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### The Real Feast of Tabernacles Temple Drama

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# **The Real Feast of Tabernacles Temple Drama**

## **Third Nephi as an Actualization of the New Year's Festival Drama**

*Psalms are inserted into the narrative of this chapter because Mormon was, we believe, familiar with them as an integral part of the festival drama, but more especially as a way of trying to recreate the sense of the original Old Testament drama. Because we do not have a directive to teach us how the original festival was performed, it is impossible to know where some of the psalms fit into its drama. But it seems to us that by placing them in a seemingly appropriate place in Mormon's recounting of the drama in Third Nephi, we can begin to discover where the psalms might have fit in the drama as it was performed in the ancient temple ceremony.*

One of the strongest evidences that Mowinckel and other scholars were correct in their reconstruction of the last two days of the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama is that their findings conform almost perfectly with the sequence of events described in the Book of Mormon<sup>824</sup> when the Savior came to America to establish his kingdom.<sup>825</sup>

The pinnacle of the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama was the coronation of the king in the Holy Place and in the of Holies. It established and legitimized the enthroned priest-king, and his subjects as priests and sacral kings—all as children and heirs of God. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Mormon wrote his account of the highpoint of the story of his people in America he used as his outline the sequence of the coronation as described in the festival's temple drama. He repeatedly tells us that he cannot write a

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<sup>824</sup> That might be explained the Prophet Joseph' own doing if he had access to the work of those scholars, but, it must be remembered, the scholars' work did not begin until 100 years *after* the Book of Mormon was published.

<sup>825</sup> There is a biblical parallel. In Zechariah 14:19, where the prophet tells about the events of the Second Coming, the only part of the Law celebrated will be the Feast of Tabernacles.

### *Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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hundredth portion of what happened during those two days, so he limits the part he does tell us to the events of the festival coronation. His doing so constitutes a testimony so that we may know that he knows that Jesus is Priest and King. This portion of his story testifies to the fulfillment of all the covenants the Lord had made with Lehi, Nephi, and their descendants, culminating in the coming of Christ to his temple in Bountiful. Mormon clearly also intended to show that the Savior fulfilled all the promises of the eighth day of the festival drama by establishing a government that would rule an ennobled community in peace and happiness. Mormon shows that the Savior's coronation in America was an actualization of the festival temple drama's coronation ceremony, only instead of the Ark representing the presence of Jehovah, Jehovah himself was present and performed the ordinances that were only symbolically performed during the drama.

Mormon showed that Christ is the King who, having defeated the enemies of his Kingdom, came triumphantly to his temple and was recognized as the Son of God. The Savior then lay the new organizational foundations of his Kingdom in righteousness by establishing the Twelve as its leaders, and inviting all to come and be a part of it. Then he gave a profound lecture on the gospel law, with its related principles and ordinances. Finally, as King, he blessed his people and their children and provided them with the sacral temple feast of the eighth day. Then he ascended to his Father. All this had been represented symbolically at the conclusion of the ancient New Year's festival temple drama which had been celebrated by Israel since at least the days of King David. Now, Mormon shows that it happened in fact. Christ's enthronement in America became the fulfillment of the anticipatory ordinances and covenants of the New Year's festival temple drama so, at its conclusion, in accordance with the procedures of long established and readily recognizable law, *Christ IS King*.

Let us go back with Mormon to the place in the sequence of the festival temple drama, after the events of the Council, creation, and garden had been depicted; and the young king has been given all of the priesthood and kingship authority necessary for his success. Now he confronts the forces of all of the combined enemies of his kingdom, and he pleads for the intercession of his God. This intercession came in the reality of Third Nephi at the same time when the Savior hung on the cross at Calvary, half a world away.

In America, the enemy was "a professional class of high priests who conspired with chief judges and lawyers against inspired men and good government."<sup>826</sup> But it was not only the mortal people who fought against the Kingdom, it is also Satan, with whom they:

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<sup>826</sup> Sidney B. Sperry, *Our Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, 1948), 210.

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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... did enter into a covenant one with another, yea, even into that covenant which was given by them of old, which covenant was given and administered by the devil, to combine against all righteousness (3 Nephi 6:28b).

Just as was portrayed in the festival temple drama, this combination hatched a plot to be carried out with such violence that God himself was compelled to intercede in behalf of his people. As the American Saints looked to God for help, they might have sung:

- 1 In the Lord put I my trust: How say ye to my soul,  
Flee as a bird to your mountain?
- 2 For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string,  
that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.
- 3 If the foundations be destroyed,  
what can the righteous do?
- 4 The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven:  
his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.
- 5 The Lord trieth the righteous:  
but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.
- 6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest:  
this shall be the portion of their cup.
- 7 For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness;  
his countenance doth behold the upright (Psalm 11:1-7).

In the festival drama they asked:

- 1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.  
They are corrupt, they have done abominable works,  
there is none that doeth good.
- 2 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men,  
to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.
- 3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy:  
there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- 4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and call not upon the Lord (Psalm 14:1-4).

*Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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One can also imagine that in the drama performed during the festival, at this point the people might sing the 20<sup>th</sup> Psalm:<sup>827</sup>

- 1 The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble;  
the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;
- 2 Send thee help from the sanctuary,  
and strengthen thee out of Zion;
- 3 Remember all thy offerings,  
and accept thy burnt sacrifice;
- 4 Grant thee according to thine own heart,  
and fulfil all thy counsel.
- 5 We will rejoice in thy salvation,  
and in the name of our God we will set up our banners:  
the Lord fulfil all thy petitions.
- 6 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.
- 7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:  
but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.
- 8 They are brought down and fallen:  
but we are risen, and stand upright.
- 9 Save, Lord: let the king hear us when we call (Psalm 20:1-9).

They might also have cried:

- 1 Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer:  
preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
- 2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked;  
from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:
- 3 Who whet their tongue like a sword,  
and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

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<sup>827</sup> For a discussion of the meaning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Psalm see Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," 216-17; for a literary study of the 20<sup>th</sup> psalm see J. Kenneth Kuntz, "King Triumphant: A Rhetorical Study of Psalms 20 and 21," *Hebrew Annual Review* 10 (1986): 157-76.

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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- 4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect:  
suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
- 5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter:  
they commune of laying snares privily;  
they say, Who shall see them?
- 6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search:  
both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.
- 7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow;  
suddenly shall they be wounded.
- 8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves:  
all that see them shall flee away.
- 9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God;  
for they shall wisely consider of his doing.
- 10 The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him;  
and all the upright in heart shall glory (Psalm 64:1-10).

Eaton understood that the Psalm was used in that way. He wrote, "Psalm 20 v. 2-6 the Psalmist addresses the king, expressing his people's blessing-wish for him. He anticipates a 'day of distress' (Psalm 18:7, 19) and desires that Yahweh will answer the king's cry and send help from the holy place."<sup>828</sup>

During the New Year's festival such cries for help seem not only to be cries of expectation but also reminders of the covenant the Lord had already made with the people and their king. Such covenants also suggest ordinances, for ordinances are often the token of the sealing or ratification of the covenants. In the New Year's festival there were apparently several preliminary ordinances to the coronation rites. Mormon mentions only baptism.<sup>829</sup>

- 23 And it came to pass that Nephi went forth among the people, and also many others, baptizing unto repentance, in the which there was a great remission of

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<sup>828</sup> Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 116.

<sup>829</sup> For an interesting comparison, see Widengren, "Baptism and Enthronement," 205-17.

*Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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sins. And thus the people began again to have peace in the land (3 Nephi 1:23).<sup>830</sup>

The concept of repentance is central to the cleansing necessary for participation in the ordinances and covenants of the Old Testament. The intensity of that feeling is expressed by the 6<sup>th</sup> Psalm:

- 1 O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger,  
neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
- 2 Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak:  
O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed.
- 3 My soul is also sore vexed:  
but thou, O Lord, how long?
- 4 Return, O Lord, deliver my soul:  
oh save me for thy mercies' sake.
- 5 For in death there is no remembrance of thee:  
in the grave who shall give thee thanks?
- 6 I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim;  
I water my couch with my tears.
- 7 Mine eye is consumed because of grief;  
it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.
- 8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;  
for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.
- 9 The Lord hath heard my supplication;  
the Lord will receive my prayer.
- 10 Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed:  
let them return and be ashamed suddenly (Psalm 6:1-10).

On the fourth day of the eight-day festival temple drama, the Canaanites symbolically attacked Jerusalem. They laid the city waste, destroyed the temple, and killed the king. Similarly, in Third Nephi—on the fourth day of the new year—there was also a great destruction:

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<sup>830</sup> We shall observe, when we get to a discussion of the Beatitudes, that “peace” may have ritualistic connotations.

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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5 And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.

6 And there was also a great and terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder.

7 And there were exceedingly sharp lightnings, such as never had been known in all the land (3 Nephi 8:5-7).

In the temple drama the people had prayed for help and the Lord had responded with the powers of heaven and the fierceness of an offended earth. In the psalms there is a prophecy of the Savior's coming. It is like the story told by Mormon. It reads:

1 The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice;

let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him:

righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

3 A fire goeth before him,

and burneth up his enemies round about.

4 His lightnings enlightened the world:

the earth saw, and trembled.

5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord,

at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. ...

11 Light is sown for the righteous,

and gladness for the upright in heart.

12 Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous;

and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness (Psalm 97:1-5, 11-12).

The 18<sup>th</sup> Psalm describes how God exercised his power in behalf of this people. The following translation by Aubrey Johnson is more vivid than the one in our King James Version:

In His Palace (*or* Temple) He heard my voice,

And my appeal came to His Ears.

The earth heaved and quaked,

While the foundations of the mountains quivered;



*Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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Yea, they rocked because He was wroth.  
Smoke rose from His Nostril,  
While fire leapt devouring from His Mouth;  
Live coals came kindling therefrom.  
He parted the heavens, and descended,  
With a cloud beneath His Feet.  
He rode upon a cherub and flew;  
He sped on the wings of the wind.  
He made darkness His covert,  
His shelter around Him the watery blackness,  
Masses of cloud which had no brightness.  
Ahead of Him through His clouds there passed  
Hailstones and coals of fire.  
Yahweh thundered in the heavens;  
The Most High uttered His Voice.  
He sent forth His arrows, scattering them abroad,  
Even lightnings in abundance, making them resound.  
Then the bed of the sea could be seen,  
And the foundations of the world were laid bare,  
At Thy rebuke, O Yahweh,  
At the tempestuous breathing of Thy Nostril.  
He reached from on high, He took me,  
He drew me out of the many waters.  
He delivered me from my powerful enemy,  
From my foes, for they were too strong for me.  
They confronted me on the day of my calamity;  
But Yahweh became my support.  
He set me at liberty;  
He freed me, for He was pleased with me.<sup>831</sup>

After the storm, the darkness hung as a tangible shroud upon the earth for three long days. During those same days, a glorious light shone in the Underworld, just as the 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm promised it would. The Savior reminded his friends of the promise of that psalm as

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<sup>831</sup> Psalm 18:6-19, translated by Johnson and published in his *Sacral Kingship*, 118-19.

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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he hung on the cross. It begins with the words, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It gives a vivid description of the pain he suffered, then the last third of the psalm testifies that he would fulfill his promises after his spirit left his tortured body.<sup>832</sup>

In America, those who survived the earthquake and the storm did not huddle in the darkness for very long wondering what had happened. They heard a voice recount the extent of the damage and the reasons for that day’s destructions:

1 And it came to pass that there was a voice heard among all the inhabitants of the earth, upon all the face of this land, crying:

2 Wo, wo, wo unto this people; wo unto the inhabitants of the whole earth except they shall repent; for the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people; and it is because of their iniquity and abominations that they are fallen! ...

10 because of their wickedness in casting out the prophets, and stoning those whom I did send to declare unto them concerning their wickedness and their abominations.

11 And because they did cast them all out, that there were none righteous among them, I did send down fire and destroy them, that their wickedness and abominations might be hid from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints whom I sent among them might not cry unto me from the ground against them.

12 And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and their abominations (3 Nephi 9:1-2, 10b-12).

The voice continued, but this time it urged those who had been spared to repent and come to the Savior and be healed. The Savior said these had been saved from physical destruction because of their righteousness—*zedek*. The Hebrew word denotes correctness in priesthood authority, ordinances, covenants, and power—rectitude in temple things.<sup>833</sup> Nephi III was the prophet who had sustained them in that. The story Mormon does not tell is about the personal and institutional preparations necessary for them to become ready

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<sup>832</sup> See the chapter called, “Act 2, Scene 7, Jehovah Conquers Death and Hell.”

<sup>833</sup> For a discussion of *zedek*, see the chapter called, “The Meaning of *Zedek*.”

*Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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for the coming of the Savior. Nephi III was the prophet who directed that as well. The Lord said:

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

14 Yea, verily I say unto you, if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me (3 Nephi 9:13-14).

In the drama, that invitation and its fulfillment were symbolic—a kind of dress rehearsal for the real thing. In Third Nephi, both the invitation and its fulfillment were the reality. Having issued that invitation, the Savior introduced himself. In his words he followed with remarkable exactitude the coronation sequences of the New Year's drama.

Without questioning the correctness of the translation, one wonders what the Nephites really heard. It was certainly not the English version of the Greek translation of his Hebrew name and name-title: "I am Jesus Christ." Jesus is translated from *Joshua/Jeshua/Jeshu*. Joshua was a rather common Jewish name and the one that was most appropriate. It was not only Jesus's given name, it was also a name-title:

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus [Joshua].

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David (Luke 1:30-32).

His name in Hebrew would be *Joshua/Jeshua/Jeshu* that means *Jehovah Saves* or *Savior*. *Christ* is a name-title that is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Messiah*, which means the *Anointed One*. Thus, when the Savior announced himself, he used name-titles that denoted his Eternal Priesthood and Kingship: "I am Jesus Christ—the *Anointed Savior*—the Son of God."<sup>834</sup>

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<sup>834</sup> Isaiah 61:1 speaks of the anointing of Christ in the pre-existence, and Peter testified that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:34-48).

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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

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 (3 Nephi 9:15-18).

His introduction was also his eternal biography and the outline of his role in the

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Mowinckel wrote: “‘Messiah’ (Greek, *Messias*) represents the Aramaic *Meshiha*, Hebrew *ha-mashiah*, ‘the Anointed One’. ... ‘Jesus Messiah’, or in Greek ‘Jesus Christ’, were His name and His title in the speech of the community, until the term ‘Christ’ also came to be regarded as a personal name” (*He That Cometh*, 3). See Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 1.

*Encyclopedia of Mormonism* concurs:

Since Jesus Christ is the central focus both in Church devotion and in scripture, he is naturally known under many names and titles, including the following:

JESUS. The Hebrew *yeshua*’ or *yehoshua*’, meaning “Jehovah saves,” is transliterated into English as the name Joshua. In Greek, it became *Iesus*, thence *Iesus* in Latin and *Jesus* in English. Since Jesus was actually Jehovah performing saving work, his name *yeshua*’, “Jehovah saves,” coincides precisely.

MESSIAH. This title comes from the Hebrew *meshiach*, “anointed one.” Among the Israelites, prophets, priests and kings were anointed, designating them as rightful successors. Commonly, “messiah” referred to a figure awaited by Israel to be her king. Applied to Jesus, the title retains its full sense of “anointed” prophet, priest, and king.

CHRIST. Greek for Messiah (anointed one) is *Christos*, Christ in English. Thus, “Jesus Christ” joins a name and a title, and means Jesus the Messiah.

(*Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols., ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:740.

### *Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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festival temple drama. That outline testified of himself and also of the importance of the teachings, ordinances, and covenants of the drama by focusing on its ultimate objective: “to them have I given to become the sons of God” (as in Psalm 2). A restatement of that introduction, written as the outline of the festival temple drama, might read:

#### Act 1

Behold, I am Jesus Christ [“the Savior Anointed”]  
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.

#### Act 2

I came unto my own, and my own received me not.  
And the scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled.  
And as many as have received me,  
to them have I given to become the sons of God;  
and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name,  
for behold, by me redemption cometh,  
and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled.

#### Act 3

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

None of the ideas the Savior expressed when he spoke to the people would have been new or strange to those who heard them. The understanding that Jehovah is the Savior was expressed in the psalms (D&C 106:21<sup>835</sup>), and even more explicitly by Isaiah, who quoted the Lord as saying, “I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior” (Isaiah 43:11<sup>836</sup>), and “thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Savior and thy Redeemer,

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<sup>835</sup> 20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

21 They forgat God their Savior, which had done great things in Egypt (Psalm 106:20-21).

<sup>836</sup> See also: Isaiah 19:20; 43:3; 45:15, 21; 49:26; 63:8. We learn in D&C 138:42 that the person anointed in Isaiah 61:1 is the Savior.

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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the mighty One of Jacob” (Isaiah 60:16). The first part of his concluding statement—“I am the light and the life of the world”—is expressed in two psalms:

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).

For with thee is the fountain of life:  
in thy light shall we see light (Psalm 36:9).

But it is best explained in D&C 93 where the Savior says:

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.  
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 (D&C 93:2-10).

His final statement, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,” is described

*Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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by Isaiah in two ways. One is in terms of his kingship:<sup>837</sup>

6 Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6).

The other is in terms of his priesthood power:

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isaiah 46:10).

This concept was clearly understood by the early American prophets:

And Amulek said unto him: Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth, and all things which in them are; he is the beginning and the end, the first and the last (Alma 11:39).

The Savior then gave two sets of instructions. Both had to do with the temple and both may readily be seen as instructions to help participants prepare for the final acts of the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama. He said:

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 (3 Nephi 9:19-20).

One can hardly wish for a stronger evidence that the Nephites knew and understood

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<sup>837</sup> Johnson observes that throughout Israelite history, “the king, or to be more precise, the ruling member of the House of David is regarded in the same way as the light or life of his people” (*Sacral Kingship*, 2).

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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the meaning of the psalms in their ceremonies, for here the Savior himself just reminded them of two 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).

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it:  
thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:  
a broken and a contrite heart, O God,  
thou wilt not despise (Psalm 51:16-17).

As with the rest of the meaning of the festival drama, the Nephite pioneers had brought that understanding with them from Jerusalem. Lehi taught it to his son Jacob, in conjunction with his father's blessing:

5 And by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever.

6 Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

7 Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered (2 Nephi 2:5-7).

In his own magnificent psalm, Nephi expressed the same understanding, couching it in words that ring of the symbolism of the ancient temple drama:

31 O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?

32 May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite! O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may walk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road!



*Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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33 O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! (2 Nephi 4:31-33).

To sacrifice does not mean to lose something or to give it away; rather, it means to set something apart, to remove it from the profane and make it sacred. An example is tithing. Tithing is a sacrifice in that it is set apart to be used for sacred purposes. If one is to sacrifice a broken heart and contrite spirit, it does not mean that these things are somehow to be lost to ourselves, but rather that they are to be made sacred. The Hebrew word translated “broken” means the same as the English word. For example, if two pots are sitting on a shelf, one an earthen pot and the other made of plastic, and something bumps the shelf and causes them to fall, the plastic one will bounce, but the clay pot will shatter. The difference is not the height from which they fall, nor the floor they hit, but their ability to maintain their structure. The plastic pot stays as it was, the earthen pot is not a pot any more.

In the ancient world, the heart is the cosmic center of the human being. It is the seat of both one’s intellect and of one’s emotions. That is easy to understand because when we learn something excitingly new, we do not feel the idea in our head, but in our heart, just as we feel all emotions in our chest area.<sup>838</sup>

The plastic pot is as one whose attitudes, preconceptions, and prejudices are well established and will not change, like a kind of spiritual and intellectual rigor mortis. The earthen pot is as one who is still alive—whose mind is still open to new ideas and who has cleansed his emotions from the debility of prejudice. It is one who can see the world—and more especially the people in it—as God sees them, as they really are in sacred time. Thus the clay pot is broken, but its little pieces might be put together and restructured into something different. A broken heart is like that—subject to becoming different from what it was before.

The word *contrite* is usually taken to mean downcast, or humble, but the meaning is much larger than that. The Hebrew and English words mean the same thing: to rub, to pulverize, or turn to powder. It is what a hammer would do to the clay pot, or what a new shoe would do to one’s heel during a long hike. It is not something the pot can do to itself because it can only be done by some external force.

The spirit is the spirit—it is the Self that animates and gives life to the body. For one’s

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<sup>838</sup> That is true of all emotions except pity or empathy. If you saw a puppy hit by a car, you would feel it right in the pit of your stomach. Thus the phrase, “the bowels of mercy.”

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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spirit to be contrite, it must be hurt by others. For one's sacrifice to be a contrite spirit, one must willingly take upon oneself the pain and sorrow of other people. An example might be when one hears a juicy bit of gossip and does not pass it on. Or when Junior comes home and tells dad he has just mashed the car. The Dad might dump the whole burden of the situation—its guilt and its costs—upon the boy, or he might put his arm around his son and say something like, "Did I ever tell you about the time I did that to my dad's car?" In the latter case, the father does not take away the responsibility, but he does take upon himself the burden of the guilt and the hurt. The car can be dealt with after the pain is gone.

A broken heart might be likened to the Savior on the cross when all of his earthly and physical desires were subordinated to his need to die and accomplish the resurrection. A contrite spirit was when the Savior suffered for all of us in Gethsemane.

In short, what the Savior requires of us is the same sacrifice that he made—but a sacrifice that is within the limits of our ability. To sacrifice one's Self is to set one's Self apart from the world and make one sacred. The sacrifice is accomplished when our preconceptions and prejudices are opened to the Savior's light so we see that others have real value and we extend our Selves to try to take away some of the hurt this world imposes upon them. To make that sacrifice is to open one's Self to the fulfillment of the Lord's promise:

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Then will the prayer of the psalms be made reality:

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God;  
and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence;  
and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;  
and uphold me with thy free spirit (Psalm 51:10-12).

### *Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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The ramifications of the Savior's instruction that there should be no more blood sacrifices and burnt offerings were complex and very far reaching. Blood sacrifices predated the Law of Moses and were lately incorporated into the Law. The first sacrifice was performed by Adam soon after he left the Garden.<sup>839</sup>

6 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.

7 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.

8 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 forevermore (Moses 5:6-8).

Lundquist observed that, "the purpose of the sacrifice is to seal and to sanctify the covenant."<sup>840</sup> The Savior's atoning sacrifice had sealed and sanctified the covenant of the Father (Moroni 10:32-33). What remained—indeed, what always remains—were the sealing and sanctifying of the covenant on the part of the people. The sacrificing of animals had symbolized the Savior's act of ratification. Now that act was accomplished, no such symbolism was required, but the act of ratification on the part of the people remained. That ratification, too, had to be sealed and sanctified by sacrifice—in a manner similar to the way the Savior's was—with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

For the Saints in the New World, if sacrifices and burnt offerings were to be done away, then that would require that they make significant changes in their temple and temple grounds. The great sacrificial altar that no doubt dominated the courtyard of the temple had to be dismantled and removed. Blood would no longer be sprinkled in the temple and the Holy of Holies, and incense would no longer be burned since those practices were a part of the sacrificial ceremonies. The barns to hold the sacrificial animals would have to be removed, and many of the tools and implements that had been used in the services would have to be put away. If those Saints were like modern-day Saints, they would not have just torn down the old structures, and left the empty places. Rather, they

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<sup>839</sup> Moses 5:5-7. Jubilees:3:26-27.

<sup>840</sup> Lundquist, "Temple, Covenant, and Law," 300.

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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might plant flowers in their place, clean the temple, and beautify its grounds.

The second instruction the Savior gave when he spoke in the darkness had to do with making changes in the temple drama. But it also was not explicit and would require additional revelation before it could be implemented. The Savior said:

21 Behold, I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin. Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God.

22 Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved (3 Nephi 9:21-22).

Such a statement may, of course, be read as only beautiful symbolic words and not as instruction at all. But even so, the phrase “come unto me” may have had some implications about remodeling the interior of the temple. Mormon continues:

1 And now behold, it came to pass that all the people of the land did hear these sayings, and did witness of it. And after these sayings there was silence in the land for the space of many hours;

2 For so great was the astonishment of the people that they did cease lamenting and howling for the loss of their kindred which had been slain; therefore there was silence in all the land for the space of many hours<sup>841</sup> (3 Nephi 10:1-2).

After a long silence, the people heard the voice of the Lord speak again. Again he reminded them of the psalms and the concluding events of the festival drama:

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

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<sup>841</sup> The idea of silence has not only the connotation of awe and reverence but also a worshipful meaning. As Hayward noted, “The proper attitude of the highest heavenly beings in the face of the Divine Presence is a *silent* worship of God in their uttering the prescribed formula of blessing.” C.T.R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple* (London: Routledge, 1996), 34.

*Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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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 Ne. 10:3-7).

With great emphasis the Savior had repeated three times words similar to those he had also spoken before his death:

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (Matthew 23:37).

His words echoed the promise of the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm:

1 He that dwelleth in the secret place [Holy of Holies] of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress:  
my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,  
and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust:  
his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;  
nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness;  
nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday (Psalm 91:1-6).<sup>842</sup>

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<sup>842</sup> See also Matthew 4:6 and Luke 4:11. That is the same Psalm that Satan used to challenge him during his three “temptations.”

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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On the seventh day of the festival drama, the king sat on the throne of God in the Temple. The throne was overshadowed by the great golden wings of the cherubim. Thus, to be invited to come under the Savior's wings was the same as being invited to sit on his throne as his son and heir (as in Psalm 2). That was the invitation the Savior referred to as he spoke in the darkness, and that is the invitation he would issue again when he came to his temple.

After the voice had spoken, the oppressive darkness remained for three days. When the darkness lifted, the scenes that followed might most easily be visualized as they would have occurred at the conclusion of the drama's coronation ceremony, when the darkness dispersed and the world was light again:

and their mourning was turned into joy, and their lamentations into the praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord Jesus Christ, their Redeemer (3 Nephi 10:10b).

Here, once more, Mormon interjects himself into the story, not in an autobiographical way, but in the much more typical "and thus we see" kind of way. He wrote, "And thus far were the scriptures fulfilled which had been spoken by the prophets" (3 Nephi 10:11).

Then Mormon again picked up the pattern of the temple drama. During the three days when the king was in the confines of death, the drama turned its focus from the king to the psalms that told of the Savior's life, death, Atonement, and Resurrection.<sup>843</sup> Mormon maintained that sequence of thought by quoting the prophecies of Zenos, and Zenock, and Jacob with reference to the coming of Christ (3 Nephi 10:12-17). Their testimonies provided a kind of conjunction that allowed Mormon's narrative to move from the events that began on the fourth day of the thirty-fourth year to "the ending of the thirty and fourth year"<sup>844</sup> without a break in the continuity of his thought. Even though a year had passed, he could now pick up the sequence of the festival in the same place where he had left it.

This Mormon did that with great grace and, typically, without calling undue attention to what he was doing. Accordingly, he tells us nothing about the remodeling of the temple and its immediate environs, which would have been necessitated by the Savior's instructions that sacrifice and burnt offerings should no longer be performed.

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<sup>843</sup> See the chapter called, "Act 2, Scene 7, Jehovah Conquers Death and Hell."

<sup>844</sup> 3 Nephi 8:5 and 10:18.

### *Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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In the festival drama, on the morning of the seventh day a new temple was symbolically re-created. In a great procession, the people walked around Jerusalem, measuring it with their steps and redefining it as sacred space. Thus, there was a New Jerusalem, a new Temple, and those who entered were a new Zion. The sequence of events in America followed that same pattern. The destruction began on the fourth day in both the drama and in the reality. After three days, that is, on the seventh day of the drama, Jehovah came to his temple. Mormon's account virtually jumps over the intervening time between the end of the darkness and the time the Savior came, so that if one reads it quickly, it appears that he is saying the Savior came to the temple almost immediately after the darkness dissipated, thus implying but not saying that it was also on the seventh day. Mormon then recounts the events of that and the following day as corresponding to the seventh and eighth days of the festival temple drama.

The remodeling of the temple was also the signal for the establishment of the new government. Mowinckel asserts that "together with the enthronement of the god goes the building and construction of his temple."<sup>845</sup> Lundquist explains why that is so. "In the Near East, temple building/rebuilding/restoring is an all-but-quintessential element in state formation and often represents the sealing of the covenant process that state formation in the ancient Near East presumes."<sup>846</sup>

The remodeling of the temple in Bountiful would probably have required a rededication. If such were to occur it should have happened during the next New Year's festival because that was the occasion of the dedication of Solomon's temple.<sup>847</sup> Snaith claims that "Solomon would have no choice as to the date when the Temple should be dedicated. He was bound to wait until the next annual feast after the completion of the building operations. It was in the proper month and at the proper full moon that the people

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<sup>845</sup> Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:132.

<sup>846</sup> Lundquist, "Legitimizing Role of the Temple," 180. Runnalls's assertions that the building or restoration of temples was such an important part of the overall enthronement process that Jesus' claim to the messiahship would not have been complete had he not cleansed the temple can readily be adapted to fit the situation described in 3 Nephi. See Donna Runnalls, "The King as Temple Builder: A Messianic Typology," in, *Spirit Within Structure: Essays in Honor of George Johnston*, ed. E. J. Furcha, (Allison Park, Pennsylvania: Pickwick, 1983), 19, 30.

<sup>847</sup> 2 Chronicles 7:8-10. Widengren, "King and Covenant," 8-9; Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 54. Mowinckel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1:127.

*In the Book of Mormon.*

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would appear with their gifts.”<sup>848</sup> In Psalm 60 the people sing:

- 1 O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us,  
thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.
- 2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble;  
thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.
- 3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things:  
thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.
- 4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee,  
that it may be displayed because of the truth.
- 5 That thy beloved may be delivered;  
save with thy right hand, and hear me (Psalm 60:1-5).

If that were true in America, as it was in Palestine, then the remodeling of the temple had been a necessary prerequisite to the establishment of the theocracy of 4 Nephi. If, then, the Temple at Bountiful had been remodeled it would also have needed to be rededicated. The most likely time for that ceremony if Lundquist’s statements hold true here, would be during the New Year celebration. For Engnell, the New Year festival was “especially celebrated in connection with the consecration of temples.”<sup>849</sup> There was good precedent for that, for example, after Solomon’s Temple was finished, he waited until the New Year festival to hold its dedication.<sup>850</sup> It is possible Nephi III would have felt it necessary to do the same.

Lundquist gives us another bit of good circumstantial evidence that this was the time of a temple rededication. He wrote that new kings would typically do five things:

1. Cite their divine calling.

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<sup>848</sup> Norman H. Snaith, *The Jewish New Year Festival: Its Origins and Development* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947), 52. That might be a bit strong. One supposes that Solomon might have done what Nabonidus, king of Babylon (Belshazzar’s father), did about 60 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. He built a new temple and forbade the celebration of the New Year’s festival until the building was completed. Budge, *Babylonian Life*, 53.

<sup>849</sup> Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship*, 10.

<sup>850</sup> 1 Kings 8:2; Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 296-97; Snaith, *Jewish New Year Festival*, 46; Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 54-58.



*Psalms of Israel's Temple Worship*

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2. Issue new laws.
3. Ordain officers.
4. Erect monuments.
5. Enter into a new legal order by way of covenant with a ritually prepared community.<sup>851</sup>

We do not know, from the Book of Mormon, of any new monuments erected, but the other four were exactly what the Savior did when he came to his temple in America.

Mormon tells us nothing about what happened during that intervening year. He spares us all accounts of the aftermath of the wind, fire, and earthquake. But he introduced us to one of the most important elements of the New Year festival: the establishment of a new order and a new world—“the prime element of the enthronement festival being a new creation.”<sup>852</sup> A new world must follow the destruction of the old. The central feature of that new creation must be a temple, as Lundquist explained:

A community is made cosmic through the foundation of the temple. The elaborate ritual, architectural, and building traditions that lie behind temple construction and dedication are what allow the authoritative, validating transformation of a set of customary laws into a *code*.

The temple creates law and makes law possible. It allows for the transformation of a chaotic universe into a cosmos. It is the very capstone of universal order and by logic and definition creates the conditions under which law is possible. ...

Thus order cannot exist, the earth cannot be made cosmic, society cannot function properly, law cannot be decreed, except in a temple established on earth that is the authentic and divinely revealed counterpart of a heavenly prototype . ...It is the creation of the temple, with its cosmic overtones, that founds and legitimizes the state or the society, which, in turn makes possible the formal promulgation of law.<sup>853</sup>

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<sup>851</sup> Lundquist, “Temple, Covenant, and Law,” 293-305.

<sup>852</sup> Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship*, 34.

<sup>853</sup> Lundquist, “Temple, Covenant, and Law,” 299, 302.