

Psalms 49-51; 61-66; 69-72; 77-78; 85-86

Episode 166 Show Notes

Psalm 49: Wisdom, Wealth, and Redemption

1. "My mouth shall speak of wisdom" (Ps. 49.3).
2. "That that trust in wealth" (Ps. 49.6).
3. Being redeemed and brought into the presence of God (Ps. 49.14-15).¹
 - a. "Like sheep they are laid in the grave... God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave"²
 - b. מִיַּד יְקֹחֵנִי אֱלֹהִים "from the hand of Sheol he will take me" (Ps. 49.15 my translation).³

¹ The meaning of "redeemed" is found throughout the Book of Mormon, where the words "redeem," "redeemed," and "Redeemer" usually mean the same thing as in Job: "yet in my flesh shall I see God." It is the opposite of "second death," which is to be excluded from the presence of God. In the Book of Mormon, the "Redeemer" is the One who makes that return possible, because he is the God to whom one first returns. The definition of "redeem" is given by Samuel the Lamanite when he said, "the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea, even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord." Baker and Ricks, [Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?: The Psalms in Israel's Temple Worship In the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon](#), Eborn Books, 2010, p. 514.

² Translations of these versus vary. Berlin and Brettler, [The Jewish Study Bible](#), p. 1337, give the following:

Sheeplike they head for Sheol,
with Death as their shepherd.
The upright shall rule over them at daybreak,
and their form shall waste away in Sheol
till its nobility be gone.
But God will redeem my life from the clutches of
Sheol,
for He will take me.

Alter translates it "from the grip of Sheol He will take me." Robert Alter, [The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary](#), Volume 3, p. 129.

³ Robert Alter translates this as follows, "But God will ransom my life, from the grip of Sheol He will take me." Alter, p. 129. This can be read as a resurrection text, something the Old Testament is lacking when compared to the Book of Mormon. [The Book of Mormon](#) teaches that the resurrection is not isolated from the other parts of God's plan of redemption. In the Book of Mormon, the Creation, Fall, birth of Jesus Christ, Atonement, Resurrection, and Judgment are all inseparably connected as parts of God's plan for His children. The Book of Mormon teaches Christ's Resurrection as the way in which humanity can overcome our spiritual and physical deaths that were brought about by the Fall of Adam and Eve and our own transgressions, and return to the presence of God to be judged, in our bodies, according to our thoughts, words, and deeds. [Alma 42:23](#) states that, "the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God ... to be judged according to their works." **The Book of Mormon and Bible together explain that everyone will be resurrected.** Paul stated that, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" ([1 Corinthians 15:22](#)), and that, "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" ([Acts 24:15](#)). Despite these statements, there are [some Christians](#) which do not believe that everyone will be resurrected. The Book of Mormon plainly teaches that the resurrection is universal: "The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time." Ultimately, **"this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost"** ([Alma 11:43-44](#)).

4. “For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away” (Ps. 49.17).

Psalm 50: God shall come, A day of new sacrifices, the counsel of the Wicked

1. “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence” (Ps. 50.3).
 - a. Let our God come and not be silent. Before Him fire consumes, and round about Him—great storming. Let Him call to the heavens above and to the earth to judge his people” (Ps. 5.3-4, Alter translation).⁴
2. “The heavens shall declare his righteousness” (Ps. 50.6).
3. “If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” (Ps. 50.12-13)⁵
4. God’s counsel to the wicked (Ps. 50.16-23).
 - a. These verses remind us of the discussion Alma and Amulek have regarding the wicked in Alma 14.1-11.⁶

Psalm 51: Asking for Forgiveness, Wanting a New Heart⁷

1. “I feel he has suffered enough!”⁸

⁴ Robert Alter, [*The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary, Volume 3: The Writings*](#), W. W. Norton & Co., 2019, p. 130.

⁵ Baker and Ricks write, “The admonition in Ps. 50.13-14 sounds remarkably like the account of the conclusion of King Benjamin’s New Year festival ceremony... The other is Psalm 51 (discussed above), which introduces this new sacrifice with an acknowledgment of the necessity to first become personally clean. It is likely that the intent of those psalms was to teach that the time would come when blood sacrifices would no longer be acceptable. But that time had not come yet.” Baker and Ricks, [*Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?: The Psalms in Israel’s Temple Worship in the Old Testament and in the Book of Mormon*](#), Eborn Books, 2010, p. 453-4.

Robert Alter gives a different interpretation. “It is now made clear that God is not calling for a categorical abolition of sacrifices. If a man needs to give thanks to God, or if he has vowed an offering, the sacrifice (whether animal or grain) is an appropriate act. But no one should imagine that God somehow depends on sacrifice.” Alter, p. 131.

⁶ When Amulek asks, “How can we witness this awful scene?” Alma responds, “The Spirit constraineth me that I must not stretch forth mine hand; for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory; and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day” ([Alma 14.11](#)).

⁷ Some scholars affirm that this psalm is exilic or early postexilic. See: Berlin and Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1338.

⁸ As a General Authority, I have prepared information for the First Presidency to use in considering applications to readmit repentant transgressors into the Church and to restore priesthood and temple blessings. Many times a bishop will write, “I feel he has suffered enough!” But suffering is not repentance. Suffering comes from lack of complete repentance. A stake president will write, “I feel he has been punished enough!” But punishment is not repentance. Punishment follows disobedience and precedes repentance. A husband will write, “My wife has confessed everything!” But confession is not repentance. Confession is an admission of guilt that occurs as repentance begins. A wife will write, “My husband is filled with remorse!” But remorse is not repentance. Remorse and sorrow continue because a person has not yet fully repented. Suffering, punishment, confession, remorse, and sorrow may sometimes accompany repentance, but they are not repentance...The meaning of repentance is not that people be punished, but rather that they change their lives so that God can help them escape eternal punishment and enter into his rest with joy and rejoicing. Theodore Burton, [“The Meaning of Repentance,”](#) *Ensign*, Aug. 1988, 7-8.

2. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness" רַחֵם נַפְשִׁי אֱלֹהִים כְּרַחֲמֶיךָ
3. "Cleanse me from my sin" (Ps. 51.2).
4. "In sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51.5).⁹

⁹ So extreme are the psalmist's guilt feelings that he sees himself as sinful even before birth; in other words, he is, by nature, a sinful being. The idea of the inherent sinfulness of humans is rarely expressed in the Hebrew Bible, except for Gen. 8.21 : "the devisings of man's mind are evil from his youth" (see also Job 25.4). Christianity developed the notion of original sin. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1339. [Another commentator](#) stated, "**While The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that the transgression of Adam and Eve brought death into the world and made all mortals subject to temptation, suffering, and weakness, it denies that any culpability is automatically transmitted to Adam and Eve's offspring.** All mortals commit sin, but they will be punished "for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" (A of F 2).

IN OTHER FAITHS. The doctrine of original sin as taught traditionally states that, due to the Fall of Adam, infants are born tainted with actual sin, resulting in the "privation of sanctifying grace"; this dogma "does not attribute to the children of Adam any properly so-called responsibility for the act of their father," nor is it a voluntary sin "in the strict sense of the word," yet it is a "real sin" (S. Harent, "Original Sin," in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1911 ed., Vol. 11, p. 315). All people, according to this doctrine, except the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ, inherit an actual, existing personal guilt (see [Immaculate Conception](#)). A corollary of this belief is the doctrine of infant baptism, holding that infants are to be baptized to remove this sin because those who die without baptism remain unsanctified and forever excluded from heaven and the presence of God.

The doctrine of original sin derives from an interpretation given to the writings of Paul, particularly [Romans 5.12-21](#) by some theologians of the second and third centuries. More than any other, **Augustine in the fifth century transformed Paul's teachings on the Fall into the doctrine of original sin.** His views were adopted as doctrine and formally canonized by the decrees of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century. According to this view, Adam's sin is considered "original" because it arose with the "origin" of man. (See: [The Catholic Encyclopedia, Original Sin](#)).

Protestantism largely accepts this doctrine. John Calvin stated: "We believe that all the posterity of Adam is in bondage to original sin, which is a hereditary evil" (R. Reed, *The Gospel as Taught by Calvin* [Grand Rapids, Mich., 1979], p. 33). Protestant views emphasize the inherited nature of the sin, reflecting the German word for "original sin," *Erbsunde* (literally "inherited sin"). Rabbinic Judaism teaches of two inclinations, one evil and one good; and some Jews consider "circumcision as a means of escaping damnation" (Samuel Cohon, *Essays in Jewish Theology* [Cincinnati, Ohio, 1987], p. 265).

IN LDS DOCTRINE. Latter-day Saints believe that infants inherit certain effects of the Fall, but not the responsibility for any sin as a result of Adam's or Eve's transgression. From the foundation of the world, the Atonement of Jesus Christ makes amends "for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam" ([Mosiah 3:11](#)). Therefore, **baptism is not needed until children reach a state of accountability**, generally at the age of eight years, for little children cannot sin and are innocent (see [Children: Salvation of Children](#)). They are redeemed from the beginning by the grace of Jesus Christ ([D&C 29:46-47](#)), whose Atonement cleanses them of the effects of the Fall ([D&C 137:10](#)). The Prophet Mormon wrote the following words of Christ: "Little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them" ([Moro. 8:8](#)).

In one account in the Pearl of Great Price, Adam learned that he had been forgiven for his transgression in the Garden of Eden, and that "the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children" ([Moses 6:54](#)). However, as a consequence of the Fall, evil is present in the world and all "**children are conceived in sin, [and] so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good**" ([Moses 6:55](#)). Begetting children in marriage is not a sin (cf. [Heb. 13:4](#)), but the propensity for sin is inherited.

5. “Purge me with hyssop¹⁰... wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps. 51.7).
6. “Blot out all mine iniquities” (Ps. 51.9).
7. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Ps. 51.10).
8. “Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me” (Ps. 51.11).
9. “Then I will teach the transgressors” (Ps. 51.13).
10. “Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God!” (Ps. 51.14).
11. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart” (Ps. 51.17).¹¹

Psalm 61-62: Shelter in the Lord, the Rock of Salvation

1. “Lead me to the rock” (Ps. 61.2).¹²
 - a. 1 Ne. 13.36 “My rock and my salvation” is written in “the book of the Lamb of God” (1 Ne. 13.38).
 - b. 2 Ne. 4.34-35, “My God, the rock of my righteousness.”
 - c. 3 Ne. 14.24, doing God’s sayings makes one wise, and his house is built upon a rock.
 - d. 3 Ne. 18.12-13, “Do these things... for ye are built upon my rock.”
 - e. Helaman 5.12, Build your foundation upon the rock, who is Christ.
2. “I will sing praise unto thy name forever” (Ps. 61.8).
3. “He only is my rock and my salvation... I shall not be greatly moved” (Ps. 62.2, 6-7).
4. “Men of low degree are vanity and men of high degree are a lie” (Ps. 62.9).¹³

No mortal person bears the burden of repenting for Adam's transgression. Nevertheless, all inherit the effects of the Fall: All leave the presence of God at birth, all are subject to physical death, and all will sin in some measure. From the moment of conception, the body inherits the seed of mortality that will eventually result in death, but only as a person becomes accountable and chooses evil over good do personal sins result in further separation from God. Thus Adam was counseled: “Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there” ([Moses 5:57](#)). [Byron Merrill, Original Sin, EOM](#), accessed 7.25.2022.

¹⁰ Hyssop was used in a ritual of purification. The priest dipped the hyssop branch in the blood of a sacrificial animal, then sprinkled it on the impure object or person to expunge the impurity (see Leviticus 14). (The fine hairs on hyssop leaves may have prevented the blood from congealing.) Alternately, hyssop was used to sprinkle water (Numbers 19:18–22) to remove impurities. Alter, p. 133.

¹¹ Prayer is more effective than sacrifices; this stands in stark contrast to the Priestly tradition, which emphasizes the efficacy of sacrifices, largely ignoring prayer. The Jewish Study Bible, p. 1340.

¹² Sigmund Mowinckel asserts that Psalm 61 is a prayer of the king that is given before battle. He writes, “Ps. 61, must be understood in a similar way (similar to Psalm 63), as a prayer accompanying the offerings before the battle, far away from that capital and Temple which the king hopes to see again before long.” Sigmund Mowinckel, [The Psalms in Israel's Worship](#), Volume 1, Eerdmans, 2004, p. 226.

¹³ Another translation of אֶךָ הַבָּל בְּנֵי־אָדָם could read “Certainly vapor are the sons of Adam!” (Ps. 62.9). Alter translates 62.9 as “Only breath—humankind, the sons of man are a lie. On the scales all together they weigh less than a breath.” Alter, p. 153. He explains the verse as follows, “The psalmist now, after the segment-marking *selah*, adds a new element to this meditation on the meaning of trust in God —an Ecclesiastian reflection on the flimsy, fleeting nature of human life. The term *hevel* (“breath” or “vapor,” what the King James Version abstracts into “vanity”) is one that Qohelet uses repeatedly. The Hebrew syntax looks scrambled, but the general sense is clear. In a move of intensification, **the poet, having invoked the proverbial equation of human life with mere breath, now invites us to visualize all of humanity being placed in one pan of a scales and mere breath in the other. The pan with humankind would rise higher, for even breath is more substantial.**”

5. “For thou renderest to every man according to his work” (Ps. 62.12).¹⁴

Psalm 63: A Veil Type-Scene¹⁵

1. “My soul thirsteth for thee” (Ps. 63.1).¹⁶
2. “I have seen thee in the sanctuary” (Ps. 63.2).¹⁷
3. “Thy lovingkindness is better than life” (Ps. 63.3).¹⁸
4. “I will lift up my hands in thy name” (Ps. 63.4).
5. “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness (חֶלֶב וְדָשֵׁן)” (Ps. 63.5).¹⁹
6. “In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice!” (Ps. 63.7).²⁰
 - a. In the Temple’s Holy of Holies, on either side of the throne were two great golden cherubim. Their wings touched the sides of the walls and made a kind of canopy that stretched over the throne; over whoever sat upon that throne; and over the Ark of the

¹⁴ כִּי־אַתָּה תַשְׁלֵם לְאִישׁ כְּמַעֲשָׂיו “For you will restore to man according to their deeds” (Ps. 62.12). The complete text of the LXX version Ps. 62.12 in the Greek reads as follows:

ὅτι τὸ κράτος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σοὶ κύριε τὸ ἔλεος ὅτι σὺ ἀποδώσεις ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. It can be read as follows, “For the power of God and mercy is yours O Lord, since you give back to each person according to their works” (My translation).

See also Alma 29, which says, “I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction” ([Alma 29.4](#)). See also Alma 3, which states, “And in one year were thousands and tens of thousands of souls sent to the eternal world, that **they might reap their rewards according to their works, whether they were good or whether they were bad**, to reap eternal happiness or eternal misery, according to the spirit which they listed to obey, whether it be a good spirit or a bad one. For every man receiveth wages of him whom he listeth to obey, and this according to the words of the spirit of prophecy; therefore let it be according to the truth” ([Alma 3.26-27](#)).

¹⁵ Mowinckel asserts that in Psalm 63 the “author beholds God.” Mowinckel, [The Psalms in Israel’s Worship](#), Volume 2, Eerdmans, 2004, p. 89. Baker and Ricks assert that Psalm 63 is “running over with ancient temple imagery.” Baker and Ricks, p. 665.

¹⁶ The blessing promised in the Beatitudes to “all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness” is that “they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.” ... In the ancient Temple, hungering and thirsting after *zedek* ultimately focused on the coronation ordinances of sonship. As the Holy Ghost comforts, teaches, cleanses (Moroni 6:4), sanctifies (3 Nephi 27:20), and empowers us to transcend the sorrows of this world, its empowerment may imply a restoration and maturation of the garment of light. Baker and Ricks, p. 665-6.

¹⁷ This is similar to other prophets who have seen God at the veil that separates mortals from divine beings. See [Isaiah 6](#) and [Ether 3](#).

¹⁸ לְשִׁבְחִי אֵיךְ־טוֹב חַסְדְּךָ מִחַיִּים שְׂפִתֵי יִשְׁבְּחוּנְךָ “For your *hesed* is better than life. My speech will praise you” (Ps. 63.3).

¹⁹ חֶלֶב וְדָשֵׁן *heleb* and *deshen*, literally “suet and fat,” or the richest part of the beast and *deshen* or fatness, or (figuratively) an abundance. This verse conceptually joins prayer and sacrifice.

²⁰ This could refer to “the secret place of the most High,” which was God’s throne in the Holy of Holies, and “shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” was a reference to the king’s sitting upon the throne in the Holy of Holies overshadowed by the great eagle-like wings of the cherubim. Baker and Ricks, p. 420. Later (p. 627) they write, “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.” See also [Psalm 91.4](#), “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust...” See also: Psalm 57.1, “In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge...”

Covenant which now sat in front of the throne as its footstool (1 Kings 6:24, 8:6-7). The phrases that God “dwellest between the cherubims (Psalm 80:1 and Isaiah 37:16), and “sitteth between the cherubims” (Psalm 99:1), are references to God sitting on his throne, either in his heavenly or in his earthly temple.²¹

- b. Because the throne and its overshadowing wings were symbolic of the reality and power of priesthood and kingship, they were also symbolic of the invitation to receive the gift of eternal life.²²
- c. The Savior repeatedly used the symbol of “coming under the wings” to represent this invitation, of coming unto the Throne of Grace and partaking in all that the Father hath.²³
 - i. We read that the Savior had “healing in his wings” in [2 Nephi 25.13](#), Malachi 4.2, and 3 Nephi 25.2.²⁴

²¹ Baker and Ricks, p. 400-1. They continue, “The throne was patterned after a chariot (1 Chronicles 28:1-21),⁶⁴² representing God’s ability to move among the clouds, and the symbolism of cherubim’s overshadowing wings represented the powerful wings of the celestial cherubim, upon whose majesty God himself is also said to have ridden. For, “he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind” (Psalm 18:10 and 2 Samuel 22:11). **And upon whose wings he invites his children to ride also.** “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

²² Baker and Ricks, p. 402.

²³ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, **how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!** (Matthew 23:37, see Luke 13:34, 3 Nephi 10:4-6, D&C 43:24).

And also as a promise to those who would: [The Savior] will gather his people even **as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings**, even as many as will hearken to my voice and humble themselves before me, and call upon me in mighty prayer (D&C 29:2, see 10:65). Nephi’s statement, resounding as it does with the clarity of the ancient enthronement ordinances, is a testimony of the validity of those ordinances, and an example of their fulfillment:

And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them (2 Nephi 4:25). Baker and Ricks, p. 401-2.

²⁴ There is quite a bit going on here (at least in the Hebrew) as it relates to [Malachi 4.2](#). The text reads as follows: וְזָרְחָה לָכֶם יְרֵאִי שְׁמִי שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָקָה וּמִרְפָּא בְּכַנְפֵיהָ וַיִּצְאֶתְהֶם וּפִשְׁתֶּם כְּעֶגְלֵי מִרְבֵּק: In this passage the “Sun of Righteousness” is feminine, שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָקָה *shemesh tsedâqâh*, which can have many meanings, but is certainly feminine with the suffix at the end of *tsedâqâh*. In one sense this can be speaking of God in a feminine way. I see this as the fulfillment of the Great Lady, meaning the church of Jesus Christ which will bring forth the kingdom of God as found in several passages in Revelation 12. The verb “arise” (וְזָרְחָה) is feminine as well, (literally, “she shall arise”) and the pronominal suffix “Her” for “Her wings” is feminine as well בְּכַנְפֵיהָ “in Her wings.”

Margaret Barker gives another approach to this very peculiar text:

Evidence from Ancient Ugarit confirms the identity of **the king’s heavenly mother who was clothed with the sun**. Their sun goddess, whose two aspects were named Athirat and Rahmay, gave birth to the two aspects of the king named Morning Star and Evening Star... A stela from Ugarit depicts the scene when the king approaches the heavenly throne, under the wings of the sun disc, who represents his heavenly mother. **The sun goddess despite being mother of the royal heir, was known as the Virgin** (KTU 1.15.ii.), as well as the ‘Great Lady who tramples the sea’ and the ‘Creatrix of the gods’ (KTU 1.4.iii.34-35). The seventy sons of El, the gods of the nations, were her

7. “Thy right hand upholdeth me” (Ps. 63.8).²⁵
8. The enemies of the king will “go into the lower parts of the earth” and “shall fall by the sword” (Ps. 63.9-10).
9. “The king shall rejoice in God” (Ps. 63.11).

children, and she was the consort of El Elyon who appears in Genesis 14.20, 22 as God Most High served by the priest-king of Jerusalem named Melchizedek. The fragment of Deuteronomy 32.8-9 found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (and appearing in newer translations such as the NRSV), shows that Israel had known the sons of El. It prompts the question how there came to be two versions of such a sensitive text, since this longer version must have been the one used by the translators of the LXX, i.e. it is the older text:

When the Most High apportioned the nations
 when he divided humankind
 he fixed the boundaries of the peoples
 according to the number of the gods
 The LORD’S own portion was his people,
 Jacob his allotted share. (4QDeut.q)

A millennium and more separates the Ugaritic evidence from the Book of Revelation, but not from the cult of the first temple. **The Woman clothed with the sun** is not the Ugaritic goddess, but **the Hebrew goddess** who was worshipped in Jerusalem until the temple purges in the seventh century BCE. **She is the Queen of Heaven**, the consort of the King, the LORD of Hosts, whom Isaiah had seen in his vision (Isaiah 6.5). The eighth-century prophets, however, spoke of her as the *’almah*, (which the LXX understood to mean Virgin), the mother of the royal child, Immanuel, God with us (Isaiah 7.14) and as the woman who would give birth in Bethlehem to the mighty shepherd of Israel (Micah 5.2-4). **When Malachi warned of the Day of the Lord, he promised that the Sun of Righteousness would rise up with healing ‘in her wings’** (Malachi 4.2, usually translated ‘its wings’). In the Book of Revelation she gives birth to her son and then flies away on eagles’ wings into the desert, to escape the ancient serpent ([Revelation 12.14](#)). See: Margaret Barker, [Revelation of Jesus Christ: Which God Gave to Him to Show to His Servants What Must Soon Take Place \(Revelation 1.1\)](#), Continuum International Publishing; 1st edition (May 1, 2000), p. 200-201, emphasis added.

What does all of this mean? To me, there is certainly several ways that we can analyze this text. I find myself developing new and interesting ways to interpret this. For starters, I acknowledge the difficult translation issues! Certainly the authors of the Book of Mormon plate text had an understanding of these complex issues, and yet in our modern version of the Book of Mormon, we basically have this KJV text. So in one sense those that “fear (God’s) name” will meet Heavenly Mother, **who has healing in her wings**, and they will “grow up as calves,” meaning that they will continue in their progression, away from the storms of mortality and in a place of safety. This to me, is a resurrection type of teaching or ritual. It is a sacred **heavenly embrace** [think “wings” also being outstretched arms] (Wings in this verse come from the word [kanaph](#). The word קנף can be translated as wing, skirt, borders, corners, ends, extremity, feathered, or skirt, corner of a garment. The image of wings outstretched could denote the precursor to an embrace, see [Mormon 6.17](#) where we are told that Jesus stands with open arms to receive us.) with our Heavenly Mother. Heavenly Mother as an embodied exalted being of brightness like the sun is a strong possibility here in this particular verse, especially when we look closely at how Asherah was the embodiment of the Tree (or the Tree of Life!) and how Lehi incorporated the Tree in his vision in 1 Nephi 8-11. For more on this, see: [D&C 2; JSH 1:27-65 Quotes and Notes](#).

²⁵ This is a procession. They are located in several places in the Psalms. Besides Psalm 63.8, we also can see this in Psalm 5.9, “Yahweh, lead me in thy righteousness in view of my adversaries, make level before me thy way.” Also Psalm 23.3, “He leads me in the highway of righteousness for the sake of his name.” See also Psalm 43.3. John H. Eaton, [Kingship and the Psalms: Studies in Biblical Theology 32](#), SCM Press LTD, 1976, p. 174.

Psalm 64: A Prayer for Help²⁶

1. "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked!" (Ps. 64.2).
2. "They commune of laying snares privily" (Ps. 64.5).
3. "But God shall shoot at them with an arrow, suddenly they shall be wounded" (Ps. 64.7).

Psalm 65: The Thanksgiving Psalm of the Harvest Feast

The premortal work of Jehovah and the other members of the Council in Heaven was the creation of the heavens and the earth. It was important that the account of creation be told and retold every year in the Jerusalem Temple drama, because, to the ancients, it explained who and what God is—Jehovah: the God of Salvation, of Creation, of Light, and of Rain. The psalms sung during the performance of the Jerusalem Temple drama affirm that Jehovah had created the world. They demonstrate that he is the light of the sun, and that it is he who controls the storms; establishing that he is—by definition—God of gods, Lord of Lords, and King of kings.

To all ancient agrarian people, the most immediately relevant power of their local chief god was his ability to bring or to withhold rain. The god's power to control the elements was most clearly shown by his ability to provide sufficient rain to insure a good harvest. That same belief was fundamental to the religion of the Israelites, who also depended on rain for their yearly food supply. Psalm 65 was a celebration of Jehovah's power over the elements. Whether it was sung at the beginning of the festival drama in conjunction with promises relating to the creation, or at the conclusion as a celebration of an abundant harvest, it acknowledged Jehovah's power to bless his people in the most practical way possible.²⁷ Sigmund Mowinckel observes:

At Yahweh's festival of enthronement all this receives a more personal touch. The almighty creator is coming to his people, renewing the covenant and securing to them all the 'blessing' which belongs to 'life' and 'peace' and 'salvation'. All the gifts of the 'kingdom of God' may indeed be summed up in these words. In fact, to secure all this was the real intention of the festal cult. When Yahweh comes again to the feast from his primeval home in the far south he brings 'abundant rain' with him, and thus restores his suffering people (Ps. 68. 8-11).

Ps. 65, the thanksgiving psalm of the harvest feast, gives a magnificent picture of all the blessings promised and granted by the new victory over the powers of chaos, the new creation and the coming of the rainy season, in the following outburst of praise:

Who by his might raised up the mountains,
being girded with power,

²⁶ 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." 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. Baker and Ricks, p. 611. The king is a servant of Yahweh, denoting his high office, but also pointing to his role as sufferer. John H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, p. 116. For other psalms where the king cries out for help, see Psalm 69.1-29; 71.1-18; 74.19-23; 77.1-3.

²⁷ Baker and Ricks, p. 217-218.

Who stilled the roaring of the sea ...,
 the tumults of its waves,
 So that the dwellers at the ends of the earth
 were terrified by thy wonders;²⁸
 The gates of the morning and evening
 thou madest to shout with joy.²⁹

1. "His strength setteth fast the mountains... stills the noise of the seas" (Ps. 65.6-7).
2. "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it... enriches it... waters the ridges... make it soft with showers... crownest the year with goodness" (Ps. 65.9-11).
3. The hill rejoice and the pastures are clothed with flocks (Ps. 65.12-13).³⁰

Psalm 66: Participating in the Sacred Temple Drama

In the Garden scenes, **the king and queen played the roles of Adam and Eve who were the first royal couple to come to and preside over the earth**, as Bentzen explains, "The king, then, is Primeval Man. The first man of Genesis 1:26-28 is described as the first ruler of the world. In the first Creation Story, the "gospel" of the New Year, we hear the blessing spoken by God at the enthronement of the first Royal Couple of the world. Man is to "rule" over all living creatures."³¹

In these scenes, the reigning king and queen were also themselves, acting out their own stories of coming to the earth to fulfill their individual missions—affirming their own places in the eternal drama. The dual roles they played were not a contradiction, for **they were simultaneously both the first royal couple, and the present-reigning king and queen**. As the first royal couple and as themselves, the reigning king and queen illustrated their own roles throughout the whole eternal sweep in the drama's presentation, and, by doing so, they also represented the lives, struggles and successes, of every person in the congregation.

In some ancient cultures the king was considered to be a god, but not in Israel. **The Israelite king was Jehovah's representative on earth**. Nevertheless, because the drama showed that the king had been present in the heavenly Council, he was also understood to be one of the premortal gods who had now

²⁸ The KJV has "tokens" here, and Mowinckel uses "wonders" for the Hebrew word *תִּיָּאֹת*, which denotes signs, tokens, wonders, miracles, or proofs.

²⁹ Mowinckel, *The Psalm's in Israel's Worship*, Vol. 1, p. 162.

³⁰ This victory Yahweh at the preceding new year feast repeated, and reestablished the world 'not as a waste (*tôhû*) but to be inhabited' (Isa. 45.18). The consequence of this 'right order' was the rain, that now yields all the blessings of heaven and earth, for which the congregation at this new year feast has to give thanks. The same victory and re-creation are also granted by Yahweh's 'coming' again this time, and so the thanksgiving psalm has in mind both the blessings of the year already past, and those to be expected for the year to come. **But all this blessing and 'salvation' may also be regarded from an ethical point of view, and the mind may dwell on the good social conditions which are to prevail in Yahweh's kingdom, when the fellowship ('loyalty', *hesed*) and faithfulness of the covenant, when justice and right order shall prevail in the land.** Mowinckel, p. 162-3, emphasis added.

³¹ Baker and Ricks, p. 132-33, emphasis added; Aage Bentzen, *King and Messiah*, James Clarke & Co, 2002, p. 17, emphasis added.

become a man.³² As a human, he retained some of his godlike qualities when he came to earth.³³ One can discover from the psalms that much of the drama was designed to help him reenforce his premortal commitments to his earlier qualities of godliness, such as love, mercy, justice, rectitude, and equity. It was understood that even though the king might seek to perfect these attributes, he was still human, having not yet ascended back to the realm and society of the gods.

There were also other actors on stage, and the members of the audience participated by following the lead of their king and queen, either symbolically or ritually. An Old Testament example of congregational or audience participation that many scholars cite is 2 Kings 23:1-3. There, King Josiah assembled the people of Judah to take part in a ceremonial covenant renewal ceremony... There the king and the people stood to make the covenants. The psalms suggest other kinds of audience participation when the people played music, sang, and danced. Examples are Ps. 33.1-4; Ps. 68.24-25, "The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after, among them the damsels playing with timbrels"; Ps. 81.1-4, "Make a joyful noise... blow the trumpet ... on our solemn fest day"; Ps. 149.1-3, "let them praise his name in the dance" ; Ps. 144.9, "I will sing a new song unto thee..."

It was vital that the members of the audience participate throughout the presentation of the drama, because each one understood that it was implicitly only about himself or herself, and about their personal covenants with Jehovah. That is, because each person made the reaffirming covenants, and accepted the empowering ordinances, the drama was intimate and personal.³⁴

Psalms 66 is such an example of audience participation.

1. "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands!" (Ps. 66.1).
2. "Sing forth the honour of his name... all the earth shall worship thee and shall sing unto thee!" (Ps. 66.2-4).
3. "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard" (Ps. 66.8).
4. "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings... I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices" (Ps. 66.13-15).
5. "Let the earth break forth into singing" (D&C 128.22).
6. "Let the mountains shout for joy... valleys cry aloud... rivers, brooks, rills... ye solid rocks weep for joy! Let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together!" (D&C 128.23).

Psalm 68: The Rivalry of Mount Bashan and Sinai³⁵

Bashan was ground zero for Old Testament demonic geography. But for all the darkness conjured up by the term, references to "Bashan" in the Old Testament aren't all sinister. describes a time when Yahweh takes ownership of Bashan.

³² In Abraham 4 and 5, the members of the Council who participated in the creation are called "gods," just as they are called "gods" in Psalm 82.

³³ For example, one Bible passage has a woman comparing David's wisdom to "the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth" (2 Samuel 14:20).

³⁴ Baker and Ricks, p. 132-136.

³⁵ For an explanation of Mount Bashan as it relates to the message of the Giants in Genesis 6 and the strife between Mounts Bashan and Sinai in Psalm 68, go to 18:32 mark of our podcast [Episode 139 "Genesis 6-11; Moses 8."](#)

15 A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan;

a mountain of many peaks is the mountain of Bashan.

16 Why do you look with hostility, O many-peaked mountains?

This mountain God desires for his dwelling.

Yes, Yahweh will abide in it forever.

17 The chariots of God

are twice ten thousand, with thousands doubled.

The Lord is among them at Sinai, distinctive in victory.

18 You have ascended on high; you have led away captives.

You have received gifts from among humankind,

and even from the rebellious, so that Yah God may dwell there.

The first thing that sticks out in this passage is that the infamous Mount Bashan is called the “mountain of God” (68:15). The phrase “mountain of God” is actually “mountain of *elohim*” (*har elohim*) in Hebrew. That means it can be translated as either “mountain of God” or “mountain of the gods.”

The latter makes more sense than the former in context for the very observable reason that the two mountains in the passage—**Bashan and Sinai—are rivals at the beginning of the psalm**. The mountain of the gods (Bashan) “looks with hatred” at Yahweh’s mountain, Mount Sinai. God desired Sinai for his abode, and the psalmist asks Bashan, “Why the envy?” This would make little sense if Bashan was already under Yahweh’s authority.

The psalmist intends a contrast of association. In the Old Testament, Sinai is firmly associated with Yahweh and Israel. **Bashan is the polar opposite of Sinai. It symbolizes unholy ground.**

The rest of the psalm describes an assault on Bashan by Yahweh and his holy army. We know the description refers to spiritual warfare since there was no such engagement of the Israelites in the Old Testament, and also because verse 17 clearly speaks of a divine army. Yahweh, the divine warrior, will one day tear down the strongholds of Bashan. He will lead a train of captives down from the mountain (v. 18).³⁶

1. “God shall wound the head of his enemies and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses” (Ps. 68.21).
2. “The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea” (Ps. 68.22).
3. “Thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies” (Ps. 68.23).
4. The participatory nature of this psalm is laid out in Ps. 68.25-32.

³⁶ Michael Heiser, [*The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*](#), Lexham Press, p. 288-296.

Psalm 69-71: A Plea for Help³⁷

1. "I sink in deep mire... floods overflow me!" (Ps. 69.2).
2. "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head" (Ps. 69.4).³⁸
3. "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (Ps. 69.9).³⁹
4. "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink... let me be delivered out of the deep waters!" (Ps. 69.14).
5. "I am in trouble: hear me speedily" (Ps. 69.17).
6. "I am full of heaviness" (Ps. 69.20).
7. "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Ps. 69.21).⁴⁰
8. "Make haste, O God, to deliver me!" (Ps. 70.1).
9. "Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha" (Ps. 70.3).⁴¹
10. "Save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress" (Ps. 71.3).
11. "Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man" (Ps. 71.4).
12. "Cast me not off... for mine enemies speak against me, and they lay wait for my soul take counsel together, saying, God hath forsaken him" (Ps. 71.9-11).

Psalm 72: A Coronation⁴²

³⁷ Psalm 69 is quoted or alluded to in each of the gospels, (Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:35-36; and John 2:17, 15:24 -25, 16:5, 19:28) and may have been used in the drama to represent the Savior's sorrow, perhaps as he approached Gethsemane. Baker and Ricks, p. 31. For other psalms where the king cries out for help, see Psalm 64; 70.1-3; 71.1-18; 74.19-23; 77.1-3.

³⁸ This is quotes in John 15.24-25.

³⁹ This verse is quotes in John 2.17. Robert Alter translates this as "For the zeal of Your house has consumed me, the reproach of Your reproachers has fallen on me." He explains, "Some interpreters have argued that this verse refers to a specific historical context—the early period of the Return to Zion after the Babylonian exile, when there were divisions within the Judahite community as to whether to rebuild the Temple. In this reading, the speaker would be one of the advocates of rebuilding. Some support for this interpretation may be offered by the last two verses of the psalm, which seem to address a situation in which the towns of Judah have been destroyed and its inhabitants are in the process of returning from exile." Alter, p. 167. Berlin and Brettler (p. 1356) give the following explanation, "Like the mourners for Zion in Isa. 61.2-3 and Zech. 7.3, the psalmist mourns for the destroyed Temple by weeping (that is, crying out in lament), fasting, and wearing sackcloth. This behavior causes everyone to revile him."

⁴⁰ See: Matt. 27.34; Mark 15.36; Luke 23.36; John 19.29.

⁴¹ "Aha aha" can be translated as imitating a cry of joy over an enemy's misfortune. Alter translates this as "Let them turn back on the heels of their shame, who say "Hurrah, hurrah!" See also Ps. 40.15 for a similar statement.

⁴² These promises in Ps. 72 can also be seen as being extended to all the righteous, as the king and queen represented the people. Even though the Old Testament historical books give no full account of a royal coronation ceremony, **Isaiah 61 does contain all five of the most essential elements of any coronation** (The five shown in Isaiah 61:3 are: washed (removing ashes), clothed, anointed, given a new king-name and crowned). These rites are so fundamental to human society that they have retained their basic integrity for thousands of years.

Fundamentally, the same ceremonies were used in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, medieval Europe, and modern Britain. For example, on the day of her coronation, the present Queen Elizabeth II was bathed, clothed, anointed, given a regal new name, and crowned. Then, as she sat upon her throne, she spoke to her subjects. Baker and Ricks, p. 336. For a video that shows some of these things discussed, see: "[The Coronation.](#)" See also: "[Zadok The Priest \(rescore\) – The Crown Coronation.](#)"

There were three coronation—or coronation-like—ceremonies performed during the course of the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama.

The first was at the Council in Heaven (Psalm 45) where the king received a blessing from Elohim in which he was given all of the powers and authorities requisite for him to fulfill his earthly assignment.

The second was on earth, when he was a young man and heir apparent, he was anointed to become king, as represented by Psalm 72.⁴³

The third coronation of the king—the one that established him as king—was performed, and subsequently reenacted, on the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama, when he was adopted as the son of God (Psalm 2), and sat upon the throne of God in the Holy of Holies—the most sacred of all earthly sacred space. But the legitimacy of that third coronation was based on the presumed reality of the first one which had taken place at the Council in Heaven. Ultimately the king's earthly authority was established by his foreordination at the Council, and his coronation on the earth was a kind of reaffirmation of that original coronation.⁴⁴

The most sacred rites of the ancient Israelite religion were performed in the Jerusalem Temple, and among those were the ordinances of the king's coronation. This coronation ritual was renewed each year as part of the climax to the festival drama. Thomasson explains, "On every anniversary of the first 'coronation' the king should repeat the rites; this leads to welfare, to increase of the country, to the destruction of enemies and so on. Then the 'inauguration' has become cyclic, annually carrying the ruler and his realm beyond a difficult stage, and re-creating the beneficial power inherent in kingship."⁴⁵

1. The king's son shall judge the people with righteousness and judgment, and shall judge the poor and save the children, the needy (Ps. 72.1-4).⁴⁶

⁴³ Baker and Ricks explain (p. 256-7) that the continuance of the practice of anointing the king's heir apparent has persisted for more than five thousand years. For example, Erickson gives this account of the infant baptism and anointing of the first Queen Elizabeth of England:

"The christening could hardly have been more elaborate if the child had been the In the Old Testament hoped-for prince. The chief nobles, the leading churchmen and the Lord mayor and aldermen stood by as the dowager duchess of Norfolk carried the baby to the church, with Thomas Boleyn behind her bearing the long train of the purple velvet christening mantle. Hangings of cloth of gold and bright tapestries draped the interior of the chapel, and soft thick carpets covered the floor. A heavy scent of incense and perfume filled the air, disguising the strong odor of coals burning in a brazier near the font; the brazier provided warmth for the baby while she was undressed behind a curtain, then handed to the bishop of London who immersed the back of her head and her heels in the holy water. Before her purple mantle was put on again she was anointed on back and breast with the holy oil sacred to royalty, and given her name" Carolly Erickson, *The First Elizabeth*, Summit Books, 1983, p. 20-21.

⁴⁴ Baker and Ricks, p. 334.

⁴⁵ Gordon C. Thomasson, "[Togetherness Is Sharing an Umbrella: Divine Kingship, the Gnosis, and Religious Syncretism.](#)" In *By Study and Also By Faith*, edited by John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks. 1:523-61. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990. 1:540.

⁴⁶ Aubrey Johnson, during his discussion of Psalm 72, observed, "What is more, it is clear from the outset that the king is both dependent upon and responsible to Yahweh for the right exercise of his power; for his subjects, whatever their status in society, are one and all Yahweh's people. It is to be observed, too, that the opening lines make passing reference to a basic principle which is expressed at length towards the close of the psalm, i.e. that it is only as the earthly king ensures a sound moral order by means of his righteous rule that one can be sure of

2. "In his days shall the righteous flourish... he shall have dominion... his enemies shall lick the dust" (Ps. 72.8-9).
3. "His name shall endure forever" (Ps. 72.17, 19).

Psalm 77-78: Moses and the Exodus, Establishing Legitimacy in Kingship

Several of the Psalms celebrate Jehovah's covenant with Moses and his fulfilling that covenant by delivering the people from Egypt, leading them through the wilderness, giving them the Law, and enabling them to inherit the Promised Land.⁴⁷ No Psalm actually shows that the king played the part of Moses, or that, during the drama, he spoke to God in the burning bush. However, the psalms recite the whole story of Jehovah's giving commands and making covenants with Moses.

Some psalms focus on specific parts of the exodus experience. Psalm 114 describes how God controlled the mountains and the sea, while Psalm 95 recites the events at Sinai when the Lord invited the people to come up the mountain to see him, and the people sent Moses instead. In this story, the mountain was the temple, and became a kind of prototype for all other temples.⁴⁸

The entire festival temple drama focused on a single concept —legitimacy—the legitimacy of priesthood and kingship—of Jehovah, of the reigning king, and of the sacral kings who also participated. This was not so simple as it sounds for the height, depth, width, breadth of that concept embraced eternity and all creation. It showed how the Lord is Lord of Lords, how the king who has priesthood authority is king of kings, how every person in the congregation is a child and heir of God. And, for ancient Israel, its all encompassing nature was epitomized in Moses, Israel's first king.⁴⁹

The first person to function as king in Israel was Moses, who "is elevated above the human sphere. He is pre-existent, as has been pointed out many times," and who has a "golden throne."⁵⁰ **Moses received the rites and powers of priesthood from the Lord on Mount Sinai at first**, then "at the time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain, And he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence." Three times in the course of the interview, the Lord addressed him as "Moses, my son."⁵¹ Thus Moses had fulfilled two of the most significant steps toward the final confirmation of kingship—priesthood and receiving from God the Israelite royal king-name, "son."⁵²

1. "The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven... thy way is the sea... thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses" (Ps. 77.18-20).
2. "He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through, and he made the waters to stand as an heap" (Ps. 78.13).
3. The Exodus retold (Ps. 78.12-58).

a corresponding stability in the realm of nature with all that this implies for the economic well-being of the people." Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, University of Wales Press, 1967, p. 7-9.

⁴⁷ Psalms 77, 78, 80, 99, 103, 105, 106, 114, 136.

⁴⁸ Baker and Ricks, p. 267.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 270, emphasis added.

⁵⁰ Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 3:437. The throne is mentioned in connection with Moses's preparing to announce that Joshua was to be his successor. At the same time he gave Joshua the throne, Moses also prepared his clothes which consisted of shoes, undergarment, cloak, turban, golden helmet, and crown of pearls.

⁵¹ Moses 1.6-7, 40.

⁵² Baker and Ricks, p. 270-271, emphasis added.

4. The story of the loss of Shiloh (Ps. 78.59-66).⁵³
 - a. “Fire consumed their young men... Their priests fell by the sword” (Ps. 78.63-64).⁵⁴
5. A Deuteronomists’ retelling of the “Tabernacle of Joseph” (Ps. 78.67-72).⁵⁵

Psalm 82: God Stands in the Congregation... Ye are Gods!⁵⁶

1. “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty⁵⁷, he judgeth among the gods” (Ps. 82.1).⁵⁸
2. “How long will ye judge unjustly?” (Ps. 82.2).
3. Defend the poor and the fatherless, do justice to the afflicted and needy, deliver the poor (Ps. 82.3-4).
4. “They know not... they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course” (Ps. 82.5).
5. “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men” (Ps. 82.6-7).⁵⁹

⁵³ The Shiloh sanctuary had been an important one in the period of the Judges. It is here that Elkanah and Hannah come each year to offer sacrifice (1 Samuel 1). Archaeological evidence suggests it was destroyed, probably by the Philistines, in the eleventh century B.C.E. The poet, following what appears to be a Deuteronomistic line of thinking, takes the destruction of the sanctuary as a sign of God’s displeasure with Israel. Alter, p. 193.

⁵⁴ This could be a continuation of the story of the destruction of Shiloh, in which case the priests in question would be Hophni and Phineas, the sons of Eli. Alternately, the sequence from verse 62 to this verse could refer to some other devastating defeat, perhaps later than the destruction of Shiloh. Alter, p. 193.

⁵⁵ The rejection of Ephraim and the selection of Judah is an endorsement of the Davidic dynasty, sprung from the tribe of Judah, and of the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem (“He built on the heights His sanctuary”). The stigmatization of the “high places” (local rural altars on hilltops) in verse 58 is a distinctly Deuteronomistic notion that reinforces the idea of one exclusive temple in Jerusalem. Alter, p. 193.

⁵⁶ For an in-depth analysis of the connection between the Savior’s words in John 10 where he quotes Psalm 82 and a path to see how those addressed in the divine assembly can be both “gods” and also “die like men,” see Daniel C. Peterson’s paper “[Ye Are Gods: Psalm 82 and John 10 as Witnesses to the Divine Nature of Humankind](#),” 2018.

⁵⁷ This is the divine council, whose “primary function in Canaanite tradition was to serve as heralds, as the messengers who delivered or even executed the decrees of El, which were the decrees of the council.” Peterson, “Ye are Gods,” p. 16. Prophets were invited into the council (Amos 3.7; Jeremiah 23.18); the dead may have been invited into the council (1 Samuel 28.13). One other example outside of the canon of the Old Testament (an anonymous speaker in column 1 of fragment 11 of 4Q491 at Qumran) reads as follows:

“El Elyon gave me a seat among those perfect forever, a mighty throne in the congregation of the gods. None of the kings of the east shall sit in it and their nobles shall not [come near it]. No Edomite shall be like me in glory, and none shall be exalted save me, nor shall come against me. For I have taken my seat in the [congregation] in the heavens And none [find fault with me]. I shall be reckoned with gods and established in the holy congregation. . . . In my legal judgment [none will stand against] me. I shall be reckoned with gods, and my glory with [that of] the king’s sons” (As translated by Morton Smith, in [Studies in the Cult of Yahweh](#), ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 2:74–75. See: Peterson, p. 19.

Further, it is noteworthy that premortal spirits are among the “great ones” in the Divine Council before the world was made. See [Abraham 3.21-27](#).

⁵⁸ אֱלֹהִים נֹצֵב בְּעֵדוּת־אֵל בְּקִרְבֵּי אֱלֹהִים: יִשְׁפֹּט Elohim is standing **among the congregation** of God and in the midst of the Elohim/divine beings/gods **he will judge** (my translation). These “gods” share in the divine nature of Yahweh, yet they are also subject unto him. See: Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., [New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis](#), Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997, p. 376.

⁵⁹ Peterson makes the case that Paul understood that humans beings were the same race as God. See Peterson, “Ye are Gods,” pages 34-39 for the details of this argument.

6. “Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations” (Ps. 82.8).

Who are the gods addressed in the Divine Assembly in Psalm 82? Peterson works to show that four interpretations are possible:

There are four standard interpretations of the “gods” in Psalm 82: They were either (1) ordinary mortal Israelite rulers or judges, (2) ordinary mortal rulers or judges of the other nations, (3) the ordinary mortal people of Israel gathered at Sinai for the revelation of the law, or (4) angelic or divine members of the council of El. Any of the first three would be compatible with Jesus’ use of the passage in John 10. Unfortunately, though, none of the three seems, on its own, to be compatible with the best recent scholarship on the original intent of the psalm itself. Only combined acceptance of the fourth interpretive option and one or more of the first three can make consistent sense of both Psalm 82 and John 10 without accusing Jesus, in the New Testament, of misrepresenting the real meaning of the former passage. More basically, only if the genus “gods” and the genus “humans” overlap can the Savior’s application of Psalm 82 to mortal human beings be a legitimate one. We have seen that, according to both the apostle Paul and a plausible reading of the Hebrew Bible, they do overlap. Yet, to my knowledge, in all Christendom it is only the Latter-day Saints, to whom a doctrine of the antemortal existence of human beings and of their literal kinship with God has been revealed, who recognize that gods and men form a single class, differentiated along a spectrum of holiness, wisdom, and power. Consequently, it would seem that the Latter-day Saints are in a uniquely strong position to reconcile the original sense of Psalm 82 with the Savior’s use of it in John 10.⁶⁰

Psalm 85: Mercy and Truth are met Together

When the festival temple drama was concluded, all was right with the world; there was no baggage of sin that either the individuals or the nation must carry with them into the next year. **Chaos was overcome and cosmos was established so that all might begin anew. Psalm 85 may have been one of the last sung at the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles temple drama.** It was an assurance that the Lord would bless and sustain his people in peace and righteousness.⁶¹ It is probable that the very last hymn sung was a parting acclamation, for all were now priests and sacral kings.

1. “Thou has forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin” (Ps. 85.2).
2. “I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land” (Ps. 85.8-9).
3. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven” (Ps. 85.10-11).⁶²
4. “Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps” (Ps. 85.12-13).

Psalm 86: A Prayer for Mercy, an Ask to See “The Way”

⁶⁰ Peterson, “Ye Are Gods,” p. 40.

⁶¹ Baker and Ricks, p. 454, emphasis added. It is probable that the very last hymn sung was a parting acclamation, for all were now priests and sacral kings. The authors propose that Psalm 133 may have also been sung at the conclusion of the assembly. See page 455.

⁶² See Moses 7.62.

In ancient Israel, the covenant relationship between the king and Jehovah seems to be symbolic of, if not parallel to, the covenant relationship between the people and Jehovah. The temples of heaven and earth both defined and sanctified those relationships, so that within the temples all things became intelligible. In each, the God of Heaven conversed with the members of the Council, first in the premortal world, now on the earth. The King of Heaven presided over the kings of earth. The Eternal Messiah blessed the earthly "messiah." It happened in reality in the temple in heaven and symbolically during the festival temple drama on earth. Similarly, Solomon's Temple was the key to earthly kingship. It was both the source and the evidence of one's legitimacy as king.

Patai maintained that the ordinances of the two temples were apparently similar.⁶³ The primary or ultimate purpose of each was the anointing and enthronement of gods and kings. Thus, the ordinances of the earthly temple became the "way," the connecting link between heaven and earth,⁶⁴ and an invitation to "walk" along its path toward heaven was an invitation to come to the heavenly temple where Jehovah is, and thereby avoid the sorrows of hell. Psalms 86:10-13 reflects that belief:

10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things:

thou art God alone.

11 Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth:

unite my heart to fear thy name.

12 I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart:

and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

13 For great is thy mercy toward me:

and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell (Psalm 86:10-13).

⁶³ Raphael Patai, *Man and Temple: In Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual*, London: Thomas Nelson and sons, 1947, p. 131-32.

⁶⁴ A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth*, Amsterdam, Johannes Muller, 1916, p. 43-45.