

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 20

This section deals with the organization and governance of the Church. The section is divided into halves, v. 1-36 present the doctrine of the Church and v. 36-84 present the application of the doctrine, or the institution and bureaucracy of the ecclesiastical body. Ecclesiastical hierarchies and bureaucracies were established anciently as well, cp. Exod. 18:17- 26.

The text of this section is of the variety of Scripture that falls under the "inspired writings" category. There are no quotations of the Lord, the author(s) write in the first-person (cf. v. 5) as well as third-person (cf. v. 6), and there are a number of confidence statements given (cf. v. 17, 29, 31, 35). This indicates the author knew what he was writing was true and inspired, but was being written in his own words by his own hand. Hence the difference in composition and content when compared with other sections which are quotations of the Lord (cf. D&C 19, 21) or of heavenly visions (cf. D&C 76).

The original draft of this text was written by Cowdery some time during 1829. How heavily the original draft was subsequently edited by Smith is unclear, but there is clear evidence Smith did edit it.

1 THE rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh, it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month which is called April-- 2 which commandments were given to Joseph Smith, Jun., who was called of God, and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church; 3 And to Oliver Cowdery, who was also called of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the second elder of this church, and ordained under his hand; 4 And this according to the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom be all glory, both now and forever. Amen.

v1-4 A general introduction presenting Smith and Cowdery as called of God by the grace of the Lord.

v1 The official date of the foundation of the Church.

5 After it was truly manifested unto this first elder that he had received a remission of his sins, he was entangled again in the vanities of the world; 6 But after repenting, and humbling himself sincerely, through faith, God ministered unto him by an

holy angel, whose countenance was as lightning, and whose garments were pure and white above all other whiteness; 7 And gave unto him commandments which inspired him; 8 And gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon; 9 Which contains a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also; 10 Which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them-- 11 Proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old; 12 Thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. Amen. 13 Therefore, having so great witnesses, by them shall the world be judged, even as many as shall hereafter come to a knowledge of this work. 14 And those who receive it in faith, and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life; 15 But those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation-- 16 For the Lord God has spoken it; and we, the elders of the church, have heard and bear witness to the words of the glorious Majesty on high, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

v5-16 These verses discuss Smith's mission. The effect of his mission is to separate the sheep from the goats. Note Smith is speaking in the third-person about himself.

v5 "entangled again", one would assume Smith is referring to the debacle of losing the 116 pages of the Book of Lehi.

v9-16 These verses share the theme of D&C 17 and Ether 5. Ether 5:4 provides a distillation on the subject of these verses.

v9-12 A parenthesis on the BofM. It introduces the witnesses of the BofM, who are later referenced in v. 13.

v13-16 The sheep are separated from the goats.

v13 "by them", i.e. the witnesses of the BofM referenced in v. 10-11.

17 By these things we know that there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, the framer of heaven and earth, and all things which are in them; 18 And that he created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness, created he them; 19 And gave unto them commandments that they should love and serve him, the only living and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship. 20 But by the transgression of these holy laws man became sensual and devilish, and became

fallen man. 21 wherefore, the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son, as it is written in those scriptures which have been given of him. 22 He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them. 23 He was crucified, died, and rose again the third day; 24 And ascended into heaven, to sit down on the right hand of the Father, to reign with almighty power according to the will of the Father; 25 That as many as would believe and be baptized in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved-- 26 Not only those who believed after he came in the meridian of time, in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who spake as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who truly testified of him in all things, should have eternal life, 27 As well as those who should come after, who should believe in the gifts and callings of God by the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and of the Son; 28 which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, infinite and eternal, without end. Amen.

v17-28 These verses recount the Creation, Fall and Redemption of man, which is the initiation and fulfillment of God's plan. It shows the plan is the same and God is the same through all of history. Note the emphasis on Redemption issues. This section completely endorses classic OT and NT fundamentals, thereby uniting the historical with the contemporary. Thus, historical events are relevant to the contemporary ecclesia because these ancient events have eternal consequences.

v17 "there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God", using the standard religio-philosophical definitions of these terms one could use this passage to argue against LDS teachings concerning eternal progression and the nature of God. However, if we compare this passage with other similar statements we quickly discover that the standard religio-philosophical definitions for these terms do not conform to the scriptural definitions. Take Hebr. 13:8 for example. There, we are informed Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and eternally. If Jesus can pass through mortality, die, be resurrected and exalted and still be labeled as "eternally the same" then it is plain the religio-philosophical definitions are ascriptural.

v26-28 Another parenthesis on the independent and eternal nature of the gospel. It is not dispensation specific, hence the contemporary work detailed in v. 5-16. Adam knew the gospel, Abraham knew the gospel, Moses taught the gospel using the Law, and we have the gospel today.

29 And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name

of Jesus Christ, and worship the Father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God. 30 And we know that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true; 31 And we know also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength. 32 But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God; 33 Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; 34 Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also. 35 And we know that these things are true and according to the revelations of John, neither adding to, nor diminishing from the prophecy of his book, the holy scriptures, or the revelations of God which shall come hereafter by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, the voice of God, or the ministering of angels. 36 And the Lord God has spoken it; and honor, power and glory be rendered to his holy name, both now and ever. Amen.

v29-36 Doctrine of Salvation is reviewed. This is the same doctrine presented to man from Adam to the present day and it will continue to the last day per v. 26-28.

v29-30 These verses discuss the three parts of Salvation in one very succinct passage: Justification by Grace (i.e. the expiation of sins by the Mercy of Christ), Sanctification by the Spirit (i.e. the baptism of fire, the purification of the individual by repentance), and exaltation after enduring to the end.

This doctrine is eminently Biblical: Justification is discussed in Rom. 5:1-2, Eph. 2:8-9; Sanctification in 2 Thes. 2:13, James 2:26; and Exaltation in Matt. 25:34, Rom. 8:17, 2 Tim. 4:8, Rev. 3:21.

v35 This verse is a confidence statement indicating the authors know the doctrine is true according to all the scriptures. It conforms to them strictly, requiring them to neither add or take away anything, following John the Revelator's injunction in Rev. 22:18. The implicit message is those churches which fail to teach all that is required for Salvation are taking away from what the Bible says.

37 And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism--All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church.

v37 This verse starts off the regulations of the governing of the ecclesia by defining the requirements for baptism. This is the obvious first step.

38 The duty of the elders, priests, teachers, deacons, and members of the church of Christ--An apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to baptize; 39 And to ordain other elders, priests, teachers, and deacons; 40 And to administer bread and wine--the emblems of the flesh and blood of Christ-- 41 And to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the scriptures; 42 And to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church; 43 And to confirm the church by the laying on of the hands, and the giving of the Holy Ghost; 44 And to take the lead of all meetings. 45 The elders are to conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost, according to the commandments and revelations of God.

v38-67 The responsibilities of Priesthood holders towards the ecclesia are reviewed in these verses. The man is to be sanctified for the service as a priest (cf. Exod. 28:41) so he may serve the people (cf. Mosiah 8:18, D&C 29:4, D&C 84:48, D&C 93:46) and act as a mediator for the people's sins (cf. Num. 18:1, also cp. Num. 25:13). This role of Priesthood holder as sanctifier is reflected in the Greek word "hierateuma" which is translated to "priesthood" in the KJV. The most literal translation of this term to English would be "sacred-effect". The men who wield the Priesthood are to have a sanctifying effect upon the ecclesia, they are to assist people in being spiritually born again.

The current program of age indexed progression through the Priesthood (e.g., Deacon at 12, Teacher at 14, etc.) was not historically practiced.

v41, 43 "to confirm", i.e. to bestow upon an individual or establish a body of individuals. For "establish", cp. Acts 14:27, 15:32 and 15:41.

46 The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament, 47 And visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties. 48 And he may also ordain other priests, teachers, and deacons. 49 And he is to take the lead of meetings when there is no elder present; 50 But when there is an elder present, he is only to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, 51 And visit the house of each member, exhorting them to pray vocally and in secret and attend to all family duties. 52 In all these duties the priest is to assist the elder if occasion requires.

v46-52 The Priest's duties are reviewed. The Priest is required to defer to an Elder when an Elder is present.

53 The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them; 54 And see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking; 55 And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty. 56 And he is to take the lead of meetings in the absence of the elder or priest-- 57 And is to be assisted always, in all his duties in the church, by the deacons, if occasion requires. 58 But neither teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize, administer the sacrament, or lay on hands; 59 They are, however, to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ.

v53-59 The Teacher's and Deacon's duties are discussed, and prohibitions are placed on them baptizing. Deacons are to defer to Teachers, and Teachers are to defer to Priests and Elders.

60 Every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him; and he is to be ordained by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is in the one who ordains him. 61 The several elders composing this church of Christ are to meet in conference once in three months, or from time to time as said conferences shall direct or appoint; 62 And said conferences are to do whatever church business is necessary to be done at the time. 63 The elders are to receive their licenses from other elders, by vote of the church to which they belong, or from the conferences. 64 Each priest, teacher, or deacon, who is ordained by a priest, may take a certificate from him at the time, which certificate, when presented to an elder, shall entitle him to a license, which shall authorize him to perform the duties of his calling, or he may receive it from a conference. 65 No person is to be ordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that church; 66 But the presiding elders, traveling bishops, high councilors, high priests, and elders, may have the privilege of ordaining, where there is no branch of the church that a vote may be called. 67 Every president of the high priesthood (or presiding elder), bishop, high councilor, and high priest, is to be ordained by the direction of a high council or general conference.

v60-67 These verses regulate Priesthood ordinations. In a system where authority comes from someone who already has it, called Sacerdotalism, regulations on how authority is dispensed must be maintained.

Note v. 63 imposes a requirement for common consent, or general sustaining, from the ecclesia, and v. 65 precludes

ordinations from occurring outside any existing organized church body if one exists. These requirements effectively preclude the dispensing of the Priesthood at the will of any single individual, and therefore eliminate the possibility for cases of individual abuse.

v60 When one is ordained by the "power of the Holy Ghost" they are ordained by the authority of the Priesthood. The Holy Spirit of Promise ratifies Priesthood ordinances, cp. D&C 76:53, D&C 132:7.

68 The duty of the members after they are received by baptism.--The elders or priests are to have a sufficient time to expound all things concerning the church of Christ to their understanding, previous to their partaking of the sacrament and being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the elders, so that all things may be done in order. 69 And the members shall manifest before the church, and also before the elders, by a godly walk and conversation, that they are worthy of it, that there may be works and faith agreeable to the holy scriptures--walking in holiness before the Lord. 70 Every member of the church of Christ having children is to bring them unto the elders before the church, who are to lay their hands upon them in the name of Jesus Christ, and bless them in his name. 71 No one can be received into the church of Christ unless he has arrived unto the years of accountability before God, and is capable of repentance. 72 Baptism is to be administered in the following manner unto all those who repent-- 73 The person who is called of God and has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize, shall go down into the water with the person who has presented himself or herself for baptism, and shall say, calling him or her by name: Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. 74 Then shall he immerse him or her in the water, and come forth again out of the water.

v68-74 The appropriate method of preparation for (v. 68-69) and administration of baptism (v. 72-74) for new members. Any children who are younger than the age of accountability are to be blessed, not baptized (v. 70-71).

v73 "having been commissioned", in 3 Ne. 11:25 the statement provided is "having authority given". In the 3 Ne. account the twelve there received their authority directly from Jesus, whereas in D&C those being addressed received the Priesthood indirectly.

75 It is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus; 76 And the elder or priest shall administer it; and after this manner

shall he administer it--he shall kneel with the church and call upon the Father in solemn prayer, saying: 77 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen. 78 The manner of administering the wine--he shall take the cup also, and say: 79 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

v75-79 The appropriate method of administering the Lord's Supper, or the sacramental bread and wine.

80 Any member of the church of Christ transgressing, or being overtaken in a fault, shall be dealt with as the scriptures direct. 81 It shall be the duty of the several churches, composing the church of Christ, to send one or more of their teachers to attend the several conferences held by the elders of the church, 82 with a list of the names of the several members uniting themselves with the church since the last conference; or send by the hand of some priest; so that a regular list of all the names of the whole church may be kept in a book by one of the elders, whomsoever the other elders shall appoint from time to time; 83 And also, if any have been expelled from the church, so that their names may be blotted out of the general church record of names. 84 All members removing from the church where they reside, if going to a church where they are not known, may take a letter certifying that they are regular members and in good standing, which certificate may be signed by any elder or priest if the member receiving the letter is personally acquainted with the elder or priest, or it may be signed by the teachers or deacons of the church.

v80-84 Policies concerning Church records.

v83 "blotted out", cp. Mosiah 26:32-36.

Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 20

Early on in the Church's history the text of this section was read over the pulpit at all conferences and various large meetings. As the Church was starting out, regulation of such matters as addressed herein was certainly a primary concern until the people came to understand and practice them.

The first excerpt is Smith's comment on the text. The second is his comments on a controversy which arose out of a particular interpretation of the text. The comments in the second excerpt necessarily imply Smith edited Cowdery's first draft. It also sheds light on the admonition against pride leveled at Cowdery (cf. D&C 23:1). The third excerpt is a historical commentary.

Excerpt from History of the Church

In this manner did the Lord continue to give us instructions from time to time, concerning the duties which now devolved upon us; and among many other things of the kind, we obtained of Him the following, by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to His will and commandment, we should proceed to organize His Church once more here upon the earth:

[text of section 20 follows]

(Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, page 64)

Excerpt from History of the Church

Shortly after we had received the above revelations [i.e., D&C 24, 25, 26], Oliver Cowdery returned to Mr. Peter Whitmer's, Sen., and I began to arrange and copy the revelations, which we had received from time to time; in which I was assisted by John Whitmer, who now resided with me.

Whilst thus employed in the work appointed me by my Heavenly Father, I received a letter from Oliver Cowdery, the contents of which gave me both sorrow and uneasiness. Not having that letter now in my possession, I cannot of course give it here in full, but merely an extract of the most prominent parts, which I can yet, and expect long to, remember.

He wrote to inform me that he had discovered an error in one of the commandments—Book of Doctrine and Covenants: "And truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto a remission of their sins." [i.e., D&C 20:37]

The above quotation, he said, was erroneous, and added: "I command you in the name of God to erase those words, that no priestcraft be amongst us!"

I immediately wrote to him in reply, in which I asked him by what authority he took upon him to command me to alter or erase, to add to or diminish from, a revelation or commandment from Almighty God.

A few days afterwards I visited him and Mr. Whitmer's family, when I found the family in general of his opinion concerning the words above quoted, and it was not without both labor and perseverance that I could prevail with any of them to reason calmly on the subject. However, Christian Whitmer at length became convinced that the sentence was reasonable, and according to Scripture; and finally, with his assistance, I succeeded in bringing, not only the Whitmer family, but also Oliver Cowdery to acknowledge that they had been in error, and that the sentence in dispute was in accordance with the rest of the commandment. And thus was this error rooted out, which having its rise in presumption and rash judgment, was the more particularly calculated (when once fairly understood) to teach each and all of us the necessity of humility and meekness before the Lord, that He might teach us of His ways, that we might walk in His paths, and live by every word that proceedeth forth from His mouth. (Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, page 104-105)

Excerpt from The Prophet Joseph

Joseph and Oliver knew during 1829 that they would organize a church. Revelations that year told of "the rising up and the coming forth of my church" (D&C 5:14) and "the foundation of my church" (D&C 18:4). In 1829 Cowdery drafted a version of what became in 1830 the first manual for church government—now Doctrine and Covenants, section 20. Called "Articles of the Church of Christ," it was a revelation to Oliver, who is "called with the same calling as Paul," to "baptize those who repent." The revelation explained the method of baptism, the words to use when ordaining priests and teachers, and the sacrament prayer. The document was signed, "Behold I am Oliver I am an Apostle of Jesus Christ." ...

At the first conference of the Church, on 9 June 1830, the members received and canonized the church government manual Oliver had penned by revelation the previous year, "The Articles and Covenants" (D&C 20). It was read at succeeding conferences and carried about by elders on missionary journeys and preaching assignments to be read to the believers.

Regarding priesthood, the Articles stipulated that Joseph Smith was called of God and "ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church." (D&C 20:2.) Oliver was second elder, and "an apostle is an elder" authorized to baptize, administer the sacrament, bestow the Holy Ghost, teach, expound,

and conduct meetings under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 20:38-45.) Taking the revelation literally, Joseph and Oliver tried to perform their duties, and they did baptize, administer the sacrament, bestow the Holy Ghost, teach, and conduct meetings. They not only received authority but used it diligently.

The Articles gave specific duties to each of four priesthood offices—main branches—of elder, priest, teacher, and deacon. Taken together, the four offices had responsibility to perform ordinances, conduct meetings, and visit members to see that all did their duty. (See D&C 20:38-59.) Various churches, or branches, would be guided and coordinated at quarterly conferences of the elders. (See D&C 20:62-65.)

This revelation on church organization built upon the Book of Mormon pattern, with the addition of deacons. The offices had a graded order from least (deacon) to highest (elder), with the First and Second Elders as the top officers, all unpaid.

During the conference, new officers were ordained: Samuel H. Smith, an elder, by Oliver Cowdery; Joseph Smith, Sr., Hyrum Smith, and Martin Harris as priests; and Hiram Page and Christian Whitmer as teachers. The conference gave licenses to the seven elders present and to three priests and two teachers to preach and teach.

By 1830 the priesthood tree had a sturdy trunk with several branches. Authority had been restored, that is, bestowed and shared. Joseph and early members called it "authority," but not Melchizedek or Aaronic Priesthood or even priesthood. Priesthood bearers proselyted, baptized, confirmed, administered the sacrament, ordained, and conducted meetings as "they [were] directed and guided by the Holy Spirit," and managed the church. (D&C 46:2.) By February 1831, elders were blessing the sick through the laying on of hands. (See D&C 42:43-48.) (Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black, *The Prophet Joseph*, pages 57-60)

Comparison of Original 1833 Text with Emended 1835 Version

There are numerous changes made between the 1833 and 1835 version, but none of them result in any change in meaning or substance. All of them are clarifications for plainer reading. As the text was frequently read over the pulpit at all conferences it is not surprising the text was revised so as to be more easily understood.

The verse numbering in the 1835 D&C is that of the contemporary 1981 LDS edition for ease of use. The textual emendations occurred in the 1835 Kirtland edition of the 1st Edition Doctrine & Covenants.

1833 Book of Commandments

1 The rise of the church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in the flesh;
2 It being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God in the fourth month and on the sixth day of the month, which is called April:
3 Which commandments were given to Joseph, who was called of God and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of this church;
4 And also to Oliver, who was called of God an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of this church, and ordained under his hand:

1835 Doctrine & Covenants

1 THE rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh, it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month which is called April-
2 Which commandments were given to Joseph Smith, Jun., who was called of God, and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church;
3 And to Oliver Cowdery, who was also called of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the second elder of this church, and ordained under his hand;

5 And this according
to the grace of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ,
to whom be all glory
both now and forever. Amen.
6 For, after that
it truly was manifested
unto this first elder,
that he had received
a remission of his sins,
he was entangled again
in the vanities of the world;
7 But after truly repenting,

God ministered unto him
by an holy angel,
whose countenance
was as lightning, and
whose garments were
pure and white
above all whiteness,
and gave unto him
commandments which inspired
him from on high,
and gave unto him power,

by the means which
were before prepared, that
he should translate a book;
8 Which book contained
a record of the fallen people,
and also the fulness
of the gospel of Jesus Christ
to the Gentiles;
9 And also to the Jews,

proving unto them, that
the holy scriptures are true;
10 And also, that
God doth inspire men and
call them to his holy work,
in these last days

4 And this according
to the grace of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ,
to whom be all glory,
both now and forever. Amen.
5 After
it was truly manifested
unto this first elder
that he had received
a remission of his sins,
he was entangled again
in the vanities of the world;
6 But after repenting,
and humbling himself sincerely,
through faith,
God ministered unto him
by an holy angel,
whose countenance
was as lightning, and
whose garments were
pure and white
above all other whiteness;
7 And gave unto him
commandments which inspired
him;
8 And gave him power
from on high,
by the means which
were before prepared, to
translate the Book of Mormon;
9 Which contains
a record of a fallen people,
and the fulness
of the gospel of Jesus Christ
to the Gentiles
and to the Jews also;
10 Which was given
by inspiration, and
is confirmed to others
by the ministering of angels,
and is declared
unto the world by them--
11 Proving to the world that
the holy scriptures are true,
and that
God does inspire men and
call them to his holy work
in this age and generation,

as well as in
days of old,
that he might be
the same God
forever.
Amen.

11 Which book
was given by inspiration, and
is called the book of Mormon,
and is confirmed to others
by the ministering of angels,
and declared unto the world
by them:

12 Wherefore
having so great witnesses,
by them shall the world
be judged,
even as many as shall hereafter
receive
this work,
either to
faith and
righteousness,

or to the hardness
of heart in unbelief,

to their own condemnation,
for the Lord God
hath spoken it,
for we,
the elders of the church,
have heard and bear witness
to the words
of the glorious
Majesty on high;
to whom be glory
forever and ever.
Amen.

13 Wherefore, by these things
we know that
there is a God in heaven,
who is infinite and eternal,
from everlasting
to everlasting,
the same unchangeable God,
the maker of heaven

as well as in
generations of old;
12 Thereby showing that he is
the same God
yesterday, today, and forever.
Amen.

13 Therefore,
having so great witnesses,
by them shall the world
be judged,
even as many as shall hereafter
come to a knowledge of
this work.

14 And those who receive it in
faith, and
work righteousness,
shall receive a crown
of eternal life;

15 But those who harden
their hearts in unbelief,
and reject it, it shall turn
to their own condemnation--

16 For the Lord God
has spoken it;
and we,
the elders of the church,
have heard and bear witness
to the words
of the glorious
Majesty on high,
to whom be glory
forever and ever.
Amen.

17 By these things
we know that
there is a God in heaven,
who is infinite and eternal,
from everlasting
to everlasting
the same unchangeable God,
the framer of heaven

and earth and all things
that in them is,
and that
he created man
male and female, and
after his own image, and
in his own likeness
created he them;
14 And that he gave unto
the children of men
commandments,
that they should
love and serve him

the only being whom
they should worship,
but by the transgression
of these holy laws,
man became
sensual and devilish, and
became fallen man.
15 Wherefore, the Almighty God
gave his only begotten Son,
as it is written
in those scriptures,
which have been given of him,
that he suffered temptations,
but gave no heed unto them;
16 That he was crucified,
died, and
rose again the third day, and
that he ascended into heaven
to sit down on the right hand
of the Father,
to reign with Almighty power
according to the will
of the Father.
17 Therefore, as many
as would believe and
were baptized in his holy name,
and endured in faith
to the end,
should be saved;

and earth, and all things
which are in them;
18 And that
he created man,
male and female,
after his own image and
in his own likeness,
created he them;
19 And gave unto
them
commandments
that they should
love and serve him,
the only living and true God,
and that he should
be the only being whom
they should worship.
20 But by the transgression
of these holy laws
man became
sensual and devilish, and
became fallen man.
21 Wherefore, the Almighty God
gave his Only Begotten Son, as
it is written in
those scriptures
which have been given of him.
22 He suffered temptations
but gave no heed unto them.
23 He was crucified,
died, and
rose again the third day;
24 And ascended into heaven, to
sit down on the right hand of
the Father,
to reign with almighty power
according to the will
of the Father;
25 That as many
as would believe and
be baptized in his holy name,
and endure in faith
to the end,
should be saved--
26 Not only those
who believed after he came
in the meridian of time,
in the flesh,

18 Yea, even as many as
were before he came
in the flesh,
from the beginning,
who believed in the words
of the holy prophets,
who
were inspired by
the gift of the Holy Ghost,
which truly testified of him
in all things,

as well as those who should
come after,
who should believe in
the gifts and callings of God,
by the Holy Ghost,
which beareth record of
the Father and of the Son,
which Father and
Son and
Holy Ghost,
is one God,
infinite and eternal,
without end.
Amen.

19 And we know,
that all men must repent
and believe on the name
of Jesus Christ, and
worship the Father in his name,
and endure in faith on his name
to the end,
or they cannot be saved
in the kingdom of God.

20 And we know, that
justification through
the grace of
our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ,
is just and true;

21 And we know, also, that
sanctification through
the grace of our
Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ,

but all those
from the beginning,
even as many as
were before he came,

who believed in the words
of the holy prophets,
who spake as they
were inspired by
the gift of the Holy Ghost,
who truly testified of him
in all things,
should have eternal life,

27 As well as those who should
come after,
who should believe in
the gifts and callings of God
by the Holy Ghost,
which beareth record of the
Father and of the Son;

28 Which Father,
Son, and
Holy Ghost
are one God,
infinite and eternal,
without end.
Amen.

29 And we know
that all men must repent
and believe on the name
of Jesus Christ, and
worship the Father in his name,
and endure in faith on his name
to the end,
or they cannot be saved
in the kingdom of God.

30 And we know that
justification through
the grace of
our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ
is just and true;

31 And we know also, that
sanctification through
the grace of our
Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ

is just and true,
to all those who love and serve
God with all their
might, mind, and strength,
but there is a possibility
that men may fall from grace
and depart from the living God.
22 Therefore, let the church
take heed and pray always,
lest they fall into temptation;
23 Yea, and even he
that is sanctified also.
24 And we know, that
these things are
true and agreeable to
the revelation of John,
neither adding to,
nor diminishing from
the prophecy of his book;
25 Neither to
the holy scriptures;
26 Neither to
the revelations of God
which shall come hereafter,
by the gift and power
of the Holy Ghost;
27 Neither by
the voice of God;
28 Neither by
the ministering of angels,
and the Lord God
hath spoken it; and
honor, power, and glory,
be rendered to his holy name
both now and ever.
Amen.
29 And again,
by way of commandment
to the church, concerning
the matter of baptism;
30 Behold whosoever
humbleth himself before God
and desireth to be baptized,
and comes forth with
a broken heart and
a contrite spirit, and
witnesseth unto the church,
that they have truly repented

is just and true,
to all those who love and serve
God with all their
might, mind, and strength.
32 But there is a possibility
that man may fall from grace
and depart from the living God;
33 Therefore let the church
take heed and pray always,
lest they fall into temptation;
34 Yea, and even let those who
are sanctified take heed also.
35 And we know that
these things are
true and according to
the revelations of John,
neither adding to,
nor diminishing from the
prophecy of his book,

the holy scriptures,
or
the revelations of God
which shall come hereafter
by the gift and power
of the Holy Ghost,

the voice of God,
or
the ministering of angels.
36 And the Lord God
has spoken it; and
honor, power and glory
be rendered to his holy name,
both now and ever.
Amen.
37 And again,
by way of commandment
to the church concerning
the manner of baptism--
All those who
humble themselves before God,
and desire to be baptized,
and come forth with
broken hearts and
contrite spirits, and
witness before the church
that they have truly repented

of all their sins and
are willing to take upon them
the name of Christ,
having a determination
to serve him unto the end, and
truly manifest by their works
that they have received
the Spirit of Christ
unto the remission
of their sins,
then shall they be received
unto baptism
into the church of Christ.

31 The duty of the elders,
priests, teachers, deacons
and members of
the church of Christ.

32 An apostle is an elder, and
it is his calling to baptize
and to ordain other elders,
priests, teachers and deacons,
and to administer the

flesh and blood of Christ

according to the scriptures;

33 And to teach, expound,
exhort, baptize, and
watch over the church;

34 And to confirm the church
by the laying on of the hands,
and the giving of
the Holy Ghost,
and to take the lead
of all meetings.

35 The elders are to
conduct the meetings
as they are led
by the Holy Ghost.

36 The priest's duty

of all their sins, and
are willing to take upon them
the name of Jesus Christ,
having a determination
to serve him to the end, and
truly manifest by their works
that they have received of
the Spirit of Christ
unto the remission
of their sins,
shall be received
by baptism
into his church.

38 The duty of the elders,
priests, teachers, deacons,
and members of
the church of Christ--

An apostle is an elder, and
it is his calling to baptize;
39 And to ordain other elders,
priests, teachers, and deacons;
40 And to administer
bread and wine--

the emblems of
the flesh and blood of Christ--

41 And to confirm those
who are baptized
into the church,
by the laying on of hands
for the baptism of fire and
the Holy Ghost,

according to the scriptures;

42 And to teach, expound,
exhort, baptize, and
watch over the church;

43 And to confirm the church
by the laying on of the hands,
and the giving of
the Holy Ghost;

44 And to take the lead
of all meetings.

45 The elders are to
conduct the meetings
as they are led
by the Holy Ghost,
according to the commandments
and revelations of God.

46 The priest's duty

is to preach, teach, expound,
exhort and baptize, and
administer the sacrament,
and visit the house
of each member, and
exhort them to
pray vocally and in secret, and
also
to attend all family duties;
37 And ordain other
priests, teachers and deacons,
and
take the lead of meetings;
but none of these offices
is he to do when
there is an elder present,

but in all cases
is to assist the elder.

38 The teacher's duty is to
watch over the church always,
and be with them, and
strengthen them,
and see that there is
no iniquity in the church,
neither hardness
with each other,
neither lying nor backbiting,
nor evil speaking;
39 And see that the church
meet together often, and
also see that all members
do their duty;
40 And he is to
take the lead of meetings
in the absence of
the elder or priest,
and is to be

is to preach, teach, expound,
exhort, and baptize, and
administer the sacrament,
47 And visit the house
of each member, and
exhort them to
pray vocally and in secret and
attend to all family duties.
48 And he may also ordain other
priests, teachers, and deacons.
49 And he is to
take the lead of meetings
when there is no

elder present;
50 But when there is
an elder present,
he is only to
preach, teach, expound, exhort,
and baptize,
51 And visit the house
of each member,
exhorting them to
pray vocally and in secret and
attend to all family duties.
52 In all these duties the
priest is to assist the elder
if occasion requires.
53 The teacher's duty is to
watch over the church always,
and be with and
strengthen them;
54 And see that there is
no iniquity in the church,
neither hardness
with each other,
neither lying, backbiting,
nor evil speaking;
55 And see that the church meet
together often, and
also see that all the members
do their duty.
56 And he is to
take the lead of meetings
in the absence of
the elder or priest--
57 And is to be

assisted always, and
in all his duties
in the church
by the deacons;

41 But neither the teachers
nor deacons
have authority to baptize
nor administer the sacrament,

but are to
warn, expound, exhort and
teach, and invite all
to come unto Christ.

42 Every elder, priest,
teacher or deacon,
is to be ordained according to
the gifts and callings of God
unto him,

by the power of the Holy Ghost
which is in the one
who ordains him.

43 The several elders composing
this church of Christ,
are to meet in conference
once in three months, or
from time to time as
they
shall direct or appoint,

to do church business
whatsoever is necessary.

44 And each priest or teacher,

who is ordained by a priest,
is to take a certificate
from him at the time,
which
when presented to an elder,
he is to give him a license,

assisted always,
in all his duties
in the church,
by the deacons,
if occasion requires.

58 But neither teachers
nor deacons
have authority to baptize,
administer the sacrament,
or lay on hands;

59 They are, however,
to warn, expound, exhort, and
teach, and invite all
to come unto Christ.

60 Every elder, priest,
teacher, or deacon
is to be ordained according to
the gifts and callings of God
unto him;

and he is to be ordained
by the power of the Holy Ghost,
which is in the one
who ordains him.

61 The several elders composing
this church of Christ
are to meet in conference
once in three months, or
from time to time as
said conferences
shall direct or appoint;

62 And said conferences are
to do whatever church business
is necessary to be done
at the time.

63 The elders are to receive
their licenses from
other elders,
by vote of the church
to which they belong,
or from the conferences.

64 Each priest, teacher,
or deacon,
who is ordained by a priest,
may take a certificate
from him at the time,
which certificate,
when presented to an elder,
shall entitle him to a license,

which shall authorize him
to perform the duty
of his calling.

which shall authorize him
to perform the duties
of his calling,
or he may receive it
from a conference.

65 No person is to be ordained
to any office in this church,
where there is
a regularly organized branch
of the same,
without the vote
of that church;

66 But the presiding elders,
traveling bishops,
high councilors, high priests,
and elders,
may have the privilege
of ordaining,
where there is no branch
of the church
that a vote may be called.

67 Every president of
the high priesthood
(or presiding elder), bishop,
high councilor, and
high priest,
is to be ordained
by the direction
of a high council or
general conference.

68 The duty of the members
after they are received
by baptism.--

The elders or priests are
to have a sufficient time to
expound all things concerning
the church of Christ
to their understanding,
previous to their
partaking of the sacrament
and being confirmed
by the laying on of the hands
of the elders,

so that all things may be
done in order.

69 And the members shall
manifest before the church,
and also before the elders,

45 The duty of the members
after they are received
by baptism.

46 The elders or priests are
to have a sufficient time to
expound all things concerning
this church of Christ
to their understanding,
previous to their
partaking of the sacrament,
and being confirmed
by the laying hands
of the elders;

47 So that all things may be
done in order.

48 And the members shall
manifest before the church,
and also before the elders,

by a godly walk
and conversation,
that they are worthy of it,
that there may be works
and faith agreeable
to the holy scriptures,
walking in holiness
before the Lord.
49 Every member of
this church of Christ
having children,
is to bring them
unto the elders
before the church,
who are to lay their hands
upon them
in the name of the Lord,
and bless them
in the name of Christ.
50 There can not any one
be received into
this church of Christ,
who has not arrived
to the years of
accountability before God,
and is not capable
of repentance.
51 And baptism
is to be administered
in the following manner
unto all those who repent:
52 Whosoever being
called of God and
having authority given them
of Jesus Christ,
shall go down into the water
with them,

and shall say,
calling them by name:
53 Having authority
given me of Jesus Christ,
I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

by a godly walk
and conversation,
that they are worthy of it,
that there may be works
and faith agreeable
to the holy scriptures--
walking in holiness
before the Lord.
70 Every member of
the church of Christ
having children
is to bring them
unto the elders
before the church,
who are to lay their hands
upon them
in the name of Jesus Christ,
and bless them
in his name.
71 No one can
be received into
the church of Christ
unless he has arrived
unto the years of
accountability before God,
and is capable
of repentance.
72 Baptism
is to be administered
in the following manner
unto all those who repent--
73 The person who is
called of God and
has authority
from Jesus Christ to baptize,
shall go down into the water
with the person
who has presented
himself or herself for baptism,
and shall say,
calling him or her by name:
Having been commissioned
of Jesus Christ,
I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

54 Then shall he immerse
them
in the water,
and come forth again
out of the water.
55 And it is expedient that
the church meet together oft
to partake of bread and wine,
in remembrance of
the Lord Jesus;
56 And the elder or the priest
shall administer it, and
after this manner
shall he do,
he shall kneel with the church,
and call upon the Father
in mighty prayer, saying:
57 O God the Eternal Father,
we ask thee in the name
of thy Son Jesus Christ,
to bless and sanctify
this bread
to the souls of all those
who partake of it,
that they may eat
in remembrance of the body
of thy Son
and witness unto thee
O God the Eternal Father,
that they are willing
to take upon them
the name of thy Son,
and always remember him,
and keep his commandments
which he hath given them,
that they may always
have his Spirit
to be with them.
Amen.
58 The matter of administering
the wine:
59 Behold they shall
take the cup and say,
O God, the Eternal Father,
we ask thee in the name
of thy Son Jesus Christ,
to bless and sanctify this wine
to the souls of all those

74 Then shall he immerse
him or her
in the water,
and come forth again
out of the water.
75 It is expedient that
the church meet together often
to partake of bread and wine
in the remembrance of
the Lord Jesus;
76 And the elder or priest
shall administer it; and
after this manner
shall he administer it--
he shall kneel with the church
and call upon the Father
in solemn prayer, saying:
77 O God, the Eternal Father,
we ask thee in the name
of thy Son, Jesus Christ,
to bless and sanctify
this bread
to the souls of all those
who partake of it,
that they may eat
in remembrance of the body
of thy Son,
and witness unto thee,
O God, the Eternal Father,
that they are willing
to take upon them
the name of thy Son,
and always remember him
and keep his commandments
which he has given them;
that they may always
have his Spirit
to be with them.
Amen.
78 The manner of administering
the wine--
he shall
take the cup also, and say:
79 O God, the Eternal Father,
we ask thee in the name
of thy Son, Jesus Christ,
to bless and sanctify this wine
to the souls of all those

who drink of it,
that they may do it
in remembrance of the blood
of thy Son,
which was shed for them,
that they may witness
unto thee,
O God the Eternal Father,
that they do always
remember him,
that they may have his Spirit
to be with them.

Amen.

60 Any member of
this church of Christ,
transgressing
or being overtaken in a fault,
shall be dealt with according
as the scriptures direct.
61 It shall be the duty
of the several churches,
composing this
church of Christ,
to send one or more
of their teachers to attend
the several conferences,
held by the elders
of this church,
with a list of the names
of the several members,
uniting themselves
to the church
since the last conference,
or send by the hand
of some priest,
so that there can be kept
a regular list of all the names
of the members of
the whole church,
in a book kept
by one of the elders;
62 Whomsoever the other elders
shall appoint
from time to time:
63 And also, if any
have been expelled
from the church,
so that their names

who drink of it,
that they may do it
in remembrance of the blood
of thy Son,
which was shed for them;
that they may witness
unto thee,
O God, the Eternal Father,
that they do always
remember him,
that they may have his Spirit
to be with them.

Amen.

80 Any member of
the church of Christ
transgressing,
or being overtaken in a fault,
shall be dealt with
as the scriptures direct.
81 It shall be the duty
of the several churches,
composing the
church of Christ,
to send one or more
of their teachers to attend
the several conferences
held by the elders
of the church,
82 With a list of the names
of the several members
uniting themselves
with the church
since the last conference;
or send by the hand
of some priest;
so that
a regular list of all the names
of the
whole church
may be kept in a book
by one of the elders,
whomsoever the other elders
shall appoint
from time to time;
83 And also, if any
have been expelled
from the church,
so that their names

may be blotted out of
the general church record
of names.

64 Any member removing
from the church
where he resides,
if going to a church
where he is not known,
may take a letter certifying
that he is a regular member
and in good standing;

65 Which certificate
may be signed by
any elder or priest,
if the member receiving
the letter is
personally acquainted with
the elder or priest, or
it may be signed by the
teachers or deacons
of the church.

may be blotted out of
the general church record
of names.

84 All members removing
from the church
where they reside,
if going to a church
where they are not known,
may take a letter certifying
that they are regular members
and in good standing,

which certificate
may be signed by
any elder or priest
if the member receiving
the letter is
personally acquainted with
the elder or priest, or
it may be signed by the
teachers or deacons
of the church.

On the Sacrament Prayers

The Sacrament prayers over the bread and wine, now replaced by water in LDS congregations, are quite similar, but have some noteworthy differences. While the similarities between the two prayers serve to emphasize the fundamental purpose of the Sacrament, the differences serve to establish the covenant theology associated with the Sacrament.

The covenant theology latent in the Sacrament prayers is seldom, if ever, discussed. This is probably because the Sacrament is often presented as a renewal of baptismal covenants. And rightly so. However, once that equation is made, there is not any additional attempt to draw covenant theology out of the prayers. These comments are intended to address both the purpose of and the covenant embedded in the Sacrament prayers.

Similarities Emphasize Purpose

The Sacrament was instituted at Jesus' last Passover meal, held with the twelve:

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide [it] among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake [it], and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup [is] the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:17-22)

Jesus tells them plainly the bread represents his body and the wine represents his blood, and they are to eat it to remember that he has sacrificed them for us. Thus, the primary purpose of the Sacrament is to remind the people of the Atonement.

Note which parts of the prayers are identical, and what points get repeated for emphasis:

O God, the Eternal Father,
we ask thee
in the name of thy **Son,**
Jesus Christ,
to bless and sanctify
this bread
to the souls
of all those who partake of it,
that they may eat
in remembrance of
the body of thy **Son,**

O God, the Eternal Father,
we ask thee
in the name of thy **Son,**
Jesus Christ,
to bless and sanctify
this wine
to the souls
of all those who drink of it,
that they may do it
in remembrance of
the blood of thy **Son,**
which was shed for them; that

and **witness unto thee,**
O God, the Eternal Father,
that they are willing
to take upon them
the name of thy Son, and
always **remember him** and
keep his commandments
which he has given them;
that they may always
have his **Spirit**
to be with them. Amen.

they may **witness unto thee,**
O God, the Eternal Father,
that they do

always **remember him,**

that they may
have his **Spirit**
to be with them. Amen.

The Holy Spirit is addressed once in each prayer, the Father is addressed twice in both prayers, and the Son is addressed three times in each prayer. All members of the godhead are addressed, but the role of Jesus is preeminent.

Remembering is explicitly referenced twice in both prayers, clearly echoing Jesus' intention at the Last Supper.

The "we ask thee" request for sanctification appears in both prayers, as does the acknowledgment of the formality of the act in "witness unto thee".

Differences Establish the Covenant

The most obvious difference between the two prayers is the bread/wine and body/blood symbols. The bread-body clearly have reference to the more temporal aspects of the Atonement (mortality, physical death, and resurrection), and the wine-blood referring to the more spiritual aspects (sin, spiritual death, and justification). Aside from these differences, note the portions of the text which are entire different between the two prayers:

O God, the Eternal Father,
we ask thee
in the name of thy Son,
Jesus Christ,
to bless and sanctify
this bread
to the souls
of all those who partake of it,
that they may eat
in remembrance of
the body of thy Son,

and witness unto thee,
O God, the Eternal Father,
that they **are willing**
to take upon them
the name of thy Son, and
always remember him
and **keep his commandments**
which he has given them;

O God, the Eternal Father,
we ask thee
in the name of thy Son,
Jesus Christ,
to bless and sanctify
this wine
to the souls
of all those who drink of it,
that they may do it
in remembrance of
the **blood** of thy Son,
which was shed for them; that
they may witness unto thee,
O God, the Eternal Father,
that they do

always remember him,

that they may **always**
have his Spirit
to be with them. Amen.

that they may
have his Spirit
to be with them. Amen.

The bread prayer is unique when it says:

they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son,
and...keep his commandments which he has given
them...always

The wine prayer is unique when it says:

the blood...which was shed for them

This is the formula of the Sacrament covenant, the two parties involved signify the two parts of the contract. First, those who partake of the Sacrament are showing they are taking the name of Jesus Christ upon them and indicate they are going to hear and do his teachings. Second, Jesus has shed his blood for them. The two parties of the covenant are identified, and the requirements are stipulated. Jesus has shed his blood for us, and if want it to be of any efficacy to us, we must do what he tells us to do.

It is particularly fitting the recipient's portion of the covenant is combined with the bread prayer as the partaker is still in mortal flesh (the struggle with the flesh being emphasized by the fact that in order to "always have his Spirit" we must "keep his commandments"). The more spiritual wine prayer is reserved for the Lord's half of the covenant. Similarly, the two prayers follow a works and grace theme. The bread prayer emphasize the works we must do, while the wine prayer emphasizes the grace and mercy of Jesus' atoning blood.

Conclusion

The symbolism of the Sacrament is intended to remind us, in fitting terms of the essential activities of eating and drinking, that Jesus sacrificed his body and blood for us so we may live.

Additionally, those who partake of the Sacrament enter into a covenant with the Lord. If they keep His teachings, then they will have His blood to atone for their sins.

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