

The Mercy Seat: Part Two "Perhaps They May Be Of Worth" by Daniel Malone 2006

"Oh 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."

In my previous article "The Mercy Seat" It was my goal to show the preparations God expects us to make before we approach Him in any of our services. Please take notice that I did not say requires of us. The Lord "required" many preparations of the house of Israel under the Law of Moses. We are "expected" to make similar preparations based on our individual knowledge of God and His new covenant of the heart. The blood of Christ our Redeemer has purchased us. Our debt has been paid and we have been set free to choose our own path. This debt I refer to is the fall of Adam. In Hebrews we are told that through one man sin entered the world and through one man, mankind has been redeemed. Mosiah 1:107 says, "For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam..."

We are left then with a choice. It has been given to all men to know good from evil. Alma 19:70 says, "for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or evil." In fact Alma explains this subject clearly to his son Corianton throughout Chapter 19. We are to be judged by our works according to our knowledge of what is written. If you are a member of the Church of Christ you have heard the words of the first paragraph. They were written long ago.

Moroni was through abridging and compiling the records that have come to be known as the Book of Mormon when he supposed he should write a few more things. I can feel his grief and pain when I read these first few verses. "I supposed not to have written more but I have not as yet perished; and I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me. For behold, their wars are exceeding fierce among themselves; and because of their hatred, they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ. And I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore I wander withersoever I can, for the safety of mine own life. Wherefore I write a few more things contrary to that which I had supposed... that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren, the Lamanites, in some future day, according to the will of God." Moroni Ch.1

Indeed they are of great worth to us today. Contained in chapter 4 and 5 of these "few more writings" is the prayer and manner of worship that was administered according to the commandments of Christ to the people on this land. Chapter 4 verse two states "...wherefore we know the manner to be true..."

Brothers and sisters in Christ: What we call a sacrament service in this modern day is an ordinance of God similar in nature and necessity if not even more important than the Ark of The Covenant, The Mercy Seat and The Holiest Of Holies was to them of old. Apostle Roland Sarratt said, "This (The Sacrament Service) is our most sacred church service." at the 2006 Mo. Reunion.

Moroni 4:1-4 tells us:

1. An Elder or Priest may administer the flesh and blood of Christ.
2. It is a commandment of Christ and the manner described is true.
3. The minister and the church members all knelt for the prayer.
4. The Prayer is given exactly how Christ commanded.

The words cannot be debated for they have been translated into our language (English) by the power of God. A close look at the prayer over the bread and wine and what the emblems

represent will support my comparison to these old testament symbols of God and his Divine Presence.

“Oh 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,”

To sanctify anything is to declare that it belongs to God. Sanctification is to separate from the world and consecrate unto God. I believe that the bread and the soul of anyone who partakes of the bread belong to God. It is an emblematic transference of ownership of our souls to God through the body of Christ who redeemed us, bought us and paid our debts.

“that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son,” (“that they may do it in remembrance of the blood that was shed for them,” --prayer for the wine)

We are remembering the body of Christ or the flesh by eating the bread. From the very beginning flesh was sacred (Gen. 9:4) and was forbidden to eat because it contained life, which is blood. Under the Law of Moses the Jews were forbidden to eat raw meat, that is flesh that contained blood and flesh that was from something strangled or that had the life choked out of it. So God calls us even today to use bread as an emblem of his body or his flesh. He was not strangled so his blood remained an acceptable sacrifice for sin. See also Acts 15:20-29

The flesh and blood of Christ go together in our sacrament service because they are both symbolic of Christ's death. “Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission” Heb. 9:22-28 “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” Since you can only offer up a sacrifice once, all of the Old Testament blood offerings were provided not to take away sin, but to point forward to the Last and True Sacrifice.

Also, in the Law of Moses it was recognized that the nearest of kin would pursue a killer, so entire cities were built and placed under the protection of the Levites to give refuge to those guilty of manslaughter, but not murder. (Num. 35:6, Joshua 20:1-6) The Avenger of Blood was the next of kin to the deceased and it was their right to pursue the slayer that killeth any person unawares. This relates to the Jewish law of kinship, (See also the story of Ruth and Boaz) to be the next of kin and as such, to buy back a relative's property. The Hebrew word “ga'al” means, avenge, deliver, purchase, ransom, redeem. The word is used throughout Lamentations and Ruth, occasionally in Psalms and almost exclusively in Isaiah. Twice in the entire book of Isaiah is the word redeemer (or redeemed, redeemedst etc.) used without being a root of this word ga'al. One of my favorite scriptures Job 19:25 “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:” is also a root of the word ga'al. As the son of man Christ was our kinsman, he died on the cross and thus became our redeemer, and when he returns again he will be the avenger of blood and will seek out those who let Him die on the cross in vain, and who do not choose to live uprightly before God taking advantage of His redeeming love. Therefore, I believe the Sacrament is also a “pointing forward” to the second coming of Christ, especially for our day and time.

“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,”

To take upon the name of Christ and witness to God that we do it means to be baptized in the Church of Christ and have our names written down in heaven in the Lamb's Book of Life. "For if a church be called in Moses' name, then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man, then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name, then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel" These are Christ's words in the 3rd book of Nephi chapter 12. We are to be baptized in the Church of Christ that is built upon the gospel of Christ and always remember him.

"and keep his commandments which he has given them,"

Matt 26:26-28 Christ commanded them to eat and drink of His body and blood both in America and in Jerusalem and it is still a commandment today. In 3rd Nephi 8:33-36 we read the words of Christ, "And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have broken bread and blessed it, and gave it unto you. And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father, that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me, ye shall have my Spirit to be with you." Very similar to the prayer we have been given in Moroni the difference being that we will not see the physical body of Christ until he comes again. Verse 40 is almost identical to the prayer we have for the blood. We are to follow the commandments of Christ and His example exactly the way He has shown us. Take special notice of the verses following this first hand account of Christ's administering of the sacrament to the people on this land so long ago. Vs. 42-44, "And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall do these things. And if ye shall do these things, blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock. But whoso among you shall do more or less than these, are not built upon my rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation."

I would also like to make note that there are some aspects to the Sacrament that we as a church have disagreements on. For example in Africa they all stand up to receive the sacrament and sit down once they have partook of the flesh and blood. In 3rd Nephi 9:39 Jesus gave us this example to stand, he commanded it even. This is also an easy way for the ministry to tell who is a baptized member. However, in 3rd Nephi 8:29 the Lord commanded the multitude to sit themselves down upon the earth before he administered the sacrament. I don't believe either way is wrong or that one way is better. I believe it is important that we all follow "the manner that we know to be true" that is given in Moroni.

"that they may always have his spirit to be with them. Amen."

This is the promise. Every time we partake of the Sacrament worthily, His spirit is with us. 3 Nephi 9:44-45 Just like in the old testament when he dwelt with them in His holy temple.

Just like in the days of old the Lord has made requirements for us to follow. This is a definitive set of rules God has set for us to follow. He is omniscient, all wise and all-powerful and He caused Moroni to write these plain and precious things that we may have the fullness of the gospel. The Bible does not have this prayer in it and when Christ's Church was restored this sacred ordinance was put into practice once again. The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever. I believe this ordinance should be treated with the same respect and reverence that God required the Jews to have for the Ark of the Covenant. If you were not a Levite priest and you

touched the Ark you died. The Lord said "whosoever eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul." 3Nephi 8:60 I believe a sacrament service is special, it is powerful and contains a promise, it requires greater preparation and anticipation, and it is not to be treated like a regular prayer service.