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Inside the ancient temple participants are washed, anointed, clothed, fed, enthroned, and symbolically initiated into the presence of God

Author(s): LeGrand L. Baker

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

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**10. “Inside the temple images of deities as well as living kings, temple priests and worshippers are washed, anointed, clothed, fed, enthroned and symbolically initiated into the presence of deity, and thus into eternal life. Further, New Year rites held in the temple include the reading and dramatic portrayals of texts which recite a pre-earthly war in heaven; a victory in that war by the forces of good, led by a chief deity; and the creation and establishment of the cosmos, cities, temples, and the social order. The sacred marriage is carried out at this time”<sup>83</sup>**

The actions described took place in ancient three

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<sup>83</sup>Lundquist, “Common Temple Ideology,” 58. See Donald W. Parry, “Ritual Anointing with Olive Oil in Ancient Israelite Religion,” *Allegory of the Olive Tree*, 266-71, 281-83; Ricks and Sroka, “King, Coronation, and Temple: Enthronement Ceremonies in History,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 1994.243-44.

For discussions of sacred clothing see: Draper and Parry, “Seven Promises,” *Temple in Time and Eternity*, 134-136; Nibley, “Sacred Vestments,” in *Temple and Cosmos*, 91-138; Stephen D. Ricks, “The Garment of Adam in Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Tradition.” In *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 705-39; Ricks and Sroka, “Garment,” in “King, Coronation, and Temple,” 254-6; John A. Tvedtnes, “Priestly Clothing in Bible Times,” *Temples of the Ancient World*, 649-704.

For discussions of covenants see Packer, Boyd K. *The Holy Temple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft), 1980; Stephen D. Ricks, “Oaths and Oath Taking in the Old Testament,” *Temple in Time and Eternity*, 43-53; For discussions of the temple drama see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord*; Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*; Mowinkel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*; Nibley, “Abraham's Temple Drama,” *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, 1-42.

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dimensional sacred space as the presentation of the temple drama. The text of the Book of Mormon often expresses ideas in sequences similar to the coronation ceremonies and the Israelite temple rites and drama, and it throws a great deal of light on their meaning and purpose.<sup>84</sup> But reading the Book of Mormon is not the same as participating in the ancient temple rites and drama or the coronation ceremony. The reverse, however, is also true. Participating in the ancient temple rites was not the same as having an understanding that can come when we unlock the mysteries of the Book of Mormon's encoded text.

The symbolism of the coronation of the ancient Israelite king can be lost in the details of the ceremony if the rites are not understood as a single event. The king had been ordained a "priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110),<sup>85</sup> Then, during the coronation ceremonies he was washed, clothed in sacred garments, and anointed with a dual ordinance wherein he was adopted, crowned, and given the new name of "son" of God (Psalm 2).<sup>86</sup> He was then enthroned as king of Israel. Thus he was the legitimate "son" and legal heir to the throne. With his anointing he received "a special endowment of the Spirit [which] is clearly associated with the rite" of anointing.<sup>87</sup> Mowinckel further explained,

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84For a discussion of the ancient Israelite temple drama and its importance in Nephite history see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord*. The entire book is devoted to that subject.

85For a discussion of Psalm 110 and the Melchizedek Priesthood in ancient Israel see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 239-53.

86For a discussion of Psalm 2 and the importance of the new king name see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 360-73.

87Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 15. The Bible records the anointings of six Israelite kings: Saul: 1 Samuel 10:1, David: 2 Samuel 5:3, Solomon: 1 Kings 1:39, Jehu: 2 Kings 9:6, Josh: 2 Kings 11:12, Jehoahaz: 2 Kings

His [the king's] 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.<sup>88</sup>

The king's sitting on God's throne was a major symbolic act, an acknowledgment that he was God's legitimate son and heir.<sup>89</sup> Borsch explains,

In a similar context we should probably put 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.<sup>90</sup>

Now, in his full capacity as king, in the full regalia of royalty, the king delivered a sermon to the people.<sup>91</sup>

There are no examples of this coronation speech in the Bible. However, there are three examples in the Book of Mormon. One is Jacob's teachings at the temple in 2 Nephi. Another is in King Benjamin's story, where the king delivered a sermon on the importance of the Atonement. The third is in 3 Nephi, where the Savior came to the Nephite temple and taught the Beatitudes and a sermon like the Sermon on the Mount.

It is apparent from these examples that the lecture was more than just a reminder of the law, it is also a renewal of the covenants between Jehovah, the king, and the people of Israel. Geo Widengren wrote about that:

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

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23:30. Absalom was also anointed to be king: 2 Samuel 19:11.

<sup>88</sup>Mowinkel, *Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 1, 58. He cites: Psalms 89:31-33; 18:21-25; 20:4; 132:10; 2 Samuel 7:14ff.

<sup>89</sup>Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father (1 Chronicles 29:23).

<sup>90</sup>Borsch, *Son of Man*, 120. Italics in original.

<sup>91</sup>Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 23; Widengren, *Ascension of the Apostle*, 24-26, 36-37.

Priest....The covenant is made in the temple....<sup>92</sup>

After the king gave his lecture, the people participated in sacrifices and offerings. The next day, the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama, was a day of the great feast, representing the hoped-for New Jerusalem and the thousand year reign of peace—and beyond to “eternal prosperity.”

That entire coronation sequence is found in Third Nephi.<sup>93</sup> The Father announces Jesus’ coming by pronouncing the royal king-name—“this is my Beloved Son.” The Savior speaks out of the chaos of the storms and earthquakes to instruct the People to prepare appropriate sacrifices. He comes to his temple, where his earthly throne is located in the Holy of Holies. The people come as though in procession, to touch his hands and feet so they can testify that he is the resurrected Christ. He delivers a lecture on the sacredness of the laws of his gospel. The people bring some food and it becomes enough for everyone. The next day no one brings any food, but the Savior provides it. This is a day of both spiritual and physical feasting.

It is apparent that Mormon carefully wrote Third Nephi so we would recognize the Savior’s coming to the Nephites as the legitimate enactment of the ancient temple’s coronation ceremony—a declaration that Jesus *is* King.

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<sup>92</sup>Geo Widengren, “King and Covenant” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 2, 1 (Jan., 1957): 1-32.

<sup>93</sup>For a full discussion of the Savior’s coronation in 3 Nephi see Baker and Ricks, *Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord* (2011 edition), 607-91.