

**“THAT THEY MAY BE PURIFIED IN ME”:  
RITUAL PURIFICATION IN 3 NEPHI 19  
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR DIVINE  
BELONGING AS THE TELOS OF  
LATTER-DAY SAINT TEMPLE  
ORDINANCES AND WORSHIP**

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Taken as a whole, 3 Nephi 19 presents us with a ritual sequence unlike anything else we encounter in ancient or modern scripture. Mormon’s account of the second day of Jesus’s three-day ministry among the Lamanites and Nephites at the temple in Bountiful (3 Nephi 26:13)<sup>1</sup> begins with additive scenes of kneeling (3 Nephi 19:6, 18, 16–17), *proskynesis* (3 Nephi 19:19, 27), baptism (3 Nephi 19:11–13), temple prayer (3 Nephi 19:6–10, 17–18, 20–24, 20–35), Aaronic priestly blessing (3 Nephi 19:25), and high priestly intercessory prayer (3 Nephi 19:19–24, 27–29, 31–35).

Jesus expresses the purpose of these rituals and ritual gestures in his high priestly intercessory prayer with the keyword “purify” (3 Nephi 19:28–29). The purification of his disciples, of the multitude present, and of the people in the future who would believe in his and his disciples’ words constitutes the *telos* of the series of rituals and ritual gestures described in 3 Nephi 19. Jesus’s high-priestly prayer and his divine actions in 3 Nephi 19:25, 30 lend additional weight to the idea that ritual and ethical purification make up the necessary prerequisites to final sanctification—the state of “belonging to the divine realm” (*q-d-š*, “holy,” “holiness”).<sup>2</sup> Only in the state of *q-d-š* can oneness with the Father and the Son exist—i.e. the “state of

never-ending happiness” and being one with God of which King Benjamin and Mormon spoke (Mosiah 2:41; Mormon 7:7).

In what follows I will attempt to make the case that holiness is not simply a matter of apartness (the traditional view) but is rather a state of belonging to the divine realm. Indeed, it is a state of *divine belonging*. Apartness as it relates to the concept of holiness amounts to a byproduct of inclusion or exclusion from the divine realm rather than its ultimate object or aim. I will further endeavor to show that one of the ways in which Jesus’s intercessory prayers in 3 Nephi 19 appear to differ from his intercessory prayer as recorded in John 17—at least in translation—is that John 17:17, 19 emphasizes *sanctification* (Gk. *hagiazō*) preceding oneness and divine belonging, while 3 Nephi 19:28–29 emphasizes *purification* preceding oneness and divine belonging. This difference is more apparent than real. The interrelationship between ritual purity and the concept of holiness has important and broad implications for Latter-day Saint ordinance work, including temple ordinances and temple worship.

I examine the interrelated and additive nature of each of the rituals and ritual gestures in their temple context as described in 3 Nephi 19, culminating in Jesus’s final high priestly intercessory prayer, and I will discuss Mormon’s possible authorial intent in his presentation of these rituals. I will further explore the lexical relationship of ritual purification to Hebrew *qdš* and Greek *hagiazō*. I will compare the high priestly prayers of Jesus in John 17 and 3 Nephi 19 and discuss the results of Jesus’s prayer in 3 Nephi 19 on the worshipers at the temple in Bountiful. Lastly, I will explain the aforementioned implications *qdš*—sanctification and holiness—as a state of divine belonging<sup>3</sup> for ordinances and temple worship and for our identity as Latter-day Saints. The ritual sequence in 3 Nephi 19:6 has much to teach us about latter-day temple ritual and can inform our worship.

**“They Did Cause That the Multitude Should Kneel Down upon the Face of the Earth and Should Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus”: Kneeling in Group Temple Prayer**

Psalm 95, as a temple hymn, served as one of the most important liturgical texts among the Nephites.<sup>4</sup> Part of that temple liturgy

invites or exhorts the worshippers who come into the temple to observe the proper ritual gestures of approach, "O come, **let us worship** [*ništaḥāweh*] and **bow down** [*wēnikrā'ā*]: **let us kneel** [*nibrēkā*] **before the Lord** [*lipnē yhwḥ*] our maker [*'ōsēnū*]" (Psalms 95:6, emphases added). Enos references this Psalm when he recollects, "And my soul hungered, **and I kneeled down before my Maker**, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul" (Enos 1:4, emphasis added).<sup>5</sup>

As part of his first day ministering among the Lamanites and Nephites, Jesus had modeled the type of temple prayer and the posture of prayer in which the people would engage during the second day of his ministry. As Mormon records, Jesus instructed the people to kneel prior to offering his first high priestly intercessory prayer in their presence (3 Nephi 17:13-15).<sup>6</sup> The kneeling of Jesus and the people before the Father, Jesus's prayer to the Father with its ineffable words, his institution and administration of the sacrament among them (3 Nephi 18), and the instruction on prayer set the tone for the second day of ministry. Jesus had earlier instructed the Lamanites' and Nephites' active preparation for the events of the second day of his ministry among them: "Go ye unto your homes and ponder upon the things which I have said and ask of the Father in my name that ye may understand and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again" (3 Nephi 17:3). His instruction on prayer and praying in their families detailed how they were "to ask the Father in [Jesus's] name" in order to understand (3 Nephi 18:15-21).

The multitude present at the temple in Bountiful for that second day was much greater than the roughly "two thousand and five hundred souls...[consisting] of men, women, and children" (3 Nephi 17:25) who were present on the first day. This required organizing the assembly into twelve bodies:

And behold, the multitude was so great that they did cause that they should be separated into twelve bodies. And the twelve did teach the multitude. And behold, **they did cause that the multitude should kneel down upon the face of the earth** and should pray unto the Father in the name of Jesus. And **the disciples did pray unto the Father also in the name of Jesus**. And it came to pass that they arose and ministered

unto the people. And when they had ministered those same words which Jesus had spoken, nothing varying from the words which Jesus had spoken, behold, **they knelt again and prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus** (3 Nephi 19:5–8, emphasis added).

Putting this temple audience numbering in the many thousands in the right spirit and frame of mind to receive the Savior and his further instructions required not only organizing the people into twelve bodies but also having them “kneel down upon the face of the earth,” as on the previous day (3 Nephi 19:6). This gesture of approach toward God the Father and Jesus Christ in a temple setting also perfectly accorded with the invitation of Psalms 95:6.

The disciples then “pray[ed] unto the Father in the name of Jesus” (3 Nephi 19:7). Some of Jesus’s final instructions from the first day of his ministry pertained specifically to prayer (see 3 Nephi 18:15–24), including the charge, “ye must always pray unto the Father in my name” (3 Nephi 18:19). Here we witness the disciples faithfully keeping the Savior’s charge, which was consistent with Nephi’s instruction regarding prayer from centuries earlier: “But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always and not faint, that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul” (2 Nephi 32:9).

Mormon then emphasizes that the disciples *ministered* unto the people, a keyword in 3 Nephi 11–28. This calls to mind the Hebrew verb *šārēt* (“minister, serve”<sup>7</sup>; “attend to the service of God”<sup>8</sup>), which is commonly used in priestly and temple contexts in the Hebrew Bible to refer to the duties attended to by priests and to the service rendered to God on behalf of the people. But here the disciples ministered directly unto the people, consistent with King Benjamin’s temple teaching: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).<sup>9</sup> The change from vertical ministration to God to direct ministration to the people may represent an early change from temple praxis under the law of Moses, which had now been fulfilled.<sup>10</sup>

Part of the disciples' ministrations was to "minister those same words which Jesus had spoken, nothing varying from the words which Jesus had spoken" (3 Nephi 19:8). Regarding this precise repetition, John W. Welch has observed, "Verbatim repetition was beneficial not only for those who were hearing for the first time but for those who had already heard."<sup>11</sup> Such repetition as a part of temple teaching reminds us of the repetition that constitutes such an important part of the fixed rituals of the endowment as well as of the role of those who represent Christ himself in dispensing such teaching in the temple. In this case, the disciples may have been reiterating the doctrine of Christ that was declared in 3 Nephi 11:32-38.<sup>12</sup> The disciples then "prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus" a second time (3 Nephi 19:8), again manifesting their commitment to keep his commandments and to create the proper spiritual conditions to receive the Savior again when he would appear as promised.

**"And They Did Pray for That Which They Most Desired":  
Ritual Purification Through Baptism and Sanctification  
Through the Holy Ghost**

We turn now to the Lamanites' and Nephites' ritual purification. This second prayer "to the Father in the name of Jesus" (3 Nephi 19:8) included a vital request that reflected the disciples' increasingly righteous desires:

**And they did pray for that which they *most desired*; and they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them.** And when they had thus prayed they went down unto the water's edge, and the multitude followed them. And it came to pass that **Nephi went down into the water and was baptized. And he came up out of the water and began to baptize. And he baptized all those whom Jesus had chosen.** And it came to pass when they were all baptized and had come up out of the water, the Holy Ghost did fall upon them; and **they were filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire** (3 Nephi 19:9-13, emphasis added).

Mormon's use of the phrase "that which they most desired" recalls a number of important scenes from Lamanite-Nephite history. First, his language recalls Nephi's vision of the tree of life, of

Mary, and of the baptism of Jesus Christ (1 Nephi 11:8–27), in which vision Nephi learned that “the love of God,” of which Jesus himself constitutes the supreme manifestation, “is the most desirable above all things” and “the most joyous to the soul” (1 Nephi 11:22, 23). Nephi’s identification of the love of God as the most desirable seems to reflect an Egyptianism that turns on the Egyptian word *mr(i)*, meaning love and desire, and the source of the name Mary.<sup>13</sup> Nephi identifies the “love of God” (cf. Egyptian *mry[.t]-ntr*) with “the virgin” he sees “bearing a child in her arms” (1 Nephi 11:20). This same lexeme, *mr(i)*, also appears to constitute the first element in the name “Mormon.”<sup>14</sup> In that same vision, Nephi learned that “the fountain of living waters,” like the tree of life, symbolized the “love of God”: “And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron which my father had seen was the word of God, which led to **the fountain of living waters** or to the tree of life, **which waters are a representation of the love of God**” (1 Nephi 11:25, emphasis added).

Second, Mormon’s use of language in 3 Nephi 19:9 recalls Alma the Elder’s founding a church and baptizing at the waters of Mormon and the desires attached to the place’s name, Mormon—meaning (divine) love or desire is enduring—and to their baptism and reception of the Holy Ghost. Alma declared to the community he intended to baptize:

Behold, here is the waters of **Mormon**, for thus were they called. And now **as ye are desirous** to come into the fold of God and to be called his people and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light...now I say unto you, **if this be the desires of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord**, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you? And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy and exclaimed: **This is the desires of our hearts.** (Mosiah 18:8–11, emphasis added).

The prophet-editor Mormon—who, along with his father, was named for these fountain waters and their environs—subsequently uses the word *desire(s)* as a linking word in a chain of passages

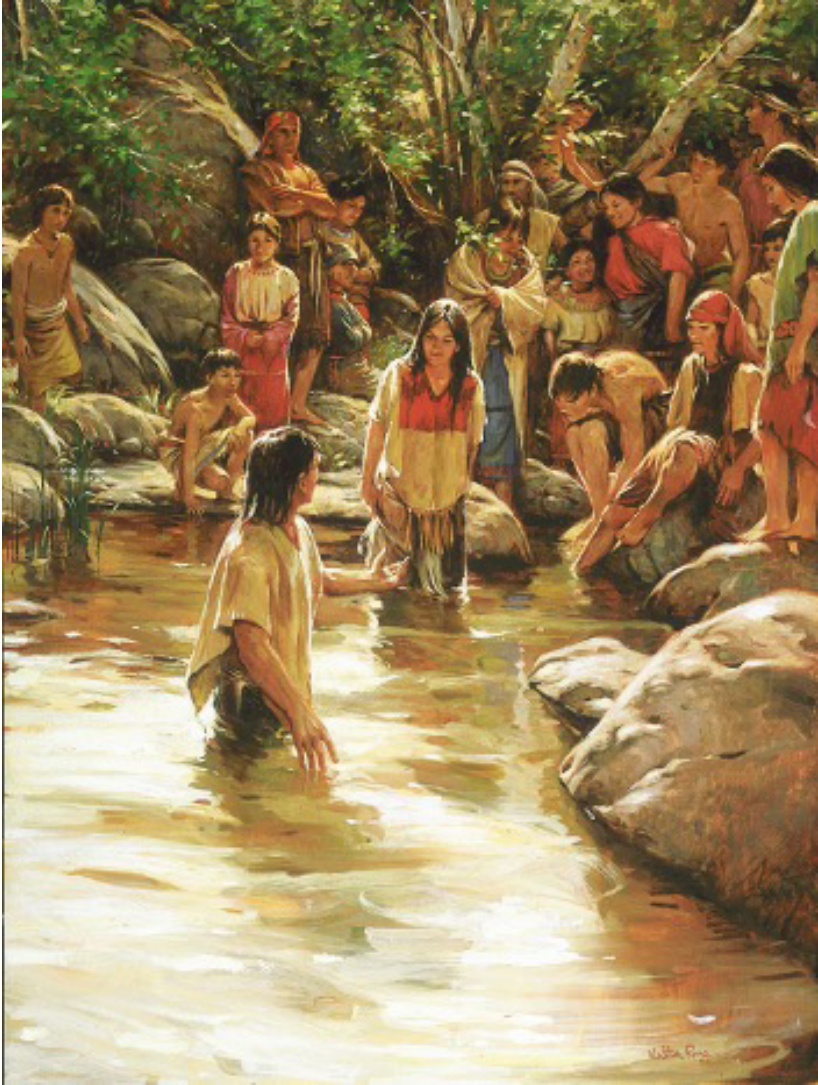


Figure 1. *Come into the Fold of God*, by Walter Rane  
(image: [churchofjesuschrist.org](http://churchofjesuschrist.org))

associated with baptism: namely, the forestalled baptism of Limhi’s people (see Mosiah 21:32–35), the finally realized baptism of Limhi’s people (see Mosiah 25:17–19), the baptisms at Sidom (see Alma 15:13–14), and the baptisms of those in Zarahemla who heard and repented at the preaching of Samuel the Lamanite (Helaman 16:1).<sup>15</sup> Mormon wishes us to see the continuity between the baptism at

the waters of Mormon that inaugurated Alma the Elder's church and the baptism of the disciples in the waters at the temple in Bountiful that inaugurated the church that the Savior established or reorganized. Baptism as a reflection of "good desires" (Mosiah 18:28)<sup>16</sup> and a "pure heart" (Psalms 24:4; Alma 5:19)—i.e., ethical purity—like the names Mary and Mormon, is associated with the love of God—the waters of life (Alma 5:34; 42:7),<sup>17</sup> the fountain of living waters (1 Nephi 11:25),<sup>18</sup> or the tree of life whose fruit is "most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure" (Alma 32:42). In other words, ritual purity via baptism becomes the outward "witness" of ethical purity, both of which are essential to sanctification.

The implications of Mormon's statement, "And when they had thus prayed, they went down unto the water's edge" (3 Nephi 19:10), indicates that there must have been "much water" (cf. John 3:23) or "many waters"<sup>19</sup> in or *adjacent to* the temple itself. Whether a deliberate narrative stroke or not, Mormon's use of the verb rendered "they went down"—comparable to Hebrew *yārdû* (from *yārad*)—recalls the "condescension of God" motif<sup>20</sup> from Nephi's vision (in 1 Nephi 11–12) and the name Jordan itself, as mentioned by Lehi in 1 Nephi 10:9.

Moreover, the fact that they "went down unto the water's edge" (3 Nephi 19:10), suggests that these waters could have had the function of a ritual pool or lake in which ablutions or lustrations, including baptism, had been performed on a consistent basis, perhaps as part of the ritual architecture of the temple at Bountiful itself. Here, one is reminded of the laver in the ancient Israelite tabernacle as well as the brazen sea in Solomon's temple, which had the size and dimensions for use in baptisms (even if such are as yet unattested).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the Gihon spring and the pool of Siloam adjacent to the Jerusalem Temple "may have served as the site of ritual bathing prior to temple ascent, at least during the Second Temple period."<sup>22</sup>

In any case, we are plausibly dealing with some type of ritual pool or lake, which evokes Egypt and the ritual architecture of temples there. Rites of water purification<sup>23</sup> with functions similar to baptism were performed in sacred lakes or pools. The Egyptian





Figure 2. Karnak temple complex 2012—by Taranis-iuppiter—Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=29910389>

nouns *š*, “lake, pool,”<sup>24</sup> and *mr*, “canal” or “artificial lake,”<sup>25</sup> referred to such ritual pools. And perhaps just as importantly, we find sacred pools at Mesoamerican temple sites.<sup>26</sup> The waters adjacent to—or a part of—the temple at Bountiful would be well at home in such a setting.

The temple precincts at Karnak host an enormous, artificial, sacred lake in which the temple priests—i.e., of the priestly class or order the Egyptians termed *wʿb*—“purif[ied] themselves.”<sup>27</sup> The Egyptian lexeme *wʿb* as an adjective denoted “pure,” and as an intransitive verb meant to “purify o[n]e’self” or “bathe” and as a transitive verb to “cleanse or purify” something.<sup>28</sup> As a noun, *wʿb* denoted “purification” or “purity.”<sup>29</sup> The derived causative verb *swʿb* denoted to “cleanse,” and “purify,” but also to “consecrate temple servants.”<sup>30</sup> Notably, “purity” is a primary concern in 3 Nephi 19 (see especially 3 Nephi 19:28–29).

In ancient Egypt, the *wʿb*-class of priests purified themselves in a sacred lake or pool attached to the temple precincts. The Egyptian ideogram *ʿb* used to write *wʿb* was the “combination of [a foot hieroglyph] with a vase from which water flows.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, it was a foot with water running over it.<sup>32</sup> The baptisms of

Nephi and of the other disciples at the waters adjoining the temple in Bountiful functioned like this type of priestly purification.

**“And Behold, They Were Encircled About as if by Fire”:  
Temple Prayer with Angelic Encircling**

Following the baptism of Nephi and the other disciples of Jesus and following their being filled with the Holy Ghost as they desired most, Mormon records: “And behold, they were encircled about as if it were by fire; and it came down from heaven. And the multitude did witness it and do bear record. And angels did come down out of heaven and did minister unto them [i.e., the disciples]” (3 Nephi 19:14).

The picture of theophanic fire and angels with whom the disciples interacted recalls the prophetic calls and commissions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Lehi at the time of each of their prophetic calls and commissions. Interacting with the angels amidst “fire” from heaven, the twelve disciples effectively became a part of Yahweh’s *sôd*, or council.<sup>33</sup>

Still within comparatively recent cultural memory, the Lamanites and Nephite dissenters in the Lamanite prison similarly experienced being “encircled about...as if in the midst of a flaming fire. Yet it did harm them not...[a]nd they were filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory” (Helaman 5:44). They, too, had received the baptism of fire<sup>34</sup> thus: “And behold, the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words” (Helaman 5:45). Then “they saw the heavens open, and angels came down out of heaven and ministered unto them” (Helaman 5:48).

William J. Hamblin has convincingly made the case that the modern temple endowment ritualizes induction into Yahweh’s *sôd*—the divine council—in which one becomes a participant like Isaiah, Lehi, etc.<sup>35</sup> One could go even further in seeing the multitude becoming *council witnesses*,<sup>36</sup> when as Mormon avers, “The multitude did witness it and do bear record” (3 Nephi 19:14). The testimonies that the multitude bore of what they experienced became part of such a powerful missionary effort that “in the thirty and sixth year [just two years later!] the people were all converted

unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites" (4 Nephi 1:2).

We often fail to appreciate that a celestializing experience—or sanctification—following the reception of the Holy Ghost is exactly what "the doctrine of Christ," as Nephi terms it (3 Nephi 11:32–38), calls for. In 2 Nephi 31:12–13, Nephi emphasized the importance of walking the covenant path that begins with faith unto repentance, then eventuates in baptism by immersion and receiving the Holy Ghost in imitation of Christ. Nephi then points out that after "the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost... **then can ye speak with the tongue of angels and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel**" (2 Nephi 31:13, emphasis added).

Neal Rappleye has pointed out that being empowered to "speak with the tongue of angels," after repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost constitutes a form of deification,<sup>37</sup> or what Joseph M. Spencer terms *angelicization*.<sup>38</sup> Something similar transpires here following the requisite sequence of the disciples' faith, prayer (perhaps in lieu of repentance), baptism, and reception of the Holy Ghost.

Suddenly, the disciples and the multitude found themselves amid "the devouring fire" and "everlasting burnings"—or the celestial glory—described in Isaiah 33:14 as reserved for those who meet the qualifications of ethical purity required there<sup>39</sup> and in the temple entrance liturgies of Psalms 15:1–5 and 24:3–6.<sup>40</sup> With theophanic fire, angels, and angel-disciples encircling, Jesus appeared, and all present were privileged to see, in Isaiah's words, "the king in his beauty" (Isaiah 33:17), as the resurrected Jesus appeared to them:

And behold, they were encircled about as if it were by fire; and it came down from heaven. And the multitude did witness it and do bear record. And **angels** did come down out of heaven and **did minister unto them**. And it came to pass that **while the angels were ministering unto the disciples, behold, Jesus came and stood in the midst and ministered unto them**. And it came to pass that he spake unto the multitude and commanded them that **they should kneel down again upon the earth, and also that his disciples should kneel down upon the earth**. And it came to pass that when they had **all knelt down upon the earth, he commanded his disciples that**

**they should pray. And behold, they began to pray; and they did pray unto Jesus, calling him their Lord and their God** (3 Nephi 19:14–17, emphasis added).

In the setting of the temple, angels—whose functions resembled those of priests or vice versa (cf. Malachi 2:7; Revelation 8:3-5, etc.)—minister to the disciples. In drawing a mental picture of these events, a Latter-day Saint might envision the appearance of white-clad temple workers to assist or minister during the presentation of the endowment.<sup>41</sup> In the same setting, we witness Jesus functioning as the Father’s messenger or “the messenger of salvation” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:8) who has “suddenly come to his temple” as “the messenger of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1; 3 Nephi 24:1). The disciples then pray to Jesus as he prays unto the father as their intercessor. Jesus and his offering of prayer functions in relation to the prayers of the disciples in an analogous way to the intercessory priestly function of the angel (*angelos* = “messenger”) described in Revelation 8 in relation to the prayers of the saints. John reports that he saw “another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand” (Revelation 8:3–4).

### **“I Pray unto Thee for Them”: *Proskynesis* and Intercessory Prayer**

Mormon reports the content of Jesus’s intercessory prayer, along with the proper gesture of approach:

And it came to pass that Jesus departed out of the midst of them and went a little way off from them and **bowed himself to the earth**, and he saith: Father, I thank thee that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen. And it is because of their belief in me that I have chosen them out of the world. Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words. Father, thou hast given them the Holy Ghost because they believe in me. And thou seest that they believe in me because thou hearest them, and they pray unto me; and **they pray unto me because**

**I am with them.** And now Father, **I pray unto thee for them, and also for all they which shall believe on their words**, that they may believe in me, that I may be in them as thou Father art in me, **that we may be one** (3 Nephi 19:19–23, emphasis added).

Jesus bowing himself to the earth as a gesture of approach to the Father corresponds to the practice that the ancient Israelites expressed through the verb *hištaḥăwâ*. In Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor's discussion of this verb, they write, "The unusual shape of this word hints at its extraordinary cultural significance" within ancient Israel.<sup>42</sup> The Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures made for the use of Hellenistic Jews at Alexandria—and subsequently copied and disseminated throughout the Greek-speaking Mediterranean—rendered this word with the verb *proskyneō*, which is usually translated "worship" but literally means "to kiss before." It is "to express in attitude or gesture one's complete dependence on or submission to a high authority figure"<sup>43</sup> (compare the Egyptian rite *sn t3 =* to "k[iss] the earth' in obeisance").<sup>44</sup> The verb *proskyneō* "designate[d] the custom of prostrating oneself before a person and kissing his feet, the hem of his garments, the ground, etc.; the Persians did this in the presence of their deified king, and the Greeks before a divinity or someth[ing] holy."<sup>45</sup> The cognate noun *proskynesis* has become a technical term broadly describing such ritual prostrations.

We see the Lamanites and Nephites observing *proskynesis* before Jesus in 3 Nephi 11 when he first appears and identifies himself: "And it came to pass that when Jesus had spake these words the whole multitude fell to the earth" (3 Nephi 11:12).<sup>46</sup> Nephi takes this ritual a stage further when he "arose and went forth and bowed himself before the Lord, and he did kiss his feet" (3 Nephi 11:19). Later on, during the first day of Jesus's ministry at the temple in Bountiful, after Jesus had healed the multitude of every malady, "they did all—both they which had been healed and they which were whole—bow down at his feet and did worship him. And as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears" (3 Nephi 17:10).

Jesus himself practices this ritual gesture of approach as called for in Psalms 95:6 when he observes *proskynesis* before God the



Figure 3. *Christ Praying with the Nephites*, by Ted Henninger  
(image: [churchofjesuschrist.org](http://churchofjesuschrist.org))

Father: “And [he] bowed himself to the earth” (3 Nephi 19:19, 27). Apart from its attestation in 3 Nephi, the collocation “and [he] bowed himself to the earth” occurs in Alma 46:13,<sup>47</sup> where Mormon details Moroni’s prayer on behalf of “his brethren.” Evidence from the Hebrew bible suggests that the underlying idiom in these passages might be *wayyištaḥû ’ārēṣâ*.<sup>48</sup>

There follows what Welch describes as "another exquisite high priestly prayer to the Father."<sup>49</sup> Jesus's use of a preposition rendered "for" (cf. Heb. *ba'ad*, "for the benefit of, for" from the idea of "surrounding in protection"<sup>50</sup> and Greek *hyper*, "for, in behalf of, for the sake of someone/someth[ing]"<sup>51</sup>) in connection with prayer expresses his intermediary and intercessory role. The ultimate purpose of all the foregoing is expressed in the purpose clause, "that we may be one" (3 Nephi 19: 23, 29). The events that follow help us to appreciate what this "oneness" looks like.

**"It Was Given unto Them What They Should Pray, and They were Filled with Desire": The Truest Order of Temple Prayer**

Mormon then reports that "when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father, he came unto his disciples, and behold, they did still continue without ceasing to pray unto him. And they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray; and **they were filled with desire**" (3 Nephi 19:24). Being "given unto them what they should pray" is a principle of the truest order of temple prayer. Their continuance in prayer not only (again) fulfills Jesus's commandment to "pray always" (3 Nephi 18:15, 18) but also provides a picture that somewhat contrasts the picture of the exhausted Peter, James, and John sleeping while the Savior was praying and suffering in Gethsemane. Notably, both intercessory prayers are threefold. In Gethsemane, Jesus prays three times and comes back to find his disciples sleeping, and he says "sleep on" (Matthew 26:45). At the temple in Bountiful, he comes back three times and finds his disciples still diligently praying, and he says "pray on" (3 Nephi 19:26). In the latter instance, Jesus later states regarding this continuance in prayer, "So great faith have I never seen among all the Jews" (3 Nephi 19:35), including the original twelve apostles.<sup>52</sup> The disciples were spiritually prepared for what they were doing and experiencing.

One important key to this continuance in prayer without "multiply[ing] many words" (including vain repetitions, cf. Greek *battalogia*) is that "they were filled with desire" (3 Nephi 19:24). This statement immediately takes us back to the moments preceding their baptism, when "they did pray for that which they most desired" (3 Nephi 19:9). Moreover, their being filled with

desire equates with their being filled with the love God and filled with the Holy Ghost. The concept of being filled represents a subtle yet prevalent theme in 3 Nephi 11–27,<sup>53</sup> all pointing Christ as the recipient of all divine fulness (cf. Gk. *plērōma*) and as the gateway to divine fulness for the human family on earth. This pure desire unifies them with the divine will.

**“Jesus Blessed Them as They Did Pray unto Him”:  
Jesus’s Priestly Blessing**

Well-versed readers of the Book of Mormon have long been aware of the textual dependency of 3 Nephi 19:25–26, 30 on the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:23–27 as footnoted in the 1981 and 2013 editions of the Book of Mormon. In a 2008 presentation, Matthew J. Grey drew renewed attention to and further explicated the significance of this intertextual connection and its implications for Jesus acting in his capacity as Priest.<sup>54</sup> Mormon clearly and intentionally draws attention to Jesus’s actions as fulfilling the priestly type of Numbers 6:22–27 as a comparison with 3 Nephi 19:25–26 readily reveals:

Numbers 6:22–27 (emphasis added)	3 Nephi 19:25–26 (emphasis added)
<p>And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise <b>ye shall bless the children of Israel</b>, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: <b>The Lord make his face shine upon thee</b>, and be gracious unto thee: <b>The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee</b>, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; <b>and I will bless them.</b></p>	<p>And it came to pass that <b>Jesus blessed them</b> as they did pray unto him. And <b>his countenance did smile upon them</b>, and <b>the light of his countenance did shine upon them</b>. And behold, they were as white as <b>the countenance</b> and also the garments of Jesus. And behold the whiteness thereof did exceed all whiteness; yea, even there could be nothing upon earth so white as the whiteness thereof. And Jesus saith unto them: Pray on. Nevertheless they did not cease to pray.</p>

What the Aaronic priestly blessing expresses as invocations using verbs with jussive moods,<sup>55</sup> Jesus performs as divine *actions*. In the priestly blessing, the “divine jussives...have the force of a





Figure 4. *The Light of His Countenance Did Shine upon Them*, by Gary L. Kapp. (image: churchofjesuschrist.org)

command” since, according to Waltke and O’Connor, “a jussive directed to the divine realm (explicitly or implicitly) may be a benediction or a malediction.”<sup>56</sup> Such jussives have “a distinctive pragmatic force.”<sup>57</sup> At the temple in Bountiful, Jesus as Priest and Lord (Yahweh) actually *does* lift up his countenance or cause “his countenance [to] smile upon them” (3 Nephi 19:25). The light of his countenance—his presence—is there shining upon them.

These actions reveal that Jesus is as glorified and pure as he was revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration and after his resurrection. They visually demonstrate his power to purify, sanctify, and glorify his disciples. Jesus further pronounces a blessing upon the people after the manner of the Aaronic priestly blessing as they continue to pray unto him. As Welch notes, the Aaronic blessing “took place at the altar in the court outside the Holy Place.”<sup>58</sup>

### “That They May Be Purified in Me”: Purification as Holiness

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the concept of *holiness*—Hebrew *qdš*—and the closely related idea of *sanctification* (becoming holy) in ancient Israelite religion. Israel’s God was the “holy one of Israel” (*qēdōš yiśrā`ēl*). For Latter-day *Saints* today, holiness and sanctification remain central to everything we hope to partake of and ultimately become. The expression “holiness to the Lord”<sup>59</sup>—Hebrew *qōdeš lyhwh*—adorns what will soon number over two hundred temples in various languages.

Traditionally, lexicographers have tied *qdš* to “apartness,” originating from the idea of “separation,” or “withdrawal,”<sup>60</sup> and thus have tied *sanctify* as “to set apart.”<sup>61</sup> But this may represent a simplistic view of the matter. In its base (or ground) stem, the cognate Akkadian verb *qadāšu(m)* meant “to be clean, free of claims.”<sup>62</sup> In its D-stem, the same verb means to “purify.”<sup>63</sup>

In several instances, the context suggests that the meaning “to purify” is intended. For example, In Numbers 11:18, the Lord commanded Israel in the wilderness “Sanctify [*hitqaddēšû*] yourselves against to morrow,” or “purify yourselves for tomorrow,” not “set yourselves apart for tomorrow.” When Joshua prepared the children of Israel to cross the Jordan into the promised land, he commanded, “Sanctify yourselves [*hitqaddāšû*]: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you” (Joshua 3:5), or “ritually purify yourselves,” “make yourselves clean.” Compare here Isaiah 52:11: “Touch no unclean thing [*tāmē*]; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean [*hibbārû*], that bear the vessels of the Lord.”

Similarly, in Joshua 7:13, after Achan had violated the *hrm*-prohibition by taking from what was consecrated to the Lord, the Lord commanded: “Up, sanctify [*qaddēš*] the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves [*hitqaddēšû*] against [for] to morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.” In other words, the Lord required Israel to ritually purify themselves on account of a sin that brought collective guilt or responsibility upon the whole community.

Later, when the Lord sent Samuel to Jesse’s family to find and anoint David as the future king of Israel, Samuel commanded the

elders of Bethlehem, "Sanctify yourselves [*hitqadděšû*], and come with me to the sacrifice," after which, "he sanctified [*wayqadděš*] Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice." (1 Samuel 16:5). That is, he commanded them to ritually purify themselves, and he ritually purified Jesse's sons. More notoriously, David illicitly took Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, after her post-menstrual purification: "And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified [*mitqaddešet*] from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house" (2 Samuel 11:4).<sup>64</sup> These examples help illustrate the interrelatedness of "holiness" and "(ritual) purity" as concepts.

What's more, a comparison of Jesus's intercessory prayer in 3 Nephi 19:27–30 with the intercessory prayer as recorded in John 17:17–21 suggests a high degree of conceptual overlap between purification and sanctification:

3 Nephi 19:27–30 (emphasis added)	John 17:9–11, 17–21 (emphasis added)
<p>And he turned from them again and went a little way off <b>and bowed himself to the earth</b>, and he prayed again unto the Father, saying: Father, <b>I thank thee that thou hast purified these which I have chosen because of their faith. And I pray for them and also for them which shall believe on their words, that they may be purified in me through faith on their words, even as they are purified in me.</b> Father, <b>I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given unto me out of the world</b> because of their faith, <b>that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou Father art in me, that we may be one</b>, that I may be glorified in them. And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he came again unto his disciples, and behold, they did pray steadfastly without ceasing, unto him. And <b>he did smile upon them again</b>. And behold, they were white, even as Jesus.</p>	<p><b>I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me;</b> for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and <b>I am glorified in them</b>. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, <b>that they may be one, as we are...</b></p> <p><b>Sanctify them through thy truth:</b> thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, <b>that they also might be sanctified through the truth</b>. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; <b>That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:</b> that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.</p>

Again, Jesus approaches the father with *proskynesis* just as he has previously and prays three times that the disciples, the multitude, and all those who would believe on their words would be “purified in [him]” (3 Nephi 19:28). In the corresponding Johannine intercessory prayer, Jesus prays that they might be sanctified, a jussive directed to the divine realm. On the surface, this might seem to represent a different plea representing a different concept. The Greek verb used to render Jesus’s words, *hagiazō*, has as its primary definition to “set aside someth[ing] or make it suitable for ritual purposes,” thus “consecrate, dedicate.”<sup>65</sup> However, this same verb means “to eliminate that which is incompatible with holiness, purify.”<sup>66</sup> Paul, in Romans 15:16, 1 Corinthians 1:2, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23, uses this verb to describe the sanctifying or purifying effect of the Holy Ghost on church members.

As noted a moment ago, Israel had been commanded not to touch any “unclean thing [*tāmē*]” (Isaiah 52:11). Isaiah had to be purified from his “unclean lips” in order to see the Lord and remain in the divine council (Isaiah 6:5).<sup>67</sup> From Lehi to Jesus Christ, Book of Mormon prophets emphasize that “no unclean thing” can inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Nephi 10:21; 15:34),<sup>68</sup> the realm of God’s holiness. When the early Saints of this dispensation endeavored to build the Kirtland temple, they received strict instructions to “not suffer any unclean thing to come into it” (see Doctrine and Covenants 94:8–9; 97:15), an intention expressed in the temple dedicatory prayer (see Doctrine and Covenants 109:20). When the Lord appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and accepted the dedicated temple, he pronounced them clean: “Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice” (Doctrine and Covenants 110:5).<sup>69</sup>

Why is all the foregoing necessary, and why is it important? The key relationship-defining expression comes at the end of the intercessory prayers in 3 Nephi 19:23 and John 17:11 in the purpose clause: “that we may be one.” This statement envisages the perfection of divine-human relationships in their proper order—in holiness. Understanding that oneness with God, Christ, and all the Saints—the sanctified or holy ones—requires purity in order to enter into and remain in the realm of his holiness helps us appreciate what the phrase “holiness to the Lord” means. To truly be holy means to

belong to God and Christ and to each other in right and righteous relationships. This is the type of belonging that Christ prayed for and that we should pray for.<sup>70</sup>

It must be significant that Mormon's teaching on charity as the pure love of Christ which endureth forever—that appears to be so connected with Mormon's own name ("[divine] love or desire is enduring")—requires prayer unto the Father:

**But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever.** And whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, **pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart that ye may be filled with this love** which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him—for we shall see him as he is—that we may have this hope, **that we may be purified even as he is pure.** Amen (Moroni 7:47-48).

This pure and enduring love is the only love that enables us to be at one with God the Father, with Jesus Christ, and with each other. This is the oneness with which and for which Christ prayed for on this occasion "with all energy of heart" (Moroni 7:48). It is Christ's pure love that we all need to be possessed of (Moroni 7:47) or "belong to"—that will lead us to become "pure even as he is pure" (Moroni 7:48).

This latter statement, as preserved in the Book of Mormon translated text, clearly resembles 1 John 3:2–3: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, *when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* And every man that *hath this hope* in him *purifieth himself, even as he is pure*" (emphasis added). John's use of the phrase "purifieth himself, even as he is pure" and Mormon's use of the phrase "that we may be purified even as he is pure" seem to reflect counsel that Jesus has been wont to give his disciples at various times: "Therefore what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you: Even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27); "Yea, your joy shall be full, even as the Father hath given me fullness of joy. And **ye shall be even as I am, and I am even as the Father; and the Father and I are one**" (3 Nephi 28:10, emphasis added).

However, John's and Mormon's statements on becoming pure "even as he is pure" find another antecedent in the holiness language of Leviticus 11:45: "Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had appealed to this language when he commanded his disciples, "Be ye therefore perfect [*teleios*], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect [*teleios*]" (Matthew 5:48). And he had appealed to it again when he taught the Lamanites and Nephites at the temple in Bountiful. On that occasion, he described his resurrected self as perfected like the Father: "Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48).

Moreover, Mormon's phrase "that we may be pure even as he is pure" distinctly echoes Jesus's temple prayer in 3 Nephi 19. Indeed, it recalls the two purpose clauses, "That they may be purified in me through faith on their words, even as they are purified in me" (3 Nephi 19:28), and "That they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou Father art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them" (3 Nephi 19:29). Again, given the strong links between desire and the waters of Mormon in Mosiah 18:8–11, it is not difficult to hear an echo of the name Mormon in the phrase "that which they most desired" (3 Nephi 19:9). And Mormon's instructions regarding "pray[ing] unto the Father with all the energy of heart" for the divine gift of "the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7: 48, 47)<sup>71</sup> carry even more power if we countenance the possibility that he also had group temple prayer in mind,<sup>72</sup> such as would unite true followers of Christ and such as we witness in 3 Nephi 19.

**"So Great and Marvelous Were the Words Which He Prayed":  
Jesus's Ineffable High Priestly Prayer**

Mormon's description of Jesus's response, "And he did smile upon them again. And behold they were white, even as Jesus" (3 Nephi 19:30) recalls again the language of the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:23–27. It has the further practical effect of reinforcing the priestly—or priesthood—nature of the prayers that Jesus is offering in a temple context. The description of whiteness helps us further visualize the purification of the disciples, like the vision of

Jesus with his glorified countenance and whitened clothing on the Mount of Transfiguration that revealed him as pure.

Mormon describes Jesus's final priestly intercessory prayer on this second day as wholly ineffable. He does not quote a single word because he cannot:

And it came to pass that he went again a little way off and prayed unto the Father. And **tongue cannot speak the words which he prayed, neither can be written by man the words which he prayed. And the multitude did hear and do bear record.** And their hearts were open, and they did understand in their hearts the words which he prayed. Nevertheless, so great and marvelous were the words which he prayed that **they cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by man** (3 Nephi 19:31–34, emphasis added).

Nephi appears to have not made any attempt to preserve the content of this prayer on the plates of Nephi. Robert L. Millet's observations regarding Jesus's first-day prayer in 3 Nephi 17:15–17 apply equally here: "Why could they not be written? Some spiritual experiences are so time and place specific, so reserved for the ears and eyes and hearts of those who experience them, that it is simply wrong, divinely inappropriate to try to replicate them, to speak openly of them, to try to rehearse or record them. In addition, some matters are ineffable, literally unspeakable or unrecordable. Mere words fail us."<sup>73</sup>

The multitudes present on both days testified that they had experienced what they had experienced but made no attempt to relay any of the content of those prayers. The statement "their hearts were opened," phrased in the divine passive, suggests that the Holy Ghost interceded with spiritual gifts to empower and elevate their understanding. Like Nephi and Lehi, the sons of Helaman, and like Peter and the apostles, they had been "filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory" (Helaman 5:44).<sup>74</sup>

### Conclusion

3 Nephi 19 highlights the importance of group worship and temple prayer at the beginning of Jesus's second day of ministry as precursors to the ritual purification of his disciples at the temple

in Bountiful via baptism. That temple appears to have had sacred waters—comparable to the Brazen Sea and an Egyptian sacred lake or pool—as a part of the ritual architecture of the temple that was used for such ritual purifications.

The disciples' baptism and reception of the Holy Ghost, as part of the doctrine of Christ, sets the stage for divine encircling and priestly or angelic ministrations in a divine council setting as Jesus begins a series of intercessory prayers on behalf of his praying disciples, the people, and those who would believe on their words. In offering intercessory prayer, Jesus observes *proskynesis* before the Father, showing us “how to worship, and...what [we] worship” as we “come unto the Father [through prayer] in [Christ’s] name” and showing us what receiving of the Father’s fulness looks like (Doctrine and Covenants 93:19). Jesus further fulfills the ancient priestly type adumbrated in the Aaronic priestly blessing of Numbers 6:23–27, personally carrying out the actions the blessing calls for (see 3 Nephi 19:25, 30).

The series of intercessory prayers culminates in a threefold petition that his people would “be purified in me” (3 Nephi 19:28–29). A comparison of this intercessory prayer with its Johannine counterpart in John 17 and an examination of the ancient terminology underlying both reveals a close relationship between the purity that Jesus prayed for and holiness as a state or condition of divine belonging (oneness). Jesus concludes these prayers with a prayer so utterly sublime and ineffable that no part of the prayer is recorded, only the testimonies of those who heard it.

These events of the second day prepared a large group of powerful messengers—missionaries or council witnesses—whose testimonies led to a society-wide conversion that lasted generations. They became the demonstration of purity, holiness, and divine belonging that Jesus prayed for<sup>75</sup>: “They were in one, the children of Christ and heirs to the kingdom of God” (4 Nephi 1:17). They were clean and fit to inherit the kingdom of God. So, too, can we be pronounced clean and become “pure even as he [and they are] pure” (Moroni 7:48; 1 John 3:3) as we are true and faithful in keeping all of the Savior’s commandments and in living his doctrine.



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## Notes

1. “Therefore I would that ye should behold that the Lord truly did teach the people for the space of three days. And after that he did show himself unto them oft and did break bread oft and bless it and give it unto them.” Book of Mormon citations will generally follow Royal Skousen, ed., *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
2. E. Jan Wilson, “‘Holiness’ and ‘Purity’ in Mesopotamia,” (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Verlag Butzon and Bercker Kevelaer, 1994), 46–65. Wilson ties *qdš* to the Sumerian concept of KUG/KU<sub>3</sub>, which as a noun denotes “silver, precious metal, money, noble”; as a verb denotes “to cleanse, purify, make cultically pure”; as an adjective denotes “shining, bright, dazzling, white, clean, pure, precious”; “sacred, holy...free (of claims), noble.” John Alan Halloran, *Sumerian Lexicon: A Dictionary Guide to the Ancient Sumerian Language* (Los Angeles: Logogram, 2006), 149–150.
3. Compare *qōdeš lyhwh*: “a state of *divine belonging* to the Lord.”
4. This is evident from the number of clear quotations of and allusions to it within the Book of Mormon text. See Jacob 6:5–6; Alma 10:6; 12:26, 33–35; 13:6, 12–13, 16, 29; 16:17; 34:31; 3 Nephi 27:19; Moroni 7:3.
5. See Matthew L. Bowen, “‘I Kneeled Down Before My Maker’: Allusions to Esau in the Book of Enos,” in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 27 (2017), 29–56.
6. “And it came to pass that when they [i.e., the sick and afflicted] had all been brought—and **Jesus stood in the midst—he commanded the multitude that they should kneel upon the ground.** And it came to pass that **when they had knelt upon the ground,** Jesus groaned within himself and saith: Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel. **And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth. And behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written.** And the multitude did bear record who heard him” (3 Nephi 17:13–15, emphasis added).
7. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 1058.
8. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 1662.

9. For more on “service” (Hebrew *ʾabōdâ*) as a key temple term in King Benjamin’s speech (Mosiah 2–5), see Donald W. Parry, “Service and Temple in King Benjamin’s Speech,” in *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16, no. 2 (2007), 42–47, 95–97.
10. See 3 Nephi 9:17, 19; 12:18, 46–47; 15:4–6, 8; 21:19.
11. John W. Welch, “Seeing Third Nephi as the Holy of Holies of the Book of Mormon,” in *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 19, no. 1 (2010), 48.
12. David M. Calabro, personal communication, (9 January 2021, notes in possession of the author).
13. See James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 225. Hoffmeier observes the following regarding the name Mary (or Miriam): “Although there are different linguistic explanations for the second mem [i.e., the final “m”], there is agreement that *mary* is the writing of the root *mry*, meaning ‘love’ or ‘beloved.’”
14. Benjamin Urrutia, “The Name Connection,” *New Era*, June 1983, 40; see also Paul Y. Hoskisson, “What’s in a Name? Mormon—Part 2,” in *Insights* 32, no. 3 (2012), 3; Matthew L. Bowen, “‘Most Desirable above All Things’: Onomastic Play on Mary and Mormon in the Book of Mormon,” in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 13 (2015), 27–61.
15. Bowen, “‘That Which They Most Desired,’” 261–298.
16. Viewed in the context of Mosiah 18:8–11 and the founding of Alma the Elder’s covenant community.
17. Cf. Doctrine and Covenants 10:66.
18. Quoting Jeremiah 2:13; 17:25.
19. See Matthew L. Bowen and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “Many-Great Waters and Moses’ Mission to Baptize (Moses 1:25–26)” *Book of Moses Insight* #43 (<https://www.pearlofgreatpricecentral.org/a-literary-masterpiece-many-great-waters-and-moses-mission-to-baptize/>).
20. Study forthcoming.
21. David M. Calabro, “Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis,” in *The Temple Ancient and Restored: Proceedings of the 2014 Temple on Mount Zion Symposium*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City and Orem: Eborn Books and The Interpreter Foundation, 2016), 172. Calabro has observed: “While there is no evidence that the temple laver was used as a baptismal font, it was definitely large enough to suggest such a use, and Joseph Smith’s specifications for a baptismal font modeled after the Solomonic laver for the Nauvoo temple show that he understood it in this connection.
22. David M. Calabro, personal communication. See also Urban C. von Wahlde, “The Pool of Siloam: The Importance of the New Discoveries for Our Understanding of Ritual Immersion in Late Second Temple

- Judaism and the Gospel of John," in *John, Jesus, and History, Volume 2: Aspects of Historicity in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. Paul N. Anderson, Felix Just, and Tom Thatcher (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2009), 155–74.
23. For a thoroughgoing treatment of Egyptian concepts of ritual purification and the connection of purification rites to temples, including rites involving water, see John Gee, "The Requirements of Ritual Purification in Ancient Egypt," PhD Dissertation. Yale University, 1998.
  24. Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1999), 260.
  25. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary*, 111.
  26. Vernon L. Scarborough, "Ecology and Ritual: Water Management and the Maya," in *Latin American Antiquity* 9, no. 2 (1998), 135–59.
  27. Michael B. Hundley, *Gods in Dwellings: Temples and the Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 39.
  28. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary*, 57.
  29. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary*, 57.
  30. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary*, 216.
  31. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 458.
  32. J. P. Allen suggests that *wʿb*-priests were originally "local residents, who served in tours of duty lasting several weeks" (i.e., lay-priests) and that *wʿb* represented the notion of "cleaner" (i.e., purifier). J. P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 58.
  33. Cf. "One" and "the twelve" whom Lehi saw in his throne vision in 1 Nephi 1:9–11.
  34. See especially 3 Nephi 9:20.
  35. William J. Hamblin, "The Sod of YHWH and the Endowment," in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Studies* 4, (2013), 147–154.
  36. On the concept of a council witness, see David E. Bokovoy, "'Thou Knowest That I Believe': Invoking The Spirit of the Lord as Council Witness in 1 Nephi 11," in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (2012), 7.
  37. Neal Rappleye, "'With the Tongue of Angels': Angelic Speech as a Form of Deification," in *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21, (2016), 303–323.
  38. Joseph M. Spencer, *An Other Testament: On Typology* (Salem: Salt Press, 2012), 52.
  39. Isaiah 33:14–17: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from

- seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty.”
40. On the interrelationship of these texts, see Donald W. Parry, “Who Shall Ascend into the Mountain of the Lord? Three Biblical Temple Entrance Hymns,” in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo: FARMS, 2002), 729–742.
  41. This is not to say that ancient Israelite priests functioned as modern temple workers do today or that either function in the exact same way as angels do (although some functions—e.g., as messengers and teachers—inevitably did). Nevertheless, all performed or continue to perform vital duties within the economy of God as “fellow-servants.” Cf. Matthew 18:29, 33; Revelation 19:10; 22:9; Jacob 5:61, 70–72, 75; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:52; Joseph Smith Translation Mark 13:59; Joseph Smith—History Endnote.
  42. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 360–61.
  43. Walter Bauer, Fredrick William Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. by Fredrick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 882.
  44. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary*, 230.
  45. Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 882.
  46. On the *proskynesis* scenes in 3 Nephi 11 and 17 and their relationship to those who “came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree” in 1 Nephi 8:30, see Matthew L. Bowen, “‘They Came Forth and Fell Down and Partook of the Fruit of the Tree’: Proskynesis in 3 Nephi 11:12–19 and 17:9–10 and Its Significance,” in *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2012), 107–130.
  47. See also Moses 6:31 where Enoch is the subject of the verbal expression “and he bowed himself to the earth before the Lord.”
  48. Consider the following examples from Genesis: “and [Abraham] bowed himself [*wayyištaḥû*] toward the ground [*’ārēšâ*]” (Genesis 18:2); “and he bowed himself [*wayyištaḥû*] with his face toward the ground [*’ārēšâ*]” (Genesis 19:1); “and [Jacob/Israel] bowed himself [*wayyištaḥû*] to the ground [*’ārēšâ*] seven times” (Genesis 33:3); “and he bowed himself [*wayyištaḥû*] with his face to the earth [*’ārēšâ*]” (Genesis 48:12). See also Genesis 23:7.
  49. Welch, “Seeing Third Nephi,” 48.
  50. Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 141.

51. Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1030. I.e., as "a marker indicating that an activity or event is in some entity's interest."
52. David Calabro, personal communication. My thanks to David Calabro for these additional suggestions strengthening my initial observation.
53. See 3 Nephi 12:6; 17:17; 18:4–5, 9; 19:13, 24; 20:8–9; 26:17; 27:16. Cf. also 3 Nephi 30:2.
54. Matthew J. Grey, "Jesus Blessed Them...and His Countenance Did Shine Upon Them": Understanding Third Nephi 19 in Light of the Priestly Blessing" ("Third Nephi: New Perspectives on an Incomparable Scripture" Conference, September 2008).
55. Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 566 (34.2.1a). They note that "in the Aaronide Blessing, only two of the six verbs are formally jussives, yet all have the same volitional sense." They further assert, "In such a situation all the verbs are to be taken as jussives."
56. Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 568 (34.3a).
57. Waltke and O'Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 568 (34.3a).
58. Welch, "Seeing Third Nephi," 49.
59. See Exodus 28:36; 39:30; Isaiah 23:18.
60. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 871.
61. Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1072.
62. Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1073.
63. *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, eds. Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicolas Postgate (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 282. Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1073.
64. Cf. Isaiah 66:17.
65. Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 9.
66. Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 10.
67. His sin was subsequently "atoned," *tēkuppār*, Isaiah 6:7.
68. See Alma 11:37; 40:26; 3 Nephi 27:19. Cf. Moses 6:57. See also Moroni 10:30.
69. Cf. Anti-Lehi-Nephi's testimony: "He imparted his word unto us and has made us clean thereby" (Alma 24:15).
70. Mormon elsewhere describes the relationship fasting and prayer have to the process of personal purification and sanctification. When the proud members of the church began to persecute the humble members of the church during the time of Helaman the son of Helaman, Mormon records: "Nevertheless they [the humble members of the

church] did fast and pray oft and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to **the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God**” (Helaman 3:35, emphasis added). The transforming power made available through the prayer of faith and yielding one’s] heart unto God must, at least in part, explain the prevalence of prayer in 3 Nephi 19.

71. Cf. again the name Mormon.
72. I would not, of course, limit the interpretation of Mormon’s reference to prayer in Moroni 7:47–48 to group temple prayer, but it is entirely plausible that Mormon had such in mind.
73. Robert L. Millet, “The Praying Savior: Insights from the Gospel of 3 Nephi,” in *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner and Gaye Strathearn (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2012), 136–137.
74. See also 1 Peter 1:8.
75. “That we may be one,” 3 Nephi 19:23, 29; cf. D&C 29:13; 35:2.