



# UNIT 6

## ABUNDANCE OF YOUR SACRIFICES

Isaiah 1:10-15

*One of the central aspects in worshipping God is the rites and rituals performed in temples. Temple worship has dramatically changed from the rituals of ancient Israel compared to our worship today. Yet the Lord is displeased with our worship as much as he was with theirs. Learn why the Lord is sick of our sacrifices and how we can better worship him.*



## SECTION 1: PROFANING GOD’S COURT

*Hear, O earth; behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it. To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt acceptable, offerings are not nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.*

~ Jehovah (Jeremiah 6:19-20)

**A**ncient Israel lived by the law of Moses as recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament. These books, written by the great historian Moses, detail the various worship rites and rituals, from the sacrifices and the temple rituals to the weekly and monthly worship and annual feasts and holidays. In reading to book of Isaiah, it is important to understand some of those rituals to fully understand the depth of what his words reveal. Even a broad but cursory understanding of the types of sacrifices, feasts, and worship rituals will deepen understanding of Isaiah’s writings.

### #1—HISTORICAL PRECEDENT: THE LAW OF MOSES

**T**he Lord asks Israel, “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me” (Isaiah 1:11). Moses set up a detailed pattern of sacrificial rites that Israel was to follow. This was part of the Mosaic Law.

The Lord revealed very specific details to Moses on when, what, where, and how to sacrifice each animal or offering. Amid all that stringent protocol, did Israel forget WHY they were performing those rights over time?

Isaiah records the irony of Israel’s actions, “They seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God” (Isaiah 58:2), yet in reality, their works were not righteous nor did they seek the Lord. They did quite the opposite. They forsook the Lord (see Isaiah 1:2-3).

The Lord stated, “This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Isaiah 29:13). It seems somewhere along the way Israel did forget the “why” of their worship. Have we done the same?

#### SACRIFICES WITHIN THE LAW OF MOSES

Part of the Law of Moses was a detailed structure of sacrificial offerings. The offerings were meant as a symbol of the grace and mercy of God. Alma taught that the intent of the law of Moses was to point toward that “great and last sacrifice,” which was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (see Alma 34:14). Here is a very brief overview of the sacrifices within the law of Moses.

In Leviticus, it lists each of the sacrifices and the details for each one. There were three voluntary offerings and two mandatory offerings. The voluntary offerings included the burnt offering, the peace offering, and the meat offering. Mandatory offerings included the sin offering and trespass offering.

#### SCRIPTURE REVIEW

##### DETAILS OF SACRIFICES

- Leviticus 1-7

##### ADDITIONAL REVIEW

- Isaiah 1:10-15
- Isaiah 29:13-16
- Isaiah 34:1-8
- Jeremiah 6:18-25
- Alma 34:1-16
- 1 Peter 2:1-8

Sacrifices could be either animals of flocks or herds or certain birds, or they could be meat offerings of grains, depending on the requirements of the Lord. For animal sacrifices, the sacrifice needed to be kosher, domesticated, and free of blemish.

## VOLUNTARY OFFERINGS

### BURNT OFFERINGS

The Hebrew word **עֹלָה** | *ō-lā'* is translated as “burnt offerings.” This comes from a root word meaning to ascend, suggesting the offering ascends to God. The purpose of this offering was to present a sacrifice to the Lord in a way of purifying oneself, making him or her acceptable to the Lord. The sacrifice was made by burning it upon fire with the sweet savor of the offering wafting upward toward God. The offering was completely burned on the altar, nothing remaining.

#### SOME USES OF **עֹלָה** | *Ō-LĀ'*

- Isaiah 1:10-12 — “Burnt offerings”
- Isaiah 40:15-17 — “Burnt offering”
- Isaiah 43:21-26 — “Burnt offerings”
- Isaiah 56:6-7 — “Burnt offerings”
- Isaiah 61:7-11 — “Burnt offering”

Acceptable burnt offerings for the Lord consisted of bullocks (young bulls), lambs, goats, and turtledoves or pigeons. Each were brought to the north side of the altar where the priest would place his hands upon the animal and then slay the animal. The blood would be flung upon each opposing corner of the altar. The pelt of the animal was given to the priest for their own use, and the animal was divided into four parts: the head, the legs, the inward parts and the fat, and the rest of the body. Unique to this sacrifice was the washing of the legs and the inward parts. Afterward, each of these were burnt upon the altar.



### PEACE OFFERING

The peace offering was very closely associated with the burnt offering and was performed after burnt offerings, so that the offering would be burned on top of the burnt offering. The Hebrew word for a peace offering is **שְׁלֵמִים** | *she'-lem*, which comes from the root word **שָׁלַם** | *shā-lām'*, meaning *to be safe*. This is also the root of the common greeting **שְׁלוֹמִים** | *shā-lōm'*, meaning “peace be unto you.”

This offering was intended for giving thanks to God for peace in life or for seeking the power of God for victory leading to peace. It was a sacrifice often offered before Israel went into battle pleading for victory or celebration of a victorious battle. It was also used by individuals seeking God’s divine intervention.

Acceptable peace offerings were oxen, sheep, or goats. No bird offerings were accepted. Like the burnt offering, it was presented at the north side of the altar and killed. Blood was sprinkled on all sides of the altar. The fat, kidneys, and part of the liver were removed and burned on the altar on top of the burnt offering. The brisket and right back leg were removed and given to the priest for their use. The leg was called the heave offering because it was lifted from the offering. The brisket became the wave offering as it was waved before God. The remaining parts of the sacrifice were kept by the person offering the sacrifice who would take it home to his family and friends for feasting.

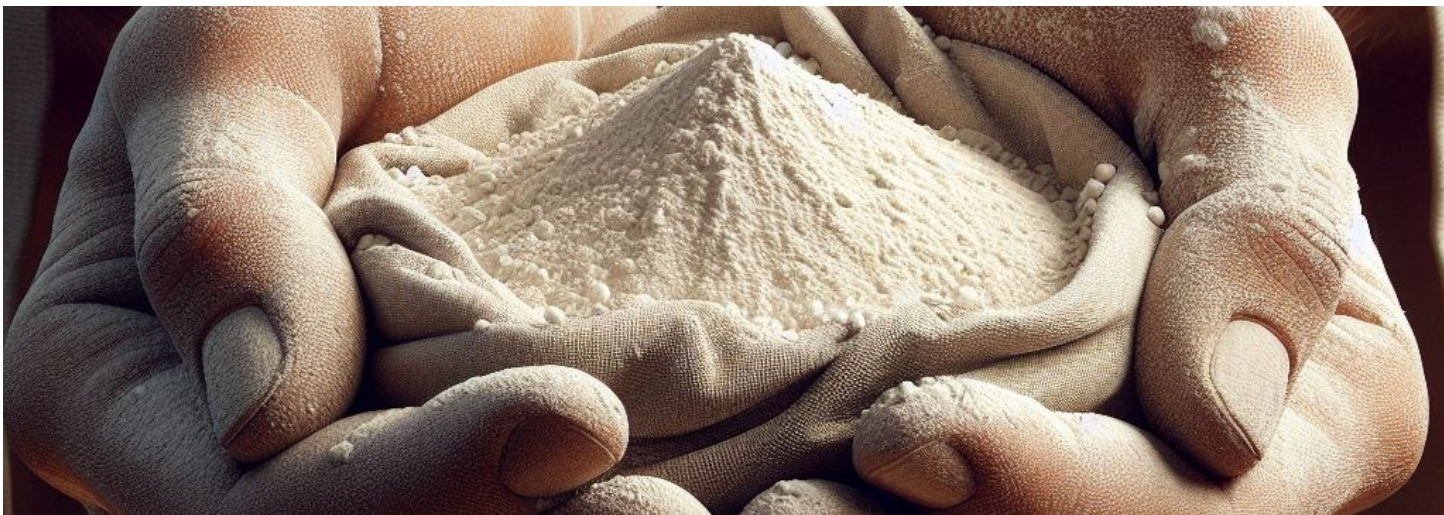
## GRAIN OR MEAT OFFERING

Meat offerings are an offering of grain. This comes from a Hebrew word מִנְחָה | mēn-ḥā' and is often translated as “oblation.” This offering was given for gratitude to God, acknowledging God as the great provider of all life. This is the only sacrifice that does not involve blood.

These offerings consisted of fine flour or bread-items made from fine flours. Those presenting the meat offering often added frankincense and salt with the offering and baked the breads in oil, each item having a specific symbolism that added to the meaning of the sacrifice.

### SOME USES OF מִנְחָה | MĒN-ḤĀ'

- Isaiah 1:10-13 — “Oblations”
- Isaiah 19:19-22 — “Oblation”
- Isaiah 43:21-26 — “Offering”
- Isaiah 57:4-9 — “Meat offering”
- Isaiah 66:1-4 — “Offering”
- Isaiah 66:19-21 — “Offering”



The offerings could not contain any leaven or honey. Unlike other offerings, this was not presented at the north side of the altar but handed to the priest in the inner court. The priest would take a portion of the flour or baked good and burn a part of it on the altar. The remainder was kept by the priest for his own consumption, but it could not leave the inner court.

## VOLUNTARY OFFERINGS

### SIN OFFERING

The sin offering was offered as part of the repentance process of committing a sin whether intentionally or not. The type offering depended on the social or economic status of an individual. For example, the high priest or the whole congregation had to offer an ox. A leader must offer a he-goat. Everyone else was required to offer a she-goat or ewe. Poor individuals could offer two turtledoves. Very poor individuals could offer a tenth of an ephah of fine flour.

The offering was sacrificed much like the peace offering with only slight differences. For the high priest or congregation, the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled seven times on the veil of the tabernacle, dabbed on the horns of the altar with the finger, and then poured out at the base of the altar. Blood for the goats or ewes were just dabbed on the horns of the altar and poured at the base. They were not sprinkled on the veil. The blood of the turtledoves was squeezed out and splashed on the side of the altar. The flour was burned on the altar without oil or incense.

The carcasses of the goats and ewes became property of the priests. The ox, however, was carried out of the city and burned outside the walls. Unlike the burnt offering, only the fat of the goats and ewe were burned upon the altar. The rest of the carcass was divided up like the peace offering

### POSSIBLE REFERENCE TO SIN OFFERINGS

- Isaiah 34:2-8 — *Description of sacrifices suggest the sin offering*
- Isaiah 43:21-26 — “fat of their sacrifice”

## TRESPASS OR GUILT OFFERING

The trespass or guilt offering was intended as an offering of restoration. The Hebrew word **אֲשָׁם** | ä-shäm' comes from a root word meaning *to be guilty*, and is translated into “guilt.” There is quite a bit of confusion between the sin and the trespass offerings and when one would offer one verses the other.

### USES OF **אֲשָׁם** | Ä-SHÄM'

- Isaiah 53:10 — “Offering for Sin”

Some suggest the sin offering is for unwritten offenses while the trespass offering concerned offenses that broke written commandments or offenses where damage was done and loss incurred. Other suggest that where the sin offering was for the cleansing of the errors of a man or woman, the trespass offering was used as to rectify deliberate wrong-doing toward God or toward another person.

This offering was also performed like the peace offering with a couple differences. The only animal that could be used as a trespass offering was a ram. No other offering was accepted. Also, before the ram was offered the priest would place a value on the sacrifice that reflected the seriousness of the trespass. The person offering this sacrifice had to pay that value plus 20% to the trespassed party.

## OTHER OFFERINGS

### INCENSE

The word incense—**קְטֹרֶת** | kâ-tō'-rêth—is only used once in the book of Isaiah (see Isaiah 1:13), but it completes the imagery of temple worship in this section of Isaiah. In the ancient tabernacle, incense was placed in front of the curtain separating the Holy of Hollies and burned twice each day, morning and evening. It represented the prayers of the children of Israel wafting up to heaven at the feet of the throne of God. Isaiah links incense to prayers in his chiasmus of this section. John similarly symbolizes incense with prayers as he describes the angel burning the incense before the mercy seat of God in heaven (see Revelation 8:3-4).



### DRINK OFFERING

There are few references to drink offerings in the Old Testament, but they were part of the burnt offerings and sacrifices. The priest would take about ¼ hin of wine (which is about one quart) and pour it out on the altar right before sacrificing a lamb. A ram required a third hin and a bull half a hin. Wine is most commonly associate with rest and celebration, which adds to the depth of symbolism in the pouring of wine on the altars.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

- 1. What is the real purpose of the sacrifices made in ancient Israel?
- 2. We do not perform blood sacrifices today. What sacrifices do we make to the Lord instead?
- 3. What sacrifices do you personally make to the Lord?
- 4. What is your purpose or intent in offering sacrifices to the Lord today?
- 5. When the Lord says he is sick of our sacrifices, what does that mean for our modern worship practices?
- 6. What are the parallels in our day to ancient days?

**NOTES**

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## #2—ANCIENT AND MODERN WORSHIP

In conjunction with the sacrificial rites, the law of Moses detailed many other areas of worship both in and out of the temple. As the Lord continued his berating of the house of Israel, he declared, “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them” (Isaiah 1:13-14). Not only did ancient Israel forget the “why” of their temple worship, they also lost sight of why they did their regular and routine worship rituals and festivals.

## SCRIPTURE REVIEW

- Exodus 20:8-11
- Exodus 31:12-17
- Leviticus 23
- Numbers 28:11-15
- Isaiah 1:13-14
- Jeremiah 17:19-27
- Hosea 2:11
- Amos 5:21
- Micah 6:6-8

## VOLUNTARY OFFERINGS

Isaiah uses the routine weekly, monthly, and yearly worship gatherings, festivals, and feasts of the ancient Israelis to parallel our modern worship meetings. The word new moon (חֹדֶשׁ | ḥō-desh') implies monthly gatherings or activities, and Sabbaths (שַׁבָּת | shāb-bāth') suggests weekly gatherings. Assemblies (מִקְרָא | mēk-rā') refers to the “convocations” or “readings” that were routinely done in their daily and weekly worship. The solemn meetings (עֲצָרָה | ä-tsä-rā') suggest the monthly our annual festivals, feasts, or holidays.

## NEW MOONS

Part of the Mosaic Law required that certain sacrifices were performed at the first of each month. חֹדֶשׁ | ḥō-desh' means *new moon* but can be translated as “month” or “monthly.” The new moon celebrations were a monthly festivity for the entire nation. The festival was marked by the blowing of trumpets with the first sign of silver on the moon, and accompanied by burnt offerings of two bullocks, a ram, and seven male lambs. Each sacrifice was accompanied by a grain and drink offering. A goat was also offered for a sin offering.

## SOME USES OF חֹדֶשׁ | ḤŌ-DESH'

- Isaiah 1:13-14 — “New moons”
- Isaiah 47:11-13 — “Monthly”
- Isaiah 66:22-24 — “One new moon to another”

Though we do not sacrifice animals, we still hold monthly worship rituals related to sacrifice. In our churches many are accustomed to monthly fasting accompanied sometimes by bearing testimonies. Fasting is not unique to modern churches. Jewish, Islamic, and Christian religions each have a tenant of fasting, which consists of a personal sacrifice of denying oneself food and water for a given amount of time.

What other monthly worship rituals can you think of that we perform?



## SABBATHS

There is a strict injunction by the Lord in the law of Moses to observe the Sabbath. In fact, it was one of the ten commandments given to Moses on the stone tablets. שָׁבַת | shāb-bāth' comes from a root word meaning to cease. It can also be translated as “week.” This represents the weekly worship performed.

The Lord was so adamant about the Sabbath that he stated, “It is holy unto you: everyone that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people” (Exodus 31:14). It was emphasized as a day of rest. The law of Moses mentions keeping the Sabbath and “observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant” as a sign between God and man (see Exodus 31:16-17).

There is little detailed about what to do on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day of rest, but there is only one reference in the Old Testament regarding a weekly worship service (see Leviticus 23:3).

Despite the vague details of Sabbath worship, the Jews made weekly Sabbath worship a strict ritual. During the time of Jesus Christ, the rules and regulations for Sabbath worship were grotesquely distorted from Old Testament teachings in the Law of Moses. Similar to ancient worship, weekly Sabbath (or Sunday) worship is common in most churches today.

What other rituals do we do on a weekly basis?

### SOME USES OF שָׁבַת | SHĀB-BĀTH'

- Isaiah 1:13-14 — “Sabbaths”
- Isaiah 56:1-8 — “Sabbath”
- Isaiah 58:13-14 — “Sabbath”
- Isaiah 66:22-24 — “One sabbath to another”

## ASSEMBLIES

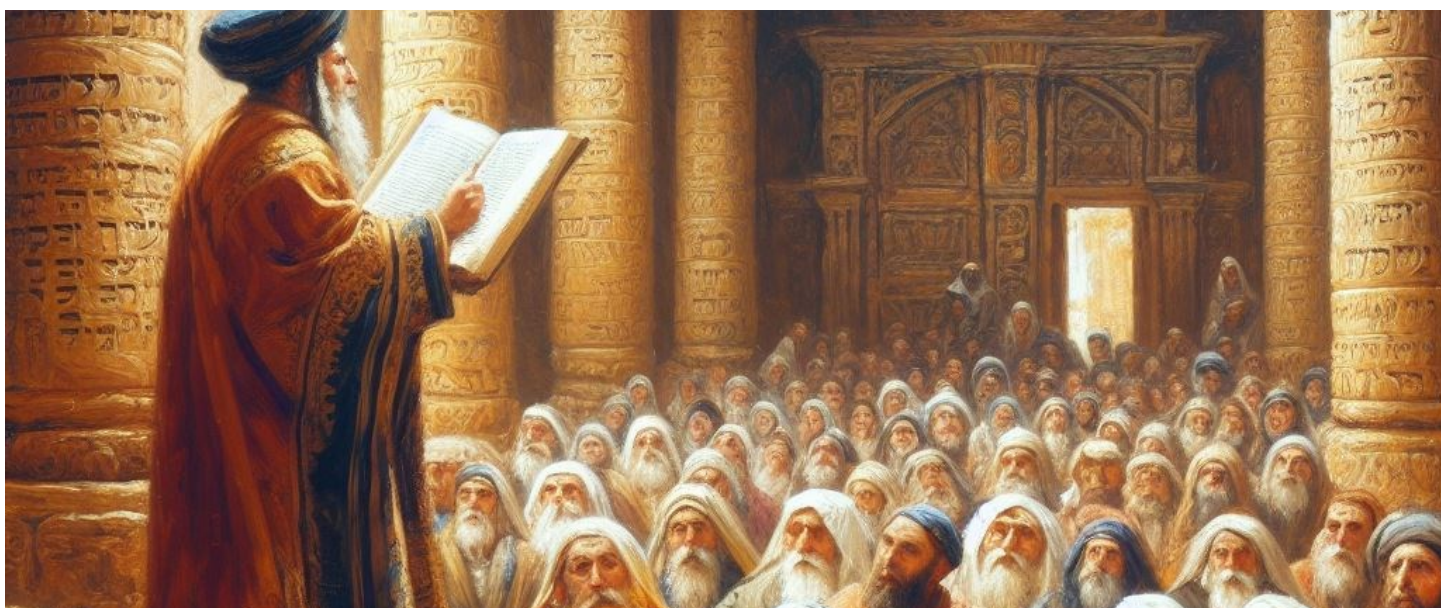
In ancient Israel, there were a handful of different types of “assemblies” or “convocations” in which the people worshiped and celebrated. The Hebrew word מִקְרָא | mēk-rā' means *a calling together or assembly* of any type, but has a connotation of a recitation or reading. It comes from a root word meaning to call out, and basically refers to a public meeting in which something is read or taught. Yet the context of the word used throughout the Old Testament suggests a meeting or assembly for worship purposes.

### SOME USES OF מִקְרָא | MĒK-RĀ'

- Isaiah 1:13-14 — “Assemblies”
- Isaiah 4:5-6 — “Assemblies”

Some of these assemblies were weekly Sabbath meetings (see Leviticus 23:3). Others were in regard to holy convocations during festivals, specifically the Passover (see Exodus 12:16).

What are the holy assemblies that we conduct on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis today?





**SOLEMN ASSEMBLY**

Where the assemblies (מְקָרָא | mēk-rä’) appear to refer to religious gatherings such as weekly meetings, the solemn assembly (עֲצָרָה | ä-tsä-rä’) refers to large assemblies, particularly festivals and feasts. It refers to the holiday gatherings. Isaiah uses this word only once in his book.

In Leviticus and Nehemiah this word is used to describe the feast of the trumpets (see Leviticus 23:36, Nehemiah 8:18). In other passages, this same word is used to describe the feast of the Passover (see Deuteronomy 16:8, Numbers 29:35, and 2 Chronicles 7:9).

What are the festivities, feasts or holidays that we celebrate as a church or religion?

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**SOLEMN ASSEMBLY**

In addition to the weekly and monthly assemblies or meetings (מְקָרָא | mēk-rä’) and the solemn assembly or festivals (עֲצָרָה | ä-tsä-rä’), the Lord adds appointed feasts. The Hebrew word מוֹעֵד | mō-äd’ means *fixed* or *appointed festivals* or *times* or *seasons*. In Leviticus 23, the Lord lists the fixed feasts. He lists the feast of the Passover, the feast of the unleavened bread, the feast of the trumpets, the day of atonement, and the feast of the tabernacles. “These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations” (Leviticus 23:37).

Below are additional brief details on each feast.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

1. When the Lord uses Isaiah to condemn the worship rituals of ancient Israel, how does that correlate to our modern-day worship practices?
2. Is the Lord angry with our current worship practices and rituals? How may they be distorted?
3. What are our daily, weekly, monthly, semi-annual, and annual traditions that Isaiah symbolizes in this verse, and why is the Lord “weary” of them?
4. How do we make these holy again before the Lord?

**NOTES**

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## VOLUNTARY OFFERINGS

There are seven feasts prescribed in the Law of Moses. The symbolism of the number seven is very significant. Some will add an eighth feast, which is the weekly feasts of the Sabbath worship. Leviticus 23 does mention the Sabbath. The Lord says to Moses, “Six days shall work be done; but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein; it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings” (Leviticus 23:3). Since we mentioned the Sabbath early, we’ll mention the others here.

Perhaps one of the most used and most well-known symbolic number, seven represents the perfect completion of spiritual things. God created the world in seven days, symbolizing the completion of a spiritually perfect creation. “On the seventh day, I, God, ended my work, and all things which I had made; and I rested on the seventh day from all my work; and all things which I had made were finished. And I, God, saw that they were good” (Genesis 2:2).

The first four feasts were spring-time feasts: Feasts of the Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Pentecost. The last three were in the fall: Feasts of the Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles

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### FEAST OF THE PASSOVER

The Passover was a reminder of when the Lord passed over the Israelites as he sent destroying plagues and angels against the Egyptians (see Exodus 12:13-14). The sign given to the destroying angel was the blood on the door frame. Symbolically, they were saved by virtue of the blood of the sacrificed lamb, which represented Jesus Christ.

This feast was observed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. This is usually in April, according to our Gregorian calendars. Each family set aside a male lamb a few days before the feast began. On the 4<sup>th</sup> day, Moses said that each family was to kill a lamb and strike the top and sides of the doorway with the hyssop that was used to sop the blood. That night, the lamb was roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, to be eaten in haste.

After the exodus, and during the temple year (or Isaiah’s time period) they would sacrifice the lambs in the evening, then the eating of the meal would begin before sundown and last throughout the night. The new day in ancient Israel began with sundown (or when there were three stars visible in the sky). They would eat at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> day and into the 15<sup>th</sup>, the full moon. That would start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

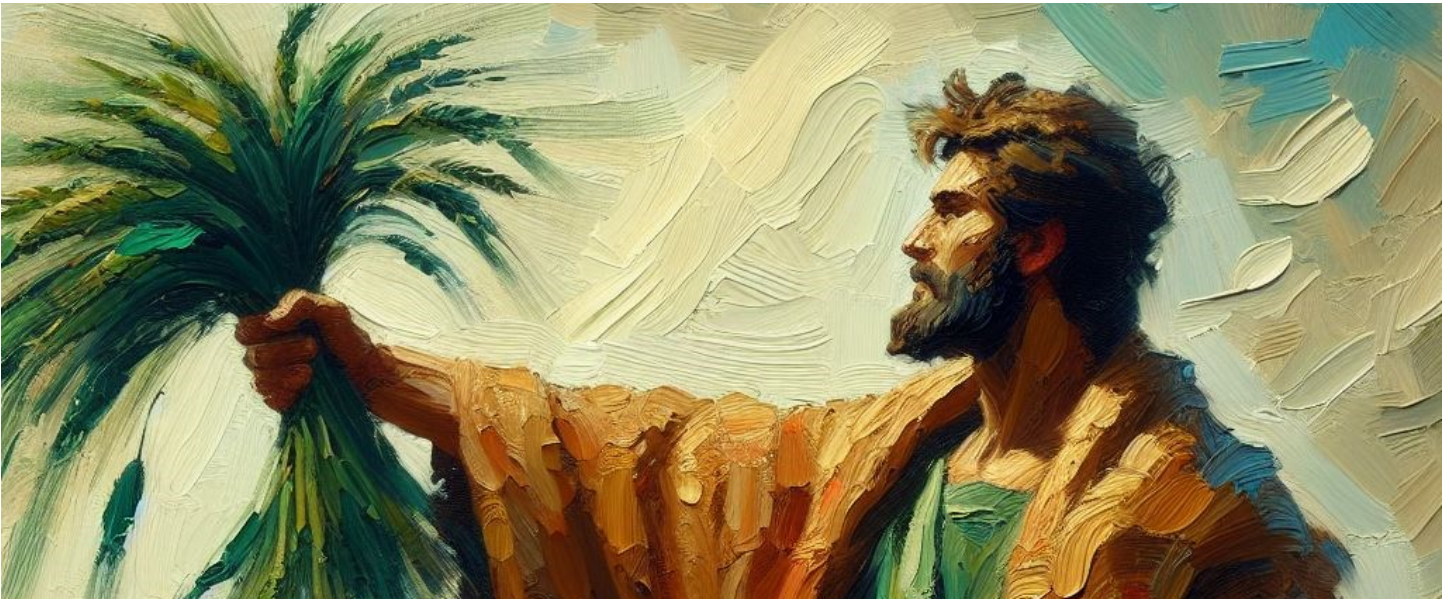
Though today Passover is celebrated over seven days, the Passover is really the first day of the festivals, which leads into the Feast of Unleavened Bread.



## FEAST OF THE UNLEAVENED BREAD

This feast was in conjunction with the Passover and was intended to commemorate God's delivery of Israel out of Egypt (see Exodus 12:17). It was a celebration lasting seven days. It starts in the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> day. Where our new day starts at midnight, the new day for ancient Israel started at sundown. The unleavened bread, or מַצֵּה | mäts-tsä', is eaten in remembrance of the deliverance of Israel.

The Lord required that for seven days they would put away all leaven, meaning they would only eat unleavened breads. Not only could they not use leaven, they could not even have it in the house. There would be a "holy convocation" or "assembly" on the first and seventh days where no one worked. Also for seven days they would "offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days" (Leviticus 23:8).



## FEAST OF THE FIRST FRUITS

The day after the Sabbath following the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of the First Fruits began. This festivity celebrated God's creation of fertile lands. They would take a sheaf of green barley and the priest would wave it before the Lord. This would start the first day of the 49-day countdown to Shavu'ot (or Pentecost). Then a male lamb was sacrificed along with a meat and drink offering. After the sacrifice was made the crop could be used.

*Note the use of unleavened bread in the meat offering and wine as the drink offering that was offered up with the unblemished male lamb. Think of the symbolism in our day compared to our sacraments.*

Interestingly, this holiday is celebrated as Easter in our day today, which comes from the pagan goddess of fertility *Ishtar*. If you think about it, we recognize items of fertility on this day, including rabbits and eggs. But the celebration was originally meant to celebrate the first planting and the first fruits that came up from the earth. Ultimately, today we recognize the Lord as the First Fruits and we celebrate his resurrection on this day.

## FEAST OF WEEKS (OR PENTECOST)

On the fiftieth day from the Feast of the First Fruits starts the Feast of Weeks. This usually occurs somewhere in May or June. This is in remembrance of receiving the commandments from Mount Sinai. Exactly seven weeks from the exodus from Egypt, the house of Israel was at the foot of Mount Sinai (see Leviticus 23:15-17).

Whereas the other feasts were all done with unleavened bread, the Feast of Weeks was baked with leaven. After giving of grain offering, they sacrificed seven lambs (without blemish of the first year), one bullock, and two rams with their accompanied meat and drink offerings. Then a kid goat was given as a sin offering and two additional lambs for a peace offering. In Leviticus the people were then instructed they are not to clear the corners of their fields or the gleanings in their harvest, but to leave those for the poor.

## FEAST OF THE TRUMPETS

On the first day of the seventh month—around September or October—begins the Feast of the Trumpets. This feast is called Rosh Hashanah, or *head of the year*. It is the celebration of the Hebrew new year. Tradition says that the earth was created on this day, particularly the 6<sup>th</sup> day when God created Adam.

This feast lasts for ten days culminating in the Day of Atonement on the 10<sup>th</sup> day. A shofar is blown several times throughout the day. In later rabbinical times, they blew it 100 times. The sound of the shofar is supposed to wake us from our slumbering state and starts the ten days of repentance.



## DAY OF ATONEMENT (YOM KIPPUR)

On the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the blowing of the shofar, the Lord says, “On the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (Leviticus 23:27).

Every holiday the Lord prescribed in Leviticus 23 is considered a Sabbath, and it was forbidden to do any work. “It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls; in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath” (Leviticus 23:32). Yom Kippur is considered the holiest day of the Hebrew year. This was the only day that the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies.

## FEAST OF THE TABERNACLES

Five days later, on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month, the Feast of Tabernacles (סֻכּוֹת | sü-kōt') begins and lasts for seven days. On the eighth day there is a holy convocation. "It is a solemn assembly," the Lord says in Leviticus 23:36.

This feast celebrated how the Lord provided shelter for the Israelites while they were in the wilderness. Some of the more devout Jews would build little booths or huts outside their houses and eat meals and worship in them. It was only later, after Israel entered their promised land, that they started associating the Feast of Tabernacles with the harvest.

On the first day of the sixth month is the start of Elul. This is where it is believed that Moses ascended Mount Sinai and was gone for 40 days. After the ten days of repentance, Moses returned on the Day of Atonement. It is said that he had brought with him the instructions on building the tabernacle.

The ten days from the Feast of the Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) to the Day of Atonement represents a time of mourning and repenting. Conversely, the week of the Feast of Tabernacles represents a time of celebration of God's presence, his goodness, and the bountiful harvest.

### NOTES:

## #3—HANDS FULL OF BLOOD

**T**he Lord declared to the leaders and people of ancient Israel that he will not hear their prayers because “your hands are full of blood” (Isaiah 1:15). Yet his words are pointed at us today. It seems startling to think that the Lord is accusing us of murder.

How are our hands full of blood? If we look at the chiastic pattern in this section of Isaiah’s writings, we see Isaiah links the blood on our hands with the blood of sacrifices. Taking into consideration the symbolism of the sacrificial offerings used in Isaiah’s writings, it is very sobering to realize what Isaiah is implying.

The Savior condemned the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. He said, “Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in” (Matthew 23:13). To keep a person from entering the kingdom of God is equivalent in the Lord’s eyes to blood on our hand. Pray we are not barring the entrance to the kingdom of heaven with our own policies, procedures, or beliefs.

There is an intriguing chiasm that plays out in Isaiah 1:11-15. The Lord will not bear our iniquities much longer (E). When we come before the Lord in prayer (B/B’), in our monthly and weekly rituals and meetings, and even in our most holy meetings (C and D/C’ and D’), the Lord asks why we have come or “who required this” of us.

Unfortunately, he will not hear our prayers because we do not worship with pure and real intent, but have come with vain offerings. Though we offer figuratively the blood of burnt offerings (A), which anciently in this verse suggest the sin and trespass (guilt) offerings, because of our iniquities we are not washed by the blood of the Savior, but rather our hands are stained with the blood of those bullocks, lambs, and goats (A’). The blood of sin remains on our hands.

**A** I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the **blood** of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

**B** When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; **incense** is an abomination unto me;

**C** the **new moons** and **sabbaths**,

**D** the calling of **assemblies**,

**E** I cannot away with; **it is iniquity**,

**D'** even the **solemn meeting**.

**C'** Your **new moons** and your **appointed feasts** my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

**B'** And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many **prayers**, I will not hear;

**A'** your hands are full of **blood**.

## SCRIPTURE REVIEW

- Genesis 4:9-12
- Isaiah 1:11-15
- Isaiah 4:3-4
- Isaiah 59:1-8
- Jeremiah 19:3-5
- Matthew 27:3-8



**QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

1. Describe the symbolism of how the sacrifices can make our hands bloody?
2. After reading the scripture review, what do the word-links suggest about the actions of ancient Israel?
3. How does that reflect how the Lord sees us today?
4. What can we do to wash the blood off our hands?

**NOTES**

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## SECTION 2: COME AND SEE THE LORD

*Let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, ‘Son thou shalt be exalted.’ When the Lord has thoroughly proved him and finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazard, then the man will find his calling and election made sure. Then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter which the Lord hath promised the saints.*

~ Joseph Smith<sup>1</sup>

**T**he purpose of the temple of God is at least two-fold. One purpose is to create a holy place as a medium between God and man where we can commune with the Divine in purity. The temple and tabernacle rituals of ancient Israel accentuate this idea through the symbolism in the sacrifices, performances, and items within the temple and tabernacle. But the main purpose of temple worship is to learn how to be like God and come to him while still in the flesh. Our modern-day temple rituals highlight this idea, especially as you journey through the ordinances of the temple and pass through the veil.

## #1—HEBREW: COMING TO SEE THE LORD

**I**n Isaiah 1:12 (KJV), the Lord asked, “when ye come to appear before me, who hath required this of your hand, to tread my courts?” The phrase “to appear before me” is written in Hebrew as follows:

כִּי תִבְאוּ לִרְאוֹת פָּנַי

We better understand this verse as we parse it out:

## SCRIPTURE REVIEW

- John 17:1-4
- 2 Peter 1
- D&C 93:1

פָּנַי | pā-nāē'

plural noun  
with suffix “my”  
“...my face.”

- Face, countenance
- Surface, front, forepart
- Appearance, exterior, person, personal presence

לִרְאוֹת | lā-rā-ōth'

verb.Niphal.infinitive ה-א-ג  
Niphal is a simple passive verb form  
“...to be seen...”

- To be seen
- To show or reveal oneself, to appear
- To be shown

תִּבְאוּ | thā-vō'-ü

verb.2mp.Qal.imperf א-ו-ב  
Qal is a simple active verb form  
“...you all will come...”

- To enter or come in or into
- Come (with), to reach or arrive
- To go (in)

כִּי | kē

conjunction  
“When...”

- The conjunction כִּי means *that, so that, because, when, for,* etc.

In the parsing above, each word is broken down into its simplest parts. In the most basic word-for-word translation, this phrase might say, “When you all will come to be seen of my face....” You can see that the King James’ version carries the idea of this passage, but the word-use dilutes the meaning.

רְאוֹת comes from the word רָאָה | rā-ā' meaning *to see* (both literally or figuratively). It is in the niphil benyan, which is the simple passive verb form, *to be seen*. פָּנַי | pā-nēm', means *face* though can also be used as the prepositions *before*. So the Lord is asking why we have come to be seen by his face, or in other words, why have we come to behold his face, and he ours?

1. “Discourse, between circa 26 June and circa 2 July 1839, as Reported by Willard Richards,” p. 19-20, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 21, 2020, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/discourse-between-circa-26-june-and-circa-2-july-1839-as-reported-by-willard-richards/5>.



Below are translations from various editions of the Bible.

- **KJV, JST, NASB translations:** “When ye come to appear before me....”
- **Great Isaiah Scroll translation:** “When you come to see my face....”
- **Avraham Gileadi translation:** “When you come to see me....”
- **My translation:** “When you come to appear before my face....”

What is your translation of this verse? \_\_\_\_\_

## SEEKING THE FACE OF GOD

As you read the scripture review, you will see that from the beginning of time there are records of men and women who transcend beyond the veil and come into the presence of God. The evidence is irrefutable. Yet in practice today, this is an unpopular and contested doctrine. It is ironic that we believe and teach that men and women of ancient days had the privilege of coming to see their God, but that in our day it is discouraged and disbelieved. Below are some of those teachings.

### THE LORD’S TEACHINGS

The Lord declared to Joseph Smith, “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).



John testified that eternal life is to know the “only true God, and Jesus Christ,” whom he sent to us (see John 17:3). Joseph Smith equated this process of knowing to receiving one’s calling and election and the Second Comforter. “Oh! I beseech you to go forward, go forward and make your calling and your election sure,” he declared. <sup>2</sup> Peter the apostle likewise gave admonition to “give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:10).

### THE MAINSTREAM BELIEFS

In contrast, Dallin Oaks, an apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) taught, “All of the righteous desire to see the face of our Savior, but the suggestions that this must happen in mortality is a familiar tactic of the adversary: to identify a worthy goal, such as to achieve exaltation, and then to use the desirability of that goal and people’s enthusiasm for it to obscure the new means the adversary suggests to achieve it.” <sup>3</sup>

Years later, when asked about how we can receive an experience like Alma in the Book of Mormon, the same man, Dallin Oaks, said, “I don’t think you’re likely to have that kind of experience.... Most of us don’t have that kind of experience.... I’ve never had an experience like that and I don’t know anyone among the First Presidency or

## SCRIPTURE REVIEW

### THEY SAW GOD FACE-TO-FACE

- Enoch (Moses 7:3-4)
- Noah (Genesis 6:8-9)
- Brother of Jared (Ether 3:1-16)
- Abraham (Abraham 2:6-12; Genesis 18:1-8)
- Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5)
- Jacob (Genesis 32:24-32)
- Moses (Moses 1)
- Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15)
- Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1-4)
- Lehi (1 Nephi 1:8-13)
- Nephi & Jacob (2 Nephi 11:2-3)
- Joseph Smith (JSH 1:16-17)

2. “History, 1838–1856, volume F-1 [1 May 1844–8 August 1844],” p. 19, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed September 17, 2020, web.

3. “Full Transcription of Boise Meeting with Dallin H. Oaks.” Address given Sunday, June 21, 2015, at Boise Idaho. Transcript Accessed 9 March 2022 on the web.

Quorum of the Twelve who have had that experience.”<sup>4</sup>

In line with these statements, Cassanda Hedelius, an apologist for the LDS church, identified within the church an apostate group she calls *Mormon Gnosticism*. She stated one of the “hallmark attributes” of those in this apostate group include the following: “An inordinate interest in the Second Comforter, complaints that the Church does not teach such subjects enough, and belief that books or teachings by individuals other than Church leaders are the best way to obtain these teachings.”<sup>5</sup>

Current Christian theology teaches it is “impossible in the earthly realm” to see the Lord face to face. “God is therefore inaccessible to mortal man on a face-to-face basis.... In heaven, since we will be free from sin, we will see God’s glory unveiled in its fulness.”<sup>6</sup>

**CHOOSING YOUR PATH**

There is a contradiction between mainstream teachings and the Lord’s teachings. It’s almost as if there is a fork in the road when pursuing the face of Christ. Though the two paths should not be mutually exclusive, it appears that one has to choose which path they will follow. To seek after the face of Christ may mean swimming against the current of the mainstream beliefs. To swim with the current will likely take us further away from our goal of seeing the Lord.



**QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

1. What does it mean to you to see the face of the Lord?
2. Does your interpretation of seeing God’s face differ from mainstream teachings? If so, how?
3. How can you come to see the face of the Lord?

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4. Dallin H. Oaks. Audio recording of a question and answer session with young church members in a multi-stake youth fireside in Bellevue, Washington, 23 January 2016. Accessed 9 March 2022 on the web.  
 5. R. Scott Lloyd, “FairMormon Conference Speaker Identifies a Spiritual Threat,” *Church News*, 19 August 2015. Accessed 18 September 2020 on the web.  
 6. “Will We See God’s Face?” Adapted from John F. MacArthur, *The Glory of Heaven*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1996), 143-46. Accessed 5 February 2024 on the web.

## #2—SEEKING THE LORD IN TEMPLES

**T**he previous section should clarify the objective of our worship. When we sit in our chapels and sanctuaries and take our sacraments, why are we there? When we worship in the temple, why do we go? When we go to temples or houses of worship to make sacrifices, who sent us there? Are we going because we have been asked by our leaders or it is what we are “supposed” to do? Is it because everyone else is doing it? Or do we do it with real intent in our hearts, seeking that the Lord will respect and receive our offerings? The Lord sees through all of our charades and facades and directly into our heart.

The Lord lamented over our vain worship. “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my



ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?” (Isaiah 58:1-3). Though we perform our regular and routine ritual rites and say that we seek after the Lord, it is apparent that the Lord thinks otherwise.

### SCRIPTURE REVIEW

- Genesis 4:1-6
- Moses 5:4-8; 20-26
- Exodus 20:18-21
- 2 Samuel 24:18-25
- Proverbs 15:8
- Isaiah 43:22-28
- Isaiah 56:3-8
- Isaiah 57:6-12
- Isaiah 58:1-3
- Matthew 5:21-24
- 3 Nephi 9:15-22
- 1 Peter 4:17-18
- Manti 5:11 (*see the Mentinab Archives*)
- D&C 97:8

### QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Ask yourself: Am I seeking the Lord, to behold his face? Or do I allow someone else to talk to God for me?
2. What are you personally doing to seek the face of God?
3. How do you actively keep this in your mind and heart?
4. What are the symbols in the temple that point us toward God and bring us to his feet?

### NOTES

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## SECTION 3: THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

*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.*

~ Moroni quoting Malachi (JS-History 1:39)

**T**he Lord is angry with us because we worship with the wrong intent. We show our devotion to God by multiplying our ordinances and increasing the frequency of temple attendance without amplifying our righteous purpose. In other words, we as a people appear more interested in the quantity of our service to God rather than the quality. Remembering that the Lord first looks at the conditions of our hearts—rather than the actions of our hands—should give us pause to worship with *real* intent.

### #1—INTERPRETING THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

**I**n the angelic visitation of Moroni to Joseph Smith, Moroni quoted the prophecy in Malachi that Elijah would return before the “coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Joseph stated, “He also quoted the next verse [Malachi 4:6] differently [from the Bible]: 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” (Joseph Smith

History 1:38-39). Our interpretations of this doctrine often return to Malachi’s original statement—or at least that which was recorded in the Bible—which states: “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6).

And so, using this version of the scripture, we attempt to do as many ordinances as we can hoping perhaps that quantity will balance out the quality, lest the earth be “utterly wasted” when the Lord comes. This is because we believe that the turning of our hearts to our ancestral fathers means that we look to our progenitors. However, in our zeal to perform our multitude of ordinances as possible, we have somehow missed the key word-links that suggest we should first gain for ourselves the covenant promises of our ancient fathers, not our immediate ancestors. Note the difference in the two statements:



#### JOSEPH SMITH HISTORY 1:39

*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 .*

#### MALACHI 4:6

*And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.*

Joseph Smith gave a speech on the priesthood in 1840. He quoted Malachi 3:3, “And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” In discussing sacrifices and the temple worship of ancient days, he said the following:

*We frequently have mention made of the offering of Sacrifice by the servants of the most high in ancient days prior to the law of Moses, See which ordinances will be continued when the priesthood is restored with all its authority power and blessing. Elijah was the last prophet that held the keys of this priesthood, and will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and delive[r] the Keys of this priesthood in order that all the ordinances may be attended to in righteousness. <sup>6</sup>*



**QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

1. What key differences do you see in the two passages quoted on the previous page?
2. What key similarities do you see?
3. What ordinances have been restored in our day?
4. What ordinances are there that have yet to be restored?

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6. The Words of Joseph Smith, 5 Oct 1840 pp 42-43

## #2—UNDERSTANDING THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

**W**hat is the spirit of Elijah? It is a linking power between heaven and earth, and is intended not only to bind ourselves to God, but bind our ancestors to ourselves, and thus also to God. Joseph Smith said the following:

*Again the doctrine or sealing power of Elijah is as follows, if you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be Crafty, the first thing you do go & seal on earth your sons & daughters unto yourself, & yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory, & go ahead and not go back, but use a little Craftiness & seal all you can; & when you get to heaven tell your father that what you seal on earth should be sealed in heaven I will walk through the gate of heaven and Claim what I seal & those that follow me & my Council. <sup>7</sup>*

## SCRIPTURE REVIEW

- 1 Kings 17-19
- 2 Kings 2-6
- Isaiah 43:22-24
- Malachi 4
- Matthew 16:18-19
- Helaman 10:2-11
- JSH 1:36-41
- D&C 54:23-24
- D&C 110:13-16

The spirit of Elijah also includes the power to seal other things both in heaven and in earth. We have seen this power used by various prophets throughout the ages. As you follow the story of Elijah, you begin to understand portions of the power of heaven he accessed. We also see his successor, Elisha, access some of that power.

### THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH: BEING CALLED & ELECTED

There is much confusion on the doctrine taught as the “Spirit of Elijah.” Many churches teach and understand little about it. The LDS church has the most extensive literature on the subject, but still only teaches this doctrine as it suits their present agenda. They teach only partial aspects of the doctrine to encourage temple attendance and ordinances for the deceased. One president of the church, Russell Nelson, taught “this is the spirit of Elijah, that we redeem our dead, and connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven.... This is the power of Elijah and the keys of the kingdom of Jehovah.” He continued to encourage members to be “temple-attending and temple-loving” people.

His quote comes directly from a discourse taught by Joseph Smith on 10 March 1844. However, he failed to extrapolate on Joseph’s intent, which was to teach people how to ascend to heaven, not busy themselves in temple work, but by penetrating heaven through the veil. The previous quote above was from this same discourse. Below are additional quotes from Joseph Smith during that discourse in 1844.

*The spirit power & calling of Elijah is that ye have power to hold the keys of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers & endowments of the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood & of the Kingdom of God on the Earth & to receive, obtain & perform all ordinances belonging to the Kingdom of God even unto the sealing of the hearts of the fathers unto the children & the hearts of the children unto the fathers even those who are in heaven. <sup>8</sup>*

*What you seal on earth by the Keys of Elijah is sealed in heaven, & this is the difference between the spirit & power of Elias and Elijah, for while the spirit of Elias is a forerunner, the power of Elijah is sufficient to make our calling & Election sure, & the same doctrine where we are exhorted to go on unto perfection not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works but of laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, etc. <sup>9</sup>*

7. Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook, compilers and editors, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, (Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University, 1980), p 331.

8. Ibid, p 329.

9. Ibid, p 330.

*The spirit of Elias is first, Elijah second, and Messiah last. Elias is a forerunner to prepare the way, & the spirit & power of Elijah is to come after holding the keys of power building the Temple to the Capstone, placing the seals of the Melchizedek priesthood up on the house of Israel, & making all things ready then Messiah comes to his Temple which is the last of all... Elijah was to come & prepare the way & buildup the kingdom before the coming of the great day of the Lord. <sup>10</sup>*



*Make your calling and election sure, go on from grace to grace until you obtain a promise from God for yourselves that you shall have eternal life. This is eternal life, to know God and his son Jesus Christ, it is to be sealed up unto eternal life and obtain a promise for our posterity. Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, this is the power of Elijah to seal or bind or turn the hearts of the fathers to their children sealed against all sin but the sin of shedding innocent blood and the Sin against the holy ghost. <sup>11</sup>*

*This power of Elijah is to that of Elias what in the architecture of the Temple of God those who seal or cement the Stone to their places are to those who cut or hew the stones, the one preparing the way for the other to accomplish the work. By this we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, i.e., Elijah.*

*To obtain this sealing is to make our calling and election sure which we ought to give all diligence to accomplish. <sup>12</sup>*

### QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. After studying the scriptures and reading these quotes, how would you describe the spirit and power of Elijah?
2. What evidences of this spirit and power do you see in our current religious environments?
3. What does it mean to receive your Calling & Election?
4. What can you do to receive that promise?

### NOTES

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10. Ibid, p 331-332.

11. Ibid, p 334.

12. Ibid, p 335





## UNIT NOTES

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