judge, and 3) the absolute assurance of God's protection – if the blessing contains all that, then it is a comprehensive covenant, embracing all of the powers and blessings of sacral kingship and priesthood – and there is nothing left to be added except a promise about his posterity, and that is reserved for the conclusion of the psalm.

The anointing of Jehovah

After the blessing from Elohim, the next voice in the 45th psalm is that of the prince himself. As I envision the scene on the stage, Jehovah has stood beside Elohim while he gave the blessing. Now,

as the hands are removed from his head, the prince kneels and does obeisance to both of his Kings – Elohim and Jehovah. That is the way it should be: the servant-king bowing before the master-Kings, and swearing allegiance to them. On the stage, we hear the prince speak to Elohim who has given him the blessing, then he does obeisance to Jehovah, his own immediate superior. To Elohim the prince says,

6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

The word translated "God" is the Hebrew, "Elohim," so there is no question who the prince is addressing. The word, "right" in Strong²⁶³ is "justice," "equity." That is interesting, because the scepter of the Father is not represented as a symbol of military might, but of his being the personification of righteous judgement ("mercy" in the Beatitudes, "charity" in Moroni 7). I like that, because it is the way I would have expected it to be.

Then, in our psalm, the prince turns to Jehovah and says:

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God [Elohim], thy God, [the God of Jehovah is Elohim] hath anointed thee [Jehovah] with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

8 All thy [Jehovah's] garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

As mentioned above, when High Priests were anointed in Israel, they were first dressed in sacred garments and then anointed with specially perfumed oil. The sacred oil was poured over their garments. If this were done in the right light, the garments would reflect the sun and sparkle as though they were made of light. The formula for perfuming that anointing oil of the high priest is

²⁶³ In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, # 4334.

given in the Old Testament, along with the command that this sacred oil may be used for no other purpose. (Exodus ch. 30 & 40) We see a similar situation in these verses of Psalm 45. It is apparent that Jehovah had just been anointed in that same manner, for the prince acknowledges that Jehovah's garments still smell of the fragrant perfumes of the anointing oil. ²⁶⁴ In doing so, he also gives us the formula by which the sacred oil was perfumed: "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." This is a very meaningful formula. The oil is, of course, olive oil, the product of the fruit of the olive tree, which in ancient Israel represented the Tree of Life. Myrrh is a perfume made from the sap of a small bush or tree. Aloes is a perfume made from the heartwood of another tree, and cassia is a perfume made from the bark of still a different tree. ²⁶⁵ So on the stage, Jehovah has been anointed with a sacred oil which represents all the parts of a tree – either an acknowledgment or a declaration that Jehovah is the Tree of Life.

Up to this point, virtually everything in Psalm 45 has taken place in Elohim's throne room and has been almost exclusively about the prince's role when he was chosen before the Council in Heaven. We have heard a declaration of his worthiness, heard the blessing given to him by Elohim, and seen him express his subservience to both Elohim and Jehovah. All of those acts were necessarily witnessed by his people so they could acknowledge that he was foreordained to come to the earth as a legitimate vassal and representative of God in Israel. Now the scene changes, and the next portion of the psalm focuses on the woman who will be the prince's bride. Her part, no doubt, is played by the reigning queen.

There is no account of how the kings were anointed, however the High Priests were anointed with perfumed oil over their clothing. (Exodus 29:21; Leviticus 8:30) That, plus the 25th psalm's saying that Jehovah's garments smell with a sacred combination of perfumes, is a good circumstantial evidence that the earthly king was also anointed over his clothing.

265 For discussions of these trees and their perfumes see the articles in *The Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible*.

A Mother's blessing

At this juncture in the 45th psalm the narrator calls our attention to the other side of the stage, where we see the women's quarters, and are introduced into a room which is probably the Queen's equivalent to the throne room of the King.

The narrator says:

9a Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

The statement, "thy honourable women" is intriguing. The narrator is clearly addressing this to someone who is not on the woman's side of the stage. The remainder of the verse suggests he is speaking to the king.

There is another question about who else was on the stage and who was in the audience. If this psalm represents the foreordination of the king and queen immediately after Jehovah's anointing, then the other members of the Heavenly Council must also be represented as being there. Yet there is no evidence that any male member of the Council except Jehovah and the king were on the stage. That asks, it is possible that the persons in the audience, who were watching the play were actually participating as the Council, and it is also possible that as they watched what was happening to the king and queen, they were seeing it as a representation of what once happened to themselves as well. I think the answer is that it is possible, perhaps even probable. If that is so, then this portion of the drama represents a kind of *sode* experience where the king and queen were

re-experiencing their callings at the Council, and it also represented a symbolic *sode* experience for the members of the audience as well.

That suggests the people in the audience were actually considered to be participating in the play as members of the cast. That is, watching this play was a participatory experience: members of the audience were not just watching – they were *there* – and the characters played by the king and queen also represented the parts each one of them had played at the Council.²⁶⁶

266 The equality I am suggesting – the king, the aristocracy, and the poor, all participating in the same ordinances – is difficult to show in the Old Testament. The prophets are forever deriding the rich for not looking after the poor. Those statements by the prophets can be used as evidence that it was the norm that the poor did not have equal religious status, or else they can be taken as evidence that their not being esteemed as equals was a violation of what should have been the norm. However, the kind of religious equality I see in the 45th psalm is easy to find in the Book of Mormon where King Benjamin and all the people make covenants, and in 4th Nephi. Mormon's description of Alma's church contains the finest description of that kind of equality I have ever read. It does not say there were no poor, but it does say the poor were not looked down upon because they were poor.

26 And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength.

- 27 And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted; and they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely.
- 28 And thus they did establish the affairs of the church; and thus they began to have continual peace again, notwithstanding all their persecutions.
- 29 And now, because of the steadiness of the church they began to be exceedingly rich, having abundance of all things whatsoever they stood in need——an abundance of flocks and herds, and fatlings of every kind, and also abundance of grain, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things, and abundance of silk and fine-twined linen, and all manner of good homely cloth.
- 30 And thus, in their prosperous circumstances, they did not send away any who were

The next voice we hear in the psalm begins, "Harken, O daughter...." Those words might have been spoken by one of two persons - either the princess' Father, Elohim, who is apparently still with the men in his throne room on the other side of the stage, or her Mother who is probably on the side of the stage with the other women. So, in fact, there seems to me to have been only one person who could have spoken these words – the Mother-Queen, the wife of Elohim. It seems appropriate to me that this – so far as I know, the only place in the scriptures which represents itself to be the words of our Mother in Heaven – that this should be a blessing to her daughter – and that it should be performed on the stage where it was probably understood to be symbolically

naked, or that were hungry, or that were athirst, or that were sick, or that had not been nourished; and they did not set their hearts upon riches; therefore they were liberal to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, whether out of the church or in the church, having no respect to persons as to those who stood in need.

31 And thus they did prosper and become far more wealthy than those who did not belong to their church. (Alma 1:26-31)

The key to that equality is in verse 26. "the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers... and thus they were all equal." This situation did not last. Three chapters later, Mormon laments, "Yea, he saw great inequality among the people, some lifting themselves up with their pride, despising others, turning their backs upon the needy and the naked and those who were hungry, and those who were athirst, and those who were sick and afflicted." (Alma 4:12) My point is that the theory of equality I see in Psalm 45 may be correct even if there were many times when the practice was very different from that.

That presents an interesting problem: in the next verse the "daughter" receives a blessing, but the person who gives the blessing is not identified. Later on, in verse 15 the women come "into the king's palace" so that suggests the "honorable women" are not on the king's side of the stage when the blessing is given. So we are left with two questions: 1) is the statement that the queen is "upon thy right side" an assertion of her authority and dignity, or is it a description of where she is standing on the stage. 2) If the queen is standing with the king, then who is with the women who is about to give a blessing to the "daughter." My questions suggests what I believe the answers are: The statement about being on the right side is an avowal of her dignity, but the queen is actually on the side of the stage where the rest of the women are, and it is she who is going to give a blessing to her daughter.

given as a personal blessing to every woman in the audience (just as Elohim's blessing to the prince was probably understood to be given to every man). The Queen's blessing is strikingly similar to, and yet quite different from the blessing which Elohim gave to the prince. The Mother's blessing reads:

10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

I wish to examine that blessing as closely as I examined the other one.

The Mother's blessing begins with instructions. That is not unusual. I suspect there are few modern Patriarchal Blessings which do not contain a great deal of instruction. In this case the instructions are: "forget thine own people and thy father's house." There is nothing unique about that principle either. Adam expressed it from the man's point of view when he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2:23-24) That is the obvious meaning of the instructions to the young princess, but given that the time and place of the blessing was the Council in Heaven, and the event of the blessing was a preparation for her coming to this world, the instruction may suggest her inevitable forgetfulness when she leaves her pre-mortal home and comes to this earth. That forgetfulness is a necessary part of one's experience here, as explained by John Taylor. My initial intent was to quote what President Taylor said about that forgetting, but the entire article is so important, and you may not have access to it otherwise, so I wish to quote it in

Among the writings of modern prophets, there is probably none more relevant to our subject than the following editorial. It was written by President Taylor when he was an apostle living in New York. He was editor of a little newspaper called *The Mormon* which he published for a short time just before the Civil War.

"The Origin, Object, and Destiny of Women."

THE "Latter Day Saints" have often been ridiculed on account of their belief in the pre-existence of spirits, and in marrying for time and for all eternity, both being Bible doctrines. We have often been requested to give our views in relation to these principles, but considering the things of the Kingdom belonged to the children of the Kingdom, therefore not meet to give them to those without. But being very politely requested by a lady a few days since, (a member of the church) to answer the following questions, we could not consistently refuse;-viz., "Where did I come from? What is my origin? What am I doing here? Whither am I going? and What is my destiny, after having obeyed the truth, if faithful to the end?"

For her benefit, and all others concerned, we will endeavor to answer the questions in brief, as we understand them. The reason will be apparent for our belief in the pre-existence of spirits, and in marrying for time and for all eternity.

Lady – whence comest thou? Thine origin? What art thou doing here? Whither art thou going, and what is thy destiny? Declare unto me if thou hast understanding? Knowest thou not, that thou art a spark of Deity, struck from the fire of his eternal blaze, and brought forth in the midst of eternal burning?

Knowest thou not that; eternities ago, thy spirit, pure and holy, dwelt in thy Heavenly Father's bosom, and in his presence, and with thy mother, one of the Queens of heaven, surrounded by thy brother and sister spirts in the spirit world, among the Gods. That as thy spirit beheld the scenes transpiring there, and thou growing in intelligence, thou sawest worlds upon worlds organized and peopled with thy kindred spirits, took upon them tabernacles, died, were resurrected, and received their exaltation on the redeemed worlds they once dwelt upon. Thou being willing and anxious to imitate them, waiting and desirous to obtain a body, a resurrection and exaltation also, and having obtained permission, thou made a covenant with one of thy kindred spirits to be thy guardian angel while in mortality, also with two others, male and female spirits, that thou wouldst come and take a tabernacle through their lineage, and become one of their offspring. You also chose a kindred spirit whom you loved in the spirit world, (and had permission to come to this planet and take a tabernacle) to be your head, stay, husband, and protector on the earth, and to exalt you in the eternal worlds. All these were arranged, likewise the spirits that should tabernacle through your lineage. Thou longed, thou sighed, and thou prayed to thy

Father in heaven for the time to arrive when thou couldst come to this earth, which had fled and fell from where it was first organized, near the planet Kolob. Leave thy father and mother's bosoms, and all thy kindred spirits, come to earth, take a tabernacle, and imitate the deeds of those you had seen exalted before you.

At length the time arrived, and thou heard the voice of thy Father, saying, "go daughter to yonder lower world, and take upon thee a tabernacle, and work out thy probation with fear and trembling, and rise to exaltation. But daughter, remember you go on this condition, that is, You are to forget all things you ever saw, or knew to be transacted in the spirit world; you are not to know or remember anything concerning the same that you have beheld transpire here; but you must go and become one of the most helpless of all beings that 1 have created, while in your infancy; subject to sickness, pain, tears, mourning, sorrow and death. But when truth shall touch the cords of your heart they shall vibrate; then intelligence shall illuminate your mind, and shed its luster in your soul, and you shall begin to understand the things you once knew, but which had gone from you; you shall then begin to understand and know the object of your creation. Daughter, go, and be faithful in your second estate, keep it as faithful as thou hast thy first estate.

Thy spirit filled with joy and thanks giving rejoiced in thy Father, and rendered praise to his holy name, and the spirit world resounded in anthems of praise and rejoicing to the 'Father of Spirits. Thou bade father, mother, and all, farewell, and along with thy guardian angel, thou came on this terraqueous globe. (The spirits thou had chosen to come and tabernacle through their lineage, and your Head having left the spirit world some years previous.) Thou came a spirit pure and holy, thou hast taken upon thee a tabernacle, thou hast obeyed the truth, and thy guardian angel ministers unto thee and watches over thee; Thou hast chosen him you loved in the spirit world to be thy companion. Now, crowns, thrones, exaltations and dominions are in reserve for thee in the eternal worlds, and the way is opened for thee to return back into the presence of thy Heavenly Father, if thou will only abide by and walk in a celestial law, fulfill the designs of thy creation, and hold out to the end. That when mortality is laid in the tomb, you may go down to your grave in peace, arise in glory, and receive your everlasting reward in the resurrection of the just, along with thy head and husband. Thou will be permitted to pass by the Gods and angels who guard the gates, and onward, upward to thy exaltation in a celestial world among the Gods. To be a Priestess Queen unto thy Heavenly Father and a glory to thy husband and offspring, to bear the souls of men, to people other worlds, (as thou didst bear their tabernacles in mortality,) while eternity goes and eternity comes; and if you will receive it, lady, this is eternal life. And herein is the saying of the apostle Paul fulfilled, "that the man is not without the woman in the Lord, neither is the woman without the man' in the Lord." "That man is the head of the woman, and the glory of the man is the woman." Hence, thine origin, the object of thy creation, and thy ultimate destiny, if faithful. Lady, the cup is

within thy reach, drink, then the heavenly draught, and live.²⁶⁸ live.²⁶⁹

If I had quoted only a few lines from President Taylor's editorial, they would have been these:

...thou heard the voice of thy Father, saying, "go daughter to yonder lower world, and take upon thee a tabernacle, and work out thy probation with fear and trembling, and rise to exaltation. But daughter, remember you go on this condition, that is, You are to forget all things you ever saw, or knew to be transacted in the spirit world; you are not to know or remember anything concerning the same that you have beheld transpire here.

I believe President Taylor's editorial helps provide the fuller context into which one must put the Mother's blessing. (The fact that about 3,000 years separate the author of the psalm from President Taylor's writing seems irrelevant to me. If something is true once, it is true again, never mind when it is written.) The editorial also helps explain the meaning of the part of the Mother-Queen's blessing which reads,

11. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship [honor] thou him.

The Mother-Queen's blessing is not only about the princess' relationship with her husband. It is also about her own earthly role as priestess/queen. The last verse of the blessing reads:

12 And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

No doubt, the phrase, "daughter of Tyre" is intended to be more symbolic than real. In Solomon's day, Tyre was the richest and most powerful city on the eastern Mediterranean coast. Its king, Hyrum, supplied Solomon with both the skilled workmen and the wood of giant trees necessary to

John Taylor, editor, *The Mormon* N.Y. August 29, 1857. Italics in the original. This article has been published in an edited form, and I understand is rather widely circulated in that form. That is another reason I included it in full here. I don't like the way it was edited. I took this version directly from a copy of the newspaper owned by the Wisconsin State Historical Society Library in Madison, Wisconsin. There is also an original copy of the newspaper in the Special Collections of the library at BYU.

John Taylor, editor, *The Mormon* N.Y. August 29, 1857

build the Temple and his palace at Jerusalem. The idea "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift" makes its point by calling attention to the power and importance of that city. In much the same way someone in my grandmother's day might have said, "Your dresses would be admired by all the women of Paris." Mentioning Tyre had the same kind of connotation as mentioning Paris. But this psalm is not talking about admiring dresses, it is about presenting "gifts." That is a different thing and the difference is very important. Official gifts to a queen were not like birthday presents, they were more like tribute – the kind of presentation a subordinate king gives to his superior king.²⁷⁰ Giving such gifts was an acknowledgment of the queen's high status and queenly superiority. The meaning of this portion of the blessing is that the Mother-Queen has just promised the princess-queen that she will not only reign in her own country, but that she will be acknowledged as a queen among queens. It is a similar blessing to that the prince received from Elohim, that he could not be hurt by his enemies - that he would be a king among kings. Like the blessing to the prince, it is the absolute assurance that the princess will have the power to make a difference in this world and to keep her eternal covenants – but unlike his, the promise carries with it no military connotation.

The final part of the Mother-Queen's blessing reads: "even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour." The Hebrew word translated "favour" is "used in a great variety of applications," and almost all of them have to do with one's exercising authority in justice, mercy, and judgement. Here again, the most important function one has on this earth – that of being a righteous judge – is the conclusion of the Mother-Queen's blessing to her daughter, just as it is the most important part

[&]quot;And also as equals among equals. See the ??????? letters." Note from Dan Belnap.
In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.
6440.

of the blessing the prince received from his Father.

To review: the Mother-Queen's blessing to the princess is in all respects but two the same as Elohim's blessing to the prince. The two exceptions are: 1) the Mother's blessing includes the idea of the sanctity of the marriage relationship, the Father's did not at that time but was reserved for the end of the psalm. 2) The Mother's blessing says nothing about being a protector and a commanding general in time of war. But the other functions of her being queen are essentially the same as the functions of his being king. The differences are that she is queen under the umbrella of his protection, and he has to provide that umbrella. In both the Mother and the Father's blessings, each place heavy emphasis on the most important temporal - and eternal - function of sacral kingship and priesthood – the responsibility, power, and blessings associated with being a righteous judge.

Once again in the 45th psalm, the scene changes and the narrator instructs the audience what is happening on the stage. This time he directs us to follow with our eyes as the Queen, the princess, and their entourage (which symbolically apparently includes all the women in the audience) leave the women's quarters, walk across the stage, and enter the Holy of Holies where Elohim, the prince and the members of the Council (the men in the audience) wait for the princess to arrive. The narrator says:

V. 13-15. The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

The Queen, the princess, and the women enter the throne room where the Father, the prince, and the other men wait for them. In the psalm, the last two verses were spoken to the prince after princess entered the Holy of Holies, but as elsewhere in the psalm, the speaker is not identified. The words are a blessing, apparently the continuation of the blessing which Elohim gave at to the prince at the beginning of the Psalm.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

In the Tanakh it is an extension of the Davidic covenant.

Your sons will succeed your ancestors; you will appoint them princes throughout the land

I commemorate your fame for all generations,

To say that blessing is extremely important would be a severe understatement. But it may also be important that it was given to the prince *after* the princess and the other women entered the throne room. I think the reason can be found somewhere among these ideas: Only a reigning queen can make a prince or princess. Only she knows who the child's father is, therefore it is entirely up to her whether her husband's heir, the next king, is a true son of her husband or is the child of an usurper.²⁷³

On earth, the reigning queen's power and overriding importance in establishing the heirship of her son is best illustrated in cases of ancient royal polygamy (such as with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon). In those instances, it was the rank of the mother which determined the rank of the child. In the case of David, for instance, he had three categories of wives: 1)a concubine may have been the daughter of someone like a desert chief who had made an valiance with David and had given him his daughter as a *pistis*. The concubine was a legal wife, but because her father was not a great king who had given a great dowery, she was a low ranking wife and her children could not inherit. 2) A "wife" may have been the daughter of a powerful monarch – an Egyptian princess who came with a rich dowery would have been a "wife" – her children could inherit. 3) The "queen," the ranking wife. Her children could not only inherit property, they could also inherit the throne. The Each of the children of the various wives had the same father, but only the son of

²⁷² Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text (Philadelphia, Jerusalem, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.)

²⁷³ For that very practical, legal reason, in most countries where there was a reigning monarch, a queen's adultery was high treason for both her and her lover. You will recall, for example, that Queen Elizabeth I's mother and uncle were executed on those charges.

the ranking mother could inherit the birthright property, priesthood, and crown. In Psalm 45, the blessing that Elohim gives to his son in the presence of the princess seems to establish her as the reigning queen – promising that her children will inherit the powers of priesthood and kingship.

PSALM 45 – uninterrupted text

If we were sitting together reading the 45th Psalm, after all those diversions and comments which kept taking us away and bringing us back again, I would suggest that the only way to really get the impact of the whole thing would be to stop and read it as a whole.

Scene 1.

The narrator speaks, directing our attention to the men's side of the stage:

- 1 My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king [the earthly king]: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.
- 2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

The blessing which Elohim gives to the prince:

- 3 Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.
- 4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
- 5 Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

The prince addresses Elohim:

6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

The prince addresses Jehovah:

- 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
- 8 All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

Scene 2.

The narrator calls attention to the other side of the stage where Elohim's wife, daughters, and other women are.

9 The king's daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

The blessing given by the Mother to her daughter:

- 10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;
- 11 So shall the king [earthly king] greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.
- 12 And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

Scene 3.

The narrator tells us the women are crossing the stage to Elohim's throne room:

- 13 The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.
- 14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.
- 15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

Elohim's blessing to the king.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

Even though that Psalm is only a stage play, it represents virtually every important aspect of sacral kingship and priesthood, and sacral queenship. To see how valid the ideas in the psalm are, it is instructive to compare its ideas with the characteristics of the resurrected gods in the Celestial kingdom, as described in D&C 76. I have italicized those parts which I think can be associated with the ancient notions of kingship and priesthood.

50 And again we bear record – for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just

- ["just" are those who do justice that is righteous judges] –
- 51 They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given –
- 52 That by keeping the commandments they *might be washed and cleansed from all their sins*, and *receive the Holy Spirit* by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;
- 53 And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.
- 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.
- 60 And they shall overcome all things.
- 61 Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.
- 62 These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever.
- 63 These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people.
- 64 These are they who shall have part in the first resurrection.
- 65 These are they who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just.
- 66 These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all.
- 67 These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general

assembly and church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn.

- 68 These are they whose names are written in heaven, where God and Christ are the judge of all.
- 69 These are they who are just men made perfect through Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood.
- 70 These are they whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical. (D&C 76:49-70 italics added)

Psalm 82 fits into the book of Abraham 3 so easily that it does not even break the cadence of the story. Psalm 45 probably goes in there somewhere also. There are other scriptures which fit there as well. When one puts them all together as a single narrative, it is remarkable how complete a picture they paint. Let me show you. (The following are all scriptures which I have quoted above, so I have not chosen to break the narrative by giving references to each one. Once again, remember that this arrangement is only my opinion, so if you don't like the story the way I've put it together, that's OK.)

In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residence of my fathers, I, Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence; And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers. It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me. I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.

And again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people. And those priests [the "children'] were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people [intelligences] might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption. And this is the manner after which they were ordained – being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place [as intelligences] being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good [as intelligences], and exercising exceedingly great faith [in Christ], are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such. And thus they ["children" – members of the Council] have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith [while intelligences], while

others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts [That phrase is defined in Alma 12: 9-11 as one who refused to know the "mysteries."] and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren. Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared —

And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man, behold, then he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them; Therefore he sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory. And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them according to their faith and repentance and their holy works. Wherefore, he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal, and becoming as Gods, knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good – Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption, that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death, which was an everlasting death as to things pertaining unto righteousness; for on such the plan of redemption could have no power, for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God. But God did call on men, in the name of his Son, (this being the plan of redemption which was laid) saying: If ye will repent and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine Only Begotten Son; Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest. And whosoever will harden his heart and will do iniquity, behold, I swear in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest.

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them: and said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits,

God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. [The Father warned,] "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? [and then gave these instructions:]Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes."[The Council responded,] "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."

And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter

into his rest – This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things – Now they were ordained after this manner – being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end – Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen.

And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.

And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him.

And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor. But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever. Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down.

[Some followed Satan.] And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven.

[All the rest followed the Saviour – but it appears some had reservations. To those he said:] Nevertheless, for my name's sake [for the covenant's sake] will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off. For, behold, I have refined thee, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, [for the sake of the covenants he had made] yea, for mine own sake will I do this, for I will not suffer my name to be polluted, and I will not give my glory unto another. Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called, for I am he; I am the first, and I am also the last. Mine hand hath also laid the foundation of the earth, my right hand hath spanned the heavens. I call unto them and they stand up together. All ye assemble yourselves and hear; who among them hath declared these things unto them? The Lord hath loved him; yea, and he will fulfill his word which he hath declared by them; and he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall come upon the Chaldeans. Also, saith the Lord; I the Lord, yea, I have spoken; yea, I have

called him [Joseph Smith] to declare, I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous. [A comment on Joseph's integrity.] Come ye near unto me; I have not spoken in secret; from the beginning, from the time that it was declared have I spoken; and the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me. And thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I have sent him [Joseph Smith], the Lord thy God who teacheth thee to profit, who leadeth thee by the way thou shouldst go, hath done it.

[Joseph F. Smith identified many of the members of the Council.] Among the great and mighty ones who were assembled in this vast congregation of the righteous were Father Adam, the Ancient of Days and father of all, And our glorious Mother Eve, with many of her faithful daughters who had lived through the ages and worshiped the true and living God. Abel, the first martyr, was there, and his brother Seth, one of the mighty ones, who was in the express image of his father, Adam. Noah, who gave warning of the flood; Shem, the great high priest; Abraham, the father of the faithful; Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, the great law- giver of Israel; And Isaiah, who declared by prophecy that the Redeemer was anointed to bind up the broken- hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound, were also there. Moreover, Ezekiel, who was shown in vision the great valley of dry bones, which were to be clothed upon with flesh, to come forth again in the resurrection of the dead, living souls; Daniel, who foresaw and foretold the establishment of the kingdom of God in the latter days, never again to be destroyed nor given to other people; Elias, who was with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration; And Malachi, the prophet who testified of the coming of Elijah – of whom also Moroni spake to the Prophet Joseph Smith, declaring that he should come before the ushering in of the great and dreadful day of the Lord – were also there. The Prophet Elijah was to plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to their fathers, Foreshadowing the great work to be done in the temples of the Lord in the dispensation of the fulness of times, for the redemption of the dead, and the sealing of the children to their parents, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse and utterly wasted at his coming. All these and many more, even the prophets who dwelt among the Nephites and testified of the coming of the Son of God, mingled in the vast assembly and waited for their deliverance, For the dead had looked upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage. These the Lord taught, and gave them power to come forth, after his resurrection from the dead, to enter into his Father's kingdom, there to be crowned with immortality and eternal life, And continue thenceforth their labor as had been promised by the Lord, and be partakers of all blessings which were held in reserve for them that love him. The Prophet Joseph Smith, and my father, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and other choice spirits who were reserved to come forth in the fulness of times to take part in laying the foundations of the great latter- day work, Including the building of the temples and the performance of ordinances therein for the redemption of the dead, were also in the spirit world. I observed that they were also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God.

and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.

My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

[As they planned the history of the earth, they came to the matter of the Assyrian invasion and the Jewish apostasy in about 720 B.C., Isaiah reports] Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? ["us" is the Council] Then said I, Here *am* I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. [Isaiah, as one of the princes, was going to die by being sawed in half when he would not worship Baal.], Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.

[Others were also assigned,]

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they that is the Gods, ordained and formed the heavens and the earth.

O come, let us sing unto the Lord:
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the deep places of the earth:
the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his, and he made it:
and his hands formed the dry land.
O come, let us worship and bow down:
let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

And I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust? I declare these things unto the fulfilling of the prophecies. And behold, they shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the everlasting God; and his word shall hiss forth from generation to generation. And God shall show unto you, that that which I have written is true. And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing. And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee. O house of Israel, may be fulfilled. Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ve are perfect in Christ, ve can in nowise deny the power of God. And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. For thy name's sake, O Lord,

What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

His soul shall dwell at ease:

and his seed shall inherit the earth.

pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him:

and he will shew them his covenant.

Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord;

for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

When I began to put that composite together, I wrote, "remember that this is only my opinion, so if you don't like my story, that's OK." Now I read it again, I hope you didn't like it all that much. The truth is, I know the story, as told there, is far from complete. There are places where it jumps over important points that want to be discussed – but that are not going to be. As it is, it is a composite of Abraham 1:1-4; 3:22 - 4:1; Alma 12:38-37, 13: 1-9; Psalms 25, 45, 82, 95; Isaiah 6: 8 - 11; Ephesians 1; Moses 4:1-3; Revelation 12:4; Isaiah 48 as recorded in 1 Nephi 20:8-17; and D&C 138:38-55; and some others. My point is this: that composite is only a beginning of what ought to be included there. I may add to it some day, but I doubt it.

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 – sacral kings and queens. 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 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. Hoffimeier 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.²⁷⁴

His "assumption of the throne" meant just that. There were two thrones in Jerusalem. One was the king's throne in his palace. The other was God's throne in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. After his coronation day, the king used his own throne in the palace, but on the occasion 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.)

The passage is important because it gives a truncated sequence of 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 his heir and representative. 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.)

As I observed already, there were 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, as may be represented by Psalm 72. The

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

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. If the play on the word "prosper" is what it appears to be, that description of Solomon's coronation in Chronicles appears to be a deliberate attempt to make that final coronation the fulfillment of promise he received at the Council. That coronation scene must have been terribly impressive to watch.

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.²⁷⁵

In that most sacred of all rooms, symbolically in the presence of God, and literally in the presence of the people, the king was apparently ordained a priest "after the Order of Melchizedek." The people probably sang 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 a lot of questions: 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 coronation? It does not seem likely that the psalm would have been sung on both occasions, but is

²⁷⁵ Ezekiel 1:6-28; Revelation 4:8; D&C:77:4.

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. 276

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 this 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.²⁷⁷

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 the ordination

^{276 &}quot;In Ps. 110:1 it [footstool] is a metaphor of Davidic dominion.

[&]quot;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.)

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.

to the Melchizedek priesthood.

After his ordination and anointing the king was the living messiah²⁷⁸ – 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'. 279

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)."²⁸⁰

During the 7th day's coronation rites, after God symbolically left the earthly temple to be enthroned in the Celestial one, the Ark of the Covenant took on a different role. It no longer represented the presence of God, but now represented the God's authority. As such, it become the footstool of the throne in the Holy of Holies.

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.

²⁷⁹ Sigmund Mowinckel, translated by A.P. Thomas, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 2 Vols. (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962), vol. 1:125.

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

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.²⁸¹

In its new role as the footstool of the throne, the Ark represented part of the connection between earth and heaven – and the king's feet were established upon that Ark.– symbolically giving evidence that his was also the connection between earth and heaven and therefore 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.²⁸²

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, as though the Ark itself were an extension of the Rock.

'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

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

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

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 it that sparkled in the sunlight), now, as Adam, he must 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"....²⁸⁴

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, 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

²⁸³ Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer, *Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount* (Washington D.C. Biblical Archaeology Society, 1998), p. 104.

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

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 the initiation rites of all those who participated as part of the audience – either by singing, or just by watching, or but more probably by also making the covenants which were part of the ceremonies, as in 2 Kings 23:1-3. So the invitation to sit upon God's throne was not just issued to the king but was symbolically, it was 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), sat upon the throne, and prepared to deliver an address to the people.

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 a dual ordinance wherein he was adopted and given the new name of "son of God" (Psalm 2), and made king of Israel. Thus he was the legitimate "son" and legal heir 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. ²⁸⁶ He was crowned with a golden crown. Then the living king ascended to the throne of

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. 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

God, which was also representative of the throne of Adam. Thus the living king became as Adam, the first king and the son of God – the king was father to the then present generation. ²⁸⁷

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.²⁸⁸

The king's sitting on God's throne was a major symbolic act, an acknowledgment that he was God's legitimate son and heir.²⁸⁹ 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.²⁹⁰

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,²⁹¹ and having his feet firmly planted on the Ark of the Covenant as the root and source of this power, he read the law to the people and

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.

²⁸⁷ Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p. 152.

[&]quot;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.

²⁸⁸ 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.

^{289 &}quot;Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father." (1 Chronicles 29:23).

²⁹⁰ Borsch, Frederick H., *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press, London, 1967, p. 120. Italics in original.

²⁹¹ 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.

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....²⁹³

Apparently, after the king gave his lecture, the people – still an important part of the ceremony –

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.

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

made covenants that they would support their king, the Kingdom of God, each other as its citizens, and God's purposes on earth.

The "establishment" of the king's feet

The sacred Ark of the Covenant, serving as the footstool to the throne of God, represented the authority of God for three reasons: 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: During the ceremonies of the New Year Festival, the king had walked in the way of righteousness until he had come to the place were God was. Now his feet were firmly established upon the Ark of the Covenant, and the sacred the emblems of kingship and priesthood which it contained. ²⁹⁴

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 – an idea which I assumed came from my reading either Isaiah or the Psalms or both, but as I wrote this I needed to find the source of that idea. What I found asked more questions than it answered. There is something like what I was looking for in Psalm 40.²⁹⁵ The first phrases in those verses

²⁹⁴ See Hebrews 9:4.

As you read this psalm, remember that the Temple sat on the sacred rock outcropping that is

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

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.

took that entire statement out of Isaiah, so it can only be found in the 1 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 the reality and the 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, Abinadi, and the people, all understood its significance — and that Abinadi spoke to that understanding. I will try to show why it is reasonable to make that assumption.

As an interesting aside, 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."

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*, ²⁹⁷ one could say that having the king's feet firmly established on the Ark was a token of the

²⁹⁶ Article by David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday, New York, 1992, vol. 2 p. 744-745.

²⁹⁷ See above for a discussion of *pistis*.

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. ²⁹⁹ The king's securing his feet upon those was the ultimate symbol of his kingship and priesthood. ³⁰⁰

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

^{298 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).

^{299 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)

³⁰⁰ 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)

fruit of the Tree of Life³⁰¹ – which Nephi understood to represented the love of God.

If one's feet are 'established' on the box which contains the symbolism of the tree of life, then symbolically, one's feet become an extension of that manna – the manna, the roots – that the person may be a tree of life. That idea is related to heirship, that one might become a son of God. The manna in the Ark was a symbol of the kings own salvation and of his ability to be a means of salvation to others.

It is now necessary to go on another long diversion. A function of the king was to bring the people to Jehovah and to help them gain eternal life. His having his feet "established" on a jar that represented the fruit of the tree of life apparently represented both that power and that responsibility. When Abinadi accused king Noah of not teaching the people, he was not only challenging the king's ecclesiastical authority, he was also challenging the eternal essence of his kingship. In order to understand the significance of that, we must now stop and consider the meaning of the tree of life.

The Tree of Life

The significance of the manna went far beyond its being a pot of the miraculous desert food that kept Israel alive for their 40 years wandering in the wilderness. The manna was an evidence of the power of God to sustain his people – it was symbolic of the Saviour as the fruit of the tree of life. One of the most amazing of the sermons of Jesus is about that.

³⁰¹ See John chapter 6 and Revelation 2:17.

- 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.
- 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.
- 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.
- 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
- 36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.
- 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
- 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.
- 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.
- 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.
- 41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.
- 42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?
- 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.
- 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.
- 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.
- 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.
- 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.
- 48 I am that bread of life.

- 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.
- 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.
- 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.
- 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?
- 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.
- 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.
- 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.
- 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.
- 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.
- 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.
- 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.
- 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?
- 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?
- 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?
- 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.
- 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.
- 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. (John 6:32-65)

There are two general themes intertwined in that scripture. One is that Jesus is the source of all human life – he is the bread of life – symbolized by the fruit of the tree of life, symbolized again by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The other theme is more subtle and is for you to read rather than for me to tell. It is concluded by: "For Jesus knew from the beginning..." The statements which led to that conclusion were these:

- 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
- 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
- 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.
- 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.
- 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. ...
- 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.
- 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.
- 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.
- 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.
- 48 I am that bread of life.
- 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.
- 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

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

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. (John 6:35-65)

The manna is only one symbol of that special relationship between God and his children. The other, more frequently used and better understood is the tree of life. There are many scriptures which talk about the tree of life fall, but they usually fall into one of three general categories. The first two are about real trees: 1) the tree of life in the story of the Garden of Eden; 2) the tree at the center of the future celestial city. The third is about the very rich and diverse symbolism of the tree of life and the waters of life.

1) the tree of life in the story of the Garden of Eden

There are five major accounts of the story of Adam and Eve, and the tree of life is a central part of four of them. The three relatively complete narratives are found in Genesis, the Book of Moses, and the Book of Abraham. In each instance the tree of life is in the center of the garden, The story as it is told in Abraham presents a different context from the other two and asks some questions they do not ask: as is often true, discovering the questions is almost the same as discovering the answers. There are also two incomplete accounts of the Adam and Eve story in the Book of Mormon. The first is 2 Nephi 2:15-27, which is embedded in an explanation of the necessity of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and concludes,

24 But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

25 Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.

26 And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.

27 Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself. (2 Nephi 2:24-27)

The second is in Alma 12. Its context makes it unique. Zeezrom and his party were planning a *coup de etat* with the intent of overthrowing the Nephite government. Alma challenged Zeezrom's purposes on the grounds that he had not been chosen at the Council in Heaven to be a Nephite ruler. During that challenge, Alma recounted the events of the Garden of Eden story in a way apparently intended to remind Zeezrom of the covenants he made during the New Year festival dramatization 302

In these stories, the Fall is represented as Adam and Eve's being removed from the Garden so they could no longer have access to the tree of life. The story of human existence, after the fall – on both an individual and a universal level – is the struggle to regain access to the tree of life.

2) The tree at the center of the future celestial city.

³⁰² See my discussion of Alma 12 and 13 for a fuller explanation.

The second category of scriptures that deal with the tree of life describe it as the center of the future celestial world. It is the promise that after having left the Garden, one can again gain access to the tree. The more important of these are in Ezekiel's description of the future temple, and in the last two chapters of the Book of Revelation. However, Lehi's vision also seems to fall into that category. Lehi's story is not so much about being there as it is about getting there – but implicit in the story is the sense that being at the tree and having obtained eternal salvation are the same thing, as my friend Dil Rust explained.

Moving from darkness to light gives concrete meaning to the process of redemption. In his dream-journey, Lehi travels in darkness for many hours before being brought, through the mercy of the Lord, to the tree of life with its white fruit of the Savior's atonement and love. (1 Ne. 8:8-11)³⁰³

In Nephi's narrative of Lehi's vision one's getting to the tree is described as being both easy and extremely difficult. As Dil observed, "To approach the tree of life is to risk wandering into mists or death by drowning." But if one holds on to the iron rod, one can make it through, because the iron rod was a representation of the word of God.

Another friend, Dan Belnap has pointed out to me that there is no archaeological evidence of banisters in ancient Israel. So Dan suspects they were holding on to something else. Dan says there are two other kinds of "rods" which would fit better into his understanding of Lehi's time and place. One would be a measuring devise like Ezekiel used to measure the temple in his vision. If that is the kind of rod Lehi was holding on to, then he was creating a kind of personal temple – a private bubble which was own sacred space – as he walked through the midst, adhering to the directions of the word of God. The other possible interpretation, the one Dan likes best, is that the

³⁰³ Richard Dilworth Rust, *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997), p. 175.

³⁰⁴ Richard Dilworth Rust, *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997), p.172 - 173.

rod was a royal scepter. In Lehi's case, it would represent both his kingship and his priesthood. That presents an interesting picture, because in the vision everyone who got through the fog held on to the rod. If it did represent a royal scepter, then while it was unique to each individual who held it, it was common to all the initiated who walked together through the darkened fog. As you might suppose, that is also the symbolism which seems most correct to me. In support of Dan's idea, let me show you some scriptures.

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

1 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 305

and

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

³⁰⁵ Three times in the New Testament, this scripture is quoted to show that Jesus, who was a descendant of David, was also the "Lord" (i.e. Jehovah) whom David worshiped. Two are in the gospels:

³⁵ And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David?

³⁶ For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

³⁷ David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly. (Mark 12:35-37)

⁴² Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David

⁴³ He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

⁴⁵ If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

⁴⁶ And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions. Matthew 22:24-46.

¹³ But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of

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

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

The Lord will stretch forth from Zion your mighty scepter; Hold sway over your enemies! 306

Nephi describes the rod as a source of power:

salvation? (Hebrews 1:13-14)

³⁰⁶ Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text (Philadelphia, Jerusalem, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.)

23 And they said unto me: What meaneth the rod of iron which our father saw, that led to the tree?

24 And I said unto them that it was the word of God; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction. (1 Nephi 15:23-24)

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

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

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

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

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

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

There, being faithful, means keeping one's covenants: Faithful (= keeping covenants) = "extended his arm" = defense against fiery darts = "with you in every time..."

John's book of Revelation is like Lehi's vision in that it is about getting to the tree of life. The difference is that while Lehi talks about individuals, John talks about an entire culture. In John's vision, the criterion for being worthy to enter the celestial city is that one has the right to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. (Revelation 22:14) Then, as citizens of the city, they are also its kings and queens.

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 307

³⁰⁷ Ezekiel 47:12 suggests the same idea.

- 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
- 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:
- 4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.
- 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22:1-5)

As celestial kings and queens, it is by the Saviour's light that "they shall reign for ever and ever," but they shall "reign" nonetheless.

The book of Revelation brings us back full circle. The conclusion shows the tree of life in the celestial city, but the beginning shows it is the same as the one in the Garden and in the Temple.

At the beginning of Revelation, John writes short "letters" to the seven churches. In the subtext of those letters, which is a rather particularized review of the ancient temple ceremony, he promises, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7) It seems reasonable to believe that in John's view, at least, the whole purpose of the ceremony his subtext is describing is to bring people back to the paradise from which Adam and Eve fell. God walked in that Garden. In terms of this world, returning to the Tree represents returning to where God is. That, of course is not only the ultimate challenge, it is also the ultimate goal. There is "an awful gulf, which separated the wicked from the tree of life, and also from the saints of God," (1 Nephi 15:28) so the first criterion for getting to the tree is to not be in the category of people who are on the wrong side of

that barrier requires that one be "pure in heart" – not an impossible task, but a feat that cannot be faked. That barrier is the shekinah. ³⁰⁸ – the light which one sees when one sees God, but also the light which separates man from God – and the light which separates man from the tree of life. The accounts say that God "placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Nephi apparently described the same thing as "the justice of God did also divide the wicked from the righteous; and the brightness thereof was like unto the brightness of a flaming fire, which ascendeth up unto God forever and ever, and hath no end." (1 Nephi 15:30)

That is what the whole plan of redemption is all about – betting back to the tree by getting to the celestial city where the tree is and where one can eat freely of its fruit.

3) The very rich and diverse symbolism of the tree of life and the waters of life.

That is the spelling used in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 5 vols. (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1991), 4:317-319. There is an excellent discussion of it in Raphael Patai, The Hebrew Goddess (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1990), p. 96-111. Patai spells the word "shekhina." It is spelled "shechinah" in the dictionary in the LDS Bible, which gives this definition:

The Presence. A word used by the later Jews (and borrowed from them by the Christians) to denote the cloud of brightness and glory that marked the presence of the Lord as spoken of in Ex. 3:1-6; 24:16; 1 Kgs. 8:10; Isa. 6-1-3; Matt. 17:5; Acts 7:55. The Prophet Joseph Smith described this phenomenon in connection with his first vision, as a 'light...above the brightness of the sun,' and said that he saw two Personages whose 'brightness and glory defy all description,' standing 'in the light' (JS-H 1:16-18)."

It is the pillar of fire in Nephi's account of his father's vision in 1 Nephi 1, and the conduit of light in Joseph Smith's account of Moroni's visit, the light too bright to see into, so is the "cloud" through which the Lord puts his finger in the brother of Jared story. I suspect it may also be related to the realization of the phrase "baptized by fire and the Holy Ghost.

309 Genesis 3:24, Moses 4: 31. Alma 12:21; 42:1-4. The Book of Abraham does not tell about Adam and Eve's leaving the Garden, so the flaming sword is not a part of that story.

The third general category of scriptural discussions about the tree of life deals with its symbolism. Again, my friend Dil Rust:

In accordance with the Book of Mormon's system of opposition, it is fitting that in his dream Lehi must go through "a dark and dreary wilderness" to reach the tree "whose fruit was desirable to make one happy" (1 Ne. 8:4). This tree of life is a rich, complex symbol. In different parts of the Book of Mormon it is linked with water, vineyards, and olive trees Its fruit stands for God's love, and faith in Christ is described as "a tree springing up unto everlasting life" (1 Ne. 11:22; Alma 32:41). Approaching the tree is a sacramental experience: "Come unto me," Alma quotes the Lord as saying, "and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; Yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely; yea, come unto me and bring forth works of righteousness" (Alma 5:34Alma 5:35). On the other hand, those who refuse will be like dead trees that are "hewn down and cast into the fire" (Alma 5:34Alma 5:35). Both alternatives depict Christ as the tree of life and the refiner's fire.

With Christ as its central focal point, the tree of life symbol in the Book of Mormon supports a number of the meanings attributed to this rich symbol over time. In Lehi's dream it is juxtaposed against a dark and dreary wilderness and mists of darkness, its fruit is of an exceeding whiteness, and only a few reach it (1 Ne. 8:1). Nephi considers it synonymous with "living waters" (1 Ne. 11:25) and sees it identified with the birth, life, mission, and death of Christ.³¹⁰

As Dil observed, the symbolism of the tree of life is rather complex. In its complexity it informs the meaning of the of the tree in the Garden, and in the Celestial City. Nevertheless, to Nephi, the symbolism of the Tree of life was quite straightforward: "Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things." I suspect that if one really wished to understand that, one would have to know his meaning of the phrase, "which *sheddeth* itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men." When I try to visualize it, I get the notion of falling leaves of light.

One of the most powerful sermons about the Tree of Life was delivered by the Saviour himself.

There he described himself as a vine, rather than a as a tree, but the symbolism is the same.

³¹⁰ Richard Dilworth Rust, *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997), p.179-80.

- 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
- 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.
- 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.
- 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.
- 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.
- 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
- 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
- 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.
- 9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.
- 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.
- 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.
- 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.
- 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
- 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.
- 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.
- 16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
- 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another. (John 15:1-17)

Alma sums up the Saviour's message in only a few words.

... but that they might receive the word with joy, and as a branch be grafted into the true vine, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord their God. (Alma 16:17b)

I have a way of visualizing love, and while I understand that it is wholly inadequate, it is the best I can do. I want to describe it to you, because, in our conversation it is important to me that you know where I am coming from – whether correct and erroneous – and if I do not explain this idea to you, you cannot know what I am thinking and no real conversation can take place here. I do not present this idea as truth, though I think it may represent something like truth – but that is for you to decide.

When I was a child I heard it preached that the reason we do genealogy and sealings in the temple is to create a family relationship – we must all eventually be sealed to Adam, so everyone in the earth will be one great family. The way I visualized that was a kind of chain: I am sealed to my parents; my dad to his, his dad to his, and so on until we get to Adam. So if one were to look from a distance at that image, all the human family would be sealed together in a pattern that looked like many chains of people radiating from Adam who was the connecting center, but eventually I decided this imagery did not represent anything like the truth, and I had to re-think the whole idea. This was my second visualization: I am sealed to my parents; my dad to his family; my mom to her parents and siblings, aunt Hazel to her children; cousin Phyllis to her daughter's mother-in-law; and the mother-in-law to her father's uncle's wife's extended family, and so on, ad infinitum. So it isn't a chain at all, it's a very intricate and beautiful pattern – like a perfect spider web. But that imagery won't do either, because that pattern flat and only two dimensional. My third visualization was that the pattern had to be three – it is a ball with the Saviour, rather than Adam, at the center, and everyone sealed to him. But that imagery doesn't work any better than the flat spider web, because each person is a child of God, so each person

has to be near the center where the Saviour is, and there can't be anyone out on the far edges of the ball. Having gotten that far in my thinking, I concluded that the only possible answer must be somewhere in the extensions of theoretical math where my mind cannot go and that I cannot not visualize. There is not one three-dimensional ball with one center, but a multi-dimensional ball with an infinite number of centers. Each person is next to Christ, but each person is also the center of his own infinite centers – with every person in the entire system being in immediate proximity – in both time and space – to oneself. So one is right next to his parents, to one's spouse and children, to the friends one loved in this world, to the friends one loved in the premortal existence but whose assignments made it impossible for them to meet in this world, – and ultimately to everyone in the entire system. I believe that salvation is simply becoming a part of that incredibly complex, yet magnificently simple social structure – that being "sealed by the holy spirit of promise" simply means being an integral part of that system. I believe that the cohesive power that holds the system together is not the formal "sealing powers" of the earthly priesthood ordinances. I believe those ordinances are necessary to give one access to the system, but that the sealing power itself is the all-pervasive "pure love of Christ" – not just the love that Christ has for us, but the love (the same kind of love as his) that is exuded from, and assimilated by every person in the system for and with every person in the system. That love is not the expression of body or soul, nor body and soul, but of one's Self – the fruition of the law of ones own being. Again, as I wrote above, "This is not Nirvana. There is no merging of personalities here. Each is the unique individual – the Self – one has created and nurtured through the eternities. The law of one's own being is as sacred as it is nonpareil." Each has a unique ability to give and to receive pure, unmasked love. Each finds fulfilment in his own uniqueness and in appreciation of the multi-faceted uniqueness of others. To the degree that this notion of multidimensional relationships represent ultimately reality, I believe the tree of life also represents that same reality, and that being able to eat freely of its fruit represents the oneness of that belonging. (For me, with my present inability to visualize the vastness of infinity, my personal hope of my personal circles is that my family and friends for whom I am writing this essay will stand next to me and I to them – in a dynamic communication of thought and love that penetrates our souls and is overshadowed by no sense of ending. To each of you I shall always say, "Thank you for being my friend.")

Paul's summation of the value of this life's experiences works well with this concept of love.

- 1 Therefore being justified by faith [pistis], we have peace [as in "peacemakers"] with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
- 2 By whom also we have access by faith [pistis] into this grace [love and light] wherein we stand [either making a covenant, or the strength to uphold it, or both], and rejoice in hope [anticipation of the fulfilment of the covenant] of the glory of God.
- 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
- 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:
- 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:1-5)

As does John's:

- 7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
- 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.
- 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. (1 John 4:7-9)

As did Nephi's who understood the "strait and narrow path" as "having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men."

19 And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come

thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

20 Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

21 And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen. (2 Nephi 31:19-21)

Now I have gotten my theories out of the way, lets read some tree of life scriptures together.

8 And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me: Look! And I looked and beheld a tree; and it was like unto the tree which my father had seen; and the beauty thereof was far beyond, yea, exceeding of all beauty; and the whiteness thereof did exceed the whiteness of the driven snow.

9 And it came to pass after I had seen the tree, I said unto the Spirit: I behold thou hast shown unto me the tree which is precious above all.

10 And he said unto me: What desirest thou?

11 And I said unto him: To know the interpretation thereof——for I spake unto him as a man speaketh; for I beheld that he was in the form of a man; yet nevertheless, I knew that it was the Spirit of the Lord; and he spake unto me as a man speaketh with another.

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21 And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?

22 And I answered him, saying: Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things.

23 And he spake unto me, saying: Yea, and the most joyous to the soul.

24 And after he had said these words, he said unto me: Look! And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many fall down at his feet and worship him.

25 And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God.

26 And the angel said unto me again: Look and behold the condescension of God!

27 And I looked and beheld the Redeemer of the world, of whom my father had spoken; and I also beheld the prophet who should prepare the way before him. And the Lamb of God went forth and was baptized of him; and after he was baptized, I beheld the heavens open, and the Holy Ghost come down out of heaven and abide upon him in the form of a dove. (1 Nephi 11:8-11, 21-27)

Christ as the Tree of Life.

In Israelite tradition the most frequent symbol of the tree of life is the Olive tree. However grape vines, palm trees, and an ear of wheat were also used as symbols of the tree of life. 311 The olive tree contained a full range symbols of the tree of life and the waters of life. Its fruit could depict the fruit of the tree; and its oil, the waters of life. The oil was used for cleansing, for anointing the sick, and for anointing kings and priests. As a symbol of the atonement, the Saviour's cross was very probably made of olive wood. In that case the Saviour himself would have represented the fruit of the tree; and his blood, the waters of life. 312 That symbolism accounts in part for Alma's statement, "ye shall feast . . . even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst" (Alma 32:42) It also gives meaning to the Saviour's declaration,

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

³¹¹ Ad de Vries in *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (London, North-Holland, 1974), 474. See a number of essays in Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994).

³¹² Griggs, C. Wilfred. "The Tree of Life in Ancient Cultures," in *Ensign* (June1988), 26-31. The same idea, though not explicit, is suggested in the Acts of Thomas, Edgar Hennecke, (English translation edited by R. McL. Wilson) New Testament Apocrypha (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1965), p. 525.

give for the life of the world. ...

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

But in the symbolism of the scriptures Christ is not the only tree of life. Alma, in his magnificent sermon to the people of Zarahemla, told them that they must be trees also.

- 33 Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you.
- 34 Yea, he saith: Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely;
- 35 Yea, come unto me and bring forth works of righteousness, and ye shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire –
- 36 For behold, the time is at hand that whosoever bringeth forth not good fruit, or whosoever doeth not the works of righteousness, the same have cause to wail and mourn.

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- 51 And also the Spirit saith unto me, yea, crieth unto me with a mighty voice, saying: Go forth and say unto this people——Repent, for except ye repent ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of heaven.
- 52 And again I say unto you, the Spirit saith: Behold, the ax is laid at the root of the tree; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire, yea, a fire which cannot be consumed, even an unquenchable fire. Behold, and remember, the Holy One hath spoken it.

••••

62 I speak by way of command unto you that belong to the church; and unto those who do not belong to the church I speak by way of invitation, saying: Come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye also may be partakers of the fruit of the tree of life. (Alma 5: 33-36, 51-52, 62)

There is an interesting saying in Proverbs, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life." (11:30)

The thing that makes it interesting is the order of its logic. It does not say that the fruit of the tree of life is righteousness – i.e. that the tree produces righteousness; rather it says that the product of righteousness is the tree. I wasn't sure I had it right, so I checked in the Tanakh and found: "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life." That's the same idea, so what does it mean? After a little checking, and a little thought, I discovered the idea is all over the scriptures. For example, it

is the main message of Alma 32, the new name in Isaiah 61, and the conclusion of the Beatitudes. Let me show you what I found.

When analyzed from a logical horticultural point of view, Alma's story of the seed, the tree, and its fruit, makes no sense whatever. The seed is planted in ones heart, the seed begins to grow and its growth begins "to be delicious" to soil in which it is planted.

28 Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves——It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.

The seed itself is producing a tree "unto its own likeness," which, of course means that one can expect the tree to produce both fruit and seeds.

31 And now, behold, are ye sure that this is a good seed? I say unto you, Yea; for every seed bringeth forth unto its own likeness.

As the tree grows within oneself – one's heart, remember, is the soil in which the seed is planted – the seed becomes a tree which bears fruit. That fruit becomes the source of one's own nourishment – Alma's phrase is that one will have "tasted this light."

35 O then, is not this real? I say unto you, Yea, because it is light; and whatsoever is light, is good, because it is discernible, therefore ye must know that it is good; and now behold, after ye have tasted this light is your knowledge perfect?

One nourishes the tree in order to harvest the fruit. In a beautiful leap of logic the gardener's heart began as the soil in which the seed was planted, and now it is that same gardener who harvests the fruit. That concept may not work in a college course called "practical agriculture 101," but it says exactly what Alma wants it to say.

37 And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, ye will say: Let us nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up, and bring forth fruit unto us. And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care it will get root, and grow up, and

bring forth fruit.

In a contrasting statement, Alma identifies the tree as the tree of life.

40 And thus, if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life.

41 But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life.

Eating that fruit is the same as having eternal live.

42 And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious..., (Alma 32:28-42a)

The progression continues from swelling to sprouting to growing rapidly. With nourishing, the plant puts down roots and grows up to bring forth fruit. Neglect of the tree (lack of nourishing by faith), on the other hand, keeps it from getting roots, "and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out" (Alma 32:38). But if you nourish the word by faith with great diligence, Alma says"it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life" (Alma 32:41). The reward comes in plucking the fruit of the tree of life,

which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.(Alma 32:42b.) 313

Thereafter, the people to whom Alma was talking began to asked him questions, he responded, then he concluded by repeating his earlier promise.

23 And now, my brethren, I desire that ye shall plant this word in your hearts, and as it beginneth to swell even so nourish it by your faith. And behold, it will become a tree, springing up in you unto everlasting life.(Alma 33:23a)

My friend Dil comments on that chapter.

To shift to another of Alma's metaphors, the tree of life (Alma 32:1), it is not enough to read the Book of Mormon once and say, "I believe." That would be like considering the first blossoming of a fruit tree to be the complete horticultural success. The tree needs to be fertilized, watered, pruned, and other- wise nourished until it reaches its full purpose in

³¹³ Richard Dilworth Rust, *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997), p. 135.

bearing fruit. Growth (and inspired learning) cannot come without help from God, but much effort is required on our part. As the apostle Paul put it, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). Or in Nephi's words, "It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Ne. 25:23). We are like Oliver Cowdery: to read God's word and translate it fully into our lives, we need to give it our best effort and God will then do his part (D&C 8:1).³¹⁴

So in Alma's example, like in the Proverb, it is not the tree that produces righteousness, it is righteousness that produces the tree.

Tasting the light and experiencing the promise of eternal life may be satisfying, even "the most joyous to the soul," but it cannot be a lonely, wholly self-satisfying thing. Salvation is a categorically individualistic experience in which one must be a part of a communion, and cannot be apart from it. The very nature of salvation precludes the nature of alone.

Elijah expressed that in one of the truly beautiful stories of the Old Testament. When Ahab told Jezebel what Elijah had done, she sent the prophet a message gloating that she would have him killed. He fled, sustained by the food and drink which an angel provided until he came to "Horeb the mount of God."

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:

12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

³¹⁴ Richard Dilworth Rust, *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1997), p.248 - 249.

13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (1 Kings 19: 9-14)³¹⁵

After Elijah fled into the wilderness, "and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die." (v.4) Elijah did not fear Jezebel's death threat – death is not frightening to those who are not afraid. The prophet's sorrow was that "I, even I only, am left." The Lord responded by instructing him to return, promising him that his enemies would not have power to hurt him, and assuring him,

Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. (v.18)

A man who is himself a tree of life has little sense of value when he is alone in a cave. Like Elijah, one may feel lonely for awhile, but there is no such thing as being saved alone.

A vivid example of that is the coronation ceremony in Isaiah 61, where the individual is washed, anointed, clothed, crowned, and given a new name. The name is, "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." "Righteousness" is zedek, so these are temple trees – not just one tree – but an orchard full, "that he might be glorified." In this context, and especially in light of verse 10, it is apparent that this new king-name is a promise that reaches out to others, to one's family of course, but also to one's friends. I will show you two evidences of that. One is circumstantial, the other is very real.

³¹⁵ That story was apparently familiar to both Nephi and his brothers, for Nephi quotes it in 1 Nephi 17:45

The circumstantial one is the story of the brother of Jared, who prayed to the Lord and got this response.

36 Then Jared said unto his brother: Cry again unto the Lord, and it may be that he will turn away his anger from them who are our friends, that he confound not their language.

37 And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon their friends and their families also, that they were not confounded.

40 And it came to pass that the Lord did hear the brother of Jared, and had compassion upon him, and said unto him:

41 Go to and gather together thy flocks, both male and female, of every kind; and also of the seed of the earth of every kind; and thy families; and also Jared thy brother and his family; and also thy friends and their families, and the friends of Jared and their families. (Ether 1:36-37, 40-41)

It is significant to me that their story is not only about families, but is about families and friends. If the brother and Jared qualifies as one who might be called a "tree of life" (and if he does not, no one but the Saviour ever will) then it is important to observe that the circumference of the stretch of that tree reached out to included both family and friends.

The Ark of the Covenant contained a jar of manna. More than anything else in the Ark the manna represented the very person of God. Perhaps for that reason, at times the Ark also represented the presence of God. But it also represented the fruit of the tree of life, and as such was not only symbolic of Jehovah, but also of those of his children who might also be called trees in their own right. Inasmuch as the king's feet rested on that Ark, it implied that he also was such a tree. For Abinadi to challenge that challenged king Noah's sacral kingship and priesthood – implying that he was not a legitimate representative of God.

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 vicariously – performed all the ordinances and made the same covenants as the king, queen, and others who performed 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 vicariously as they watched, where also made sons and daughters of God. The implications of the ordinary men and women who participated in the ceremonies 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 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.³¹⁶ At the conclusion of his reading, the king

The annual renewal of the covenant came to include the idea of commandments in general;

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.³¹⁷ 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. That precludes the argument that they made none, and opens the likelihood that they made others as well.

The idea 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 318

It is apparent to some scholars that the New Year Festival coronation was enacted because it was

not only this, but also of certain specific and definite commandments....

[&]quot;In this rite...we have the root of the later custom of the Jewish congregation reciting the lawbook, 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. 317 2 Kings 23:1-3; Geo Widengren, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 2-5, 18.

³¹⁸ 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.

important that the people be able to participate. They were, as we shall discuss later, an indispensable part of the play. And their covenants were as important as the king's. Abinadi will address this matter very eloquently, but it seems only right that his answer should be properly reinforced by statements from modern 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 vairly 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 who himself would be saved by following in the way of the First Perfect Man.³¹⁹

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. ³²⁰

Widengren observed, "a covenant was made between Yahweh and the king and his people, as well

³¹⁹ Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p. 184.

³²⁰ 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.)

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 ³²¹

Aubrey Johnson, during his discussion of Psalm 72, "which is one of the more famous of the socalled 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.³²²

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. 323

³²¹ Widengren, Geo, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 21-22.

³²² Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 7-8.

³²³ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 91.

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. 324

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

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.³²⁵

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. ³²⁶ When he reaches the coronation segment of the Beatitudes, he is still speaking to "the multitude."

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called [given the new king-name] the children 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.)³²⁷

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." 325 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.

³²⁶ I'll explain that more fully when we discuss the Beatitudes.

³²⁷ The same idea is expressed in Mosiah 5:7 and Ether 3:14.

The nature and promise of sacral kingship was the whole focus of Abinadi's argument as he described what one must be to become a child of Christ. As I have already observed, the coronation rites at the conclusion of the New Year festival not only represented the renewal of the king's earthly authority as son of God, but they also represented the renewal of the ordinances and covenants of salvation for the king and every individual who participated in the ceremonies.

Consequently, when Abinadi asked, "who shall be his seed," then answered his own question, he answered in terms of sacral kingship:

And who shall be his seed? Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord – I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God. (Mosiah 15: 10b-11)

That was Abinadi's point – "his people" are the "seed"? – the children? the legitimate "heirs"? His argument was not unique. Indeed, his conclusions are the same as are found everywhere in the scriptures. The high-point of the Beatitudes is, "...for they shall be called the children of God." That conclusion is powerfully expressed in the King Benjamin account of the New Year festival.

And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters." (Mosiah 5:7)

It is most beautifully expressed in the words of the Saviour to the brother of Jared:

Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters." (Ether 3:14)

Relative to these sacral kings and queens, the Prophet Joseph wrote,

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; (D&C 137:1-2)

The Great Feast

On the 22nd day of the New Year festival (the 8th and "extra" day of the Feast of Tabernacles), the ceremonies concluded with the king and the people joining in a great celebration feast. ³²⁸

Hence the festival cult invariably has a more or less dramatic character; it is a sacred drama, representing the salvation which takes place. This dramatic character tallies with the fact that the cult is a mutual act on the part of God and of the congregation, with address and answer, action and reaction.³²⁹

(In Third Nephi, the day after the Saviour came to the temple, he also provided a sacred meal for everyone present. I believe that the reason Third Nephi exhibits so many of the same events as the New Year festival, and in the same order, is because Mormon wanted to use the festival sequence as a testimony that Jesus followed the correct steps and was therefore demonstrably the legitimate King.)

Summation

Before we actually get to the story of Abinadi, I would like to summarize all that I have tried to say. I would like to do that, not by giving a review, but by showing you a few scriptures which literally say all there is to say. I have already made reference to the 23rd Psalm and to the Beatitudes as complete statements of the entire story. It really doesn't make much difference what one calls the story. We can call it the plan of salvation, or the drama of the Feast of Tabernacles, or

³²⁸ Frederick H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1967, p. 95-96; John H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, Sheffield, England, 1968, p. 87-88; Geo Widengren, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 9. 329 Sigmund Mowinckel, D. R. Ap-Thomas, trans., *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2 vols., 1979), 1: 19. There Mowinckel is using the word "cult" almost as a verb, meaning the ordinances as they are performed.

even one's own autobiography. It doesn't matter because they are all the same thing. So in summation of this section which tried to lay the background for the Abinadi story, I would like to read those scriptures with you.

Twenty-Third Psalm

The 23rd Psalm is very short, but remarkably complete:

The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

thou anointest my head with oil;

my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Its surface text is almost universally acknowledged to be one of the most beautiful poems ever written. Its sub-text is awesome. The sub-text is not hidden, it is only not apparent to those who do not know the language. It is a short play, divided into three acts: 1) the pre-mortal existence; 2) "the valley of the shadow of death;" and 3) "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Act One

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Almost all of the accounts we have of fore-ordinations contain the principles and promises expressed in these words. The Lord is in charge. It is he who gives instructions and foreordains one to a specific task; he and his Father make enabling covenants regarding the fulfillment of those tasks; and it is by his sustaining power that one is enabled to perform one's task and keep one's covenants – "The Lord is my shepherd" – the one whom I shall follow.

The second part, "I shall not want," is the same assurance as Paul's, which was also set in the context of the covenants of the pre-mortal world: "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."

(Ephesians 1)

Jeremiah is a good example.

Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations. (Jeremiah 1:9-10)

Not everyone is set over the nations, but everyone is given an equivalent guarantee of success — and perhaps an equivalent guarantee of "easy" success. King Zedekiah didn't like Jeremiah and caused him to be lowered into a pit of mire up to his neck. He was left to stand there until he was exhausted, when it was expected he would simply sink into the morass and drown in the mud. (Jeremiah ch. 38:5-6) Someone pulled him out and he didn't die then, but it is reported he was later taken to Egypt and murdered there. The point is, he wasn't drowned in the mud, but lived to fulfill his mission. The Lord hadn't promised his assignment would be a piece of cake, only that he could not be prevented from doing it.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures

There are two likely meanings here which easily merge into one. The first meaning is explained by Nephi as a declaration of the Saviour's ultimate kingship.

- v. 25 And he gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd; and he shall feed his sheep, and in him they shall find pasture.
- v. 26 And because of the righteousness of his people, Satan has no power; wherefore, he cannot be loosed for the space of many years; for he hath no power over the hearts of the people, for they dwell in righteousness, and the Holy One of Israel reigneth. (1 Ne. 22:21-31)

The second probable meaning is deduced from what follows:

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

The waters of life are moving, living, tranquil waters. They give life as rain, rivulets, and great rivers, but they are never stagnant and never salty. Nephi wrote that the waters of life and the fruit of the tree of life represent the love of God. If that was so in Nephi's day, it would have been so in Adam and David's as well. The symbolism of the tree and waters of life are fundamental to the Feast of Tabernacles drama. In the 23rd Psalm we do not have a tree that sustains life because the symbolism is of sheep, rather than of people. So in conjunction with the waters of life we have "green pastures" instead. 331

³³⁰ James Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. #4496: peaceful, quiet, rest.

Please note my earlier comment that in Israelite tradition the most frequent symbol of the tree of life is the Olive tree. However grape vines, palm trees, and an ear of wheat were also used as symbols of the tree of life. One finds this in: Ad de Vries in *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (London, North-Holland, 1974), 474.

He restoreth my soul.

In section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, when the Lord was explaining resurrection and exaltation, he used the word "soul," and in that context defined it as the body and spirit of man. (D&C 88:15) But elsewhere – almost everywhere else – in the scriptures the "soul" is the spirit which animates one's physical body and gives it life. 332 It seems that both ideas are the same, and that a "soul" is an intelligence clothed with a body. Whether that body is a spirit, or both spirit and physical, the definition still holds.

The "soul" in the 23rd Psalm is "restored." But this happens before it falls from the world of light into the world of darkness in the valley of the shadow of death. So this "He restoreth my soul" happened in the pre-mortal spirit world. In that life we could sin, as is evinced by the seriousness with which a third of the hosts of heaven sinned. Then as now, the consequence of sin was uncleanliness, and no unclean thing can be in the presence of God.

Our options before we were born into this world seem to have been about as complex as our options are now. The eternal importance of free agency and of the value of experience suggests that if one had the option of choosing some wrong thing at every point along the way, as one has in this life – Well, I, for one, probably made some really stupid choices there, just as I have here. But notwithstanding whatever I did wrong back then, I was born into this mortal world as an innocent baby, pure and clean. I brought no baggage and no sin from my pre-mortal life. I was an innocent baby because the atonement made me innocent. In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord explains

³³² For examples see: Alma 29:16, 36:15, 40:11, 41:2; Matthew 10:28; 2 Nephi 1:22; D&C 59:19).

how that was done.

Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, man became again, in their infant state, innocent before God. (D&C 93: 38)

So we were "innocent in the beginning" – that would be when we were born to our heavenly parents as spirits. And we become innocent again, a second time when we are born to our earthly parents. In order for us to become innocent again, something had to happen to make us uninnocent after "the beginning." It's easy to know what. Free agency is meaningless unless there are real choices. Experience in knowing the difference between correct and incorrect choices is necessary for growth, even though making wrong choices subjects one to the laws of justice. That is what repentance is for, and notwithstanding the wrong choices we made in the pre-mortal spirit world, the atonement made it possible for us to be born into this world as innocent little babies. I don't know if that was what King David had in mind when he wrote, "He restoreth my soul," but that's what I think when I read it.

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

"Paths of righteousness" are the "way," the system of steps, ordinances and covenants, through which one must pass in order to return to God. As mentioned above, the word "righteousness" (zedek) identifies the path as the ancient priesthood and temple ordinances and covenants. We have already discussed that, but may I quickly review.

"Righteousness" is a key word which has popped up again and again in our discussion. In English, its root means to be "right," to be at "right angle" to something, to be square with, plumb with, literally to bring something to the square. The Hebrew word which is translated "righteousness"

means the same thing, being altogether just, justified, true, square, but it also has singular and very important priesthood and temple connotations. It is the same word as the name Zadok, the High Priest in the days of David and Solomon. Throughout the history of Solomon's temple, tradition says, only Zadok and his descendants could hold the office of High Priest, enter the Holy of Holies and officiate in the sacred temple ordinances. So as an adjective, zedek has to do with that kind of priesthood propriety. So "righteousness" does not mean just doing nice things, it means doing appropriate temple things with legitimate priesthood authority, which is the authority of Zadok, Melchizedek, and other High Priests. As one examines the use of the word "righteousness," in the Doctrine and Covenants, it is apparent that the Lord used the word there the same way it is used in the other scriptures, with strong connotations of priesthood propriety. For example the phrase, "robes of righteousness" has a specific and consistent meaning throughout the scriptures. In the phrase "works of righteousness" are the quintessence of obedience. Such works were obedience to correct laws, principles, covenants, ordinances, and rules of clothing. For one to do "works of righteousness," he must do precisely the right thing, in precisely the right way, for precisely the right reason, dressed in precisely the right clothing, in the temple and with precisely the right priesthood authority. Its meaning is fully brought into play in the Beatitudes in the phrase, "Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness...." Alma explains this principle, not only in terms of being unclean, but also in terms of eating the wrong food and drinking the wrong water, in contrast to his frequent mention of the fruit of the tree of life and the waters of life.

But behold, an awful death cometh upon the wicked; for they die as to things pertaining to things of righteousness [Note: Alma does not say, "die as to righteousness," he says, "die as to things pertaining to things of righteousness."]; for they are unclean, and no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God; but they are cast out, and consigned to partake of the fruits of their labors or their works, which have been evil; and they drink the dregs of a bitter cup (Alma 40:26).

The "paths of righteousness" in the 23rd Psalm are the way by which one may come unto Christ,

but the context is still in act one, which is the pre-mortal existence. Speaking of that, President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote that there were "ordinances" in our pre-mortal life.

During the ages in which we dwelt in the pre-mortal state we not only developed our various characteristics and showed our worthiness and ability, or the lack of it, but we were also where such progress could be observed. It is reasonable to believe that there was a Church organization there. The heavenly beings were living in a perfectly arranged society. Every person knew his place. Priesthood, without any question, had been conferred and the leaders were chosen to officiate. Ordinances pertaining to that pre-existence were required, and the love of God prevailed.³³³

In support of the idea that there was a church organization with enabling ordinances in the premortal spirit world, President Smith quoted Ephesians 1:3-4.³³⁴ He might also have used I Nephi 20, Isaiah 61:1, D&C 93:21-23, Alma 12-13, Isaiah 6, and lots of others. So there was, in the pleasantness of the world of "green pastures" and "still waters," a clearly defined "way" which King David calls "the paths of righteousness."

for his name's sake.

As mentioned above, "name" is another key word. New covenants are almost always associated with new names. Abram received the "Abrahamic covenant" and his name was changed to Abraham. Jacob made a covenant and the Lord changed his name to Israel. In First Nephi 20, when the people who were called Jacob made a covenant with the Lord, their name was also changed to Israel. In many instances in the scriptures the word "name" can be replaced by "covenant" without changing the meaning of the statement.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949), p.50-1.

Joseph Fielding Smith, The Way to Perfection (Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949), p.50-1; and also his *Doctrines of Salvation*, Salt Lake City, 1954, Vol. 1, p. 66

The paalm's "he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake," is about as straightforward as it can be. "Paths" equal ordinances, "righteousness" is zedek, and name is "covenant." "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" might read, "He leads me through the ordinances of the priesthood for the sake of the covenants we have made together."

Act 2

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

There is not a voice change here, but there is a change in the way the king speaks about God.

Throughout act one the king is rehearsing the story of his own past, and God is spoken of as "He."

But when one enters the world of "the valley of the shadow of death," the psalm becomes a prayer, and God is addressed as "thou." That prayer is an expression of hope and confidence that God will fulfill his part of the covenant so the king may fulfill his: One's assignment may be difficult, but in the fulfillment of that assignment, one is never alone.

thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

As observed above, a rod is a symbol of kingship.³³⁵ It is the same as the royal scepter which is the branch of the Tree of Life. An ancient tradition says that the rod of Moses was a branch of the tree of life – an interesting idea, since he received its power at the time he saw the burning bush.

James Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. #7626: "a *stick* (for punishing, writing, fighting, ruling, walking, etc.) or (fig) a clan: – correction, dart, rod, sceptre, staff, tribe."

Aaron's staff was a symbol of priesthood authority. When Aaron's authority was challenged, he put his staff in the ground and the next morning it had blossomed. Thereafter that staff was kept in the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

"Comfort" is the same word used in Isaiah 61:1-3 to introduce the coronation sequence: to wash, anoint, clothe, crown, and give a new name. That coronation may be a this-world re-play of the earlier "he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. "

So what this verse apparently says is, "Even though I am in the darkness of this world, I have no reason to fear, for I am enthroned by the symbols of kingship (rod) and of priesthood (staff)."

Thou preparest a table before me.

The table prepared is the temple feast. Its symbolism is much older than the Law of Moses, and it represents something far more important than a temporal meal. A possible example is when Melchizedek met Abraham returning from rescuing Lot. He received tithes from Abraham and brought bread and wine to serve to him. Melchizedek was High Priest of Salem. Not only did he build a temple there, but he also gave the city a new name, Jerusalem, city of peace. 336

Perhaps the most remarkable example of this feast was with Moses on Mt. Sinai.

Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God,

Josephus, the Essential Writings, translated by Paul L. Maier, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988, p. 367.

and did eat and drink (Exodus 24:1-18).

The meal in the 23rd Psalm might also refer to the meat that was taken from the seething pot at the temple in Jerusalem. There the people who offered the sacrifice sat with the priests and ate the meat of the sacrifice. If these are the meals David refers to by the words, "Thou preparest a table before me," then he is probably talking about symbolically eating in the presence of the Lord – a royal banquet, where Jehovah confirms the rule of the king.³³⁷

In Third Nephi, after the Saviour came to the temple and gave the lecture (Beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount), the people brought bread and wine and it was multiplied so that it filled all those present (3 Nephi 18:1-12). Then on the following day, Christ himself provided the bread and wine that satisfied an even greater multitude. (3 Nephi 20:5-9) That is the same sequence as the 21st and 22nd days of the New Year festival, and probably the same ceremonial feasts.

Thou anointest my head with oil.

That is a clear reference to the kingship coronation rites.

My cup runneth over.

In an extended discussion of the question, Barre and Keslman write that "... the banquet scene is properly a royal banquet, where the (divine) overLord reconfirms the rule of his vassal-king...." Michael L. Barre & John S. Kselman, "New exodus covenant in Psalm 23," in Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor, ed., *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth, Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Published for the American Schools of Oriental Research by Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, Indiana 1983), p. 104-106.

To have one's cup run over is to have so many blessings that there is not room enough to receive them. That blessing is a logical – even necessary – conclusion to the anointing and the sacred meal.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life

These are the words which constitute the conclusion of Act 2. In English, goodness has to do with how one acts, and mercy has to do with how one judges. Dan Belnap tells me, that the word for mercy in Hebrew is *hesed*, but its meaning is debated. He said that some scholars believe it is the Hebrew equivalent for the New Testament concept of charity – "Eternal lovingkindness." In his video, *Faith of an Observer*, Hugh Nibley says the law of the gospel is to repent and to forgive³³⁸ – it's that idea.

Barre and Kselman translate the line as: "Henceforth may only (your) covenant blessings pursue me all the days of my life."³³⁹ However, Freedman believed that "goodness and mercy" were proper actually name-titles, and probably represented guardian angels who were members of the Council and who had covenanted to come to the earth to assist the king during his lifetime. The quote reads:

The association of the divine virtues...here is distinctive and exceptional. . . . In the background is the mythological picture of the principal deity accompanied by lesser divine beings who . . . will leave their posts in the heavenly court, and accompany the Psalmist

Nibley doesn't say where he came up with that idea, but it seems to say it in the first few verses of the Sermon on the Mount. See 3 Nephi 12:21-24. The rest of the sermon goes through the remainder of the sequence, so it is reasonable to suppose that is correct.

³³⁹ Michael L. Barre & John S. Kselman, "New exodus covenant in Psalm 23," in Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor, ed., *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth, Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Published for the American Schools of Oriental Research by Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, Indiana 1983), p. 89-100.

all the days of my life

If "goodness and mercy" are the blessing the king receives, then the words "all the days of my life"

340 Michael L. Barre & John S. Kselman, "New exodus covenant in Psalm 23," in Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor, ed., *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth, Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Published for the American Schools of Oriental Research by Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, Indiana 1983), p. 102. (The parts left out of the quote are explanations of Hebrew words.)

They give as their source: David N. Freedman, "The Twenty-Third Psalm." Pp. 275-302 in *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy.' Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry.* 1980 [Originally, 1976, pp.139-66 in *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of George Cameron.* ed. L. L. Orlin et al. Ann Arbor, MI: Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan.), p. 297-98.

They also include a footnote (# 18, on p. 117) about guardian angels. It reads: "So also J. H. Eaton, *Kingshzp and the Psalms*. Studies in Biblical Theology 2/32. London: SCM, 1976: 153: "A tendency to personify the covenant-graces appears fairly clearly in a number of passages; they take the form of angelic beings commissioned by God to accompany and guard his king." In addition to Ps 23: 6, Eaton cites Pss 21: 4; 40: 12; 42: 9; 43: 3; 54: 7; 59: 11; 61: 8; 91: 4. On Pss 40: 12 and 61: 8, see below."

The full quote from David Noel Freedman, "Twenty - Third Psalm," in *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy, Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake, Indiana, Eisenbrauns, 1980), p. 275 - 302, reads as follows:

In Ps. 23, the situation is reversed: the Psalmist will be accompanied by divine goodness and mercy. We may compare this passage with Ps. 43:3, where the divine attributes, "your light and your truth" will guide the poet. In the background is the mythological picture of the principal deity accompanied by lesser divine beings who serve him as retinue and bodyguard. The pre Israelite tradition has been preserved almost intact in Hab. 3:5 where Pestilence (deber) and Plague (res>p) are described as marching before and behind the Deity. Elsewhere the accompanying figures have been demythologized in the form of divine attributes, as e.g., in Ps. 96:6

Honor and majesty are before him

Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

In Ps. 23, there is a further adaptation. The divine virtues will leave their posts in the heavenly court, and accompany the Psalmist throughout his life. There is a hint that something approaching divine honors is being accorded to the Psalmist. Perhaps we have here an early form of the later doctrine of guardian angels.

are a promise that God will bless one that he may have sufficient opportunity and resources to fulfill the covenants he made at the Council. If "goodness and mercy" are the characteristics of the king, that he may bless others, then the promise is essentially the same. But there is also another connotation which cannot be ignored: "all the days of my life" sounds very much like "endure to the end"— and that also fits, no matter which way one interprets "goodness and mercy."

Act 3

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

As is frequently the case in the scriptures, act three and the end of act two are represented by the same words. "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" is the perfect ending for act two. But "forever" lasts longer than this earth life, so that same sentence also stands for all we need wonder about act three.

The story of Lehi goes through the same sequence and ends the same way when Lehi says, "But behold, the Lord hath redeemed [past tense] my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am [present tense] encircled about eternally in the arms of his love." (2 Nephi 1:15) The embrace "in the arms of his love" represents the conclusion of Lehi's life. But "eternally" is longer than this world, so that word extends the embrace forever into act three.

That same pattern is also found at the end of the Beatitudes. After one goes through the sequence, becomes "salt" and "a light," the instruction is given, "Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." The implication being that both one's light and the people's glorifying God should go on forever.

(For the sake of clarity, let me say that I am using the word "Beatitudes" to include 3 Nephi 12: 1-16, which begin "Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve....," and concludes with, "Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good

3 Fortunate are the humble in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. 4 Fortunate are those who mourn, for they shall be consoled. 5 Fortunate are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Fortunate are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall he satisfied. 7 Fortunate are the merciful, for they shall have mercy shown to them. 8 Fortunate are the pure-minded, for they shall see God. 9 Fortunate are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. [and so on]

In a footnote, they explain why they chose the word "fortunate."

3. Fortunate. The word in Greek was used in classical times of the state of the gods in contrast to men. The usual English "blessed" has more and more come to have liturgical or ecclesiastical overtones, and we have chosen "fortunate" as being the best translation available to us. [W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *The Anchor Bible, Matthew* (New York, Doubleday, 1971), p.45.]

It is important to me that Joseph used the same word that is in the King James Matthew, so we could compare the Bible and the Book of Mormon with confidence, and know that the Book of Mormon carried the same understanding as the Bible. It is also important that these two scholars have clarified what the Bible – and therefore what the Book of Mormon – means. The thing that is so interesting to me about the clarification is that these world-class scholars knew what the Greek word said – "in the state of the gods" – but didn't believe what it said, so they came up with a watered-down word – "fortunate" – because that made more sense to them. Then, consistent with their training as scholars, they put the real meaning in a footnote.

I frequently find myself being astonished at the words Joseph Smith chose when he translated the Book of Mormon. For example, he used the word "blessed," with the meaning in the Beatitudes, when he translated First Nephi which was written in Egyptian almost 600 years earlier. Here are two examples where the word "blessed" in First Nephi that might best be understood as "in the state of the gods," meaning the condition of the past, present, and future members of the Council in

This is one of my favorite examples of Joseph's "We believe the Bible to be the word of God so far as it is translated correctly." The *Anchor Bible* is a very scholarly translation of the Bible in which a whole volume is devoted to each book in the Bible. The book of Matthew, which contains many quotes from the Old Testament, has two author/translators, W. F. Albright, a distinguished Old Testament scholar, and C. S. Mann, an equally distinguished New Testament Scholar. This is the way they translate the Beatitudes.

1 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 behold, he stretched forth his hand unto the multitude, and cried unto them, saying: Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to be your servants; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are baptized with water, behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; therefore blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am.

- 2 And again, more blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.
- 3 Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- 5 And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Heaven.

"And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: **Blessed art thou, Nephi**, because of thy faith, ... And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher [king and priest] over thy brethren." (1 Ne. 2:19-22) In the Book of Mormon that is the equivalent of the Davidic covenant upon which the legitimacy entire Nephite dynasty is based.

And

"And when I had spoken these words, the Spirit cried with a loud voice, saying: Hosanna to the Lord, the most high God; for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all. And **blessed art thou, Nephi**, because thou believest in the Son of the most high God; wherefore, thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired." (1 Nephi 11:6)

- 7 And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- 8 And blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- 9 And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.
- 10 And blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 And blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake;
- 12 For ye shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.
- 13 Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted? The salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.
- 14 Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the light of this people. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.
- 15 Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house;
- 16 Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (3 Nephi 12: 1-16)

As far as I know, the Beatitudes as written in Third Nephi are the most complete and succinct statement of the ideas – not the events, but the ideas – of the endowment/enthronement drama of the New Year festival that one can find anywhere in the scriptures. Most of the Beatitudes are very short quotes or paraphrases from the Psalms or Isaiah. It is apparent that the Saviour quoted these passages in order to evoke in the memory of the listeners the entire psalm or Isaiah passage. His speaking the Beatitudes would have only taken about three minutes. For his audience it must have been an overwhelming experience to hear the Saviour run through that sequence of ideas so quickly – while their minds were filled to overflowing with the full intent of their meaning. If, as I presume, the Spirit conveyed the message to his listeners, their minds would have been flooded

with a quick succession of infinitely powerful ideas. There are a number of stories told in the scriptures where I wish I could have been among the people present – but being in that assembly, hearing the Saviour speak the Beatitudes, and feeling the impact of their message, is certainly near the top of my list.

The following discussion of the Beatitudes is not intended to be anything like an exhaustive one. Indeed, it is intended to be rather limited – and remember, this is still only my opinion.

The Beatitudes in the Book of Mormon begin:

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 behold, he stretched forth his hand unto the multitude, and cried unto them, saying:

That is extremely significant: Jesus had been speaking to the Twelve, but now he speaks to the entire "multitude." In only a few words, Mormon has given us the same message that was so important to Abinadi: The blessings of sacral kingship and priesthood are not reserved to the leaders, but are available to all the Saints.

Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to be your servants; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water;

This first Beatitude is about obedience to the brethren because they hold the keys of the Kingdom and no ordinances are "acceptable" without their authority. Each of the following statements by the

Prophet Joseph help explain why that is true.

The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose.

It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world. Jesus did everything to gather the people, and they would not be gathered, and He therefore poured out curses upon them. Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.

It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc. One of the ordinances of the house of the Lord is baptism for the dead. God decreed before the foundation of the world that the ordinances should be administered in a font prepared for the purpose in the house of the Lord....

If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.

Where there is no change of priesthood, there is no change of ordinances, says Paul.³⁴²

and

If men would acquire salvation, they have got to be subject, before they leave this world, to certain rules and principles, which were fixed by an unalterable decree before the world was....

The organization of the spiritual and heavenly worlds, and of spiritual and heavenly beings, was [past tense] agreeable to the most perfect order and harmony: their limits and bounds were fixed irrevocably, and voluntarily subscribed to in their heavenly estate by themselves, and were by our first parents subscribed to upon the earth. Hence the importance of embracing and subscribing to principles of eternal truth by all men upon the earth that expect eternal life.....³⁴³

and after that ye are baptized with water, behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; therefore blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am.

There is an important distinction here. The Twelve had the power to baptize with water, but the

Saviour himself will baptize with fire and the Holy Ghost. As I understand it, when someone lays

³⁴² *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 308.

³⁴³ Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.324-5.

his hands on another person's head and says, "Receive the Holy Ghost," those are the words of a command. It is also an authoritative promise. The command is that one must learn to receive the Holy Ghost. The promise is that one may do so. After one receives that blessing, its command/promise is made viable as one learns, through faith and practice, how to listen to the Spirit; how to know that its feeling is different from all other feelings; and how to ask questions and receive answers that are confirmed by that feeling. Eventually, one is able to fulfill the command, and as with a mantel of light, one receives the Holy Ghost as a gift from the Saviour.

Having spoken to and about the people present, the Saviour then expands his discussion beyond his immediate audience and speaks about those who have not yet been in his presence.

2 And again, more blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.

This is not just a review of the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel, it is a focus statement about how to prepare for what is coming next. Having a remission of one's sins is a fundamental and necessary step that is accomplished not just by baptism but through the process of receiving the Holy Ghost. Moroni explained that after people had "been received unto baptism," they "were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost." (Moroni 6:4a) Psalm 24 is not one that the Saviour quoted in the Beatitudes, but it is one that is relevant here. It asks,

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,

The Saints, at least in Alma's time, were acquainted with both the question and the answer, for Alma quoted the psalm when he asked,

I say unto you, can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands? I say unto you, can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances? (Alma 5:19)

Being clean – both ceremonially clean, as comes through baptism, and personally clean, as comes through repentance and having one's sins remitted, are necessary prerequisites to the steps that follow. What the Saviour describes next is what follows in reality.

3 Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Sometimes that beatitude is easier to understand if one reads it backwards to discover first its object, and then its method. The object is: "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That does not say they shall be citizens of the kingdom, it says it is theirs – they shall own it – people who own kingdoms are called kings and priests, or queens and priestesses. So, implicitly, the beatitude says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for they are the kings and priests, the queens and priestesses of the kingdom of heaven."

To "come unto me" means precisely what the words say. It is not about just doing good things, it means one must go to the place where he is, as in the 24th Psalm which I just quoted. The entire purpose of the drama of the New Year festival was to bring one behind the veil which separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the world. Understood symbolically, the phrase "come unto me" happened when one had passed through that veil and entered the Holy of Holies – God's earthly

throne room – to be in the presence of Jehovah. Taken quite literally it meant one must come to the place where Christ is – just as the brother of Jared did when the Lord reached his hand through the cloud of light.

Implicitly then, the Beatitude says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit who come to the temple where I am, for they are the kings and priests, the queens and priestesses of the kingdom of heaven."

The question now is "who are the 'poor in spirit'?"

Non-Mormon commentators on Matthew 5's "the poor in spirit" insist the phrase has nothing to do with being impoverished. "Poor" does not mean lacking either "spirit," spirituality, or worldly goods. There is nothing about emotional, spiritual, or worldly poverty which qualifies one to come to where the Saviour is, or to be anointed to become a king or queen, unless that poverty is acquired in righteousness and according to eternal law. The poor in spirit" are not spiritually impoverished, but "Those living in uprightness, or 'perfection." 344

The only kind of poverty which fits those criteria is acquired through sacrifice. "Sacrifice" does not mean to lose something or to give it up, it means to make it sacred – to set it apart. Throughout the scriptures – even while animal sacrifices were still performed under the Law of Moses – the

Albright and Mann are very capable scholars, and I have neither the academic credentials nor the inclination to suggest they are anything less than that because I truly admire their work, but what they did with "poor in spirit" is the same sort of thing they did with "fortunate." They translated it as "humble in spirit," then in the footnote they suggested an altogether different and more powerful meaning: "Those living in uprightness, or "perfection" – an idea that comes remarkably close to their "in the state of the gods." W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *The Anchor Bible, Matthew* (New York, Doubleday, 1971), p.45-6.

sacrifice the Lord declared to be acceptable was that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

When the Lord spoke to the Nephites out of the darkness and said,

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

19 And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings.

20 And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 9: 18-20a),

he was not stating a new commandment, but was saying something they already knew from the psalms:

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18)

and

For thou desirest not sacrifice;

else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:

a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (Psalm 51: 16-17)³⁴⁵ In the following verses from the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord states that the "poor" are those

Saints who have made the sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit.

Wo unto you poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men's goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, and who will not labor with your own hands! But blessed are the poor who are pure in heart, whose hearts are broken, and whose spirits are contrite, for they shall see the kingdom of God coming in power and great glory unto their deliverance; for the fatness of the earth shall be theirs (D&C 56:17-18).

³⁴⁵ See: D&C 56:17-20, 3 Nephi 9:19-20, D&C 59:8.

The Lord further says that this sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, as were the blood sacrifices of the Law, is associated with priesthood covenants and priesthood ordinances.

That temple relationship is emphasized by the phrase "in righteousness" [zedek] in the following verse.

Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit (D&C 59:8).

Twice Isaiah equates the poor and the meek with those who will embrace the gospel.

- 18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.
- 19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 29:18-19)

and

- 1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:
- 2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;
- 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:
- 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
- 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.
- 6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.
- 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Isaiah 11: 1-7, 12)

The Lord declared that those prophecies were about to be fulfilled when he described the fruits of modern missionary work.

15 And the poor and the meek shall have the gospel preached unto them, and they shall be looking forth for the time of my coming, for it is nigh at hand." (D&C 35: 15)

The "poor and the meek" are also coupled in section 88 where the Lord says,

- 17 And the redemption of the soul is through him that quickeneth all things, in whose bosom it is decreed that the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it.
- 18 Therefore, it [the earth] must needs be sanctified from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared for the celestial glory;
- 19 For after it hath filled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the presence of God the Father; (D&C 88:17 19)

It is apparent to me that the phrase "poor in spirit" is a reference to those who make a covenantal sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit. I believe that when the Saviour spoke the Beatitudes to the Nephites, they understood it that way also. One reason that is apparent is that when the Saviour finished the Beatitudes and began the body of the Sermon on the Mount, he returned to the idea of verse 3 and expanded on it.

- 19 And behold, I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and *come unto me* with *a broken heart and a contrite spirit*. Behold, ye have the commandments before you, and the law is fulfilled.
- 20 Therefore *come unto me* and be ye saved; for verily I say unto you, that except ye shall keep my commandments, which I have commanded you at this time, ye shall in no case *enter into the kingdom of heaven*. (3 Nephi 12:20 italics added)

So, if that is correct, the "poor in spirit" were those who had made the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit in the context of the ordinances of the ancient temple, and in preparation to entering his presence, and becoming kings and queens, and priests and priestsesses of the kingdom of heaven.

In the Beatitudes, the Saviour will repeat the phrase "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" again after the verse which appears to be the actual kingship anointing. That repetition leads one to believe that the use of the phrase here in verse three represents an anointing to become king and queen, rather than the actual anointing to be king and queen which occurs later on.

And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

That verse is easily recognizable as a paraphrase of the beginning of Isaiah 61. There, as we have observed, "comfort" is used in conjunction with the coronation ordinances of being washed, anointed, clothed, given a new name, and crowned. In that chapter of Isaiah, "they that mourn" are the dead who are awaiting their saving ordinances. So one can assert that the Saviour's "Blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" is a clear reference to vicarious temple work for the dead.

And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

As already observed, this is a paraphrase of Psalms 37 and 25 which define the meek as those that keep the covenants they made in the Council. It is they for whom the earth was created, and it is

And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

If this Beatitude, like the others, is a close paraphrase of one of the psalms or Isaiah, that scripture is now lost to us. (Unless, of course, it is a more obscure reference to the beginning of the 23rd Psalm.) Fortunately, however, it is relatively easy to sort out its meaning.

"Righteousness" is zedek – temple things – so it is reasonable to read the Beatitude as: "And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after the fulfillment of the promises of the ordinances and covenants of the temple, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost."

Another possible parallel is Isaiah 49 (again using the 1 Nephi 21 version as we discussed earlier). It is a promise that Joseph Smith and those who are assigned to work with him will restore the temple ordinances, and as a result, will bring about the gathering of Israel. The verses I have in mind sound very much like Isaiah 61 in language, and the sub-text is clearly about vicarious temple work for the dead – but it also promises temple blessings for the living.

- 8 Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time have I heard thee, O isles of the sea, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee my servant [The footnote in the Book of Mormon leads one to 2 Nephi 3: 6-15 which identifies Joseph Smith by name.] for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;
- **9 That thou mayest say to the prisoners: Go forth;** [In light of Isaiah 61, this is a clear work to vicarious temple work.] **to them that sit in darkness: Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.** ["high places" are temples.]

10 They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. [temple code words](1 Nephi 21: 8-11)

The Saviour cited verse 10, suggesting that he was both the temple and the tree and waters of life.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

When Jesus served the sacrament to the Nephites, he further explained:

And he said unto them: He that eateth this bread eateth of my body to his soul; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood to his soul; and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled. (3 Nephi 20: 8)

John understood the connection between the Saviour's statement and the Isaiah prophecy:

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7: 14-17)

To hunger and thirst is probably a reference to one's desire to eat of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the waters of life. I have quoted these verses in another context, but this part of Alma 32, which is about how one may do that, is also especially relevant here. Alma also equates the Saviour with the tree of life.

40 And thus, if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to

the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life.

- 41 But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life.
- 42 And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.
- 43 Then, my brethren, ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long-suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you. (Alma 32:40-43).

Again, It is to the Psalms where one turns to discover the intensity of the meaning of the words:

As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

My tears have been my meat [food] day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God:

for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. (Psalm 42:1-5)³⁴⁶ This being "filled with the Holy Ghost" is probably not a re-statement of what he said in the first verse "I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost." This, I suppose is step three of what

appears to be at least a three-step process. If step one is to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, step two is to be baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost, then step three is to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Perhaps that same idea is found in the statement in section 88 which talks about the celestial earth

Even though the words "hunger and thirst" do not appear in Nephi's psalm (2 Nephi 4), the impact of his words are strikingly like those of Psalm 42, and suggest the same deep yearning for "righteousness."

and those who will live upon it. But rather than just speaking of them as becoming celestial people after they are resurrected, it speaks of them of receiving resurrected celestial bodies because they are celestial people while they live here.

- 25 And again, verily I say unto you, the earth abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law--
- 26 Wherefore, it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again, and shall abide the power by which it is quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it.
- **27 For notwithstanding they die, they also shall rise again, a spiritual** [resurrected] **body.** [Now, having said that, the Lord describes those who will become celestial persons not just in terms of their future, but in terms of their state in the present.]
- 28 They who are [present tense] of a celestial spirit shall receive [future tense] the same body which was [past tense] a natural body; even ye shall receive [future tense] your bodies, and your glory shall be [future tense] that glory by which your bodies are quickened.[present tense]
- 29 Ye who are quickened [present tense] by a portion of the celestial glory shall then receive [future tense] of the same, even a fulness.

As far as I can tell, that says there are people living on the earth whose bodies may be as subject to sickness, pain, and age as any one else's, but whose spirit is celestial. I suspect these are people who have been "filled by the Holy Ghost." If that is correct, then our Beatitude might be read as saying: "And blessed are all they who do hunger for the fruit of the tree of life and thirst for the waters of life in accordance to the fulfillment of the ordinances and covenants of the ancient temple, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, and sanctified by it."

And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

This exact phrase does not appear in our translations of the Psalms or Isaiah, and it is such a

common theme in the scriptures that it is not possible to pinpoint its source elsewhere. Alma understood it in its full context of dealing justly, judging righteously, and doing good continually.

Therefore, my son, see that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again. (Alma 41:14)

The sequence of the Beatitudes is as remarkable as their content. One is prepared to enter the temple through faith, repentance, baptism, and the reception of the Holy Ghost. Then verses 3 and 4 represent one's being there: "Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." and "And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." The first is representative of the temple ordinances for the living, the other is those same ordinances for the dead. Verse 5 is about keeping one's eternal covenants: "And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Verse 6 is about living what one has learned: "And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." Verse 7 is about learning how to be a king or a queen – that is, learning how to be a righteous judge: "And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Kings judge. That is their primary function. So do Queens. If one is to become a righteous king or queen, one must learn how to judge mercifully – that is why, in the preceding verse, one must have the Holy Ghost.

In the sequence of the beatitudes this verse about judging mercifully becomes the pivotal place.

Everything before it has to do with what one does – the attitude with which one does it is important throughout, but an attitude can be faked, so it is mostly about *what* one does. One can come this far

by doing the performances without the heart, the soul, or the love, but one can go no further than this. Now, having come this far toward becoming to be a king or a queen, one must learn to judge as God judges. Up until this point in our existence, God gives man and woman every possible chance to obtain exaltation. That was so even in or pre-mortal life: Satan, who was a liar from the beginning, apparently performed the necessary performances to demonstrate valiance and get into the Council (D&C 93:25); Cane, who was perdition while in the spirit world, apparently performed the necessary performances to come to this earth (Moses 5:21-24). In this life, anyone can go through all the steps of the Beatitudes (even live worthy and receive the Holy Ghost) based on one's performances until one gets to verse 7. That verse is not about performances, it is about the fundamental nature of one's soul; it is not about knowing how to judge, – it is about judging – which is the most fundamental and the most everlasting qualification of being a sacral king and queen. To judge with mercy, one must have charity – actually one must *be* charity – otherwise one condemns oneself as one judges others. From this point, in one's quest for salvation, if one is not a person of charity there is simply no place else to go.

One can fain faith and repentance, and one can be active in the Church, and use one's talents to exercise all sorts of ecclesiastical authority, but there are no earthly *performances* sufficient to get one from this world into the celestial kingdom. To do that one must *be* a person of mercy because of one's charity. Charity is the only way, and charity is a quality of the soul that cannot be faked. In terms of what one does, functional charity is the Law of Consecration; in terms of how one judges, it is "mercy."

So this Beatitude is like a door, a curtain, or the veil. No matter how well one performs the correct

performances in order to get to this place, one cannot go farther without going through that veil. It is the stopping place where the heart and soul are judged by the same criteria with which one judges others – "to measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man." (D&C 1:10)

The scriptures are replete with examples of how one should judge. The Lord's mercy and lovingkindness is an ever recurring theme in the psalms, Isaiah, and elsewhere.

Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.

Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart. (Psalms 36: 5-10)

After one has learned to be that – to judge with mercy – then the veil of the sequence in the Beatitudes is parted and one may continue:

And blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

This Beatitude is also a paraphrase from the psalms. Psalm 24, which I have already quoted, leads one to that same place.

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

who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O [God of] Jacob (Psalms 24:3-6).

From the beginning of this world, people have been instructed to build temples so they and God could come and meet together. The Saviour's instructions to the Prophet Joseph to build a temple in Zion is a shining example of this principle.

And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God....Therefore, verily, thus saith the Lord, let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion--THE PURE IN HEART; therefore, let Zion rejoice, while all the wicked shall mourn (D&C 97:15-22).

As when he spoke the Beatitudes to the people in America, the Lord elaborated on the promise of this Beatitude in terms that have universal application – the Lord does not put restrictions on our blessings – only we can do that.

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;

2 And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; (D&C 93: 1-2)

Jim Cannon wrote about the pure in heart in the most meaningful way I have ever seen it discussed

In the Doctrine and Covenants and in the Pearl of Great Price, there is some very curious type-setting whose purpose I do not know. For example, in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 97, verse 21, it says, "let Zion rejoice, for this is Zion -- THE PURE IN HEART," and the pure in heart is set in small capital letters. I like to think that this is more than just a

description of the people who shall dwell in Zion. I like to think of this as a title, as a name, as a name for those who are pure in heart because they have promised to be so, because they have covenanted to be pure in heart. I like to think that we will be in Zion if we care so much about Zion that we promise ourselves and God that we will be pure in heart, that we are pure in heart by covenant. "Behold," says the Lord, "if Zion do these things she shall prosper, and spread herself and become very glorious, very great, and very terrible. And the nations of the earth shall honor her place, for God is there, and the hand of the Lord is there." Only the pure in heart will be there, because the Lord reigns there, and only the pure in heart can dwell in the presence of God. Zion will be very great and very terrible because only the pure in heart will feel comfortable there.

I want "Pure in Heart" to be part of my very long name. I want "Kind" to be part of my long name. I want "loving" and "Responsible" to be part of my long name. I hope that we will make it very apparent to the people that we live around that we have very long names which describe who we really are and that those names will remind us how to behave from day to day. We want as part of our name that covenant which says that we are preparing to go to the temple to be sealed forever with someone else who has a very long and righteous name, in the presence of God, who has the longest and most righteous name of all, that God who has promised us all that is his if we but keep his commandments. We dare not let anything tear us from these sacred promises, these wonderful names that describe who we really are.

Each week we renew our covenant to take upon us the name of Christ. "Jesus, name of wondrous love, name all other names above." ³⁴⁷

And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

I think the best way to understand that statement is to go to Moroni 7 where Mormon elaborates on its meaning. In the Beatitudes and in Moroni 7, "peace" is the primary characteristic of one who has seen the Savior. In the Isaiah passage the priests of Noah quoted to Abinadi, the one who sits upon the throne "publisheth peace" before he "publisheth salvation." For the Savior to "publish peace" is for him to teach the promise of peace and to teach how one might be a peacemaker:

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

³⁴⁷ James W. Cannon to his daughter Adria, May 22, 2002. (Thanks, Jim, for letting me use this.)

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ... These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. (John 14:27, 16:33)

The full sequence of Isaiah's depiction of this enthronement is:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. (Isaiah 52:7)

I suppose if one were looking for a one sentence summary of the kind of peace one finds in Third and Fourth Nephi, one could not do better than that.

In the beatitude, the phrase "they shall be called children of God" is simply the plural form of the royal covenant king name, "son of God." The difference is that the peacemakers of this verse who have taken the final step in the coronation, are designated by the non-gender-specific new covenant name "Child of God." The Saviour explained the same principle when he was talking with the brother of Jared.

In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. (Ether 3:14b)

If all that I have written about so far holds true here, then this verse in the beatitudes represents the final step of the coronation ceremony in the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple when the prince was adopted as a son of Jehovah and anointed king. The Beatitudes have brought us through the same sequence as the New Year festival, and have reached the same final ordinances – but, as Nephi observed, not to the end of the "way" – there is one thing left to do: "and whoso shall *publish peace*, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be." (1 Nephi 13:37 italics added)

It is very possible that Abinadi was aware of Nephi's equation of peace and joy, and that his entire sermon was simply a commentary on it. But it is more likely that the venerable old prophet came into the city and surrendered his life to king Noah in order to be able to teach those principles to just one young man – Alma. The Beatitudes talk about that as well:

And blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake;

For ye shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.

Persecution *comes with* knowing. The reason is simple enough, but it does not alleviate the pain. When one who *knows* bears testimony, the one who hears must hear – but acting on what one hears requires repentance, and if one does not want to repent, then there seems to be an option which enables one to avoid acknowledgment and repentance. That option is to justify oneself by giving evidence that the testimony is not true, or that the person who gives the testimony is not just. false. The easiest way to prove the testimony false is to demonstrate the vulnerabilities of the one who testifies. In the case of the Saviour, Abinadi, Paul, Isaiah, and the Prophet Joseph that was done by putting them to death. For countless others it has been done in ways almost as cruel, even if not as fatal. But the persecution is part of it. It hurts, but one goes on because there are other things that must be done before one's covenants are fulfilled and one can go home to rest.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted? The salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.

I published an article in the *Ensign* a few years ago which showed that being the "salt of the earth" meant teaching about the atonement to people who did not yet understand – that is, it is about

"What does it mean to be the 'salt of the earth'?" Ensign, April 1999, p. 53-54.

Response by LeGrand L. Baker, curator Wells Freedom Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, and a member of the Cherry Hill Ninth Ward, Orem Utah Cherry Hill Stake.

The scriptural phrase "salt of the earth" has come to mean many things. In likening the scriptures unto ourselves (see 1 Ne. 19:23), we may sometimes overlook the author's primary intent and the key points of comparison in his use of metaphor. A full understanding and appreciation of a given passage of scripture may thus elude us. [I was especially pleased that sentence got in unchanged.]

That sometimes appears to be the case with the metaphor of salt. Perhaps we have observed that just as salt enhances the taste of certain foods, so we must be as salt, living our lives to bless and enhance the lives of others and make the gospel palatable to them. We may have also noted that salt is a preservative not unlike the preserving influence of righteous Saints who uphold gospel ideals in a world of shifting values.

While such applications are relevant and meaningful to Latter-day Saints worldwide, to the ancients the central figurative meaning of salt had to do not with taste but with smell.

When sacrifices were offered upon the altars of ancient Israel, the Israelites did not give the Lord the flesh of the animal, the fruit of the ground, or the ashes or smoke of such sacrifices. The acceptable part of the offering presented to the Lord was the smell, "a sweet savour unto the Lord" (Lev. 1 17).

In the Bible, the word savour most often refers to the pleasant smell of burning sacrifice in the temple. To ensure that the smell would be sweet, the Mosaic law required that the offering be liberally sprinkled with salt.

The scent of an unsalted burnt offering would be the stench of scorched flesh. But if the meat were generously salted, the odor would be quite different, due to the reaction of the salt upon the cells that compose animal flesh. Under high-salt conditions, cellular fluid rapidly escapes the cells to dilute the salts outside cell membranes. When accentuated by heat, these fluids cause a sweet savor to emanate.

The Lord's requirements concerning their offerings was clear. Referring to "the salt of the covenant," the Lord instructed ancient Israel, "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Lev. 2:13). Flavius Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, explained how that was done. He wrote that the priests "cleanse the bodies [of the sacrificial animals], and divide them into parts, and salt them with salt, and lay them upon the altar, while the pieces of wood are piled one upon another, and the fire is burning.... This is was the way of offering a burnt offering" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. William Whiston [1875], 3:9:1).

The purpose of the law of performances and ordinances given to the children of Israel through Moses was to point their souls to Christ and to bear witness of His gospel. The atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled the law of Moses and ended blood

LeGrand Baker, "What does it mean to be the 'salt of the earth'?," *Ensign*, April 1999, p. 53-54.

sacrifice. The resurrected Lord explained the new law of sacrifice to His followers on the American continent: "Ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away....

"And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost" (3 Ne. 9:19-20).

In this context the charge to be the "salt of the earth" takes on marvelous significance. The Lord said, "I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted?" (3 Ne. 12:13). The Savior's audience no doubt understood the law of Moses and the close connection between salt and acceptable sacrifice.

It is clear that under the new covenant the followers of Christ, as "salt," are responsible for extending gospel blessings to the whole earth. "When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant," the Lord explains, "they are accounted as the salt of the earth and the savor of men" (D&C 101:39). It is our privilege and blessing to lovingly lead our brothers and sisters to Christ, helping them receive their covenant blessings. As we do so, we become the figurative salt that makes it possible for them to offer the acceptable sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. In addition, our own covenant sacrifice of time, talents, and means is pleasing to the Lord.

This tremendous responsibility of helping bring salvation to others is coupled with caution: "But if the salt shall lose its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted? The salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men" (3 Ne. 12:13). Salt used anciently for sacrifice could easily lose its savor, and always for the same reason – impurity. If such impure salt was heated, the combination of impurities and salt can result in an unpleasant odor. It was therefore discarded, lest its use desecrate the sacrifice and offend the Lord.

Likewise, we are displeasing to the Lord to the degree that we are impure and ineffective "not the saviors of men," but instead "as salt that has lost its savor" (D&C 103:10).

So how do we become the salt of the earth? The Apostle Paul points out that charity is a key to this process: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5:1-2). We must seek to love others purely, as the Savior loves us. It is through this love that we can help bring souls to Him, that they and we might be found acceptable – "unto God a sweet savour of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15).

Somebody in Salt Lake must have liked the idea because they published it.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the light of this people. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house;

Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Christ is the light and the life of the world, often represented as the Tree of Life – a tree of light. In the Holy Place in Solomon's temple there was a great "candlestick" which was not a candlestick at all, but a lamp stand. By representation, it was the



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

light of the world. In form it is was shaped like a tree which represented the tree of life whose branches lift toward heaven as in prayer. If one has a little imagination, one might describe it as a man praying with his hands lifted toward heaven – three times. The cups at the ends of its upraised branches were filled with olive oil – the same kind of oil that was used to anoint kings and priests. The fires from these lamps lit the interior of the temple, and symbolically the light reached out to light the rest of the world as well. Thus it became a burning bush which lighted the WAY – the tree of life which invites one to come unto Christ and his Father. It is a tree of anointing light.

At the conclusion of the Beatitudes, the Saviour's words had symbolically brought his hearers' into the holiest of sanctuaries, only to instruct them that they must go out again "to be the light of this people.... Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

The distinguished scholar, Geo Widengren wrote an article on for-ordination, entitled "Baptism and Enthronement in Some Jewish-Christian Gnostic Documents. Near the beginning of that article he wrote:

In another connection an attempt has been made to distinguish between the coronation of a king and his enthronement. The ceremonies of coronation in ancient Near Eastern religion obviously took place in the temple, whereas the scene of enthronement was envisaged as situate in heaven. Enthronement may be said to be the mythical counterpart of the coronation ritual. Enthronement in its ritual form served as a visualization of the mythical action. Of which the king was the center. Accordingly, we meet in the coronation ceremonies with the same interplay between myth and ritual as elsewhere in the Near East, and, to facilitate a distinction between a purely mythical action and its ritual performance, the use of the terms enthronement and coronation is convenient. Other expressions might be used; but what really matters is the fact that the distinction between myth and ritual be kept in mind.

The pattern of enthronement, as well as that of coronation, can be traced back to ancient Mesopotamian times; early forms also occur in the West-Semitic, especially the Israelite, civilizations, and from there its developments can be followed on into Hellenistic-Jewish times. It is but natural that this pattern should admit of certain variations, however, its main proportions were firmly established and they may be reconstructed as follows overleaf.

- 1. Ascent to heaven.
- 2. Ablution.
- 3. Unction.
- 4. Communion.
- 5. Investment with a holy garment.
- 6. Handing over the ruler's attributes.
- 7. Participating in the heavenly secrets.
- 8. Sitting on the throne of God.³⁴⁹

That list is striking like the Beatitudes:

- 1. Ascent to heaven.[be in sacred space / "come unto me".]
- 2. Ablution. [baptism / washing.]
- 3. Unction.[anointing with oil / with Holy Ghost.]
- 4. Communion.[Sacrament / fruit of tree of life, waters of life.]
- 5. Investment with a holy garment. [righteousness.]
- 6. Handing over the ruler's attributes. [mercy and meekness.]
- 7. Participating in the heavenly secrets. [see God.]
- 8. Sitting on the throne of God.[called the children of God heirs who sit on throne.]

One cannot "prove" that the Beatitudes were an invitation to, and explanation of, the coronation of

³⁴⁹ 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, Barns & Noble, 1963), text on p. 205, chart on p. 206.

the men and women who listened to the Saviour speak of them, but the evidence is strong enough that I believe that is precisely what they were.

Here, again, the culture of our modern world gets in the way of our understanding. The idea that Christ might give instructions to the Twelve to do the same thing for everyone that he has done for them – i.e. to make *everyone* kings and queens – violates our notions of the patterns of institutional administration and we ask, "If everyone is king, who are the subservients?" The answer is, "There needn't be any. Administrators need subservients, sacral kings do not." In all the Psalms there is no ode to the king's administrative ability, but there is much praise of his qualities as a loving parent. That idea is perfectly consistent with what the Prophet Joseph Smith said when he anticipated the modern exodus of the saints to the mountains.

I want every man who goes to be a king and a priest. When he gets on the mountains he may want to talk to his God.³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1976), 333.

In the foregoing introduction to a discussion of Abinadi's trial, we followed much of the sequence of Abinadi's story, but not the story itself. That is, by moving through the events and ideologies of the royal coronation, we have focused on the person of the king until we reached the end of those ceremonies. As far as I can tell, Abinadi's defense rested on the fact that one's watching the New Year festival drama and coronation was a participatory experience which culminated in the initiation and coronation of all members of the audience. Thus the entire congregation (nation) became sons and daughters of the Most High. The story of Abinadi leads us through that same sequence of ideas until it reaches that same conclusion. It is the same story we find in the King Benjamin account, where, at the conclusion of the ceremonies, all the people received a new king name that defined them as children (legitimate heirs) of Christ.

The priests of Noah challenged Abinadi to interpret the scripture, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings" believing that with his answer he would accuse himself of treason, blasphemy, and being a false prophet because Abinadi had said the king was not a true and honest representative of God. One may assume that king Noah's feet were established upon a sacred box, reminiscent of the Ark of the Covenant that was implanted into the Rock – the navel of the earth – the connecting power between earth and heaven. The king's authority was the personification of God's authority – both as king and as high priest. But in theory, if not in practice, only a righteous, adopted son of God could sit upon Jehovah's throne. The message of the New Year festival was that if an usurper or an unrighteous man claimed the

sacral kingship, the whole cosmos would be out of order and the kingdom would collapse into chaos. When Abinadi made the allegation that Noah and his priests were usurpers because of their unrighteousness, his prophesies were the promise that Noah's whole world would implode. When Abinadi was brought to judgement in Noah's court, the accusations against him revolved around a single question: What was meant by the highest ordinances of the ancient Israelite temple ceremonies: Who may legitimately be called a child of God.

Part III

So far, what I have written has been a kind of introduction in which I have tried to establish a cultural, religious, and ceremonial background for Abinadi's trial and defense. Abinadi's story in the Book of Mormon is relatively short, and it seems to me that before we go on, we should stop and review it in its entirety.

Mosiah, chapter 11

- 1 And now it came to pass that Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon Noah, one of his sons; therefore Noah began to reign in his stead; and he did not walk in the ways of his father.
- 2 For behold, he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and concubines. And he did cause his people to commit sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness.
- 3 And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed, a fifth part of their gold and of their silver, and a fifth part of their ziff, and of their copper, and of their brass and their iron; and a fifth part of their fatlings; and also a fifth part of all their grain.
- 4 And all this did he take to support himself, and his wives and his concubines; and also his priests, and their wives and their concubines; thus he had changed the affairs of the kingdom.
- 5 For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones in their stead, such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts.
- 6 Yea, and thus they were supported in their laziness, and in their idolatry, and in their whoredoms, by the taxes which king Noah had put upon his people; thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity.
- 7 Yea, and they also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the vain and flattering words of the king and priests; for they did speak flattering things unto them.
- 8 And it came to pass that king Noah built many elegant and spacious buildings; and he ornamented them with fine work of wood, and of all manner of precious things, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of brass, and of ziff, and of copper;
- 9 And he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof, all of

which was of fine wood and was ornamented with gold and silver and with precious things.

10 And he also caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work within the walls of the temple, of fine wood, and of copper, and of brass.

11 And the seats which were set apart for the high priests, which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold; and he caused a breastwork to be built before them, that they might rest their bodies and their arms upon while they should speak lying and vain words to his people.

12 And it came to pass that he built a tower near the temple; yea, a very high tower, even so high that he could stand upon the top thereof and overlook the land of Shilom, and also the land of Shemlon, which was possessed by the Lamanites; and he could even look over all the land round about.

13 And it came to pass that he caused many buildings to be built in the land Shilom; and he caused a great tower to be built on the hill north of the land Shilom, which had been a resort for the children of Nephi at the time they fled out of the land; and thus he did do with the riches which he obtained by the taxation of his people.

14 And it came to pass that he placed his heart upon his riches, and he spent his time in riotous living with his wives and his concubines; and so did also his priests spend their time with harlots.

15 And it came to pass that he planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made wine in abundance; and therefore he became a wine-bibber, and also his people.

16 And it came to pass that the Lamanites began to come in upon his people, upon small numbers, and to slay them in their fields, and while they were tending their flocks.

17 And king Noah sent guards round about the land to keep them off; but he did not send a sufficient number, and the Lamanites came upon them and killed them, and drove many of their flocks out of the land; thus the Lamanites began to destroy them, and to exercise their hatred upon them.

18 And it came to pass that king Noah sent his armies against them, and they were driven back, or they drove them back for a time; therefore, they returned rejoicing in their spoil.

19 And now, because of this great victory they were lifted up in the pride of their hearts; they did boast in their own strength, saying that their fifty could stand against thousands of the Lamanites; and thus they did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren, and this because of the wickedness of their

king and priests.

- 20 And it came to pass that there was a man among them whose name was Abinadi; and he went forth among them, and began to prophesy, saying: Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people, thus saith the Lord——Wo be unto this people, for I have seen their abominations, and their wickedness, and their whoredoms; and except they repent I will visit them in mine anger.
- 21 And except they repent and turn to the Lord their God, behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies; yea, and they shall be brought into bondage; and they shall be afflicted by the hand of their enemies.
- 22 And it shall come to pass that they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of my people.
- 23 And it shall come to pass that except this people repent and turn unto the Lord their God, they shall be brought into bondage; and none shall deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God.
- 24 Yea, and it shall come to pass that when they shall cry unto me I will be slow to hear their cries; yea, and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.
- 25 And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions; and thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me.
- 26 Now it came to pass that when Abinadi had spoken these words unto them they were wroth with him, and sought to take away his life; but the Lord delivered him out of their hands.
- 27 Now when king Noah had heard of the words which Abinadi had spoken unto the people, he was also wroth; and he said: Who is Abinadi, that I and my people should be judged of him, or who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction?
- 28 I command you to bring Abinadi hither, that I may slay him, for he has said these things that he might stir up my people to anger one with another, and to raise contentions among my people; therefore I will slay him.
- 29 Now the eyes of the people were blinded; therefore they hardened their hearts against the words of Abinadi, and they sought from that time forward to take him. And king Noah hardened his heart against the word of the Lord, and he did not repent of his evil doings.

- 1 And it came to pass that after the space of two years that Abinadi came among them in disguise, that they knew him not, and began to prophesy among them, saying: Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying—Abinadi, go and prophesy unto this my people, for they have hardened their hearts against my words; they have repented not of their evil doings; therefore, I will visit them in my anger, yea, in my fierce anger will I visit them in their iniquities and abominations.
- 2 Yea, wo be unto this generation! And the Lord said unto me: Stretch forth thy hand and prophesy, saying: Thus saith the Lord, it shall come to pass that this generation, because of their iniquities, shall be brought into bondage, and shall be smitten on the cheek; yea, and shall be driven by men, and shall be slain; and the vultures of the air, and the dogs, yea, and the wild beasts, shall devour their flesh.
- 3 And it shall come to pass that the life of king Noah shall be valued even as a garment in a hot furnace; for he shall know that I am the Lord.
- 4 And it shall come to pass that I will smite this my people with sore afflictions, yea, with famine and with pestilence; and I will cause that they shall howl all the day long.
- 5 Yea, and I will cause that they shall have burdens lashed upon their backs; and they shall be driven before like a dumb ass.
- 6 And it shall come to pass that I will send forth hail among them, and it shall smite them; and they shall also be smitten with the east wind; and insects shall pester their land also, and devour their grain.
- 7 And they shall be smitten with a great pestilence——and all this will I do because of their iniquities and abominations.
- 8 And it shall come to pass that except they repent I will utterly destroy them from off the face of the earth; yet they shall leave a record behind them, and I will preserve them for other nations which shall possess the land; yea, even this will I do that I may discover the abominations of this people to other nations. And many things did Abinadi prophesy against this people.
- 9 And it came to pass that they were angry with him; and they took him and carried him bound before the king, and said unto the king: Behold, we have brought a man before thee who has prophesied evil concerning thy people, and saith that God will destroy them.
- 10 And he also prophesieth evil concerning thy life, and saith that thy life shall be as a garment in a furnace of fire.
- 11 And again, he saith that thou shalt be as a stalk, even as a dry stalk of the field, which is run over by the beasts and trodden under foot.

- 12 And again, he saith thou shalt be as the blossoms of a thistle, which, when it is fully ripe, if the wind bloweth, it is driven forth upon the face of the land. And he pretendeth the Lord hath spoken it. And he saith all this shall come upon thee except thou repent, and this because of thine iniquities.
- 13 And now, O king, what great evil hast thou done, or what great sins have thy people committed, that we should be condemned of God or judged of this man?
- 14 And now, O king, behold, we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore, this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain.
- 15 And behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou shalt also prosper.
- 16 Behold, here is the man, we deliver him into thy hands; thou mayest do with him as seemeth thee good.
- 17 And it came to pass that king Noah caused that Abinadi should be cast into prison; and he commanded that the priests should gather themselves together that he might hold a council with them what he should do with him.
- 18 And it came to pass that they said unto the king: Bring him hither that we may question him; and the king commanded that he should be brought before them.
- 19 And they began to question him, that they might cross him, that thereby they might have wherewith to accuse him; but he answered them boldly, and withstood all their questions, yea, to their astonishment; for he did withstand them in all their questions, and did confound them in all their words.
- 20 And it came to pass that one of them said unto him: What meaneth the words which are written, and which have been taught by our fathers, saying:
- 21 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;
- 22 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion;
- 23 Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem;
- 24 The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God?

- 25 And now Abinadi said unto them: Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean?
- 26 I say unto you, wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord.
- 27 Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise. Therefore, what teach ye this people?
- 28 And they said: We teach the law of Moses.
- 29 And again he said unto them: If ye teach the law of Moses why do ye not keep it? Why do ye set your hearts upon riches? Why do ye commit whoredoms and spend your strength with harlots, yea, and cause this people to commit sin, that the Lord has cause to send me to prophesy against this people, yea, even a great evil against this people?
- 30 Know ye not that I speak the truth? Yea, ye know that I speak the truth; and you ought to tremble before God.
- 31 And it shall come to pass that ye shall be smitten for your iniquities, for ye have said that ye teach the law of Moses. And what know ye concerning the law of Moses? Doth salvation come by the law of Moses? What say ye?
- 32 And they answered and said that salvation did come by the law of Moses.
- 33 But now Abinadi said unto them: I know if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved; yea, if ye keep the commandments which the Lord delivered unto Moses in the mount of Sinai, saying:
- 34 I am the Lord thy God, who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- 35 Thou shalt have no other God before me.
- 36 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing in heaven above, or things which are in the earth beneath.
- 37 Now Abinadi said unto them, Have ye done all this? I say unto you, Nay, ye have not. And have ye taught this people that they should do all these things? I say unto you, Nay, ye have not.

- 1 And now when the king had heard these words, he said unto his priests: Away with this fellow, and slay him; for what have we to do with him, for he is mad.
- 2 And they stood forth and attempted to lay their hands on him; but he withstood them, and said unto them:
- 3 Touch me not, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver; neither have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell; therefore, God will not suffer that I shall be destroyed at this time.
- 4 But I must fulfill the commandments wherewith God has commanded me; and because I have told you the truth ye are angry with me. And again, because I have spoken the word of God ye have judged me that I am mad.
- 5 Now it came to pass after Abinadi had spoken these words that the people of king Noah durst not lay their hands on him, for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and his face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord.
- 6 And he spake with power and authority from God; and he continued his words, saying:
- 7 Ye see that ye have not power to slay me, therefore I finish my message. Yea, and I perceive that it cuts you to your hearts because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities.
- 8 Yea, and my words fill you with wonder and amazement, and with anger.
- 9 But I finish my message; and then it matters not whither I go, if it so be that I am saved.
- 10 But this much I tell you, what you do with me, after this, shall be as a type and a shadow of things which are to come.
- 11 And now I read unto you the remainder of the commandments of God, for I perceive that they are not written in your hearts; I perceive that ye have studied and taught iniquity the most part of your lives.
- 12 And now, ye remember that I said unto you: Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of things which are in heaven above, or which are in the earth beneath, or which are in the water under the earth.
- 13 And again: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me;

- 14 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.
- 15 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- 16 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 17 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;
- 18 But the seventh day, the sabbath of the Lord thy God, thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates;
- 19 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- 20 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
- 21 Thou shalt not kill.
- 22 Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal.
- 23 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- 24 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.
- 25 And it came to pass that after Abinadi had made an end of these sayings that he said unto them: Have ye taught this people that they should observe to do all these things for to keep these commandments?
- 26 I say unto you, Nay; for if ye had, the Lord would not have caused me to come forth and to prophesy evil concerning this people.
- 27 And now ye have said that salvation cometh by the law of Moses. I say unto you that it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet; but I say unto you, that the time shall come when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses.
- 28 And moreover, I say unto you, that salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses.

- 29 And now I say unto you that it was expedient that there should be a law given to the children of Israel, yea, even a very strict law; for they were a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity, and slow to remember the Lord their God;
- 30 Therefore there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him.
- 31 But behold, I say unto you, that all these things were types of things to come.
- 32 And now, did they understand the law? I say unto you, Nay, they did not all understand the law; and this because of the hardness of their hearts; for they understood not that there could not any man be saved except it were through the redemption of God.
- 33 For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began—have they not spoken more or less concerning these things?
- 34 Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth?
- 35 Yea, and have they not said also that he should bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, and that he, himself, should be oppressed and afflicted?

- 1 Yea, even doth not Isaiah say: Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?
- 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him.
- 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
- 4 Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
- 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
- 6 All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and

the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.

- 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth.
- 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people was he stricken.
- 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no evil, neither was any deceit in his mouth.
- 10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
- 11 He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.
- 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- 1 And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.
- 2 And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—
- 3 The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son——
- 4 And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.
- 5 And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people.
- 6 And after all this, after working many mighty miracles among the children of men, he shall be led, yea, even as Isaiah said, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

- 7 Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father.
- 8 And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men——
- 9 Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.
- 10 And now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? Behold, I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed. And now what say ye? And who shall be his seed?
- 11 Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord——I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God.
- 12 For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed?
- 13 Yea, and are not the prophets, every one that has opened his mouth to prophesy, that has not fallen into transgression, I mean all the holy prophets ever since the world began? I say unto you that they are his seed.
- 14 And these are they who have published peace, who have brought good tidings of good, who have published salvation; and said unto Zion: Thy God reigneth!
- 15 And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!
- 16 And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that are still publishing peace!
- 17 And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who shall hereafter publish peace, yea, from this time henceforth and forever!
- 18 And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people;

- 19 For were it not for the redemption which he hath made for his people, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, I say unto you, were it not for this, all mankind must have perished.
- 20 But behold, the bands of death shall be broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead.
- 21 And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ——for so shall be be called.
- 22 And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection.
- 23 They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them; thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death.
- 24 And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord.
- 25 And little children also have eternal life.
- 26 But behold, and fear, and tremble before God, for ye ought to tremble; for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection.
- 27 Therefore ought ye not to tremble? For salvation cometh to none such; for the Lord hath redeemed none such; yea, neither can the Lord redeem such; for he cannot deny himself; for he cannot deny justice when it has its claim.
- 28 And now I say unto you that the time shall come that the salvation of the Lord shall be declared to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.
- 29 Yea, Lord, thy watchmen shall lift up their voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.
- 30 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.
- 31 The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

- 1 And now, it came to pass that after Abinadi had spoken these words he stretched forth his hand and said: The time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord; when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just.
- 2 And then shall the wicked be cast out, and they shall have cause to howl, and weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth; and this because they would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord; therefore the Lord redeemeth them not.
- 3 For they are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil.
- 4 Thus all mankind were lost; and behold, they would have been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state.
- 5 But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore, he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God.
- 6 And now if Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption.
- 7 And if Christ had not risen from the dead, or have broken the bands of death that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting, there could have been no resurrection.
- 8 But there is a resurrection, therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ.
- 9 He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death.
- 10 Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil——
- 11 If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation, being delivered up to the devil, who hath subjected them, which is damnation——

- 12 Having gone according to their own carnal wills and desires; having never called upon the Lord while the arms of mercy were extended towards them; for the arms of mercy were extended towards them, and they would not; they being warned of their iniquities and yet they would not depart from them; and they were commanded to repent and yet they would not repent.
- 13 And now, ought ye not to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved?
- 14 Therefore, if ye teach the law of Moses, also teach that it is a shadow of those things which are to come——
- 15 Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father. Amen.

- 1 And now it came to pass that when Abinadi had finished these sayings, that the king commanded that the priests should take him and cause that he should be put to death.
- 2 But there was one among them whose name was Alma, he also being a descendant of Nephi. And he was a young man, and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken, for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them; therefore he began to plead with the king that he would not be angry with Abinadi, but suffer that he might depart in peace.
- 3 But the king was more wroth, and caused that Alma should be cast out from among them, and sent his servants after him that they might slay him.
- 4 But he fled from before them and hid himself that they found him not. And he being concealed for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken.
- 5 And it came to pass that the king caused that his guards should surround Abinadi and take him; and they bound him and cast him into prison.
- 6 And after three days, having counseled with his priests, he caused that he should again be brought before him.
- 7 And he said unto him: Abinadi, we have found an accusation against thee, and thou art worthy of death.
- 8 For thou hast said that God himself should come down among the children of men; and now, for this cause thou shalt be put to death unless thou wilt recall all the words which thou hast spoken evil concerning me and my people.
- 9 Now Abinadi said unto him: I say unto you, I will not recall the words which I have

- spoken unto you concerning this people, for they are true; and that ye may know of their surety I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands.
- 10 Yea, and I will suffer even until death, and I will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you. And if ye slay me ye will shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day.
- 11 And now king Noah was about to release him, for he feared his word; for he feared that the judgments of God would come upon him.
- 12 But the priests lifted up their voices against him, and began to accuse him, saying: He has reviled the king. Therefore the king was stirred up in anger against him, and he delivered him up that he might be slain.
- 13 And it came to pass that they took him and bound him, and scourged his skin with faggots, yea, even unto death.
- 14 And now when the flames began to scorch him, he cried unto them, saying:
- 15 Behold, even as ye have done unto me, so shall it come to pass that thy seed shall cause that many shall suffer the pains that I do suffer, even the pains of death by fire; and this because they believe in the salvation of the Lord their God.
- 16 And it will come to pass that ye shall be afflicted with all manner of diseases because of your iniquities.
- 17 Yea, and ye shall be smitten on every hand, and shall be driven and scattered to and fro, even as a wild flock is driven by wild and ferocious beasts.
- 18 And in that day ye shall be hunted, and ye shall be taken by the hand of your enemies, and then ye shall suffer, as I suffer, the pains of death by fire.
- 19 Thus God executeth vengeance upon those that destroy his people. O God, receive my soul.
- 20 And now, when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by fire; yea, having been put to death because he would not deny the commandments of God, having sealed the truth of his words by his death.

Abinadi's speech on the qualities of sacral kingship

If the scripture with which Noah's priests challenged Abinadi was intended to evoke an answer that would justify his being sentenced to death on charges of blasphemy, treason, and being a false

prophet, then the answer they expected was probably something like this: "In his acclamation, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings," Isaiah is celebrating the king's coronation and his authority as the "son," heir, and earthly representative of Jehovah."

If Abinadi had answered that way, their next statement probably would have begun something like: "You say the king is God's representative on earth, yet you prophesy against him and his people...." Thus, Abinadi's own words could be used against him as evidence of both treason, blasphemy, and of being a false prophet, so the death sentence would be a simple matter.

However, Abinadi did not answer them in the way they apparently expected. Instead he did the seeming impossible, and turned the questions on them, and when he had finished, they could not counter his argument that their king did not qualify as a legitimately adopted son of Jehovah. Before we examine Abinadi's answers, lets look more closely at the Isaiah passage the priests quoted. Abinadi divided the passage into two parts, addressing first one part, then the other. He first discussed the part about the very quintessence of sacral kingship.

21 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;

As Abinadi will point out, Isaiah's statement can be read in three different ways. All three are correct, and all three are an accurate reflection of the coronation ceremonies of the ancient Israelite New Year festival – and also of the coronation sequence described in the Beatitudes. The three are these:

First (the one Noah's priests apparently expected)

It is about the coronation of Israel's earthly king, as son and representative of Jehovah.

Second (the one that was, no doubt, most important to Abinadi)

It is a celebration of the Kingship of Jehovah

Third (the one Abinadi used to teach Alma)

It is about the sacral kingship and priesthood of every worthy individual – about how one may become a child of God.

Let's discuss them one at a time, and in that order.

The first interpretation of

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth

(the one Noah's priests apparently expected) is that it is about the coronation of Israel's earthly king, as son and representative of Jehovah.

The idea apparently was that it represented the concluding acts of the enthronement of the king, when he sat upon the throne of God at the back of the Holy of Holies, with his feet firmly established on the sacred Ark which contained the symbols of kingship, priesthood, and the tree of life. Isaiah's words were virtually a definition of kingship, and a testimony of the sacredness of the person of the king. King Noah's priests apparently expected Abinadi to acknowledge that. Instead, he "read" them the Ten Commandments to them, questioned their righteousness, and accused them of not teaching the people the Law of Moses. So I suppose the next questions we need to address is why did he choose to read the Ten Commandments, and how did he use them to lay the foundation of his response.

The answer to those questions may be that king Noah was wearing an embroidered copy of the Ten Commandments as part of his royal clothing. I have alluded to that before, but now would like to discuss it fully. The reason to believe that a visual copy of the Ten Commandments was a part of the royal regalia comes from an Old Testament story about an unworthy queen who was deposed by temple priests who put a boy on the throne in her stead. The story reads: "And he [the priest] brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king." (2 Kings 11:12; see also 2 Chronicles 23: 11)

Some scholars believe the "testimony" they put on the boy king was an embroidered copy of the Ten Commandments. The reason they believe that is in Exodus 25:16 where the stone tablets on which the Commandments were written were called the "testimony." ³⁵¹ The reason the Ten Commandments are called the "Testimony" was that they were the testimony of the Lord's covenant with Israel (a wonderful example of a *pistis*):

28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

29 And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. (Exodus 34: 28-29)

³⁵¹ The following is not an exhaustive list of scriptures:

The stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments are written are called the Testimony: Exodus 31:18, 32:15; 34: 28-29.

The "Testimony" was put in the Ark of the Covenant: Exodus 16: 33-34; 25:1-22.

The Ark of the Covenant is called the Ark of the Testimony: Exodus 30: 26; Numbers 7:89.

The "testimony" is in the Holy of Holies: Exodus 26: 33-34; 27: 21; 30: 6.

The significance of the king's actually wearing a copy of the Ten Commandments on his royal person as a visual reminder of the covenant is this: "One fact after all remains primary: the king is always the ultimate authority so far as the *trh* is concerned." 352

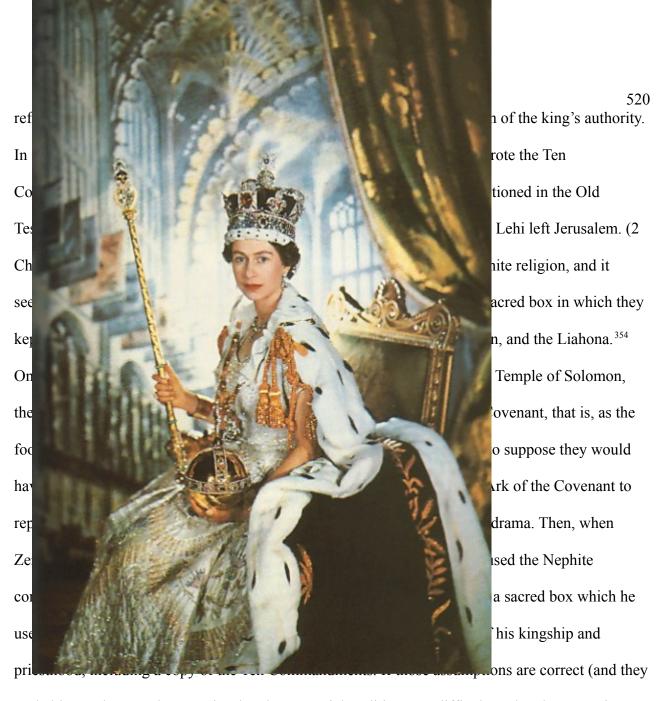
The Israelite king on the day of his enthronement received a copy of the Law, that is these same Heavenly Tablets, given by Yahweh to Moses [that is, the tablets on which the Lord wrote the Ten Commandments].... The Israelite king is also as the possessor of the Tablets of the Law 'full of wisdom', a proclaimer of God's revealed will. The king is the owner, possessor, chief student, expert, and teacher of the law. It is his ecclesiastical duty to teach and explain it to the people and to see that they adhere to its precepts that they might receive the blessings associated therewith." ³⁵³

If king Noah were wearing a copy of the Ten Commandments on his person, that would solve one of the very minor but intriguing problems in Abinadi's story. "And now I read unto you the remainder of the commandments of God, for I perceive that they are not written in your hearts (Mosiah 13:11)" It is unlikely that while he stood before the king and council, they provided him with a copy of the scriptures so he could use them in his defense. On the other hand, it is not at all unlikely that he could have quoted the Ten commandments (He was obviously a scriptural scholar, and would soon show that by quoting more than a full chapter of Isaiah), but the account says he "read" the Ten Commandments – which implies he, and they (?), could see a copy – perhaps the one the king was wearing.

There would have been another very good reason for Abinadi's beginning his rebuttal with a

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

³⁵³ Widengren, Geo, "King and Covenant" in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II, No. I, 1957, p. 1-32. For other discussions of the king's wearing a copy of the Ten Commandments see: Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 23-24; Widengren, Geo, "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, Oxford, 1958, p. 167-168; Widengren, Geo, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift, 1950, p. 25-26.



probably are, because human visual and ceremonial traditions are difficult to abandon, even in apostate conditions), then a second reason for Abinadi's referring to the Ten Commandments would have been because the king's feet were (or had been at the time of his coronation) established upon the box which contained the symbols of his authority. If that were so, then Abinadi accused them on not teaching the Ten Commandments, he was challenging the very

John Rogerson pointed out to me that these were all necessary to represent the power of the Nephite kings. He said the Brass Plates contained the genealogies and therefore represented the patriarchal authority; the sword represented the governmental authority, and the Liahona (an orb) represented priesthood authority. Then he showed me this picture.

All that is supposition of course, but the supposition is consistent with the known facts of the Book of Mormon story, with the ancient Israelite notion of what kingship represented, and with what I understand to be true about the ancient Israelite coronation rites.

The way I envision the picture of Abinadi is that this dignified old man – a prophet whose voice resounds with the quiet authority of a prophet – is standing in front of king Noah, pointing to the copy of the Ten Commandments which the king wore upon his person, and saying in effect: "Obedience to *those* laws are the first conditions of being a legitimate son of Jehovah – *and you and your priests just don't qualify!*"

Abinadi was not only challenging the ecclesiastical status of the king and his priests, he was also challenging their political right to rule. Similarly, it was by and through the authority of king Noah's sacral kingship and royal priesthood that his priests challenged Abinadi. Their accusations against him were related to the most fundamental and sacred notions of Israelite temple worship – and that was the place where they were most vulnerable.

While the king and his priests were conducting their farcical courtroom trial, there was a powerful drama going on before their eyes which they neither saw nor heard. When a prophet speaks by the power of the Holy Ghost, and another person listens by that same power, both know what is happening. Alma was listening, so Abinadi must have known. Abinadi appeared to be talking *to* the king, but he was talking *with* Alma. In the development of Abinadi's speech, one hears the

venerable prophet lecturing the king with defiance, almost belligerence, and then changing his approach as he teaches the young prince what it really means to be a son of God.

After "reading" the Ten Commandments to his accusers, Abinadi continued,

And now ye have said that salvation cometh by the law of Moses. I say unto you that it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet; but I say unto you, that the time shall come when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses." Mosiah 13:27)

His argument looks forward to the Saviour's atonement just as Paul looked back to it. Paul's explanation that "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer" may purify one in this world, but only the blood of a God can cleans the souls of men for eternity, is the same idea. (Hebrews 9)

25 And now Abinadi said unto them: Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean?

That kind of retort is most likely to come from either someone who doesn't know the answer and is playing for time, or from someone who is very sure of himself and is about to grab control of the situation. Abinadi was probably addressing the very officials who had presided over king Noah's coronation rites, and he insisted on challenging their interpretation of those rites. Abinadi's next statement confirms that he had just taken control.

26 I say unto you, wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord.

27 Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise. Therefore, what teach ye this people?

The word "wise" as spoken by Abinadi, appears to be a much stronger word than it is in typical American English where it means something like being prudent or clever. Anciently "wisdom" was

the knowledge of God – not knowledge about God, but God's knowledge. ³⁵⁵ By saying they had not been wise – that is, that they had not acted in accordance to God's knowledge – Abinadi had just challenged the very foundation of their ecclesiastical and political authority. When they responded, they ignored his challenge and did what people do who lean on tradition rather than revelation:

28 And they said: We teach the law of Moses.

- 29 And again he said unto them: If ye teach the law of Moses why do ye not keep it? Why do ye set your hearts upon riches? Why do ye commit whoredoms and spend your strength with harlots, yea, and cause this people to commit sin, that the Lord has cause to send me to prophesy against this people, yea, even a great evil against this people?
- 30 Know ye not that I speak the truth? Yea, ye know that I speak the truth; and you ought to tremble before God.
- 31 And it shall come to pass that ye shall be smitten for your iniquities, for ye have said that ye teach the law of Moses. And what know ye concerning the law of Moses? Doth salvation come by the law of Moses? What say ye?
- 32 And they answered and said that salvation did come by the law of Moses.
- 33 But now Abinadi said unto them: I know if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved; yea, if ye keep the commandments which the Lord delivered unto Moses in the mount of Sinai, saying:
- 34 I am the Lord thy God, who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- 35 Thou shalt have no other God before me.
- 36 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing in heaven above, or things which are in the earth beneath.

Proverbs 1-3 is an essay about Wisdom., representing it as the very extension of the knowledge and power of God. See also: Margaret Barker, *The Older Testament, The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity* (London, SPCK, 1987), p. 81-99. Raphael Patat, *The Hebrew Goddess* (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1978), 97-99.

37 Now Abinadi said unto them, Have ye done all this? I say unto you, Nay, ye have not. And have ye taught this people that they should do all these things? I say unto you, Nay, ye have not.

Abinadi was a very difficult kind of person to deal with. The Saviour was that kind of person, so was Alma, and the Prophet Joseph Smith. When discussing gospel principles, they do not have the option of reverting to a position of compromise. So one must deal with them on their own terms. That means one must accept them as a sayer of truth, or else try to prove them to be a fraud. If one knows, but can't handle the fact that the prophet is saying the truth, then in order to justify one's disbelief, one must try to demonstrate that the prophet is a false prophet. To do that they often resort to the simple expedient of demonstrating that the prophet is unable to enforce his truth, or that he cannot be sustained by the truth he espouses. That may be done by throwing him in jail or killing him. That action is an extremely dangerous position to work from, because if one does that, one is likely to go to hell. That was the bind king Noah was in. He had power over the life and death of his subjects, and he reacted exactly the way one might expect.

1 And now when the king had heard these words, he said unto his priests: Away with this fellow, and slay him; for what have we to do with him, for he is mad.

- 2 And they stood forth and attempted to lay their hands on him; but he withstood them, and said unto them:
- 3 Touch me not, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver; neither have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell; therefore, God will not suffer that I shall be destroyed at this time.

If verse 3 was translated by the same criteria as the Old Testament – and I presume it was – then the word "Elohim" is rendered as "God" and "Jehovah" as "Lord." Assuming that is true, the

³⁵⁶ This distinction is important. During a *sode* experience the prophet sees God (Elohim) sitting on his throne. But he receives his assignment and instructions from Jehovah. For example: in Psalm 82 and Abraham 3 it is Elohim who makes the covenant. Jehovah makes the assignment,

statement reads:

Touch me not, for God [Elohim] shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not delivered the message which the Lord [Jehovah] sent me to deliver; neither have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell; therefore, God [Elohim] will not suffer that I shall be destroyed at this time."

4 But I must fulfill the commandments wherewith God [Elohim] has commanded me; and because I have told you the truth ye are angry with me. And again, because I have spoken the word of God [Elohim] ye have judged me that I am mad. (Mosiah 12:1-4)

If that reading is correct, then that statement is very important for four reasons: 1) it shows that Abinadi had a perfect understanding of the Godhead. 2) It shows that Noah and the priests had a similar understanding – otherwise there would have been no point in Abinadi's using his words with the care he did. 3) Because the relationship of Elohim, Jehovah, and the kings and prophets who where in the Council was clearly portrayed in the drama of the New Year festival (see Psalm 25, 45, 82), 357 Abinadi's carefully distinguishing which God did what, appears to be strong circumstantial evidence that his statement was based on their understanding of that drama. 4) If one may assume that Abinadi was speaking literally and with authority – and I believe he was – then what we have there is a reference to his *sode* experience and an account of the assignment he received at the Council in Heaven. By distinguishing between which God had made the covenant, and which had given him the call he received at the Council, Abinadi was giving evidence in the strongest possible terms that he was a true prophet, and that he had come to deliver an official message from God and the Council. The king's theoretical claim to authority rested on the belief that he was chosen at the Council; his continued authority rested on his claim that his decisions represented the decisions of God and the Council. Now Abinadi was challenging those claims by

as in Isaiah 6, "the voice of the Lord [Jehovah], saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us [the Council]?" In 1 Nephi 1, Lehi sees God [Elohim] sitting on his throne, and one whose "luster was above the sun at noon-day" gave him the book which contained instructions for his mission.

357 See Psalm 25, 45, 82.

asserting that his own covenant had been with from Elohim, and that his instructions from Jehovah. Abinadi was doing more than just pitting his authority against the king's. Because he claimed to have had a *sode* experience wherein he had received the assignment to call king Noah's people to repentance and tell the king hw was going to hell, Abinadi was actually asserting that his authority – at that moment at least – was greater than the authority of the king. It is little wonder that their furry was so intense that it required the powers of heaven to defend him from their immediate retaliation.

5 Now it came to pass after Abinadi had spoken these words that the people of king Noah durst not lay their hands on him, for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and his face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord.

I wonder what that verse really says. It is, at the least, Alma's testimony of what *he* saw when *he* looked into Abinadi's face. At the most, it is a description of what everyone else also saw, but I wonder if unworthy people can see that light, or if they king Noah's priests simply subdued by the power of the prophet's presence. If the king and the priests did see that light – and then chose to shed his innocent blood – they are in really bad trouble. Abinadi later warned them of that, but it did not do them much good, because they killed him anyway.³⁵⁸

6 And he spake with power and authority from God; and he continued his words, saying:

7 Ye see that ye have not power to slay me, therefore I finish my message. Yea, and I perceive that it cuts you to your hearts because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities.

8 Yea, and my words fill you with wonder and amazement, and with anger.

Mosiah 17:10 "Yea, and I will suffer even until death, and I will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you. And if ye slay me ye will shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day."

One of the powers of a prophet is to know the thoughts of the persons with whom he is dealing. It is probably safe to assume that Abinadi's describing their "wonder, amazement, and anger" was more real than his just guessing by the looks on their faces. If he knew their thoughts, then he would also have known that his words were understood by them, and he knew that they knew he was a true prophet (as with Zeezrom in Alma 12:7).

9 But I finish my message; and then it matters not whither I go, if it so be that I am saved.

If he could hear their thoughts and understood that they intended to murder him, then his next statement is simply part of an unspoken but nonetheless real conversation between him and them.

10 But this much I tell you, what you do with me, after this, shall be as a type and a shadow of things which are to come.

11 And now I read unto you the remainder of the commandments of God, for I perceive that they are not written in your hearts; I perceive that ye have studied and taught iniquity the most part of your lives.

12 And now, ye remember that I said unto you: Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of things which are in heaven above, or which are in the earth beneath, or which are in the water under the earth.

13 And again: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me;

14 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

15 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

16 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

17 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work;

- 18 But the seventh day, the sabbath of the Lord thy God, thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates;
- 19 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- 20 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
- 21 Thou shalt not kill.
- 22 Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal.
- 23 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- 24 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.
- 25 And it came to pass that after Abinadi had made an end of these sayings that he said unto them: Have ye taught this people that they should observe to do all these things for to keep these commandments?
- 26 I say unto you, Nay; for if ye had, the Lord would not have caused me to come forth and to prophesy evil concerning this people.

Habitually, when I read this part of the story, my eyes fly quickly over the Ten Commandments because I think I already know what they say. I suspect Alma knew them, and he expected his readers would also. He could have just written, "Abinadi quoted the rest of the Ten Commandments" or Mormon could have abridged Alma's writings that way and that would have saved him the trouble of engraving them all on the plates. But they did not do that. Abinadi's face was a burning light. A quick run-through of the Ten Commandments cannot account for the need of a light like that. I suspect he read them slowly and powerfully like a list of indictments, and his accusers heard them that way. I suspect that his reading those accusations one at a time sank deeply into Alma's soul and that he wrote them out – one at a time – to try to convey the meaning

- 27 And now ye have said that salvation cometh by the law of Moses. I say unto you that it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet; but I say unto you, that the time shall come when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses.
- 28 And moreover, I say unto you, that salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses.
- 29 And now I say unto you that it was expedient that there should be a law given to the children of Israel, yea, even a very strict law; for they were a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity, and slow to remember the Lord their God;
- 30 Therefore there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him.
- 31 But behold, I say unto you, that all these things were types of things to come.
- 32 And now, did they understand the law? I say unto you, Nay, they did not all understand the law; and this because of the hardness of their hearts; for they understood not that there could not any man be saved except it were through the redemption of God.

Like you, each time I read the scriptures I get new insights. This time, when I read that passage and the two verses that follow, I stumbled for a moment on the meaning of the word "God." As I mentioned above, I believe the Book of Mormon was carefully translated so one could use the other scriptures to understand its meaning, and one could also use the Book of Mormon to understand the meaning of the other scriptures. In the Old Testament the word "Elohim" is translated as "God," but in this passage "God" does not refer to Elohim, it refers to Jehovah. So that threw me into a bit of a tailspin while I tried to sort it out. After I thought about it for a while, this is what I came up with: Long before Moses was told the new covenant name of "Jehovah," the Lord was worshiped by the name of "El" which is also translated "God" in the Old Testament. Sometimes it is "El Elyon" which is translated "The Most High God."

In Genesis, the title "El Elyon" is the name of Abraham's God.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." (Genesis 14:18-20)

The names "El" and "El Elyon" continued to be used even after the name "Jehovah" was revealed to Moses. For example, in Psalm 78, the God who "smote all the firstborn in Egypt" and delivered Israel was El Elyon. The psalm says,

Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies." (Psalm 78:56)

During the Babylonian captivity, the God of Israel was also known as El Elyon.

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire." (Daniel 3:26)

From the Book of Mormon we learn that Nephi referred to both Jehovah and his Father Elohim by the title of "Most High God."

"And when I had spoken these words, the Spirit cried with a loud voice, saying: Hosanna to the Lord, the most high God; for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all. And blessed art thou, Nephi, because thou believest in the Son of the most high God; wherefore, thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired." (1 Nephi 11:6)³⁵⁹

So El and El Elyon might refer to either, but the important point in our discussion is that they were the names of Abraham's God before that God gave the Law to Moses, and before he came to be known as Jehovah. If "El" is the word Abinadi used here, then by his language he was pushing the idea of the atonement back beyond Moses to the time when the Lord was worshiped by Abraham

For a discussion of El and El Elyon see "God, the Names of," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vols (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1990) v. 2, p. 411 - 412.

and others as El or El Elyon. It is the same argument Paul used when he reminded his readers that Abraham was promised salvation – "that he should be the heir of the world" – long before there was such a thing as the Law of Moses. (Romans 4:13)

If what I have suggested is correct, then Abinadi's use of "El" makes a great deal of sense within the context of his argument. The priests had claimed that salvation came through the Law of Moses, and Abinadi was showing that the Lord – El – had made salvation possible long before Moses received the Law. By using the name-title "El" rather that "Jehovah" Abinadi was driving home his point that salvation comes through Moses' God, but not through Moses' Law.

- 33 For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God [El] should redeem his people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began have they not spoken more or less concerning these things?
- 34 Have they not said that God himself [El] should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth?
- 35 Yea, and have they not said also that he should bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, and that he, himself, should be oppressed and afflicted?

The second interpretation of,

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth

(the one that, no doubt, was most important to Abinadi) is that it is a celebration of the Kingship of Jehovah.

Before we can address that interpretation, we must first ask, "How was Jehovah's Messiahship

incorporated into the New Year festival drama, and how did it relate to the coronation of Israel's kings?"

Beginning with his anointing in the Council in Heaven, and concluding with his giving eternal life to those whom he calls his children, the New Year festival was a celebration of the triumph of Jehovah's Kingship. This essay is neither the time nor the place to go through all of that, but there are a few psalms which are specifically about Jehovah as Jesus the Messiah. Their whose use in the New Year festival would have given anyone who participated in it – and who would seek to understand – a correct understanding of the atonement. When Noah's priests could not use treason as an excuse for murdering Abinadi, they used his testimony about the life and death of Jesus to accuse him of blasphemy. The charge against Abinadi was asinine and illegal, but, as they said, it was the best they could come up with. Before we go further in his story, we need address that question: how do the psalms describe their King Jehovah as Jesus the Messiah.

Jehovah is the Only Begotten of the Father – the Royal Heir – the Beloved Son. Throughout the scriptures, most of the accounts we have of people's hearing the words of the Father include the Father's testimony of Jesus' sonship and therefore of his kingship. Examples are the Father's words at Jesus' baptism, on the Mount of Transfiguration, in his introduction of the Saviour in 3 Nephi, and in Joseph Smith's First Vision. The statement "This is my Beloved Son" is a declaration that Jehovah/Jesus is Son and Heir – King and High Priest. The other title, "Only Begotten Son," says all there is to say – but there are other ways of saying it:

Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation — The light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men. The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all

There can be no question that the pre-exilic prophets – both those in the Old Testament and those in the Book of Mormon – understood the atonement of Christ. But as our attention is focused on the New Year festival and the way it was portrayed in the pre-exilic religious ceremonies, one must ask "What do the Psalms say about that? – how well did the people really understand?"

I believe the Psalms were part of the original text of the ancient Israelite endowment-enthronement ceremony. If that is correct, then it follows that those psalms which describe the Saviour's atonement would have also been a part of the Feast of Tabernacles drama, and that the Psalms' testimony of the atonement would have been at least partially understood by everyone who participated in those rites. As already mentioned, some of the psalms are specifically about the Saviour's experience on the cross. Others (like Psalm 2, "thou art my son") were most immediately about the earthly king, but the king's coronation was symbolic of the ultimate establishment of the kingdom of God, so the earthly king's coronation would have been a representation of the past coronation of Jehovah and future coronation of Jesus. At the same time, Psalm 2 is also about the symbolic coronation of all the initiates in the audience who participated. Other psalms, which are not directly about the Saviour imply a sophisticated understanding of his eternal mission. An example is Psalm 8, which was the inspiration for the hymn, "How Great Thou Art."

Jehovah as Son of God, King of Israel, Messiah-to-Come, and Saviour

During the New Years festival drama, Psalm 8 may have been sung as a celebration of the creation of Adam and Eve in the dramatic portrayal of the Garden of Eden story. But it is not just about

Adam's creation, it is his coronation as well. The King James translators wrote, "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." In Hebrew the word translated "angels" is "Elohim" which is the proper name of the Father of the gods, and also the plural word for the "gods" generally. So what it really says is "For thou hast made him a little lower than the *gods* – the members of the Council in Heaven."

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the gods, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! (Psalm 8)

For mortals, this psalm addresses some of the greatest mysteries of all:

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

This is the great question: why would the God who created the immensities of space and gave order and life to all things condescend to visit man – either humans as a race, or jut one individual person? The answer must be found in the whole cosmos – and also in the eternal accumulation of

³⁶⁰ The word translated "angels" is "elohim" which is the plural "gods," meaning the members of the Council. Hebrew dictionary in James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. # 430. The Elizabethan Christian translators did not like the notion that men were a little lower than the gods, so they used "angels" instead. Modern Jewish scholars didn't like the idea any better and translated the line, "You have made him a little less than divine." *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, Jerusalem, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.)

each person's individual history – as an Intelligence; as a member of the Council; as one who was faithful in the pre-mortal spirit world; as a human – here on earth. The Saviour answered the question, and the answer he gave is as amazing as the question itself: He is our Friend! "I will call you friends, for you are my friends, and ye shall have an inheritance with me." (D&C 93: 45, 84:77; John 15: 12 - 16)

O the psalms that most directly represent the Saviour's atonement, let us look at Psalm 34 first.

Psalm 34 – foreshadowing the atonement

The power of Psalm 34 is hidden in its own modesty, but it is running over with magnificent ideas. It is a discussion of the very essence of sacral kingship. But it slides over the ideas so readily that one can fail to notice they are there. The primary idea which brings us to that psalm is the verse which shows that a discussion of the atonement was an integral part of the ancient Israelite endowment / coronation ceremony. It relates the principles of the Saviour's kingship with his suffering on the cross.

- 7 The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.
- 18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.
- 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.
- 20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. (Psalm 34: 7, 18-20)

John the Beloved called attention to that psalm when he wrote,

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. (John 19:34-36)

Many ideas associated with endowment / coronation are scattered throughout the psalm. I can most easily point them out by rearranging them and pulling them together into separate categories. My artificial grouping of the following verses is only to point out similarities of ideas, and I apologize for the injustice it does to the poetry. For example, there are some lines that speak of the physical senses of both God and man: like the admonition which reads:, "keep...thy lips from speaking guile."

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry."

"I will bless the Lord at all times:
his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

"Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile."

The second grouping has many of the ideas of the Beatitudes. The easiest way to show that is to quote the Beatitudes and the Psalm together. The following is not intended to be an in-depth discussion of the meaning of the Beatitudes, that was given earlier, so this chart simply assumes those ideas

Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

As I understand it, the poor in spirit are those who have made the sacrifice of a broken heart and contrite spirit. "Who come unto me" is a reference to one's being in the place where Christ is. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven," means the kingdom

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"

belongs to them – they are sacral kings and queens.

And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

This is about the fruit of the tree of life, and the waters of life, and the blessings to those to receive them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

One wonders if Alma had his psalm in mind when he said, "...after ye have tasted this light is your knowledge perfect? And thus, if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life." (Alma 32: 35, 40)

In the Beatitudes the ultimate power and responsibility of kingship is represented in the words, "And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." In the sequences which assumes one has learned how to do that, the next words are, "And blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The clearest tie between this verse in the Beatitudes and the one which follows it is Ether 3:13-14.

"And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters."

In the Book of Mormon, in Job, and in this psalm, the word "redeem" means to be brought into the presence of the Lord (Ether 3: 13-17; Helaman 14:17; 2 Ne. 1:15, 2:2-4; Job 19: 25-26)

Our psalm reads: "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate."

Our psalm reads: Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?

The other Beatitude most prominently represented in this psalm is the one which depicts one's adoption as a child of God, and final coronation to be sacral king or queen.

And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. And

Our psalm reads: Depart from evil, and do

blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In Moroni 7, Mormon bridges the gap between a peacemaker and being one of whom it can be said with finality: "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Mormon addresses those who "are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope by which ve can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until ve shall rest with him in heaven." I presume that means they have, and can again see their Saviour. He knows this "because of your peaceable walk with the children of men." He explains that their next steps are to perfect faith (token of the covenant), hope (living as though the covenant were already fulfilled), and charity (the ultimate sealing power). Then he concludes: "But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever: and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure."

good; seek peace, and pursue it.

By themselves, those examples of the connections between the psalm and the Beatitudes would not be very impressive, and I might rightly be accused of stretching it. My point is not that there is an exact match of the Beatitudes with the psalm, my point is that this psalm simply assumes and incorporates many of the ideas in the Beatitudes, and thereby relates the coronation ideas in the Beatitudes with the Saviour's suffering on the cross. (That also assumes, as I do, that the sequence

of ideas in the Beatitudes was known long before the Saviour summed them up in that simple, yet powerful way.) Here is the 34th psalm without my messing up the order of the verses. It is virtually a celebration of the life, kingship, and atonement of the Saviour.

I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.

The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

Depart from evil, and do good;

seek peace, and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate

Psalm 22 – the Cross and the Triumph after the Cross

Psalm 22 is the other psalm which describes the atonement. It is divided into two parts. Part one is a first person account of the Saviour's feelings while he was on the cross. Part two is about his visiting the spirits of the dead as described in Isaiah 61 and D&C 138. I will not interrupt your reading of this psalm except to point out the juncture between the two parts.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

But thou art holy,

O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

Our fathers trusted in thee:

they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

They cried unto thee, and were delivered:

they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

But I am a worm, and no man;

a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

All they that see me laugh me to scorn:

they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him:

let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

But thou art he that took me out of the womb:

thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

I was cast upon thee from the womb:

thou art my God from my mother's belly.

Be not far from me; for trouble is near;

for there is none to help.

Many bulls have compassed me:

strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. ³⁶¹

They gaped upon me with their mouths,

as a ravening and a roaring lion.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint:

my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;

and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me:

they pierced my hands and my feet.

I may tell all my bones:

³⁶¹ This may be a reference to people with gossiping tongues. See Jacobs, Paul F., "'Cows of Bashan' — A Note on the Interpretation of Amos 4:1," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1985, vol. 104, p.109-110.

they look and stare upon me.

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me.

Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

Save me from the lion's mouth:

for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

[At this juncture the tone of the psalm changes dramatically as the Saviour's spirit leaves his body on the cross, and he joins the great congregation of the righteous who are waiting for him in the spirit world. The reference to the "meek" is a close link between this psalm and Isaiah 61's account of the same great conference. For that and other reasons, I believe that Isaiah 61 was intended to be a commentary on the latter half of the 22nd Psalm.]

I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.

All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

Returning to the Abinadi story

That discussion of what the psalms say about the atonement was not intended to be a diversion from our subject. Those psalms describe the mission of Jehovah/Jesus as one would expect it would have been understood – or at least ought to have been understood – by king Noah and his priests. If those psalms were used during the drama of the Nephite New Year festival – and I am proceeding on the assumption that they were – then a representation of the Saviour's life and atonement were an important part of that drama. Abinadi demonstrates that he clearly understood it, even though he quoted Isaiah rather than the Psalms. Lacking the historical hindsight we enjoy, their understanding Psalm 22 would have given the ancients a clearer scriptural insight into the Saviour's suffering on the cross, and his subsequent triumphal entry into the world of the spirits, than any other scripture I know about. It would have provided a vivid background through which Abinadi and his contemporaries could understand the Saviour's death as discussed in Isaiah 53. (The presumption of their knowledge Psalm 22 becomes even more important to our story in light of the utter absurdity of Noah and his priests eventually using Abinadi's teaching about the atonement as the legal excuse to have the prophet killed.)

Having established the presumption, but not the certainty, of what king Noah and his priests knew – or should have known – about sacral kingship, and about the Saviour and his relationship with those who become his sons and daughters, we can now return to the dialogue which took place during

As I observed earlier, the scripture "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings...." can be understood in three different ways. As we have seen, Abinadi first dealt with the interpretation which was most obvious to king Noah and his priests: that is, that the Isaiah passage was about the earthly king as a representative of Jehovah. Now we will return to Abinadi's interpretation which was probably most obvious to himself: that Isaiah's statement was a celebration of the Kingship of Jehovah. Even though Abinadi understood, and would explain, other interpretations of that passage, to him it meant first of all about Jehovah/Jesus/Messiah/Saviour as Eternal King. That is also the primary way I understand it. Whenever I read that scripture, or hear it sung, my mind also goes to the Saviour. And to me, the most vivid example of the Saviour's coronation are the events in Third Nephi. 362

One of my dearest friends once told me how he envisioned the Saviour's coming to the temple in Third Nephi. I was so moved by his account that I have adopted it as my own, and now I cannot imagine it happening any other way.

What follows is a combination of what he told me, along with some rather personal – and to me, very meaningful additions of my own. Out of deference to him – to preserve both his privacy and mine – I shall make no attempt to distinguish between which ideas are his, which are mine, and which are ours.

Among the other coronations of the Saviour which are mentioned in the scriptures are the one at the Council alluded to in Psalm 45; Jesus's baptism, which I have already discussed; the Mount of Transfiguration appears to me to have been another one; and the one in Revelation and elsewhere when Christ comes to reign on the earth again.

The Resurrect Saviour Comes to America

In Third Nephi, the thunder, lightning, earthquake, and darkness began on 3rd day of first month of 34th year after the sign of the Saviour's birth.³⁶³

- 3 And it came to pass that there came a voice again unto the people, and all the people did hear, and did witness of it, saying:
- 4 O ye people of these great cities which have fallen, who are descendants of Jacob, yea, who are of the house of Israel, how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you.
- 5 And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not.
- 6 O ye house of Israel whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart. (3 Nephi 3-6)

The Saviour had spoken similar words before.

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

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

I used to have a very vivid mental picture of that. (The picture is still vivid; I'm just not sure it's that relevant any more.) When I was a boy living on the farm, I was watching a mother hen and her dozen or so baby chicks. She would cluck and scratch the ground to find things to eat, showing them how to scratch and peck, and how to find seeds and bugs. If one became too intense on the

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

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

1 Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great I AM, whose arm of

mercy hath atoned for your sins;

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

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

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

65 For, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts;³⁶⁵

66 Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely. (D&C 10:64-66) 366

There are two places in the Book of Mormon where the phrase "partake of the waters of life freely" is used,³⁶⁷ but Joseph had not translated them yet, so his frame of reference would have been to the book of Revelation in the New Testament where it is used twice, once in conjunction with the promise of sonship, the other to describe the situation of those who live in the Celestial world.

^{364 2} Nephi 4: 24; Enos 1:4; Alma 6:6, 8:10; 3 Nephi 27:1; Moroni 2:2; D&C 5:24.

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

³⁶⁶ See also D&C 43:23-24.

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

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

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

and

- 1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.
- 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
- 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:
- 4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.
- 5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.
- 6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

•••

- 16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.
- 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22: 1-17)

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

Johnson considers the phrase in a number of places and says it may refer to one of four things.

While analyzing its use in the psalms, he rejects "the action of a parent bird in shielding its young,"

and writes that "the stylized and obviously cultic [temple related] character of the psalm" suggests the psalmist had something else in mind. He cites three other options: "the wings of the cherubim shrouding the Ark," "a direct allusion to the Temple," or "the formal portrayal of the solar disc with outspread wings which is so common a feature of ancient Near Eastern art." ³⁶⁸ Johnson's preference is that the phrase is a reference to the solar disc. In another place he translates the 36th Psalm as,

When men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings!
They are regaled with the rich food of Thy house,
And Thou givest them to drink of Thy delightful stream;
For with Thee is the spring of life...;
It is through Thy light that we see light.
Then he observes.

Here the immediate context, coupled with the psalmist's ultimate plea for deliverance from the oppressor, makes it clear that the reference is to an untroubled, full, and prosperous life, which is picturesquely described as having its source in Yahweh. 369

That idea of the solar disc and of God's being the source of all blessings seems to work well in the psalms, but Johnson did not have the advantage of comparing that usage to Third Nephi or the Doctrine and Covenants where the idea of the solar disc does not work well at all. So we are left with the other two options, and both of them have to do with being on the throne of God under the wings of the cherubim. That is also strongly implied in some of the psalms.

I will abide in thy tabernacle [temple] for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.(Psalms 61:4.)

Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. (Psalms 63:7) 370

³⁶⁸ Aubrey R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1979, p. 250, 279, 352.

³⁶⁹ Aubrey R. Johnson, *Vitality of the Individual lin the Thought of Ancient Israel*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1964, p. 105.

³⁷⁰ See Psalms 17:8, 18:10; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 91: 4 (That is the same Psalm which Satan used to challenge him during his three "temptations.");104:3. When King Hezekiah prayed, he addressed

When God was present in the Jerusalem Temple he was said to sit on his throne between the cherubim, but during the coronation rites of the New Year festival, after God was represented as having returned to his own throne in the celestial temple, the king himself sat on the throne that was overshadowed by the cherubim wings.³⁷¹ The way the phrase "how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings" makes most sense to me is to think that it is a reference to the final scenes of the New Year festival coronation rites where the king, having been anointed both king and adopted son of God, may now legitimately sit on the great throne in the Holy of Holies. My notion is that, symbolically at least, it was to this throne of sacral kingship that the Saviour would have brought all of the people if they had only listened – so would have gathered them under his wings in the temple. Joseph Smith did not say exactly that same thing, but he came very close. He said,

The doctrine of baptism for the dead is clearly shown in the New Testament; and if the doctrine is not good, then throw the New Testament away; but if it is the word of God, then let the doctrine be acknowledged; and it was the reason why Jesus said unto the Jews, "How oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"-that they might attend to the ordinances of baptism for the dead as well as other ordinances of the priesthood, and receive revelations from heaven, and be perfected in the things of the kingdom of God-but they would not. ³⁷²

My supposition is that when the Saviour spoke to the Nephites he was lamenting the fact that they had rejected the ordinances, and his reference to their failing to be beneath his wings was a lamentation of their rejection of his blessings. They might have received those blessings if they had

the "Lord of Hosts, enthroned on the cherubim" (2 Kings 19:15; Isaiah 37:16; se also 1 Samuel 4:4 and 2 Samuel 6:2; Eli Borowski, "Cherubim: God's Throne?" in *Biblical Archaeology Review* (21/4, July/August, 1995), 36-37.

³⁷¹ See Psalms 42:8; 57:2; 61: 5; 72:8; 80:1, 99:1

³⁷² Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.310.

taken seriously the ordinances and covenants of the coronation rites of the New Year festival, which offered an invitation to all the people to be joint heirs with the king and symbolically sit upon the throne of God in the Holy of Holies.

As the story told in Third Nephi continues, Jehovah spoke out of the darkness again – and what he said this time changed their entire concept of temple worship, and required that they change much of the physical environs of the temple itself.

- 15 Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.
- 16 I came unto my own, and my own received me not. And the scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled.
- 17 And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled.
- 18 I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.
- 19 And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings.
- 20 And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not.

If the Nephites had understood the 34th Psalm to be about the Saviour – about his being in Gethsemane and about his hanging on the cross – about his contrite spirit and broken heart – they must suddenly have realized, if they had not known already, that Psalm 34 was also about

themselves. They were not required to hang on a cross as he did, but the law of consecration required that they give all they were capable of giving. They were not required to experience a Gethsemane like his, but they were required to love as he loved. Charity not only causes one to rejoice when others rejoice, but it may also cause one's soul to hurt for others as much as one's soul is capable of hurting for one's Self. The Saviour's voice which spoke out of the darkness reminded them that within the limits of their abilities, the same thing was required of them that had been required of him. He would later reduce that idea to every-day experiences, when, in the Sermon at the Temple, he remind them that they must not set their hearts on the treasures of this world, and they must not get angry, or hurtful, or be unkind, and otherwise reviewed the ordinances and covenants of the Feast of Tabernacles endowment/coronation drama.

Up until the time the people received the instruction: "ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away" – until that time, I think it is safe to assume that the Nephites had kept both the tradition of their temple worship and the pattern of their temples since Nephi built his. He tells us,

I did construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things; for they were not to be found upon the land, wherefore, it could not be built like unto Solomon's temple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine. (2 Ne 5:16)

If the Nephites kept to that pattern, one may assume that not only the floor plan, but also the furnishing in the Temple at Bountiful were as nearly like Solomon's as the Nephites could make them (even though architectural styles surely changed during those 600 years) – including the standard three rooms with the Holy of Holies at the back, and the Throne of Jehovah against the rear wall of the Holy of Holies. If that is so, and if the rest of the pattern also remained constant,

near the front of the Temple at Bountiful there was a great altar on which the daily burnt offerings and other sacrifices were made.

But now, if they followed the Saviour's instructions, that great altar would have to be removed, as would the barns, holding pens for sacrificial cattle, and all the implements for the sacrificial slaughter of the animals. Now there were to be no more sacrifices, there would be no temple meal associated with the sacrifices (the sacrament would replace that). The seething pot in which the meat was boiled would be removed, and the tables and benches used to eat the temple feast would be cleared away. With these things gone, the smell which would have reminded one of a small commercial slaughter house would have dissipated. That is significant, for as with the Temple at Jerusalem, the Temple at Bountiful was probably associated in the minds of the people with its smell as much as with its appearance. With those changes came others. They would not have just torn out that altar and the outbuildings without replacing them with something else – probably trees and flowers which would have turned the temple grounds into something beautiful to see. The interior of the temple itself would have also been changed, but how much, one cannot know. The incense altar would have been removed. In Solomon's temple, the ordinance rooms were apparently on an upper floor which was reached by a circular stair (perhaps in an arrangement somewhat like the original Nauvoo Temple. 373). If the Nephite temple at Bountiful was like that, they would not

That assumption on my part is based on two scriptures. One is the D&C statement that the same ordinances performed in Solomon's temple would be performed again in the Nauvoo temple. The other is the Old Testament description of Solomon's temple. It shows two possible places for ordinance rooms: the "chambers" built around temple, and the rooms at the top of the "winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third." Those scriptures read:

³⁷ And again, verily I say unto you, how shall your washings be acceptable unto me, except ye perform them in a house which you have built to my name?

³⁸ For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances

have needed to change the upper floor, and the lower floor, with its veil covering the Holy of Holies, would probably have been changed very little. The menorah with its arms upraised in prayer would certainly have remained in front of the veil, and behind the veil the Holy of Holies with the great throne of Jehovah would have remained as they were.

In the account in Third Nephi, the darkness lasted three days, that is during the fourth, fifth, and sixth days of the first month of the 34th year. (3 Ne. 8:5) Almost a year later, "in the ending of the thirty and fourth year" (3 Ne. 10:18), a multitude gathered at the temple and "they were marveling and wondering one with another, and were showing one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place." (3 Ne. 11:1) A quick reading of Third Nephi, without paying particular attention to those dates, brings one's mind to the earthquakes and then to the assumption that the

might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was.

and

³⁹ Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipals, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name.

⁴⁰ And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people; (D&C 124: 37 - 40)

⁵ And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle [Holy of Holies]: and he made chambers round about:

⁶ The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

⁷ And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

⁸ The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third. (1 Kings 6: 5-8)

"changes" had to do with tumbled down walls and broken buildings. However, if that were really so, it would imply that the earthquake damage had not been cleaned up for a year, and that these people were just now getting around to being amazed at how bad the damage was. That scenario does not seem reasonable to me. It seems to me that a more likely reading would be that the earthquake damage been cleaned up, and the changes had to do with altering the Temple and its grounds and Temple in conformity with the Lord's instructions that there should be no more burnt offerings performed there.

Given all those changes, it is likely that arrangements had been made for a re-dedication of the temple. In the ancient Near East temples were customarily dedicated as part of the New Year festival. So it is likely that the group who came to the temple "in the ending of the thirty and fourth year" (3 Ne. 10:18) was probably a select group who came by invitation in conjunction with its rededication. They were an extraordinary company of individuals, for they were about to see the Saviour and participate in a ceremony which appears to have been the realization of the coronation ceremony which the festival only depicted.

They heard the voice of the Father declaring that Jesus was the rightful heir and king. "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name – hear ye him." ³⁷⁴ They looked and "saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them" He introduced himself: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world."

^{374 3} Nephi 11:7. The name "son" is the same as the royal name-title as in Psalm 2: "thou art my son." The word "name" also has covenant connotations.

The name "Jesus Christ" is a translation of the Greek version of his name, so those words are not what he would have said to the Nephites. "Jesus" is the Greek form of the name Joshua, which means "God saves" or "Savior." Mary was told by the angel that she should "call his name Jesus."(Luke 1:39) "Christ" is the Greek form of Messiah, which means the anointed one. ³⁷⁵ In pre-exilic Israel it had connotations of both kingship and priesthood. So when Jesus introduced himself to the Nephites what they heard was: "Behold, I am the Anointed Saviour whom the prophets testified shall come into the world." Like the Father's introduction, "Behold my Beloved Son," the name Jesus Christ (Anointed Saviour) is a declaration of his kingship and priesthood.

When he joined the people who were gathered at the temple, it seems unlikely that he would have simply moved about in the crowd or stood in a kind of reception line where they might walk by him. This was Jehovah. He had come to *his* temple. The Holy of Holies was *his* throne room – in it was *his* throne. During the coronation of earthly kings, those men would sit upon that throne as token of their heirship. But Jesus was actually *thee* King, and it was *his* throne. It is likely that the people who were present would have understood that what they were witnessing was the true enthronement – the reality for which the conclusion of the New Year's festival drama was only a preparatory enactment. (It seems to me that Jesus' enthronement ceremony that is described in the Book of Mormon ought to have happened in Jerusalem – but there, rather than the Saviour's taking his place in the Holy of Holies, the veil was rent by Nature in protest of the Jews' failure to open it themselves.)

When the Saviour came to the Temple at Bountiful, it seems reasonable to me to suppose that he

³⁷⁵ See LDS Bible Dictionary.

would have done precisely what the people would have expected him to do, that is, the veil before the Holy of Holies would have been pulled back, and their King — Jehovah / Messiah / the resurrected Saviour — would have gone into the Holy of Holies and sat upon his own throne. If the room was arranged like the one in Solomon's Temple, the throne would have been elevated above the floor, and there would have been a footstool there, a sacred box akin to the Ark of the Covenant, containing emblems of priesthood and kingship — perhaps the sword of Labon, the Liahona, the Small Plates, and other sacred symbols of divine authority. When the Saviour sat upon his throne, his feet would have been "established" upon that footstool and his kingship and priesthood would have been represented by the sacred objects the box contained.

Then all the people formed a line (perhaps analogs to the procession which entered the city and the temple just before the coronation ceremony of the New Year festival). One by one they came before the Savior, knelt before him, embraced by the overwhelming power of his love, they would have looked up – through the brilliant light which, with his love, defined him as God – and into his smiling eyes. Each one touched his hands and his side. Then, perhaps like Nephi, they "bowed himself before the Lord and did kiss his feet." As they held his feet in their hands – washing them with their tears, then caressing his feet with their fingers – their finger tips would have reached back to the place where the nail had been driven through his heels and into the wood of the cross. ³⁷⁶ As

[&]quot;In 1968 the bones of a crucified man were found at Giv'at ha-Mivtar just north of Jerusalem. These belonged to a man about 26 years old and 167 cm © 5' 5 ½") tall. The heel bones (calcanea) were still fixed together by a nail. An examination showed that the nail had first been hammered through a piece of Pistacia or Acacia wood and then through both heel bones before entering the cross made of olive wood. The lower leg bones were broken. There was the mark of a nail on one of the lower right arm bones (radius.)

[&]quot;The nails were probably put through a plaque of wood to stop them tearing through the flesh. The weight of the body would have pulled the arm nails up the forearm to the wrist. The legs were broken against the side of the cross. All the weight of the victim's body would be on the arms causing death by suffocation." Peter Connolly, *A History of the Jewish People in the Times of Jesus*

each individual knelt there, within the unspeakable power of his love, their joy and their tears bore testimony to their souls that he was real – their fingers which touched the wounds testified to their souls that it was truly him. Before leaving, some would tenderly wipe his feet with their own hair – feeling that to use anything else would be inappropriate.

Whenever I read Isaiah's "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings," it is that scene, as I have described it to you, that my soul envisions.

Just as at the conclusion of the New Year festival, while the King was sitting upon his throne he delivered an address to the people, so did the Saviour. In Third Nephi, the text of the sermon the resurrected Christ spoke was in two parts: the Beatitudes was a synopsis of the whole meaning of the temple rites, and the "Sermon on the Mount" which was a review of the temple covenants and a very practical statement about how one might live them – the object of the rites and the objet of the sermon being the same. As I have observed, there is evidence that the ancient endowment/coronation ceremonies were about the people as well as the king and queen. When the king was anointed and adopted as a child of God, it seems to have represented the anointing and adoption of each individual who participated. Ultimately, perhaps the best evidence that is true is the way Mormon reports the events of Christ's coming to America. When the Saviour introduced the Beatitudes.

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)

The point here is that he had only just been giving specific instructions to Nephi and the Twelve, but when he reviewed the enthronement/endowment ceremonies of the New Year festival drama, he addressed the entire multitude. There are several differences between the Beatitudes in the Bible and those in the Book of Mormon. One of the most often repeated differences is the use of the word "all." In Matthew 5's "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" "peacemakers" may be read as a generic characteristic. But in the Book of Mormon's "And blessed are *all* the peacemakers..." the word focuses on each individual. "Peacemakers" may be a generic term, but "all peacemakers" separates those in the group into individual persons – and it is as individuals that "they shall be called the children of God" That is a very significant difference.

The other most frequently found difference is also in that verse. It is the use of the words "yea' and "and." In Matthew, the Beatitudes are several loosely connected nice things to say. But in Third Nephi each one begins with the word "yea" or "and." Those words are conjunctions which string the Beatitudes into a single coherent and sequential statement – emphasizing again that the Beatitudes are to be understood as a unit – and that the sequence it represents are for *all* the people. It is apparent to me that the Lord was reminding his audience of the personal requisites of sacral kingship and eternal priesthood.

At the end of the sermon, on that day, there were sacrifices and a feast. Similarly, in America, on after the sermon the Saviour invited the people to bring some food, which he blessed and there was enough for all the congregation to eat.

In the New Year festival, the coronation and sermon at the Temple occurred on the 21st day of the festival, which was the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The next day (the 8th day of the Feast of

Tabernacles and the last day of the festival) there was a great feast. In America, on the day following the sermon at the Temple, the people gathered together and the Saviour himself provided the food by which they were all fed.

The third interpretation of,

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth

(the one Abinadi used to teach and convert Alma) is about the sacral kingship and priesthood of every worthy individual.

Mormon's purposes seem to be revealed in the fact that his book ignores one of the most essential facets of modern historical writing: that is, he uses his characters to teach, but otherwise, he makes very little effort to tell us who they were. When there is a sequence of fathers and sons, their identity is not hard to follow, but we know almost nothing about the backgrounds of Mosiah I, Abinadi, Captain Moroni, or Samuel the Lamanite, and even Mormon's own connections with the ancient royal family is left to inference. So it is with Alma. We know almost nothing about his background when he entered Abinadi's story – except that his was a young man, a member of the royalty, and apparently one of king Noah's "priests." (But we can't be sure if "priest" was a purely ecclesiastical title, or if it also denoted members of the ruling council.)

But there was one among them whose name was Alma, he also being a descendant of Nephi. [I take it that means he was a member of the royal family] And he was a young man, and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken, for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them. (Mosiah 17:2-3)

That is all we learn about Alma until Abinadi had finished his message and Alma spoke in his behalf – and with sufficient energy that king Noah had him expelled from the room, then sent assassins to follow and murder him (That is another evidence of Alma's social and political standing: for even though he was only a young man, the king apparently did not dare get rid of him except by assassination.)

As I observed earlier, unless I misread what Abinadi was saying, he asserted he had returned to the city to fulfill the assignments he received at the Council – *sode*. You will recall that the verses from which I found that inferrence were,

- 3. Touch me not, for God [Elohim] shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not delivered the message which the Lord [Jehovah] sent me to deliver; neither have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell; therefore, God [Elohim] will not suffer that I shall be destroyed at this time.
- 4. But I must fulfill the commandments wherewith God [Elohim] has commanded me; and because I have told you the truth ye are angry with me. And again, because I have spoken the word of God [Elohim] ye have judged me that I am mad. (Mosiah 12:3-4) 377

That statement is not a complete description of a *sode* experience, of course. It does not mention that God was sitting on his throne, and it does not mention other members of the Council being present. However (like Lehi in Nephi chapter one, and like Joseph Smith's First Vision) it does say that both the Father ("God") and the Son ("the Lord") were present, and (as in other accounts of the *sode*) it was Jehovah who gave the specific assignment to the prophet, including the words which he was to teach. As with Lehi and Joseph Smith, the assignment itself is given by the Son and ratified by the Father. For my part at least, I think Abinadi's statement is sufficient evidence to assert that when he returned to the city it was to fulfill an assignment he had received at the *sode*. I

³⁷⁷ Elsewhere I have suggested that "God" might come from "El" and therefore be a name of Christ. The reason I do not believe that to be so in this case is that this scripture speaks of both "God" and "the Lord." "The Lord" is Jehovah, so "God" must be someone else: i.e. his Father.

also think that the remainder of his story is sufficient evidence that he fulfilled that assignment. If that those assertions are correct, then one might deduce what his assignments were by observing that he accomplished. There seem to have been four: 1) He testified to the people, and in so doing he laid the foundation of the repentance which ultimately caused the people to return to Zarahemla; 2) he told the king and his priests if they did not repent they would go to hell, leaving them without excuse; 3) he taught Alma, and; 4) he died to seal his testimony.

What I am leading up to is that Abinadi knew from the outset who Alma was. If Abinadi had seen his own mission at the Council, he would have also known that his was inseparably intertwined with Alma's, and that Alma's mission would be pivotal for the whole history of his people. It is likely that Abinadi understood that his own most important purpose for returning to the city was to help Alma understand who he was and what his own mission was to be. It may not be an oversimplification to say that Abinadi had come to give his own life so that he could be instrumental in the conversion of just one boy.

One cannot know of their earlier relationship. It is possible that Abinadi was one of the priests of Zeniff whom Noah expelled when he took his father's throne. If that is so, then one would suppose that Abinadi knew Alma when he was just a lad. Beyond that, there is not enough evidence to even guess what their relationship might have been. Now Abinadi was an outcast, and the only way he would be able to talk with the young prince was to get his attention, and then teach him in the hostile and unforgiving environment of king Noah's court. So now, in our story, they have been brought together in that environment – Alma to be taught, and Abinadi to teach him. It clearly worked – at the cost of Abinadi's life, and almost at the cost of Alma's – but it worked.

The scene that I cannot visualize, but can almost feel is the dynamics of the conversation between Alma and Abinadi, when Alma was listening by the Spirit, and (I suspect) Abinadi was actually answering Alma's questions, as the Holy Ghost introduced those questions to the young man's mind. That kind of three-way conversation is not rare, and there is no reason to suppose it did not happen here.

In our story we hear Abinadi's words, as Alma remembered them. What we are left to imagine is what those two men were feeling during their public – but intensely private – conversation. I suspect that their feelings would have been focused on three things – and all three at once, with each of the feelings intensified by the power of the others. 1) Abinadi was bearing testimony of the Saviour in profoundly personal terms. Alma was feeling the power of that testimony, and his soul was being melted thereby. 2) Abinadi was explaining to Alma how he could become a child of God, and the Holy Ghost was teaching Alma that most important of all doctrines. 3) Abinadi loved Alma, and Alma loved Abinadi in return. That fact is only implied in the story, but it had to be there: because without the dynamics of that reciprocal love, the rest of the conversation could not have happened. So if one were going to try to envision that scene, it would probably be sufficient to discover it in the glow in the eyes of the old prophet, and the response on the face and in the eyes of the young prince.

Just when, in the story, that conversation between Abinadi and Alma became a personal and private exchange of ideas is impossible to tell. But at least by Mosiah 11:33 Abinadi had begun to help Alma understand who Jehovah really is. To do that, he again returned to calling Jehovah by his earlier name/title "El" – the name of the God of Abraham – in order to pull the young prince's mind

back in history to before the time when the covenant name "Jehovah" connoted the covenant he had made with Moses. He apparently did this to remind Alma that Moses understood that the principles of the gospel far predated the time when Moses received the Law.

- 33 For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah [Jehovah the anointed King], and that God ["El" Abraham's name for Jehovah] should redeem his people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began have they not spoken more or less concerning these things?
- 34 Have they not said that God himself [El] should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth?
- 35 Yea, and have they not said also that he should bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, and that he, himself, should be oppressed and afflicted?

Before we go on, we need to stop and consider the sentence, "For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people?" We need to ask, what did he mean by "redeem?"

The meaning of the word "Redeem."

The word "redeem" has a number of different meanings, and the place in the scriptures where one reads it has a great deal to do with what that meaning is. For example, the word "Redeemer" is found in all of the standard works except the New Testament. The reason it is not in the New Testament is that the Hebrew word translated "redeemer" does not have an equivalent concept in Greek. The words translated "redeem" from the Hebrew, and the words translated "redeem" from the Greek have slightly different meanings. Both are valid in their own context, they just mean slightly different things. The word "redeem" in the Book of Mormon employs both New and Old Testament meanings, but usually has a different meaning still — one that is almost unique to the

Book of Mormon. That meaning is implied in many places in the Old Testament, and is clearly expressed in one place in the Bible. That is the oldest use of the word "redeemer" anywhere in the scriptures.³⁷⁸ It is in the Book of Job:

For I know that my redeemer liveth,
and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:
And though after my skin worms destroy this body,
yet in my flesh shall I see God:
Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another;
though my reins be consumed within me. (Job 19:25-27)

From that reference in Job and from many such uses in the Book of Mormon, one can go back to the Bible, especially to the Psalms and Isaiah, and find many places where the words "redeem" or "Redeemer" are used in that same way. But without the Book of Mormon as a key, one would not know that the most important scriptural meaning of the words "redeem," and "Redeemer" has to do with one's coming into the presence of the Saviour. In the following pages we will discuss the different meanings of the word "redeem" and how they are used in the scriptures.

1. TO RANSOM

Strong's Hebrew dictionary,³⁷⁹ gives the Old Testament meaning as, to deliver, ransom, redeem, or rescue.

Strong's Greek dictionary gives the meaning as ransom, figuratively to rescue from loss or to improve opportunity, to redeem. Something to loosen with, i.e. a redemption price

³⁷⁸ The book of Job is believed by many to be the oldest book in the Old Testament. Assuming that is true, the use of the word "Redeemer" in Job would make that the oldest use of the word in the scriptures.

³⁷⁹ In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. # 6299.

The primary difference between the two is in who does the redeeming. In the Hebrew, the debt is paid by a brother or other relative, and the family relationship is a necessary part of the meaning. i.e. pay the debts of a brother to get him out of prison - marry the widow of a brother to take care of her and her family. The story of Ruth is an example. Boaz married Ruth according to his family rights to redeem her in her widowhood, because, as Naomi pointed out, he was their "kinsman." The word translated "kinsman" there is the same Hebrew word that is translated "Redeemer" in Job's "I know that my redeemer liveth." ³⁸¹ The word in both Ruth and Job suggest a family relationship. In Hebrew a "redeemer" is the member of the family who redeems the other person. In Greek, the meaning of the word carries no family ties, so the family member who acts as the "redeemer" is not a necessary part of the Greek concept. Consequently, the word "Redeemer" – meaning the family member – is not found in the New Testament.

2. To purchase

Redeem is also used in both the Old and the New Testaments to mean "to purchase" as one would purchase something in the market place.³⁸² Paul and others used this commercial term to explain the atonement, by saying that the Lord had ransomed or purchased us from the consequences of sin.

3. To bring one into the presence of God

³⁸⁰ In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. # 1805 and 3083.

³⁸¹ In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Hebrew # 1350.

³⁸² In the dictionary at the back of James Strong, ed., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Hebrew # 58.

The Book of Mormon uses the word redeem the same ways it is used in both the Old and the New Testaments, however it most frequently uses the word is in the way it is used in Job – to bring one back into the presence of God – and in those contexts it means the opposite of "second death," which is to be excluded from the presence of God. The "Redeemer," then, is the One who makes that return possible – He is the God to whom one first returns, before one returns to the Father. That apparently is the intended meaning of "Redeemer" in Isaiah, so it should not be a surprise to note that of the 17 other times the word "Redeemer" is used in the Old Testament, all but 4 are in Isaiah – who understood the meaning of the word firsthand. Nephi cherished Isaiah's words because he, like Nephi, had seen the Saviour. 383

If to be redeemed means to be brought into the presence of God, then the phrase "plan of redemption" as used in the Book of Mormon, means the plan whereby men and women can be brought back into God's presence, and has the same connotation as the frequently repeated phrase "come unto me," or "come unto Christ."

As Abinadi will point out, those who are redeemed, who are brought before the Saviour to be judged and who, by right, may stay in the presence of the gods forever – these are the ones whom Christ calls "my sons and my daughters" in a passage in Ether.

¹ And now, Jacob spake many more things to my people at that time; nevertheless only these things have I caused to be written, for the things which I have written sufficeth me.

² And now I, Nephi, write more of the words of Isaiah, for my soul delighteth in his words. For I will liken his words unto my people, and I will send them forth unto all my children, for he verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him.

³ And my brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him; wherefore, I will send their words forth unto my children to prove unto them that my words are true. Wherefore, by the words of three, God hath said, I will establish my word. Nevertheless, God sendeth more witnesses, and he proveth all his words. (2 Nephi 11:1-3)

- 13. And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are [present tense] redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are [present tense] brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you.
- 14. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. (Ether 3: 13-14)

Another example of the word "redeem" being used to mean to be brought into the presence of God is:

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

I am convinced that is one of the most important verses in the Book of Mormon, probably one of the most important in all the scriptures, because it defines the single most important doctrine of the gospel: By using the symbolism of an embrace it describes Christ's personal relationship with the righteous. In this verse there are a number of key words in addition to "redeemed." The entire concept is suspended on the past tense quality of the word "hath." For Lehi the redemption has occurred in his own past, but also continues as the vitality of his present, and the hope of his future.

To be redeemed, as Lehi used the word, means: "I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love." That is consistent with Job and many such testimonies in the Psalms, Isaiah, and the Book of Mormon, where to be redeemed means to be brought into the presence of the Saviour.

The final phrase in our verse, "and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love," is a reference to a physical embrace, a present and eternal token of friendship – a "hope" which will

mature until it changes the very nature of one's eternal being. (That, by the way, is the meaning of the word "hope," in Moroni 7.)

I believe that the concept and the realization of redemption are together the single most important doctrine of the gospel. It encompasses the power and meaning of the atonement and all of our eternal relationships with the Saviour – as a flower encompasses all of the promise of the seed that was planted and the stem and leaves that grew from that seed – and as that same flower is the promise its fruit which will produce other seeds, and prefigures life in perpetuity Redemption is the epitome of friendship, and the timeless light of all that is life.

Another Book of Mormon example is blessing to his son Jacob.

Nevertheless, Jacob, my first-born in the wilderness, thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain. Wherefore, thy soul shall be blessed, and thou shalt dwell safely with thy brother, Nephi; and thy days shall be spent in the service of thy God. wherefore, I know that thou art redeemed [present tense], because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer; for thou hast beheld [past tense] that in the fullness of time he cometh to bring salvation unto men. And thou hast beheld in thy youth his glory; wherefore, thou blessed even as they unto whom he shall minister in the flesh; the Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And the is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free. (2 Nephi 2:2-4)

Again, the power of the concept is in the tense of the verb: "I know that thou art redeemed." A third example is Nephi, writing about himself, his brother Jacob, and Isaiah.

And now I, Nephi, write more of the words of Isaiah, for my soul delighteth in his words. For I will liken his words unto my people, and I will send them forth unto all my children, for he verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him. And my brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him; wherefore, I will send their words forth unto my children to prove unto them that my words are true. Therefore, by the words of three, God hath said, I will establish my word. Nevertheless, God sendeth more witnesses, and he proveth all his words. (2 Nephi 11:2-3)

Other examples are:

Nephi and many others:

I glory in plainness; I glory in truth; I glory in my Jesus, for he hath redeemed my soul from hell [past tense]. I have charity for my people, and great faith in Christ that I shall meet many souls spotless at his judgment-seat. (2 Nephi 33:6-7)

Alma

And it came to pass after they had fasted and prayed for the space of two days and two nights, the limbs of Alma received their strength, and he stood up and began to speak unto them, bidding them to be of good comfort: For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord [past tense]; behold I am born of the Spirit. And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. I say unto you, unless this be the case, they must be cast off; and this I know, because I was like to be cast off. Nevertheless, after wading through much tribulations, repenting nigh unto death, the Lord in mercy hath seen fit to snatch me out of an everlasting burning, and I am born of God. My soul hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was racked with eternal torment; but I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more. (Mosiah 27:23-28)

More examples of "redeem" meaning to be brought into the presence of God are: Jacob 6:8-9, Mosiah 26:21-28, Alma 13:1-6, Alma 19: 6-14, Alma 36:22-26, Alma 58:41, Helaman 8: 22-23, Helaman 14:15-19, Mormon 9:12-14, Moroni 7:2-4, D&C 43:29-30, D&C 88:14-32, D&C 138:58-60, and, of course, one must include the Lord's promise to Everyman and Everywoman in D&C 93:1.

Abinadi's entire argument rests upon the importance of one's becoming a son or daughter of God. In that context, then, one may assume that in his statement, "For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people?" he is using word "redeem" to mean to be brought into the presence of God, and to teach Alma that one must become a child of Christ.

If the whole plan of salvation were reduced to a single sentence, the first part of the sentence would be about the Saviour's atonement, but the ending would be "that one might return and remain in the presence of God." When Adam was taught the meaning of sacrifice, the Holy Ghost brought him a message from the Saviour:

And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will."

Adam understood the full impact of "thou mayest be redeemed," and said,

Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God. (Moses 5: 9-10)

It is significant to me that this relationship was emphasized by the Saviour in the Beatitudes. In that summation of the plan of salvation we read:

Blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. (3 Nephi 12: 8-9)

Having talked with Alma about the plan of redemption, Abinadi did not immediately continue his explanation of the scripture which the priests had challenged him, rather he continued their citation by quoting the next chapter of Isaiah's words. He will return to the original citation later on, but he will use Isaiah 53 to establish its context.

Mosiah, chapter 14, Abinadi quotes Isaiah 53.

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

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

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

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

1 Nephi 22

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

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

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

Psalm 98

- 1 O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.
- 2 The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.
- 3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

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

Job 40

- 3 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,
- 4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.
- 5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. 6 Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ...
- 9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?
- 10 Deck [dress] thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty. ...
- 14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.
- 1 Then Job answered the Lord, and said,
- 5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. (Job 40:
- 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14; 42: 1, 5)

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

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

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

Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.
Gird thy sword upon thy thigh,

O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible [awesome] things. (Psalm 45: 2 - 4)

Psalm 48 associates that idea with the temple:

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

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

Some years ago, in a fast and testimony meeting, my friend and neighbor Ellis Rasmussen walked up to the microphone and said, "I have a friend whose name was Isaiah, and today I would like to bear you his testimony." Ellis then read Isaiah 53, the same passage that Abinadi quoted. Ellis is one of the Church's best Old Testament scholars. He was Dean of Religion at BYU and senior editor, under Elder McConkie, of the project which brought us the new addition of the LDS scriptures. As he concluded reading Isaiah's testimony, I listened intently to hear what he would say about it, but all he said was something like this: "This is my testimony also," and then he sat down. I have sat in lots of testimony meetings, but I do not recall a testimony which moved my soul more than that one. Now I find myself confronted with Ellis' dilemma. How can I say more than Isaiah said? I cannot, so I only echo Ellis' "This is my testimony also."

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

- 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him.
 - 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
 - 4 Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
 - 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
 - 6 All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.
 - 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth.
 - 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people was he stricken.
 - 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no evil, neither was any deceit in his mouth.
 - 10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.
 - 11 He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.
 - 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Mosiah 14:1-12)

As noted above, John wrote, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." (John 12: 41) I believe that may also be said of the author of Psalm 22. Whenever I read one, I do it in light of the other. But even though Psalm 22 was the New Year festival's testimony of the

Saviour's atonement, it would not have served Abinadi's purpose so well as this passage of Isaiah.

For Isaiah not only talks about the Saviour's atonement, he also ties that to the most important matter of all: "who shall declare his generation ... when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed."

Abinadi's whole purpose has been to define what constitutes a legitimate heir – one who may become a king or queen – one who, as the Saviour said, "shall become my sons and my daughters." (Ether 3:14) Abinadi now explains the Isaiah chapter by addresses that question directly.

Mosiah chapter 15

The first eight verses of Mosiah 15 are considered by many to be some of the most difficult to understand in the Book of Mormon. It is the problem I mentioned earlier about using already established religious language to teach new gospel principles. In this instance it is the question of how the "Father" and the "Son" may be "One God." The difficulty arises, not from the statement itself, but from the context in which some people read it. When they read it in terms of the Trinity – three in one, one in three – it sounds like the Trinity, but when it is read in the context of Abinadi's understanding of God, then, not only does it make perfect sense, but it becomes one of the most sublime, profound, and relevant statements in all the scriptures. If I were asked to name ten passages of scripture which were my "favorites," this statement by Abinadi would have to be among those ten.

Paul offers a good introduction to what Abinadi was trying to explain. In Hebrews, he defines the

Psalms as one would define the earthly king of Israel – with one major change – here it is the Eternal Father who declares the Saviour's kingship by using the words in Psalm 2; and then declares his priesthood by using the words of Psalm 110.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. [That's the quote from Psalm 2]

6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. [that's the quote from Psalm 110]

7 Who [the Saviour] in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him [Elohim] that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; (Hebrews 5: 4 - 9)

The relationship between the Saviour and his Father is described in the scriptures in terms of love, trust, and covenant, as is attested by many, if not most, of our accounts of events in the Council in Heaven.

And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: ... But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me——Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." (Moses 4:1-2)

Also Paul,

That we should be to the praise of his [the Father's] glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which [sealing] is the earnest [covenant of intent] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1: 12 - 14)

The Saviour's own description of that relationship far more explicit.

- 32 And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me; and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me.
- 33 And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.
- 34 And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.
- 35 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost.
- 36 And thus will the Father bear record of me, and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one. (3 Nephi 11:32-36)

Perhaps the best example of that relationship is found in the story of the children in Third Nephi.

- 14 And it came to pass that when they had knelt upon the ground, Jesus groaned within himself, and said: Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel.
- 15 And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him.
- 16 And after this manner do they bear record: The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father:
- 17 And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.
- 18 And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome.
- 19 And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them, and bade them arise.

- 20 And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.
- 21 And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.
- 22 And when he had done this he wept again;
- 23 And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.
- 24 And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them. (3 Nephi 17:14-24)

Again I remember the Prophet's poetic version of D&C 76.

And I heard a great voice bearing record from heav'n, He's the Saviour and only begotten of God; By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made, Even all that career in the heavens so broad.

Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,
Are sav'd by the very same Saviour of ours;
And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons
By the very same truths and the very same powers.³⁸⁴
That statement ends all discussion about whether the decisions of the Council applied to only this earth or to the entire system, just as it ends any discussion about whether Christ is the Saviour of this world only, or of all the worlds which "career in the heavens so broad."

Abinadi's recital of Isaiah 53 is bracketed by his introduction: "Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of a man," (Mosiah 13:34) and by his summation: "God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people." (Mosiah 15:1) Abinadi was moved by the pain and the love epitomized in the act of the atonement, and he tried to explain that in terms that would be most immediately

³⁸⁴ *Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1843. The poem is more fully quoted above.

applicable to the life of the young prince with whom he was speaking.

Let me emphasize again, that what I am writing is only supposition on my part. I am not so much trying to interpret the scripture as I am trying to understand it. My question is: Why did Abinadi choose these ideas as the most important concepts he could teach to young Alma in the short time they had together? I have an answer to that question that satisfies me – one that I actually like a great deal – but I do not pretend that I have any kind of evidence to show that the answer is correct. So, for only what its worth, here is the supposition:

Abinadi had only recently been at the Council (*sode*), and there he had not only learned about his own final mission, but he had also learned who Alma was – that Alma had been a member of the Council and had made covenants regarding his earthly assignments. Abinadi knew what Alma's assignments were, and why it was worth Abinadi's pain and horrid death just so he could have a few minutes' opportunity to teach that boy. The young man Alma, on the other hand, did not know any of those things. He had grown up in a culture that taught him to deny who he really was and why he was here. Abinadi's responsibility was to shake Alma loose from that culture and teach him that he must now learn to be a prophet. To do that, Abinadi chose to liken Alma's pre-mortal covenants and earthly assignment to the Saviour's. Abinadi talked only about the Saviour's, and left it to the Holy Ghost to help Alma interpret that in terms of his own life and responsibilities. As is true with each of us, the man Jesus was a composite – spiritual person in a physical body. But quite unlike the rest of us, Jesus' spirit was Jehovah, who was, is, and always will be God. Nonetheless, as a human being, his mortal ego had to learn to bend to the will of his eternal Self. Abinadi first spoke of Jehovah as "El," – the supreme head of the Council, the creator God, the Father of heaven

and earth, God of Abraham – and said that he would come to the earth as a man, subject to pain like other men. Abinadi taught that the man Jesus would keep the covenants which he, as the God Jehovah, had made with his Father before the Council. He would describe the tension between premortal spirit Jehovah and the mortal Jesus. He taught Alma that the atonement happened because the spirit of Jehovah dominated the life of the man Jesus – just as the spirit of the pre-mortal-covenant/prophet Alma must come to dominate the life of the mortal Alma, so that Alma could keep the covenants he had made with his Father at the Council. In achieving that end, I believe Abinadi reduced one of the most profound concepts of all eternity to only a few sentences, and in so doing created one of the most profound statements in all the scriptures.

An important key to understanding what Abinadi is about to say is the idea that Jehovah is not just the King of Israel, but is the nation's Father, just as he is the Father of all things, both in heaven and in earth. Isaiah taught, "thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting. (Isaiah 63:16 b) That is important to our discussion because Abinadi will use that concept to describe Jehovah as "the Father." In order for me to read it to you the way I believe it should be read, I will have to insert some changes in the text. While I believe those insertions are valid, I do not believe I have the right to make them without giving you ample warning. So this is what I would like to do. I want to quote that passage exactly as it is in the Book of Mormon, then quote it again, telling you how I believe Abinadi intended Alma to hear it.

- 1 And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.
- 2 And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—
- 3 The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—

- 4 And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.
- 5 And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people.
- 6 And after all this, after working many mighty miracles among the children of men, he shall be led, yea, even as Isaiah said, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.
- 7 Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father. ³⁸⁵
- 8 And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men –

Now I will quote it again, with some insertions.

1 And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself

The word translated "God" here implies that Abinadi again used the word El rather than Jehovah, Once again bringing his hearer's minds back to the time before Moses, when Jehovah was worshiped as El. shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

"Redeem" in this context surely means to bring his people back into the presence of God – that is, to completely undo the effects of the Fall of Adam.

- 2 And because he [Jehovah] dwelleth in flesh he [Jehovah] shall be called the Son of God [Jesus], and having subjected the flesh [Jesus] to the will of the Father [Jehovah], being the Father [Jehovah] and the Son [Jesus] –
- 3 The Father [Jehovah], because he [first as Jehovah and then again as Jesus] was conceived by the power of God [Elohim]; and the Son [Jesus], because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father [Jehovah] and Son [Jesus] –

There are a number of sources from which Abinadi could have learned Jesus would be crucified. It was prophesied on the Brass Plates by the prophet Neum (1 Nephi 19:10), and Jacob had been shown by an angel. (2 Nephi 10:3, Jacob 6:9) We know Abinadi did not have access to Jacob's words on the original Small Plates of Nephi, but there is no reason to believe that copies had not been made, and that Abinadi may have had access to such a copy. One may also suppose, that Abinadi's reference to the crucifixion may have been a reference to Psalm 22 which is written as though it were a first person account of one's hanging on a cross. There is also the very real possibility that Abinadi was not quoting any secondary source, but that through vision he had a first hand knowledge of the Saviour's death, resurrection, and atonement.

- 4 And they [Jehovah/Jesus] are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.
- 5 And thus the flesh [Jesus] becoming subject to the Spirit [Jehovah], or the Son [Jesus] to the Father [Jehovah], being one God [Jehovah/Jesus], suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself [Jesus] to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people.
- 6 And after all this, after working many mighty miracles among the children of men, he [Jesus] shall be led, yea, even as Isaiah said, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he [Jesus] opened not his mouth.
- 7 Yea, even so he [Jesus] shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh [Jesus] becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son [Jesus] being swallowed up in the will of the Father [Jehovah].

There are few scriptures which touch my soul more deeply than that last verse. It exposes all the tensions: Jesus – his desire to remain with his friends and his natural aversion to physical pain on the one hand – and Jehovah – his covenantal love for his friends and his covenantal determination to perform the atonement on the other hand – and it was Jesus – not just Jehovah – who had to decide.

One of the reasons that scripture is so important to me is because it throws a burning light on each one of us – but one that only we ourselves can see. Perhaps the easiest way to describe that light is to try to conceptualize its effect on Alma.

Before he left his Heavenly Father's presence, he made covenants regarding his mission here and what he would do to fulfill that mission. What Paul wrote to the Thessalonians is true of Alma also: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the

truth." (2 Thessalonians 2:13) I suppose that choosing was not unique to Alma any more than it was unique to the Thessalonians. But it was as true of him as of them. No doubt he also was "beloved"; and also "from the beginning chosen." But now, as a young, wealthy, no doubt popular prince, his memory is darkened by the world his physical eyes could see. Here his mind is be limited by earthly things and his body knows how to feel weariness and pain.

There was a time, before his memory fogged and his eyes and ears were closed, that he could look forward to this life and see purpose, necessity, and mission in it. It was then, when he was fully cognizant, that he made covenants about what he would do here. Now he had come to sit in judgement against Abinadi. And Abinadi had come to answer his questions and give credence to the things the Spirit would teach him about himself. Now, the Alma who sits in the king's council must seek to become subjugated to the Alma who sat in the Council among the gods. If he can achieve that quality of freedom, with the tutelage of the Holy Ghost, he will acquire the power to fulfill the covenants he made when he fully understood. The will of his present self must be swallowed up in the will of his past – and fully cognizant – pre-mortal Self.

The author of the Hymn of the Pearl understood that principle when he wrote the following description of a boy's recalling his eternal covenants. (I was going to quote just 3 or 4 lines of that poem, then it occurred to me that some of my friends who will read this may not have access to the entire text, so I will quote it all for their sake.) It is an ancient poem, reportedly recited my the apostle Thomas just before his death as recorded in the apocryphal "Acts of Thomas." ³⁸⁶

This typed copy has my additions in brackets, also, I have removed some punctuation such as <> without indicating that I have done so. There are many translations of the Hymn of the Pearl. The one I quote here is from: Hdgar Hennecki (Edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher, English translation edited by R. McL. Wilson), *New Testament Apocrypha, Writings Relating to the Apostles; Apocalypses and Related Subjects*, Vol. 2, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, p. 498-504.

"The HYMN of the PEARL"

- When I was a little child And dwelt in my kingdom, the house of my father,
- 2 And enjoyed the wealth and the luxuries Of those who brought me up,
- From the East, our homeland,

[the "east" is the place from which the sun rises. It is heaven.] My parents provisioned and sent me;

- 4 And from the wealth of our treasury They had already bound up for me a load.
- 5 Great it was, but so light That I could carry it alone:
- 6 Gold from Beth 'Ellaye And silver from great Gazak
- 7 And chalcedonies of India And opals of the realm of Kushan.
- 8 And they girded me with adamant,

Which crushes iron.

[some scholars suggest adamant may be diamond]

- 9 And they took off from me the splendid robe Which in their love they had wrought for me,
- 10 And the purple toga,

Which was woven to the measure of my stature,

[That it was woven to fit him becomes important later on]

11 And they made with me a covenant

And wrote it in my heart, that I might not forget:

[That the covenant is written in his heart is also important later]

"If thou go down to Egypt

And bring the one pearl

[Many scholars believe the pearl is the boy himself]

Which is in the midst of the sea,

In the abode of the loud-breathing Serpent,

[some translations say "dragon."]

- 14 Thou shalt put on again thy splendid robe And thy toga which lies over it,
- 15 And with thy brother, our next in rank, Thou shalt be heir in our kingdom."
- I quitted the East and went down, Led by two couriers,
- 17 For the way was dangerous and difficult And I was very young to travel it.
- I passed over the borders of Mesene, The meeting-place of the merchants of the East,
- 19 And reached the land of Babel, And entered in to the walls of Sarburg.
- 20 I went down into Egypt
 And my companions parted from me.
- I went straight to the serpent, Near by his abode I stayed,
- 22 Until lie should slumber and sleep, That I might take my pearl from him.
- 23 And since I was all alone

I was a stranger to my companions of my hostelry.

[note: he was all alone, not because there were no other people, but because he was not like the other people]

- 24 But one of my race I saw there, A nobleman out of the East,
- 25 A youth fair and lovable,
- An anointed one,
 And he came and attached himself to me
- 27 And I made him my intimate friend, My companion to whom I communicated my business.
- We warned each other against the Egyptians

And against consorting with the unclean.

- 29 But I clothed myself in garments like theirs, That they might not suspect that I was come from without
- To take the pearl,
 And so might waken the serpent against me.
- 31 But from some cause or other They perceived that I was not their countryman,
- And they dealt with me treacherously And gave me to eat of their food.
- And I forgot that I was a king's son And served their king.
- And I forgot the pearl For which my parents had sent me.
- And because of the heaviness of their food I fell into a deep sleep.
- And all this that befell me
 My parents observed and were grieved for me.
- And a proclamation was published in our kingdom That all should come to our gate,
- The kings and chieftains of Parthia And all the great ones of the East.
- They made a resolve concerning me, That I should not be left in Egypt,
- And they wrote to me a letter And every noble Set his name thereto:
- 41 "From thy father, the king of kings, And thy mother, the mistress of the East,
- And from thy brother, our other son, To thee, our son in Egypt, greeting!
- Awake and rise up from thy sleep,

 [You have heard those words before]

And hearken to the words of our letter.

Remember that thou art a son of kings.
See the slavery -- Him whom thou dost serve!

- 45 Remember the pearl For which thou didst journey into Egypt
- 46 Remember thy splendid robe, And think of thy glorious toga,
- That thou mayest put them on and deck thyself therewith, That thy name may be read in the book of the heroes
- And thou with thy brother, our crown prince, Be heir in our kingdom."
- 49 And the letter was a letter
 Which the king had sealed with his right hand
- Against the wicked, the people of Babel And the rebellious demons of Sarburg.
- It [the letter, which is the endowment] flew in the form of an eagle, The king of all birds,
- 52 It flew and alighted beside me And became all speech.
- At its voice and the sound of its rustling
 I awoke and stood up from my sleep, [note those words]
- I took it and kissed it, Broke its seal and read.
- And even as it was engraven in my heart Were the words of my letter written.

[He knew it was true because it was the same as the covenant which had been written on his heart in the pre-mortal existence.]

- I remembered that I was a son of kings And my noble birth asserted itself.
- I remembered the pearl For which I was sent to Egypt,

- And I began to cast a spell
 On the terrible loud-breathing serpent.
- I brought him to slumber and sleep By naming my father's name over him,
- And the name of our next in rank
 And of my mother, the queen of the East.
- And I snatched away the pearl
 And turned about, to go to my father's house.
- And their dirty and unclean garment I took off and left in their land,
- And directed my way that I might come To the light of our homeland, the East.
- And my letter, my awakener, I found before me on the way;
- As with its voice it had awakened me, So it led me further with its light,
- Written on Chinese tissue with ruddle,

 [fine paper with gold lettering]

 Gleaming before me with its aspect
- And with its voice and its guidance Encouraging me to speed,
- And drawing me with its love.
- I went forth, passed through Sarburg, Left Babel on my left hand
- And came to the great city
 Mesene, The haven of the merchants,
- Which lies on the shore of the sea.
- And my splendid robe which I had taken off, And my toga with which it was wrapped about,
- 73 From the heights of Hyrcania My parents sent thither

- 74 By the hand of their treasurers, Who for their faithfulness were trusted therewith.
- 75 Indeed I remembered no more its dignity, For I had left it in my childhood in my father's house,
- But suddenly, when I saw it over against me,
 The splendid robe became like me, as my reflection in a mirror;
- I saw it wholly in me, And in it I saw myself quite apart from myself,
- 78 So that we were two in distinction And again one in a single form.

[That is, he sees himself as two people in one. There is the person who had the experiences on the earth, and the person of glory whom he was, is, and will be. These two come together to make the one person which is his total Self.]

- And the treasurers too
 Who had brought it to me, I saw in like manner,
- That they were two of a single form,

 For one sign of the king was impressed upon them,
- [There is a tear in the original manuscript here so it cannot be read. Apparently it says, referring to the king,]

 He who restored to me through them

 my pledge [covenant] and my riches,
- My splendid robe adorned Gleaming in glorious colours,
- With gold and beryls, Chalcedonies and opals,
- And sardonyxes of varied colour, This also made ready in its grandeur,
- And with stones of adamant Were all its seams fastened.
- And the likeness of the king of kings
 Was completely embroidered all over it

 [That is important. The robe (the inner garment) had symbols on it
 which represented the boy's being like God.]

- And like stones of sapphire again in its Grandeur resplendent with manifold hues.
- And again I saw that all over it The motions of knowledge were Stirring.
- And I saw too
 That it was preparing as for speech.
- 90 I heard the sound of its songs Which it whispered at its descent:
- 91 "I belong to the most valiant servant, For whom they reared me before my father,
- And I perceived also in myself
 That my stature grew according to his labours."

 [While the boy was wallowing in the muck of this world, the robe had to grow so it would still be able to fit the boy when he returned.

 His experiences on earth were the source of this growth.]
- And with its royal movements
 It poured itself entirely toward me,
- And in the hands of its bringers It hastened, that I might take it;
- And my love also spurred me
 To run to meet it and receive it,
- 96 And I stretched out and took it.
 With the beauty of its colours I adorned myself.
- 97 And my toga of brilliant colours I drew completely over myself.
- I clothed myself with it and mounted up To the gate of greeting and homage.
- 99 I bowed my head and worshipped
 The splendour of the father
 who had sent the robe to me,
- Whose commands I had accomplished, As he also had done what he promised.

- 101 And at the gate of his satraps I mingled among his great ones.
- For he rejoiced over me and received me, And I was with him in his kingdom.
- 103 And with the sound of the organ All his servants praise him.
- And he promised me that to the gate
 Of the king of kings I should journey with him again
- And with my gift and my pearl With him appear before our king.

Some scholars say that the language of the Hymn of the Pearl suggests it may date to about the time of Abraham. Whoever the author was, he knew more about the ancient temple ceremony and the message it teaches than I may ever know. The parts I would have quoted, if I only quoted part, deals with the boy's response when he received his earthly endowment in the form of a letter that contained the words of the covenant that had been written in his heart before he left his pre-mortal home:

- And even as it was engraven in my heart Were the words of my letter written.
- I remembered that I was a son of kings And my noble birth asserted itself.

That is what Abinadi was saying about Jesus: "His noble birth asserted itself": "the will of the Son [Jesus] being swallowed up in the will of the Father [Jehovah]." And I suppose, that was message which he most wished Alma to hear. At that critical time and in that hostile environment, Alma's

pre-mortal "noble birth asserted itself," he listened to the prophet and put his life on the line when he spoke out to defend the good old man. In doing so, he began to sever the ties which bound his Self to his earthly environment, and began to become the man he had covenanted to be.

The Saviour taught the same principle to the Nephites. In four powerfully succinct statements he defined the gospel, the law, the commandment, and the gospel again. His first definition of the gospel is: "I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me." I have used full caps to show the breaks in the subjects, and put the parts in italics which reflect that idea. The full passage reads:

- 3 BEHOLD I HAVE GIVEN YOU MY GOSPEL, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.
 - 14 And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil —
 - 15 And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.
 - 16 And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.
 - 17 And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.
 - 18 AND THIS IS THE WORD which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words.
 - 19 And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their

faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

20 NOW THIS IS THE COMMANDMENT: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

21 Verily, verily, I say unto you, THIS IS MY GOSPEL; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do; (Nephi 27: 13 - 21. Full caps and italics added.)

His second definition of the gospel is a summation of the gospel, law, and commandment as he has just given them – but then he adds one more thing: "ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do" and what he did is this: "I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me."

The implications of the Saviour's last statement intrigues me. The first definition of the gospel is that he came to do the will of his Father because his Father sent him. A subset of that seems to be a second definition of gospel: which is that we also came do the will of the Father because our Father sent us. Before we continue with Abinadi's discussion of what constitutes a child and heir of God, there is another word which needs to be defined.

In this idea, I believe, one finds the flowering of an earlier one. For now there comes into focus a fuller meaning of the blessing which Elohim gave to the king in Palm 45.

And in thy majesty [sacral clothing] ride prosperously [in the presence of God] because of truth [knowing who one is, was, and will become] and meekness [keeping the covenants one made at the council] and righteousness [doing the right things, in the right time, with the right authority, saying the right words, and dressed the right way] and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible [awesome] things. (Psalm 45: 2 - 4 - italics added)

In the story of Abinadi and Alma, both characters display perfect meekness as that word is understood in the Psalms, the Beatitudes, and other scriptures. In his meekness, Abinadi stands defiantly before the king and knowing it will cost him his life, delivers his message to young Alma. Alma listened. There is no way of our knowing what he heard, to suggest he only understood the words which Abinadi spoke would strike me as incredibly simplistic. What he heard – what the Spirit taught him that Abinadi was really saying – was sufficient for him to accept as the prophet he would become, to defend Abinadi until he was forced from the room, then to hid himself while he preserved the words he had heard Abinadi speak. There was nothing modest or unassuming about either Abinadi's presence or Alma's response – but each were acting in strict conformity with the covenants they had made – each was at that moment a perfect personification of what the scriptures call "meek."

It is significant to me that of the scriptures which tell us most about the Council in heaven or the pre-mortal existence (for example: Psalm 45, 82; Eph 1; Alma 12-13; Abraham 3; Isaiah 6; 2 Ne 20; D&C 88, 93), only three contain the word "meek." In Alma 13 it is part of the admonitions which Alma gives his hearers following his discussion of their pre-mortal priesthood covenants; in Psalm 45 it is in the blessing given to the king – looking forward to the way he will conduct himself in this world; and in D&C 88 it is used to describe those who inherit the celestial world – but in no instance do they talk about the "meekness" of the noble and great ones as their characteristic in the pre-mortal world.

On the other hand, of the three major scriptures which describe the Saviour's visit to the world of spirits after his death, (Psalm 22, Isaiah 61, and D&C 138) the word "meek" is used to describe

those spirits in both the psalm and in Isaiah; while in D&C 138 those same people are called "the noble and great ones." (v. 55) The reason that is significant to me is because it is additional another evidence that in the scriptures, the word "meek" means those who, while in this world, keet the covenants they made at the Council in Heaven.

Do not misunderstand my focusing on Abinadi's relationship with Alma to suggest I am down playing what Abinadi was saying about the Saviour. It is just that I believe that Abinadi was willing to die in exchange for the few minute he had to deliver his message to the young prince, and even though the written story does not tell us much about how Alma heard that message, I believe that question is well worth exploring – even if the place where one can find the answers is limited to the confines of one's own imagination. Abinadi did not have time to deliver a long discourse on the importance of the covenants one made at the Council in Heaven; and he did not have time to deliver a long discourse on the relevance of the Saviour's life and atonement to one's keeping those covenants. He literally had to deliver both messages by speaking the same sentences. It was a double entente whose sub-text only Alma was intended to hear. That he heard it is evinced by the way he wrote it; that he understood its importance is evinced by the fact that he wrote it so others could hear it too

Now that we have tried to explore that sub-text, let us return to Abinadi's words and read them only as a testimony of the life and death of the Saviour. Abinadi's description of the tensions between the pre-mortal God Jehovah and the mortal man Jesus – the struggle between his spirit Self and his physical Self – is a beautiful revelation about the nature of Christ,

1 And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

- 2 And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son –
- 3 The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son –
- 4 And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.
- 5 And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people.
- 6 And after all this, after working many mighty miracles among the children of men, he shall be led, yea, even as Isaiah said, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.
- 7 Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father.
- 8 And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men –
- 8 And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men –
- 9 Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.

Lehi also understood the importance of Christ's intercession for man. Here he explains, as Abinadi said, that we will be redeemed – brought into the presence of God – by virtue of that intercession.

- 9 Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved.
- 10 And because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him. Wherefore, the ends of the law which the Holy One hath given, unto the inflicting of the punishment which is affixed, which punishment that is affixed is in opposition to that of the happiness which is affixed, to answer the ends of the atonement. (2 Nephi 2: 9 10)

The prayer of the atonement is not given in the New Testament but is found in the 45th section of the

- 1 Hearken, O ye people of my church, to whom the kingdom has been given; hearken ye and give ear to him who laid the foundation of the earth, who made the heavens and all the hosts thereof, and by whom all things were made which live, and move, and have a being.
- 2 And again I say, hearken unto my voice, lest death shall overtake you; in an hour when ye think not the summer shall be past, and the harvest ended, and your souls not saved.
- 3 Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him –
- 4 Saying: Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified;
- 5 Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.

If I am correct that Abinadi's discussion of the Saviour contained a subtext which was designed to help Alma understand himself, what he said next was not just the next logical step in the young man's education, it was the next *necessary* step. Given that Abinadi then understood that Alma wished to fulfill his covenantal responsibilities, the next question must be, "How does one become an heir – a son of God?

10 And now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? Behold, I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed. And now what say ye? And who shall be his seed?

11 Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord – I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God.

There you have it. Those who are anointed to become sacral kings and queens, priests and priestesses are those who believe the prophets, believe that the Lord will redeem his people, and

live their lives to that end – "they are the heirs of the kingdom of God."

12 For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed?

13 Yea, and are not the prophets, every one that has opened his mouth to prophesy, that has not fallen into transgression, I mean all the holy prophets ever since the world began? I say unto you that they are his seed.

14 And these are they who have published peace, who have brought good tidings of good, who have published salvation; and said unto Zion: Thy God reigneth!

15 And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!

For the young prince, Abinadi had just moved the sacred emblems of the Ark of the Covenant from under the feet of an unworthy monarch, and made them the foundation of Alma's own sacral kingship and priesthood. I am not suggesting that at this early stage Alma understood all about what his assignment was going to be – but I am suggesting that by this time Alma understood that he had made sacred covenants, and that Abinadi's statement was designed to teach him about the absolute authority by which he would ultimately act. (If that is so, the prophecy was correct, for Alma would become both king and priest to his people.)

While Abinadi's words were addressed to Alma, Alma's writing them was for the sake of whomever could read them. It is another testimony of what one finds in D&C 132, which may be described as primarily being about how to become a king and queen, and which says of Abraham that he "hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne." Later it says,

For I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father." (D&C 132: 29, 49)

As far as I can tell, "O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!" and "sitteth upon his throne" say precisely the same thing. Abinadi's words continue:

16 And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that are still publishing peace!

17 And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who shall hereafter publish peace, yea, from this time henceforth and forever!

Abinadi has now established that the throne – i.e. that of sacral kingship and priesthood – are the rights of all those who are sons and daughters of Christ and adopted heirs of Elohim through the atonement of his Son. These are the rights which belong to the prophets and those who heed the words of the prophets. Abinadi did not say that precluded frightened king Noah, only that Noah e was not exempt from the same standards as everyone else. Everything about the drama of the temple coronation rites insisted that the earthly king must not only meet those standards but he must be the epitome of their perfection. Abinadi's accusative reading of the Ten Commandments had shown that in the eyes of this prophet, king Noah and his priests had been weighed on the balance of that criteria and found wanting.

In the correct order of things no royal authority is autonomous: kings report to Kings; gods report to Gods; the Council reportes to Jehovah; Jehovah to Elohim. As the Lord explained to Abraham,

These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all." (Abraham 3:19)

So it was not only appropriate, but necessary that Abinadi who spoke in behalf of the Council, should insist that this earthly king was subject to his eternal King.

- 18 And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people;
- 19 For were it not for the redemption which he hath made for his people, which was prepared from the foundation of the world [at the Council], I say unto you, were it not for this, all mankind must have perished.
- 20 But behold, the bands of death shall be broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead.

It is significant *here* that Abinadi did not refer to his God as "El" or "Jehovah," but as "the Son." Abinadi's whole sermon has been devoted to the clarification of the rights of sonship. And at this point Abinadi's purpose seems to have been to teach the young prince that he, as *a son*, must be entirely subservient to God, as *the Son*.

21 And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ – for so shall he be called.

The word Abinadi used was probably the Hebrew "Messiah," which means the anointed one. The Greek word which is translated in the New Testament "Christ" means the same thing. When Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, either word would probably have been correct, but "Messiah" would have called to the reader's mind the pre-mortal Jehovah of the Old Testament, while "Christ" pushes the reader's mind to the resurrected Saviour of the New Testament – which is apparently precisely what Joseph wished to do.

- 22 And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection.
- 23 They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them [brought them into his presence]; thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death.

Abinadi's next statement is a declaration of the eternal constancy of God's criteria for the salvation

of mankind, and the hope extended to those who were died in ignorance of the Saviour and his atonement.

24 And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord.

25 And little children also have eternal life.

Unless Abinadi was speaking from personal revelation, there appears to be only one obvious way to account for verse 24's "and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them." That is, that Abinadi knew and understood the meaning of Isaiah 61 and the last half of Psalm 22 – both of which testify that the Saviour will visit the dead, and provide a way for those who have not heard the gospel to hear it then.

Apparently this promise of salvation being available to those who repent after death brought Abinadi's mind back to his original audience. Having established the criteria upon which all men and women will be judged, Abinadi unabashedly told Noah and his priests that if they and their people did not meet that criteria in this life, they would all go to hell.

26 But behold, and fear, and tremble before God, for ye ought to tremble; for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection.

27 Therefore ought ye not to tremble? For salvation cometh to none such; for the Lord hath redeemed none such; yea, neither can the Lord redeem such; for he cannot deny himself; for he cannot deny justice when it has its claim.

After delivering that short message, Abinadi returned to the scripture with which they had first confronted him. He had answered their question about the meaning of the second part of the

scripture which began, "How beautiful upon the mountain..."

- 22 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion;
- 23 Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem;
- 24 The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God?

The Saviour answered that same question. Before we read Abinadi's answer, we should read the Saviour's, and then compare them.

3 Nephi 20: 30-46

When the Saviour was in America, on his second day (which corresponds to the Great Feast or final day of the New Year festival coronation rites) he delivered an address to the multitude in which he paraphrased the same Isaiah text that Abinadi used here. If one wishes to understand what Abinadi is trying to say, it seems to me that one must begin by examining the Saviour's rearrangement of that text, and his commentary on it. His words read:

- 29 And I will remember the covenant which I have made with my people; and I have covenanted with them that I would gather them together in mine own due time, that I would give unto them again the land of their fathers for their inheritance, which is the land of Jerusalem, which is the promised land unto them forever, saith the Father.
- 30 And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fulness of my gospel shall be preached unto them;
- 31 And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name.
- 32 Then shall their watchmen lift up their voice, and with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye.
- 33 Then will the Father gather them together again, and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.

- 34 Then shall they break forth into joy Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.
- 35 The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one.
- 36 And then shall be brought to pass that which is written: Awake, awake again, and put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.
- 37 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.
- 38 For thus saith the Lord: Ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed without money.
- 39 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people shall know my name; yea, in that day they shall know that I am he that doth speak.
- 40 And then shall they say: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings unto them, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth!
- 41 And then shall a cry go forth: Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch not that which is unclean; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.
- 42 For ye shall not go out with haste nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel shall be your rearward.
- 43 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.
- 44 As many were astonished at thee his visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men –
- 45 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.
- 46 Verily, verily, I say unto you, all these things shall surely come, even as the Father hath commanded me. Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people be fulfilled; and then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people, and it shall be the land of their inheritance. (3 Nephi 20:29-46)

The story and message told in the sacred sub-text of the Book of Mormon is its sacred

space. There is a linguistic veil which separates the surface story which can be read by any literate person, from its temple sub-text. But while everything about that surface story invites one to discover its veil and learn its sacred language, the encoded story and message can only be read within the context of the legitimate functions of a ancient Israelite temple. I would like to go through that statement by the Saviour again – *not to interpret the sub-test* – but to point out some keys by which it may be read.

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

"Fullness" is a key word. It means "fullness," so must be read literally. As I have tried to point out before, I believe the surest and easiest way to read the sub-text of the scriptures is to assume the prophets knew all that the reader himself knows and a good deal more besides, so when one seeks to discover the temple context in which the prophet was writing, one must reach out to the very edge of his own understanding. Since there can be no "fullness" of the gospel where there is not also a knowledge of the temple, the phrase "fullness of the gospel" immediately tells one he has entered the sacred space of the Book of Mormon.

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

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

The next verse begins with the word "then." "Then" creates a causal relationship between the

prayer in verse 31 and what follows in verse 32. So the "then" tells us that the words which follow must either describe the results of the prayer, or else they must describe the method by which the prayer is said. In this case it appears to be the method.

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

The watchmen sing in unison. Now, given the context of the "fullness of the gospel" and "pray" one can easily recognize their song "together" as the ancient, sacred prayer circle, where words are spoken or sung in unison and where the movements of their dance are also in unison.³⁸⁷

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

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

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

And it came to pass that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in mighty prayer and fasting. And Jesus again showed himself unto

³⁸⁷ For further explanations of the ancient prayer circle see Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1992, 313-316; and papers in Donald W. Parry, ed. *Temples of the Ancient World*, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1994.

them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst ["midst" means center, as in the center of a circle] of them, and said unto them: What will ye that I shall give unto you? (3 Nephi 27:1-2).

Psalm 17 seems to be such a prayer. It asserts three times that the Lord will listen to one's voice.

I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. (Psalms 17:6)

Elder McConkie commented on those verses this way,

The Nephite Twelve 'were united in mighty prayer and fasting...They were praying unto the Father in the name of Jesus.' This is the perfect pattern for gaining revelation or whatever is needed. In this setting, the record says: "And Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said to them: What will ye that I shall give you?" 388

32b. for they shall see eye to eye.

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

For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God (Alma 36:26).

The Saviour's paraphrase of Isaiah continues:

- v. 33 Then will the Father gather them [the watchmen who participate in the prayer] together again, and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.
- v. 34a Then shall they break forth into joy Sing together [same idea], ye waste places [sacred spaces which had become profane, but now are sacred again] of Jerusalem; for the Father hath comforted his people, ["comfort" in Isaiah 61 references the coronation rites: wash, anoint, clothe, crown, and give a new name.]

34b. he hath redeemed Jerusalem. [To redeem is to bring back into the presence of God]

³⁸⁸ Bruce R. McConkie *The Promised Messiah*, p. 557-8.

- v. 35 The Father hath made bare his holy arm [That means exactly what it says]in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one.
- v. 36 And then shall be brought to pass that which is written: Awake, awake [You have heard those words spoken before]
- again, and put on thy strength ["Strength" connotes royal clothing], O Zion [Zion is the pure in heart]; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city ["Holy" means complete, nothing lacking], for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean [those who are not ceremonially cleansed].
- v. 37 Shake thyself from the dust [In the creation story, man is made from the dust of the earth.]; arise [One stands to make a covenant, as in 2 Kings 23:1-3], sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.[A covenant with God is an enabling power.]
- v. 38 For thus saith the Lord: Ye have sold yourselves for naught, and ye shall be redeemed [brought into the presence of God] without money.
- v. 39a Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people shall know my name;

Sometimes, as in the story of King Benjamin and his people, when one learns the name of Christ they also take that name upon themselves. In the scriptures, new names are so closely associated with new covenants, that the words "name" and "covenant" can often be interchanged without changing the meaning of the sentence, as I suppose in this instance, the phrase would carry a double meaning, and one of them would be the same concept as if it read, "that my people shall know my covenant."

39b. yea, in that day they shall know that I am he that doth speak.

As was true with Moses when he stood in the presence of God with and the fire of the burning bush separating them.³⁸⁹ One can only really know the name of God when he tells it himself. Only in sacred space, either symbolically or in fact, can one learn, first hand, the name of God.

v. 40 And then ["then" is the key word. Here it suggests after they are clothed and know the name] shall they say: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings unto them, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that publisheth salvation; [as in: "And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears." (3 Nephi 17:10).] that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth!

There is only one way and in one place (either symbolically or in fact) where one can know that

Above I discussed the shekinah (or "shekhina" or "shechinah" in the dictionary in the LDS Bible). It means The Presence and denotes the veil, light, or fire which separates man from God.

"Thy God reigneth!" That declaration can only be made with certainty by one who has been where God is.

- v. 41 And then shall a cry go forth: Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch not that which is unclean; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. ["The vessels of the Lord" are the cups, horns, and other implements used in the temple ordinances.]
- v. 42 For ye shall not go out with haste nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel shall be your rearward.
- v. 43 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.
- v. 44 As many were astonished at thee--his visage was so marred, more than any man [as in Psalms 22], and his form more than the sons of men--
- v. 45a So shall he sprinkle many nations;

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

- v. 45b. the kings [sacral kings] shall shut their mouths at him, [This could mean to stand in awe, listen rather than talk, or know how to keep a secret, probably the latter.] for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.
- v. 46a Verily, Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall surely come, even as the Father hath commanded me. Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people be fulfilled [see Moroni 10:28-34]; and then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people, [italics added]

"My people" are the covenant, initiated people who constitute Zion. "Zion are the pure in heart." They are the one's spoken of by the Saviour when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

v.46b. and it shall be the land of their inheritance. (3 Nephi 20:30-46).

Abinadi's explanation of the Isaiah passage is perfectly consistent with the Saviour's.

28 And now I say unto you that the time shall come that the salvation of the Lord shall be declared to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

- 29 Yea, Lord, thy watchmen shall lift up their voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.
- 30 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.
- 31 The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.
- 1 And now, it came to pass that after Abinadi had spoken these words he stretched forth his hand and said: The time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord; when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just.
- 2 And then shall the wicked be cast out, and they shall have cause to howl, and weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth; and this because they would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord; therefore the Lord redeemeth them not.
- 3 For they are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil.
- 4 Thus all mankind were lost; and behold, they would have been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state.
- 5 But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore, he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God.
- 6 And now if Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption.
- 7 And if Christ had not risen from the dead, or have broken the bands of death that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting, there could have been no resurrection.
- 8 But there is a resurrection, therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ.

The New Year festival drama founded the coronation rites on the understanding that the king's claim to his earthly throne was based on the belief that Jehovah himself had descended into the underworld, defeated death and hell, and to rescued the king, brought him back to the world of the living, and placed him on his temple throne. Abinadi not only asserts the reality of that restoration

to life, but also the reason for it.

9 He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death.

10 Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil –

11a If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness; "Who is his seed?" is the question Abinadi just asked. Then, striking an eternal contrast, Abinadi explains why neither king Noah, nor his priests, nor his people – unless they repent – can be legitimate heirs, for they cannot be called the children of the God of Light.

11b and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation, being delivered up to the devil, who hath subjected them, which is damnation –

12 Having gone according to their own carnal wills and desires; having never called upon the Lord while the arms of mercy were extended towards them; for the arms of mercy were extended towards them, and they would not; they being warned of their iniquities and yet they would not depart from them; and they were commanded to repent and yet they would not repent.

13 And now, ought ye not to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved?

14 Therefore, if ye teach the law of Moses, also teach that it is a shadow of those things which are to come –

15 Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father. Amen.

CHAPTER 17

1 And now it came to pass that when Abinadi had finished these sayings, that the king commanded that the priests should take him and cause that he should be put to death.

2 But there was one among them whose name was Alma, he also being a descendant of Nephi. And he was a young man, and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken, for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them; therefore he began to plead with the king that he would not be angry with Abinadi, but suffer that he might depart in peace.

- 3 But the king was more wroth, and caused that Alma should be cast out from among them, and sent his servants after him that they might slay him.
- 4 But he fled from before them and hid himself that they found him not. And he being concealed for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken.
- 5 And it came to pass that the king caused that his guards should surround Abinadi and take him; and they bound him and cast him into prison.
- 6 And after three days, having counseled with his priests, he caused that he should again be brought before him.
- 7 And he said unto him: Abinadi, we have found an accusation against thee, and thou art worthy of death.
- 8 For thou hast said that God himself should come down among the children of men; and now, for this cause thou shalt be put to death unless thou wilt recall all the words which thou hast spoken evil concerning me and my people.

Abinadi had made his point. It took three days for king Noah and his priests to come up with "an accusation against thee, and thou art worthy of death." The accusation they "found" was inadequate and absurd. At the beginning of this trial, they had tried to entrap him by getting him to speak treason mingled with blasphemy, to demonstrate that he was a false prophet. He had spoken treason, all right, by declaring the king to be an usurper of his own throne, but he had couched his declaration in terms that were legally unchallengeable. If they were going to murder him under cover of the law, they would have to invent an accusation. And that, of course, is what they did. In the New Year festival, God himself did not actually appear, but his presence was represented by a sacred box which contained emblematic representations of his Kingship and Priesthood. Abinadi had said God himself would come among men, but the festival only represented his presence as the a box – apparently upon those grounds they reasoned that Abinadi was worthy to die.

9 Now Abinadi said unto him: I say unto you, I will not recall the words which I have

spoken unto you concerning this people, for they are true; and that ye may know of their surety I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands.

10 Yea, and I will suffer even until death, and I will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you. And if ye slay me ye will shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day.

11 And now king Noah was about to release him, for he feared his word; for he feared that the judgments of God would come upon him.

12 But the priests lifted up their voices against him, and began to accuse him, saying: He has reviled the king. Therefore the king was stirred up in anger against him, and he delivered him up that he might be slain.

13 And it came to pass that they took him and bound him, and scourged his skin with faggots, yea, even unto death.

14 And now when the flames began to scorch him, he cried unto them, saying:

15 Behold, even as ye have done unto me, so shall it come to pass that thy seed shall cause that many shall suffer the pains that I do suffer, even the pains of death by fire; and this because they believe in the salvation of the Lord their God.

16 And it will come to pass that ye shall be afflicted with all manner of diseases because of your iniquities.

17 Yea, and ye shall be smitten on every hand, and shall be driven and scattered to and fro, even as a wild flock is driven by wild and ferocious beasts.

18 And in that day ye shall be hunted, and ye shall be taken by the hand of your enemies, and then ye shall suffer, as I suffer, the pains of death by fire.

19 Thus God executeth vengeance upon those that destroy his people. O God, receive my soul.

20 And now, when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by f ire; yea, having been put to death because he would not deny the commandments of God, having sealed the truth of his words by his death.