



BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<http://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

Calling and Election Made Sure, Explained in the Epistles of Peter

Author(s): LeGrand L. Baker and Stephen D. Ricks

Source: *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?: The Psalms in Israel's Temple Worship in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2011

Page(s): 679–691

Archived by permission of author, LeGrand L. Baker.

<http://www.legrandlbaker.org/>

In the Book of Mormon.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:22-27).

The peace the Savior gives is not a peace that the world understands. It is an empowerment.

**Calling and Election Made Sure,
Explained
in the Epistles of Peter**

As though to explain to Jim and others like him how this can be accomplished, the Apostle Peter testified that Christ is the Lamb whose sacrificial blood purifies, makes clean, and prepares one to come into the presence of his Father. Peter explained:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren,

see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:18-23).

In another place, Peter explained how it is done:

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have

Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship

obtained like precious faith [*pistis*.⁹⁰³] with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ: [like Mormon in Moroni 7, Peter addresses these words to temple worshipping Saints]

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:1-4).

In these verses, Peter has identified his audience as temple-worshipping Saints. He now tells what they must do after they leave the temple.⁹⁰⁴

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue;⁹⁰⁵ and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness [“reverence” in the LDS Bible footnote; one cannot hurt anyone or anything that one reveres];

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness;⁹⁰⁶ and to brotherly kindness charity.

⁹⁰³ A *pistis* is a covenant with the guarantee of fulfillment. For a more complete discussion, see the chapter called The Meaning of Faith—*pistis*.”

⁹⁰⁴ For a more complete discussion of 2 Peter, see the chapter called “A Meaning of “Hope.”

⁹⁰⁵ “In ancient thinking, ‘virtue’ was closely tied to what seemed ideal masculine qualities: toughness, courage, simplicity of life, loyalty, piety, and contempt for suffering and even death.” Steve Mason, “Did the Essenes Write the Dead Sea Scrolls?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 34, 6 (November/December 2008): 62.

⁹⁰⁶ In this verse, the King James Version uses the phrase “brotherly kindness,” but elsewhere in the New Testament that same Greek word is always translated as “brotherly love” which has a somewhat stronger connotation (Strong: Greek 5360 [first edition, 1894] reads: “**philadelphia**; *fraternal affection*: brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren.” [Emphasis is in original).

This is probably significant. Righteous masculine virtues include priesthood, extended brotherly love, and charity. In contrast, righteous women enjoy the focused yet overriding feminine virtue that has a more

In the Book of Mormon.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5-11).

In Peter's sequence, the first four steps are about what one does for one's Self: faith, virtue, knowledge, and temperance. The second four are about one's attitude toward others: patience, reverence, brotherly love, and charity.

In the Beatitudes, the Savior had now brought his audience to that same place within the veil where "peace" is a gift of the Spirit. To have peace while in this world is to be able to transcend sorrow. It is the same concept as "comfort" in Psalm 23. To be a peacemaker is to enable others to share that blessing. The Savior then said:

singular quality of charity than men have. In the eternities our Father's objective has always been to bring each of us back to him in the eternal family unit where friendship, love, and charity are the sealing power—timeless in both directions—and where each participates in the creation of endless lives "after their own image"—"as innumerable as the stars" in the heavens (D&C 132:30-31).

**9 And blessed [enjoying “the state of the gods”]
are all the peacemakers,
for they shall be called the children of God (3 Nephi 12:9).**

Inasmuch as most of the Beatitudes can be identified as snippets from the psalms or from Isaiah, one wonders which this Beatitude may have referenced. The answer seems to be the 37th Psalm. It is a promise of invulnerability to the righteous. It is also a perfect transition between the Beatitude that say:

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 (3 Nephi 12:8-9).

The words that create that transition are:

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. ...

22 For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. ...

29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

31 The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. ...

37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace (Psalm 37:11, 22-24, 29-31, 37).

The other candidate is Isaiah 52, which is also virtually overflowing with temple code:

7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good

In the Book of Mormon.

tidings, that publisheth peace [peacemaker]; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!⁹⁰⁷

8 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 (Isaiah 52:7-8).

The easiest way to visualize people seeing eye to eye is to see them standing in a circle. Here they are singing, or perhaps speaking in unison. This seems to be a reference to a pre-exilic prayer circle. That idea would fit with Nibley's pattern. He wrote, "It is because each prayer circle is a faithful reproduction of the celestial pattern that impulses can be transmitted from one to the other by all who are in a receptive state; the thoughts of those in the circle are concentrated as in a burning glass."⁹⁰⁸ Isaiah continues:

9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10 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 (Isaiah 52:9-10).

The phrase "the Lord hath made bare his holy arm" is apparently a reference to the expression of sacred fellowship shown in Psalm 45, "And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things," (v. 4) and Job 40, "Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee" (v.14).⁹⁰⁹

We get further insight into the meaning of this Beatitude in Mormon's great sermon in Moroni 7. It begins by Mormon's addressing his "beloved brethren" and declaring the authority by which he was "permitted to speak" these things. ("These things" are Book of Mormon code for the temple drama and teachings.) Then he identifies his audience as peacemakers:

2 And now I, Mormon, speak unto you, my beloved brethren; and it is by the

⁹⁰⁷ For a discussion of the meaning of this passage, see the chapter called, "Act 2, Scene 12: 'Establishing' the King's Feet."

⁹⁰⁸ Hugh Nibley, "The Early Christian Prayer Circle," *Mormonism and Early Christianity*, 69.

⁹⁰⁹ For a discussion of this topic, see Todd M. Compton, "The Handclasp and Embrace as Tokens of Recognition," *By Study and Also By Faith*, 1:611-42.

Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship

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 [present tense] the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained [past tense] 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.

4 And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable walk with the children of men (Moroni 7:2-4).

It appears that Mormon's sermon in Moroni 7 is a commentary on this Beatitude. The sermon begins by acknowledging his audience as those who walk peaceably with the children of men. It then teaches them what they must now do so they can reach the conclusion: "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" (Moroni 7:48). In his teaching, Mormon explains that faith, hope, and charity are the keys to attaining that end (We will discuss Moroni 7 in more detail below).

In the ancient temple drama of the Feast of Tabernacles, the day following the coronation was a great day of feasting and celebration, representing the time of eternal peace when Jehovah shall reign in heaven and on earth.

But in the Savior's Beatitudes, what follows the day of coronation is much closer to the reality of this world. He had also cited Psalm 25 and 37 to show that the meek were those who keep their eternal covenants. Now he reminds his audience that there is a burden—often a severe cost—to those who are the children of God. He said:

**10 And blessed [enjoying "the state of the gods"]
are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (3 Nephi 12:10).**

"For my name's sake" might be written "for the sake of the covenant." Because all new covenants are sealed with a new name, "name" and "covenant" can be interchanged in this sort of context without changing the meaning.

Here, he places persecution in juxtaposition with a second coronation ceremony. In verse three he had said, "Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Now he says, "And blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." These two statements suggest the

In the Book of Mormon.

ancient Israelite practice of anointing the heir apparent to become king, then later, after he had proven his worthiness, of anointing him again, this time as king.⁹¹⁰

**11 And blessed [enjoying “the state of the gods”]
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
(3 Nephi 12:11-12).**

The Savior had warned his apostles of the same thing:

- 1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.
- 2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.
- 3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.
- 4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you (John 16:1-4).

People who know—who really know—and who bear testimony of what they know, are often perceived by others to be very difficult, to be hypocritical, or even dangerous—men like the Savior, Abinadi, Nephi, the Prophet Joseph, and the local grocer who is not afraid to tell people about the restoration of the gospel. When the Spirit testifies to another person that someone is telling the truth, that leaves the other person with two options: he can repent, or refuse to repent. If he refuses to repent, then he is almost always driven by a need to prove he chose correctly. The only way to do that is to

⁹¹⁰ For a discussion of the practice of anointing a prince to become king, see the chapter called, “Act 2, Scene 2: Anointed to Become King.”

show that the prophet was not actually a prophet, and the most efficient way to do that is to show that the prophet does not have the power to protect himself—so the persecutions! Ultimately, in many cases, this brings about the murder of the prophet, whereupon the prophet seals his testimony with his blood, and the persecutors are left to their own means to try to settle for some sort of salvation outside the realms of truth and righteousness. But the salvation they find, like their own souls, is mostly darkness.

**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.
(3 Nephi 12:13)**

Some time ago LeGrand Baker wrote a short article that appeared in the *Ensign* called, “What does it Mean to be the ‘Salt of the Earth?’”⁹¹¹ In it he wrote the following:

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.

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

⁹¹¹ LeGrand L. Baker, “What does it mean to be the ‘salt of the earth’?” *Ensign* 29, 4 (April 1999): 53-54.

In the Book of Mormon.

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” (Leviticus 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 the way of offering a burnt offering” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, trans. Whiston, 1876, 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 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

Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship

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).

**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)**

The mandates found in both this charge and the preceding one, begin with the words, “I give unto you to be. ...” They are not a suggestion, but a commission that is part of the definition of one who has been anointed to be a sacral king. The previous commission “to be the salt of the earth” was a charge to teach those who were not yet a part of the kingdom. The present one, “to be the light of this people,” is a charge to fulfill one’s covenants with regard to the people of the Kingdom. It is about individual and communal friendships with each other and with God. “A city [Zion] that is set on a hill” was to be a place of sanctuary and peace. And while it is also a beacon toward which others might look, it is primarily the home of the pure in heart. Within Zion is a Temple, and within the Temple is the menorah, a “candlestick.”

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 menorah, the “candlestick” that was not a candlestick at all, but a lamp stand. It was shaped like a tree, which represented the tree of life whose three sets of branches lift toward heaven as in prayer, uttered 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 priests and kings. 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 that lights the way—the tree of life that invites one to come to the great multi-colored veil of Solomon’s Temple. It is a tree of anointing light.

The Savior asked, “Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel?” Then he responded to his own question. “Nay, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house.” His reference to a candlestick invites one’s mind into the Temple where

Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship

the great Menorah stood just outside the veil. Thus the “house” would be the Temple, where the Saints may come at will. He adds, “Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

It should be remembered that at this time he was speaking not just to the Twelve but to the entire congregation. The light of each was to enlighten and enhance the light of each other. This was a charge to bless and be blessed, to enlighten the enlightened, and to love those who exuded charity.

It did not create an exclusivity club among the elite, for it magnified, rather than negated, the charge to be the salt of the earth. The Lord gave a similar charge to the Saints in Kirtland and Missouri. He said:

40 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.

41 He comprehendeth all things, and all things are before him, and all things are round about him; and he is above all things, and in all things, and is through all things, and is round about all things; and all things are by him, and of him, even God, forever and ever. ...

67 And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.

68 Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will (D&C 88:40-41, 67-68).

When the Savior came to America, he introduced himself by saying, “I am the light and the life of the world.” Now, consistent with the other commandments he had given them, he told the Saints that they must become like him.

The remainder of the Savior’s coronation sermon is, as Welch explained so well, a review of the ancient temple drama and a practical reminder of how one must keep his

covenants.⁹¹² In the Book of Mormon it is instructive to follow the Sermon at the Temple as a temple text.

3 Nephi 20, A Review of the Israelite Temple Drama

Some of the strongest evidences of the continuance of the ancient temple drama after the ending of animal sacrifice are in 3 Nephi 20, where the Savior paraphrases Isaiah 52. The Isaiah passage is full of ancient temple code, most of which we have discussed already. It reads:

7 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!

8 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.

9 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10 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 (Isaiah 52:7-10).

In chapter 20 of 3 Nephi, the Savior prophesied what would happen in America from that time until he came again. When he reached the place in time when the gospel would be restored, he described that restoration in terms of the ancient Israelite temple drama. He said:

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.

⁹¹² See Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple & Sermon on the Mount*.