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Chapter One

“And God Blessed the Seventh Day, and Sanctified It”: The Sabbath at Creation, Dedications, and Christ’s Theophany in 3 Nephi

Daniel L. Belnap

The Creation narrative, found in various places within the canon of scripture of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, describes the institution of two different types of time.¹ The first type of time is established in the “fourth day” with the placement of the astronomical bodies, which act as markers “for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years”—that is, common time (Genesis 1:14; Moses 2:14). The second type of time is established in the “seventh day,” when the Lord rests from his labors. Situated as it was at the conclusion of the physical creation and marking what could be considered the beginning of the social creation (such as the naming of the animals, the institution of marriage, and the production of clothing), this event is described as a day of divine rest and represents the institution of sacred time (see Genesis 2:2–3; Moses 3:2–3; Abraham 5:2–3).² The Lord’s rest is often interpreted as a cessation of work or activity, but this is not fully accurate. At least two activities were associated with this restful period, or sacred time—namely, the Lord’s blessing and sanctifying of the earth—with a third activity, that of assembly, implied.

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It is from the day of rest that the Sabbath emerged. Yet the activities associated with the day of rest, as well as its liminal, or “in-between,” nature, suggest a relationship with another type of sacred time—the time of dedications (that is, dedicatory events such as temple dedications). In fact, the similarities that exist between these two events, the day of rest and dedications, may suggest that the day of rest in the Creation, and in subsequent Sabbaths, may be understood as dedicatory time. By noting the characteristics of these two types of times, the day of rest established in the Creation and dedicatory events, we can recognize the presence of sacred time even when it is not explicitly designated by any known source—for example, during the time surrounding Christ’s ministry in the New World.

The Sabbath as a Dedication

As noted above, one way to better understand the Sabbath as a dedicatory event is to recognize its liminal nature. So named from the Latin *limen*, meaning “doorway” or “threshold,” liminality describes those places (or in this case times) that are not meant to be permanent but that instead act as transition points where individuals can interact with other members of the given community in ways not possible in “regular” space or time. In other words, liminality refers to an “in-between” state in which one has the time and space to transform into new states while engaging with others who may be in other social or community contexts that one does not normally engage with directly.³ With this definition in mind, two characteristics of the Sabbath—its unique placement within the scheme of creation and its temporary nature—suggest that the Sabbath may be understood as a liminality.⁴ Dedicatory events are also liminal in that they too are temporary, an “in-between” time: they simultaneously culminate one period and inaugurate another, and they are enacted to facilitate the transformation of an object or a place into a state in which that object or place can function as designed. In light of the similarities in liminality between the Sabbath and dedications, specifically temple dedications, it may not be surprising to see that the three activities associated with the creation Sabbath—namely assembly, blessing, and sanctification—may also define the dedicatory experience.

One of the challenges to understanding the role of the Sabbath in the Creation narrative is that the final version of that narrative, Genesis 1–3, appears to be an amalgamation of two Creation narratives that later editors spliced together. Similarities between Genesis 1 and the tabernacle texts

in Exodus and Leviticus have led some scholars to suggest that Genesis 1 is a product of one or more “priestly” authors or redactors.⁵ Because of differences in narrative, setting, and even terminology between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2–3, it has been presumed that chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis have been written by another author or redactor to represent a different Creation narrative.⁶ For Latter-day Saints, the differences between the two narratives have been understood to reflect two different temporal periods of the Creation: (1) a premortal organization by which the spiritual reality and relationship of all things were established prior to their physical creation and arrangement, and (2) the subsequent physical creation.⁷ Whether or not this interpretation of these two narratives is the correct one, it does highlight the intended relationship between them, namely that the final redactor clearly believed them to harmonize with one another and therefore put them next to each other. And in fact, the narrative elements mentioned above do not so much highlight a different physical creation as they highlight the creation of the social cosmos, in which the social aspects of the Creation are emphasized.⁸

The creation of this social cosmos begins in Eden, God’s earthly garden. Further geographical areas are designated by the four rivers that flow from Eden, which may be understood as social space—that is, space that indicates a social function. In this case, the social function is found in the inhabited areas of the ancient Near East.⁹ The designation of a garden in Eden suggests that it too may be understood as social space, in that gardens are artificially planned environments that indicate prestige or other social dynamics.¹⁰ In similar fashion, while Genesis 1 emphasizes the physical creation of the animals, Genesis 2 emphasizes the naming of the animals, thereby showing that the social act of naming takes place in the second creative period. Later comes the differentiation of the moral principles that can sustain a society, such as right and wrong; obedience and disobedience; guilt and innocence; and correct and incorrect—polarities that are at the foundation of a sociolegal tradition and are essential to a functioning society. These examples demonstrate the continuity between the first creative event and the second, yet they also show a change in focus. The institution of the Sabbath separated the two periods, acting as a transitory mechanism from one to the other.

Key to understanding this transitioning function of the Sabbath is understanding what exactly is meant by “he rested” (Genesis 2:2). Though often understood to mean “ceasing activity,” the verb *shavat* (from which

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the term *Sabbath* derives) actually reflects “the coming to an end” of an activity; therefore, the verb is particularly appropriate when a specific activity is finished or completed, not merely stopped.¹¹ The verb’s usage and placement in the Creation narrative suggests that the specific completed activity from which God rested was the physical creation of the cosmos, as highlighted in Genesis 2:1. Having finished physically creating the cosmos, God was now ready to dedicate it for its ultimate use.

The association of the Sabbath rest with inauguration or dedication has been noted elsewhere, specifically highlighting the similarities between the Creation narrative and the dedication of other sacred spaces such as temples. S. Dean McBride Jr., who sees the newly formed earth as a templelike space, suggests that “this day of silent divine rest is a consummation of all that has gone before because it inaugurates God’s residence within the cosmic temple.”¹² Likewise, John H. Walton highlights the relationship between the Sabbath as dedication and the dedication of Solomon’s temple:

When the house was complete, however, all that existed was a structure, not a temple. It was ready to be a temple, but it was not yet functioning like a temple, and God was not dwelling in it . . . what constituted the transition from a structure that was ready to be a temple to an actual functioning temple? . . . This is an important question because there is a comparison to be drawn if Genesis 1 is indeed a temple text. We find that in both the Bible and the ancient Near East there is an inauguration ceremony that formally and ceremonially marks the transition from physical structure to functioning temple.¹³

As for what was being dedicated, it is possible that the earth itself was inaugurated, reflecting its function for all humankind; however, a more specific location may be the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden’s similarity to and possible function as a temple space has been noted elsewhere, and in light of its cultic function, the suggestion that the institution of the Sabbath acted as the garden’s dedication is not unfeasible.¹⁴ Regardless, the dedicatory nature of the Sabbath would indicate not a cessation from activity but rather an introduction to another set of activities specifically designed to inaugurate the functioning of creation.

For Latter-day Saints, the act of dedicating has been historically related to the completion of a temple. Though the first temple was built six years after the official organization of the Church itself in 1830, Joseph Smith

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had been receiving revelation concerning its construction and usage as early as 1831. On March 27, 1836, the dedicatory events for the Kirtland Temple began. The dedication process itself was relatively simple. It was a communal experience in which the Church members gathered to receive instruction from Church leaders. This was then followed by the dedicatory prayer, in which Joseph Smith prayed that God would accept their labors and requested requisite blessings by virtue of the temple's completion. The dedicatory prayer suggests that the dedication process acted as part of the construction and that the building was now ready for God's divine presence, which would denote the building as a functional temple (Doctrine and Covenants 109:4, 10–13). The dedication, at least those elements performed by the Church members, concluded with the Hosanna Shout, consisting of the congregation speaking aloud in unison, "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna, to God and the Lamb" three times. While there is no official explanation as to why they did this, the use of the term hosanna, derived from the Hebrew *hōšî'āb-nā'*, meaning "save us, please," suggests that it was an official invitation to turn the building into a functioning house of God, so noted by God's presence.

Since then, every one of the 162 temples now in operation¹⁵ has been dedicated in similar fashion, with the dedication marking the point at which the building becomes a sacred space used to further humanity's salvation. Though no Church leader has explicitly associated these events of dedication with the inauguration of the Sabbath, at least one has suggested that the Creation contained a dedicatory event: Lorenzo Snow, the fifth prophet of the Church, remarked in 1899 that the Job 38:7 reference in which "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy" referred to the "the first shout of 'Hosanna'" given at the Creation.¹⁶ Thus, from President Snow's perspective, every Latter-day Saint who engages in a temple dedication reenacts one of the earliest events of all creation.

As noted earlier, corresponding to the overall function of the creation Sabbath as a dedicatory event, three specific activities within Genesis 2:1–3 completed the Creation and prepared it for further creative action.

The first of these is assembly. Genesis 2:1 sums up the creative process thus far by stating that heaven and earth were finished "and all the host of them." Though the first two elements, heaven and earth, can be understood as a reference to the totality of the physical creation, the word

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“host” (*ševā’ām*) is often used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to the assembly of heaven or, when in reference to Israel, the congregation.¹⁷

Who exactly this assembly comprises in Genesis 2 is less clear, but many have noted the role of the divine assembly in the creative process.¹⁸ Though Job 38 has already been noted in a Latter-day Saint context specifically in regard to the Hosanna Shout, the verses themselves seem to place the shouting of the sons of God within the Creation narrative: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth . . . Who hath laid the measures thereof . . . or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (vv. 4–7). If this reading is correct, then the creation Sabbath can be characterized as a time of assembly during which the hosts of heaven came together at this pivotal moment in the Creation (see also Abraham 3:21–26). Though somewhat outside the purview of this paper, the Israelite practice of the Sabbath also incorporated assembly as part of its praxis.¹⁹

The second specific activity was that of blessing. As to the nature of the blessing, that is less clear, but Norman Habel suggests that this particular activity was “a key factor in sustaining the creation process. To bless (*barak*) is to impart power. In this instance, that power activates a capacity to procreate and ‘multiply on *Erets* [earth].”²⁰ In other words, while all living things were potentially able to “be fruitful and multiply” and were even expected to do so, they could not perform their function until God blessed them. The created cosmos remained in a state of potentiality until God’s blessing, which allowed for the elements of the Creation to begin doing what they were designed to do. This appears to be the case regarding Adam; though his spirit had already been made in the image of God, his physical body was not enlivened until after the divine blessing on the Sabbath (Genesis 2:3, 7). Latter-day Saint scripture may add another perspective to the blessing activity. In the book of Moses, a revelation given to Joseph Smith that included a version of the Creation, chapter 3 contains an additional phrase at the point where God looks over his completed works in the seventh day: “and I, God, saw that they were good” (v. 2). In the biblical version, this phrase is found at the end of the preceding chapter, as God concludes the physical creation in Genesis 1 on the sixth day. However, it is not found in the seventh-day narrative of Genesis 2:1–3. The Moses version makes it clear that the Sabbath activities are directly associated with the pronouncement found throughout the narrative. More

than merely an acknowledgment of what has happened, the declaration that the aspects of the Creation, including the Sabbath, were “good” represents a fundamental and crucial observation as well as a promise that the objects noted are fulfilling their divine purpose and function.²¹ This declaration represents the intrinsic integrity making up the cosmic entities and thereby the underlying order and organization of the cosmos as a whole.²² Thus it is possible that the declaration itself is the blessing.

The final activity was that of sanctification. The act of sanctification, based on the term *q-d-š*, is often understood as a “setting apart” in which sanctified objects are assigned a new position or function apart from similar objects. However, the adjectival form is often translated as “holy,” an English word related to the similar terms “whole” and “hale.” This implies that sanctification is not just the setting apart of an object, but that it is the act through which the object set apart becomes “complete.”²³ Moreover, the Hebrew term itself has variants, thus the meaning or usage of the term in any scriptural passage depends upon which variant of *q-d-š* was used. The most common form is *qōdeš*, which is used to describe a number of things, such as the clothing of the priests, the animals offered for sacrifice, and the instruments in the tabernacle. The term *qadōš*, on the other hand, is rarer and used to describe objects or individuals that are not just holy themselves but also have the dynamic ability to move objects into a divine, or completed, state. Not surprisingly, God is the number one entity described as *qadōš*, but Israel too is expected to be *qadōš*, like their God (Leviticus 11:44–45; 19:2).²⁴

In light of the above, the assembly, blessing, and sanctifying actions taken by both the “host” of heaven and by God (actions that are associated in other contexts with dedications of sacred spaces) suggest that the creation Sabbath too can be viewed as a dedication, a liminal state and time in which the completed physical creation is now made functional.²⁵ Moreover, as the prototype to historical Sabbaths, or those Sabbaths experienced within human history (as opposed to the prehistorical period of the Creation), it is possible that these three same activities of assembly, blessing, and sanctification are to be part of all Sabbaths—that is, that these acts may be crucial elements in any Sabbath worship, with the Sabbath itself being a liminal state completing one week and inaugurating the next. Finally, as the prototype of any sacred time (at least biblically), the Creation’s dedicatory Sabbath may act as a template for other sacred times that are not explicitly referenced as Sabbaths, such as Christ’s theophany in 3 Nephi 8–26.

Christ's Theophany as a Dedicatory Sabbath

The events surrounding the theophany of Christ as depicted in 3 Nephi 8–26 suggest a transition from one period of Nephite history to another. Considering this, it may not be surprising to recognize Creation narrative elements within this record. Two aspects are particularly suggestive of a parallel between Christ's arrival and the Creation: (1) the darkness, and (2) the unorganized nature of the physical landscape.

Genesis 1 begins with a setting that is familiar to those who know ancient Near Eastern cosmology. According to verse 2, the pre-creative state was one of darkness, in which the earth had no distinctive shape and was “without form, and [was] void.” The corresponding Hebrew phrase, *tohû wābohû*, does not mean “nothing” or indicate an absence, as the English translation suggests, but instead refers to a state that was often associated with water, in which material was present yet unorganized and unformed.²⁶

In 3 Nephi 8, after Christ's crucifixion, the reader is told that following hours of physical devastation “there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land” (v. 19). Some scholars have provided possible, even plausible, scientific and geological explanations for the nature of this darkness;²⁷ regardless of the exact cause, Mormon's descriptions of this event appear to parallel the pre-creative state of the cosmos as described in Genesis. According to Mormon, the preternatural darkness preceding the arrival of Christ in the Americas was a “vapor” that could be felt (3 Nephi 8:20); two verses later, he refers to it as “the mists of darkness . . . upon the face of the land.” The darkness was so pervasive that “there could be no light, because of the darkness, neither candles, neither torches; neither could there be fire kindled . . . there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars” (vv. 21–22).

The fluidic aspect of this period may also be seen in the ever-changing geological landscape. Throughout chapter 8, the reader is told that the whole earth shook “as if it was about to divide asunder” (v. 6); that the “whole face of the land was changed” (v. 12); that some cities were sunk and others were replaced by mountains (vv. 9–10); and that the “face of the whole earth became deformed” as the “rocks were rent in twain; they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth, insomuch that they were found in broken fragments, and in seams and in cracks, upon all the face of the land” (vv. 17–18). Though this geological unrest initially took place

during the first three hours of destruction, 3 Nephi 10:9–10 suggests that it continued for the next three days: “And it came to pass that thus did the three days pass away. And it was in the morning, and the darkness dispersed from off the face of the land, and the earth did cease to tremble, and the rocks did cease to rend, and the dreadful groanings did cease, and all the tumultuous noises did pass away. And the earth did cleave together again, that it stood.”²⁸ These verses describe a dark, ever-changing, and fluid landscape, in which the very earth itself was under continuous change—an environment that perfectly reflects the precreative state in Genesis 1.²⁹

Paralleling the physical chaos, the social system in 3 Nephi could also be described as precreative. Prior to the physical destruction of the cities, Nephite (and apparently Lamanite) social structure had fractured into tribal circles, “every man according to his family and his kindred and friends; and thus they did destroy the government of the land . . . and the regulations of the government were destroyed . . . [until] the more part of the people had turned from their righteousness, like the dog to his vomit, or like the sow to her wallowing in the mire” (3 Nephi 7:2, 6, 8). Thus, by the time the physical calamities took place, society had already been effectively destroyed. Like the earth itself (in both Genesis 1 and in 3 Nephi), society was ready to be remade into something new.³⁰

As noted above, in 3 Nephi 10 we read that the darkness lifted after three days, and the earth settled into a new form; yet this “new” creation remained incomplete, with the social structure completely undefined until Christ’s arrival. Interestingly, Mormon provides no time frame between the lifting of the darkness and the arrival of Christ, an omission that appears to be deliberate. It is clear that Mormon can provide very specific information on times and dates, but he chooses not to do so here, perhaps highlighting the symbolic nature of the events rather than the literal, sequential occurrences.³¹ Thus, instead of providing only a description of existence during this stasis period, Mormon also anticipates Christ’s coming, which will complete this new creation and establish a new society.

Regarding the above, it is not surprising to see aspects of the Creation narrative in Christ’s arrival, particularly the formation or presence of light. Christ himself had used some of this imagery when speaking to the survivors of the cataclysmic events who were still experiencing the mists of darkness. Noting that he was the creator of the heavens and the earth, he also referred to himself as “the light and life of the world” (3 Nephi 9:18) suggestive of God’s first creative work in Genesis 1.

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According to the text of 3 Nephi 9, a few hours later Christ spoke again, this time likening his work to “a hen who gathereth her chickens” (vv. 4–6). While this latter imagery is seemingly pastoral, it is also reminiscent of God’s creative labors. In Genesis 1:2, prior to the creative acts by which the cosmos is brought into being, the reader is told that “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” The verb translated as “moved,” *nāhap*, is also used to describe the hovering of an eagle’s wings over her young in Deuteronomy 32:11, suggesting then a similar action taken by God in the Creation. If this is the case, then Christ not only used terminology and imagery that reflected the survivors’ covenantal relationship with God but also incorporated creation imagery to show them that his creative powers were still available even in their current state. Just as the spirit had hovered over the nascent creation in the precosmic darkness, so too did Christ spread his “wings” over his children as they stood in the mists of darkness.³²

Yet it isn’t the creative acts per se that suggest Christ’s theophany may be understood as a Sabbath; rather, it is the three activities that have been associated with dedications and that were present in the creation Sabbath: assembly, blessing, and sanctification. Assuming that the criteria for a dedication were similar to those for dedications performed today, the need for a dedication would have been present following the destruction of civilization in 3 Nephi. For instance, as the text makes clear, entire cities were destroyed by fire, drowned in the sea, or swallowed up by the earth. Sacred sites would have needed to be rebuilt and therefore rededicated for use. Even those sites that survived the cataclysmic events would have required a rededication since their designs reflected praxis under the law of Moses, and when he spoke in the darkness Christ had explicitly stated that this law was fulfilled (3 Nephi 9:16–20). In any case, we can see that the three dedication activities played essential roles in Christ’s visit.

The first activity, assembly, is the primary setting for the entirety of Christ’s ministry in 3 Nephi. According to 3 Nephi 11:1, prior to Christ’s immediate arrival but after the darkness had lifted, “a great multitude gathered together” at the temple in Bountiful. We are not told why they gathered at this specific place, nor are we given the date of when this gathering took place; however, this gathering may suggest that Christ’s arrival coincided with one of the festivals associated with temple assembly. Regardless of the reasons, the text makes it clear that there was an assembly and that the activities and teachings associated with Christ’s ministry are to be understood within the context of an assembly. In fact, of the 104

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references to “multitudes” in the Book of Mormon, almost half of them are found in 3 Nephi 11–26, clearly emphasizing the communal nature of the events.

At least three different assemblies took place during the theophany. The first was the initial assembly noted above in 3 Nephi 11:1. This multitude witnessed Christ’s arrival and participated in the physical experience of handling Christ’s resurrected body. This initiatory event is described in verses 14–16, concluding with those assembled crying, “Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God!” in verse 17. The meaning of the term “hosanna” has been explained above; based on the root *yasa’* meaning “to save” with a suffixal ending “-*nah*,” most often understood as a precative particle, it results in a term that has the basic meaning of “save us, please.” Although the meaning is clear, the origin of the term is less certain. It is only found once in the Old Testament in Psalm 118:25, a psalm that has been historically associated with entrance to the temple. However, many scholars connect the usage of the term with Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of the last week of his mortal ministry (see Matthew 21:15; Mark 11:10; John 12:13). Its place in this gospel narrative is often assumed to be messianic in nature, with its usage denoting the desire for those gathered to be delivered by the incoming Son of David, thus indicating Christ’s royal status.³³

In the Book of Mormon, the Hosanna Shout is found three times. The first instance is in 1 Nephi 11. The Spirit of the Lord proclaims: “Hosanna to the Lord, the most high God; for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all” (v. 6). Then he blesses Nephi with his desired vision. The second instance is in 3 Nephi 4:32, concluding a sequence of events in which the Gadianton chief, Zemnarihah, is executed by hanging. Following his death and the cutting down of the tree, those gathered are reputed to have collectively shouted three declarations. The first was a plea that the Lord preserve the community by “felling” all who sought power through secret combinations, just as Zemnarihah had been felled. The second declaration immediately followed the first: the people rejoiced and cried again, “May the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, protect this people in righteousness, so long as they shall call on the name of their God for protection” (v. 30). The final communal declaration was the Hosanna Shout: “Hosanna to the Most High God” (v. 32). The final usage of hosanna is during Christ’s appearance in 3 Nephi 11, as noted earlier.

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Though each one of the three usages occurred in completely different circumstances, they all mark a transition, in which one event is concluded and another is about to begin. In the case of 1 Nephi 11, the divine usage marks the conclusion of the angel's preliminary worthiness questions to Nephi and the beginning of the vision proper; in 3 Nephi 4, the usage marks the end of the conflict with the Gadianton robbers; and finally, the usage in 3 Nephi 11 marks the conclusion of the initiatory events and the beginning of Christ's sermons. Thus, the exclamation of hosanna appears as an element of transition, a liminal experience in which God's protective power is requested specifically as the individual or community transits from one state to another.

Yet the creation Sabbath specified a particular type of assembly, namely one in which both the divine and the mortal hosts ("heaven and earth") interacted. While we do not have records of an incident in which both mortal and divine communities cried aloud together, 3 Nephi 17 does record interaction between the two. According to verse 24, following a round of blessing, those gathered "cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire." A similar event is described in 3 Nephi 19: following the baptism of the twelve disciples Christ had chosen, "angels did come down out of heaven and did minister unto them" (v. 14). As the angels were ministering, Christ himself appeared among them and also ministered. What is unclear in both events is how long the divine community remained with the multitude following their respective ministering. In 3 Nephi 17 the angels appeared following Christ's healing of the sick and his blessing of the children but before his institution of the sacrament, his blessing of the disciples, and his ascension into heaven. In 3 Nephi 19 the angelic visitations took place after the baptism of the disciples but preceded all the events described in 3 Nephi 19–26. In neither case is mention given concerning the leaving of the angelic hosts, perhaps suggesting that this mixed assembly of mortal and divine beings remained together throughout all the events that followed their conjoining. In any case, the event of assembly, even an assembly of the hosts of heaven and of earth, was present during Christ's theophany.

The second activity associated with dedications and the creation Sabbath is that of blessing. According to Genesis 2, having instituted or designated the time of the Sabbath, God then blessed it as well as the nascent creation to that point. Not surprisingly, the act of blessing also played a prominent role

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in Christ's ministry to the New World, especially in the assembly depicted in 3 Nephi 17. Following a sermon that included the blessed sequence of Christ's "sermon on the mount," Christ requested all who were sick or "lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that [were] withered, or that [were] deaf, or that [were] afflicted in any manner" to come and be healed by him (v. 7). This was followed by his pronouncing that they were "blessed" because of their faith, whereupon he took the children of the assembled and "one by one . . . blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them" (v. 21). In chapter 18, we learn that Christ introduced a new ordinance: the sacrament, which was characterized by the blessing of wine and bread. Christ promised that those who partook of this ordinance would be blessed (see vv. 1–14).

Blessing continued to play an important part of the proceedings on the second day of Christ's ministry as well. The latter part of 3 Nephi 19 bears record to Christ's praying on behalf of the disciples and the multitude gathered. The next chapter describes another sacramental observance and then Christ's primary sermon of the day. The sermon began with Christ discussing the land itself: "The Father hath commanded me that I should give unto you this land, for your inheritance" (3 Nephi 20:14). This may seem to be simply reinforcing what had already been promised to the people as far back as Lehi, but it is possible that this supposed reiteration of the promise concerning the land as a land of inheritance may in fact have been referring to the new landscape that followed the physical destruction described earlier. If this is the case, then Christ's pronouncement might not have been a reiteration or a renewal, but a new declaration or dedication of the land to those who were righteous. Regardless, Christ promised, "It shall be a New Jerusalem. And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you" (v. 22), as characterized by the divine–mortal interaction. The declaration was followed by Christ announcing that those gathered were the fulfillment of the covenant made to Abraham, by which he and his seed would bless all the nations of the earth. Thus, part of the sermon includes announcing that the people themselves were a blessing. This was then followed by Christ declaring that blessing the multitude was one of the primary purposes of his visit: "The Father having raised me up unto you first, and sent me to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities; and this because ye are the children of the covenant—and after that ye were blessed then fulfilleth the Father the covenant which he made with Abraham, saying: In thy seed

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shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed—unto the pouring out of the Holy Ghost through me upon the Gentiles, which blessing upon the Gentiles shall make them mighty above all” (vv. 25–27).

The rest of the sermon details how those assembled would experience the fulfilling of God the Father’s covenants, resulting in a peaceful, prosperous society (3 Nephi 22:13–17). Though this promise will ultimately be fulfilled during Christ’s millennial reign, it was also fulfilled by the official reinstatement of the Church (3 Nephi 27; 4 Nephi 1) and the establishment of a Zion society immediately following Christ’s visit (3 Nephi 26:19–20; 4 Nephi). Just as the dedicatory blessing of the Creation formally acknowledged that the cosmos could now function as designed, so too did Christ’s blessing reinforce the multitude’s covenant relationship with God, the newly formed land, and themselves.

The final activity associated with dedications and the creation Sabbath was that of sanctification. As noted above, one of the consequences of blessing is a resulting sanctification of the person or object being blessed. In the case of the Creation narrative in Genesis, the sanctified object was the Sabbath time itself, which was “set apart” from the rest of the cosmos and specifically identified as separate in function from other times and spaces. In Christ’s theophany, sanctification was also present, yet unlike in the Creation narrative, in 3 Nephi it is not a time or space that is sanctified, but a people. According to 3 Nephi 19, after having been baptized, the disciples of Christ were then “filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (v. 13). When Christ arrived he prayed, thanking the Father for “giving” to him the disciples, suggesting a separation from the greater community (see v. 20). While the disciples continued to pray, Christ blessed them, “and the light of his countenance did shine upon them, and behold they were as white as the countenance and also the garments of Jesus; and behold the whiteness thereof did exceed all the whiteness, yea, even there could be nothing upon earth so white as the whiteness thereof” (v. 25). In this case, the sanctification that took place affected the physiology of the disciples, thus transfiguring them into a state similar to that of divine beings.

Christ acknowledged the transformation with a second prayer:

Father, I thank thee that thou hast purified those whom I have chosen,
. . . and I pray for them, and also for them who shall believe on their
words, that they may be purified in me, . . . even as they [the disciples]
are purified in me. Father, I pray not for the world, but for those whom

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thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified in men, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them (vv. 28–29).

While similar to the first prayer, the second prayer now acknowledges that those who have been transfigured have also been purified. Moreover, the prayer requests that all who heed the words of the sanctified disciples would themselves become sanctified so that the purified can become one with God. This consequence of becoming one with God may in fact give insight into the purpose or function of sanctification: instead of simply denoting the separateness of the divine world from the mortal world, sanctification as described in 3 Nephi 19 may be the process by which the divine and the mortal are brought together. In other words, the primary function of sanctification is to facilitate the union of the divine and mortal communities. If this is the case, then it follows that the purpose of God's sanctifying the Sabbath at creation was for the same purpose—namely, to facilitate the unity between God and the cosmos. Moreover, it may further suggest that, like the disciples who were transfigured, humankind now has the primary function to accelerate that unity as much as possible. Finally, it may also provide insight into the function of all Sabbaths (or even all sacred times in general) by demonstrating the infinite mercy of God, who from the beginning set apart a liminal, dedicatory time in which transformations could be enacted that allowed for direct interaction between the mortal and divine realms.

Conclusion

As interesting as the Sabbath's function as dedication may be within a scholastic setting, the impetus of this study lies in the possible application of this perspective in modern worship. Beginning in 2015, Latter-day Saint Church leadership embarked on a worldwide effort to emphasize the Sabbath, with the hope that doing so would increase faith among the membership, thus preparing them for future trials.³⁴ The Church's concern is not unique, as other denominations have also recognized a need to renew the Sabbath as an integral part of one's religious experience.³⁵ Part of this renewal entails understanding the nature of the Sabbath within the scriptural canon.

This study provides a new perspective on the relationship between the Sabbath and the Creation and the relationship between Sabbaths

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and dedications. In turn, it allows for a new understanding of Christ's theophany as an example of such sacred time. Moreover, it is hoped that this study will also allow for a reconsideration of our own Sabbaths. When we understand the Sabbath as a liminal, dedicatory event, it can become a time of personal commitment in which we are blessed and sanctified before reentering the common time and space of the world. The Sabbath thereby becomes a sacred time in which everyday social interactions that once separated an individual from his or her fellows, or even from God, can be suspended, allowing unity between heaven and earth, thus finally fulfilling the paramount purpose of the Creation itself.

Endnotes

1. There are three primary Creation accounts: Genesis 1–3; Moses 2–4; and Abraham 4–5. A fourth account with which Latter-day Saints may be familiar is the narrative given during the temple endowment.
2. The production of clothing and the investiture of Adam and Eve take place after Adam and Eve partake of the fruit but before they are expelled from the Garden of Eden, which allows us to place the production of clothing as part of the second stage of Creation, as the social elements above suggest.
3. Anthropologist Arnold van Gennep was the first to coin this term in his seminal study concerning rituals and ritual space, *Les rites de passage* (Paris: Librairie Critique, 1909). But it was Victor Turner in his seminal work, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), who suggested that liminal space created what he called “communitas,” or the creation of or engagement with social relationships that would not be possible outside of the liminal space.
4. See S. Dean McBride Jr., “Divine Protocol: Genesis 1:1–2:3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch,” in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 3–41. John H. Walton further expands on the idea of temples as dedicatory institutions:

Solomon spent seven years building the house to be used as the temple of God in Jerusalem. When the house was complete, however, all that existed was a structure, not a temple. It was ready to be a temple, but it was not yet functioning like a temple, and God was not dwelling in it. . . . What constituted the transition from a structure that was ready to be a temple to an actual functioning temple? How did the house become a home? This is an important question because there is a comparison to be drawn if Genesis 1 is indeed a temple text. We find that in both the Bible and the ancient Near East there is an inauguration ceremony that formally and ceremonially marks the transition from physical structure to functioning temple. . . . In that inauguration ceremony, the functions of the temple are proclaimed, the functionaries are installed and rituals are begun as God comes down to inhabit the place that has been prepared by his instruction.

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The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 50.

5. See Robert B. Coote, *In the Beginning: Creation and the Priestly History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). For sake of convenience, biblical scholars often refer to those texts that may have been redacted or edited by priests as “P,” and they refer to the presumed writers as “P” as well. For more on “P,” see also Suzanne Boorer, *The Vision of the Priestly Narrative: Its Genre and Hermeneutics of Time* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016). For specific studies on the relationship of “P” and the tabernacle and creation, see Gordon J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1–11*, vol. 4 of Sources for Biblical and Theological Study, ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399–404; and Moshe Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in *Melanges bibliques et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, ed. André Caquot and M. Delcor, in *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 212 (Kevelaer, DE: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn, DE: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 501–12. For a more recent study engaging in more contemporary methodologies, see G. Geoffrey Harper, *“I Will Walk Among You”: The Rhetorical Function of Allusion to Genesis 1–3 in the Book of Leviticus* (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018).
6. The editor/redactor of Genesis 2-3 is often referred to as “J” because of the prominent use of Yahweh (Jehovah) in the narratives presumed to have been edited or redacted by this individual (or individuals). Narratives presumed to have been written by “J” are, therefore, referred to as “J” narratives. For more on the nature of the J narrative, see Albert de Pury, “Yahwist (‘J’) Source,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:1012–20; and John Van Seters, *The Yahwist: A Historian of Israelite Origins* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013).
7. The Latter-day Saint reading is influenced directly by additional scripture found in Moses 3:5–9, which presents a different version of the material found in Genesis 2. While Genesis 2:4–5 may imply a level of creation prior to the physical creation, it is not explicit: “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.” Chapter 3 of the Moses version expands on the possible existence of the plant prior to its physical creation, noting that all things were made spiritually first, “every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth” (v. 5). This concept is repeated later, when discussing the physical formation of humans: “And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; nevertheless, all things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word” (v. 7). For more on the Latter-day Saint reading of the spiritual creation, see

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- Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *In God's Image and Likeness: Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 1:135–45.
8. Many scholars have noted the social cosmos element. Eckart Otto explains that “not only is Genesis 2:7 terminologically tied to Genesis 1, Genesis 1:27 contains the ‘fact’ of the creation of man, whereas following up on Genesis 2:7 the “how” is developed.” Otto, “Paradieserzählung Genesis 2–3, Eine nachpriesterschriftliche Lehrerzählung in ihrem religionshistorischen Kontext,” in *Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit*, ed. Otto Kaiser, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 241 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), 183–84. Seth D. Postell agrees: “Otto’s words point to overriding compositional intentions that go beyond any putative and contradictory sources. Moreover, the fact that Genesis 2–3 is aware of the ‘priestly’ materials and even includes vocabulary classically assigned to ‘P’ undermines Wellhausen’s theory both in terms of his understanding of the chronological relationship of ‘J’ to ‘P’ and in terms of the notion of clearly identifiable and distinguishable literary criteria used to distinguish one hypothetical source from another.” Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Cambridge, MA: James Clarke, 2012), 18. Similarly, Walton states the following: “In Genesis 1:2, an inchoate cosmos is described, whereas an inchoate earth is described in Genesis 2:5–6. . . . Genesis 2 explains how humans function in sacred space and on its behalf (in contrast to Genesis 1, which addressed how sacred space functioned for humanity).” *Lost World*, 69. John Day offers further clarification: “The account in Gen. 2.4b–3.24 is often spoken of as the second Creation account in Genesis, following on that of P in Gen. 1:1–2.4a. This is true, but the second account very much centres on the Garden of Eden and the first man and woman, and apart from that there is very little on the creation of the world.” Day, *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1–11* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 24–25. In all these cases, there is an awareness that Genesis 2 does not describe merely another tradition. Instead, it describes the next stage of the creation event: the creation of society.
 9. The focus on socially recognized spaces has led some to note the relationship between the Genesis 2–3 narrative and those of the patriarchs. As Postell points out, “Scholars have noticed inner-textual parallels between Adam and Abraham. Not only does the text thematically link Abram to Adam, but Genesis 15–16 appears to be an intentional recapitulation of Adam’s story in Genesis 2–3. . . . First, in both passages the central figure undergoes a deep and divinely induced slumber. Second, both passages provide homogenous geographical information regarding the boundaries of a divinely provided land. Third, while Genesis 2 does not mention a covenant as does Genesis 15, it is clearly covenantal in nature.” *Adam as Israel*, 90–91. For Latter-day Saints, the use of ancient Near Eastern geographical nomenclature may clash with modern-day insight in which the Garden of Eden has been presumably located in Missouri. One possible answer is that the texts in question, Genesis 1 and Moses 3, both reflect their ancient Near Eastern (and Israelite) audiences. Interestingly, in the Book of Abraham no geographical nomenclature is mentioned (see Abraham 5:10), perhaps reflecting its earlier, pre-Israelite origin.
 10. Ziony Zevit explains this nuance:

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In biblical Hebrew, *gan*, 'garden,' refers to a plantation of trees, fruit-bearing, aromatic, decorative, or in some aesthetic mix (Isa 1:30; Ezek 31:4–9; Song of Songs 4:16; 5:1; 6:2), as well as to a green garden for raising vegetables (1 Kings 21:2). The Hebrew word is related to the verbal root *g-n-n* used to generate verbs referring to protecting and sheltering. It is distinguished from *sādeh*, 'open field,' where cereals were raised, and *kerem*, 'orchard,' where grape vines and olives trees were cultivated. Elements of an orchard might have been imagined in a garden, but not fields. . . . Gardens are civilized artifacts. Manufactured and controlled, they are usually created for some mix of utilitarian and aesthetic purposes.

What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden? (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 89–90.

11. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Joseph Fabry, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (hereafter *TDOT*), trans. Douglas W. Scott (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), s.v. "*shavat*," 14:382–86. Norman Habel notes that God resting "apparently does not mean inaction or taking a vacation," as the event described "in Gen. 2.3 indicates continued divine action." *The Birth, the Curse and the Greening of Earth: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 1–11*, Earth Bible Commentary Series (Sheffield, MA: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 40. Carol L. Meyers gives fuller context on the meaning of divine rest:

What is the nature of divine rest in the Hebrew Bible? In the ancient Near Eastern literature, we have noted a range of activities (and inactivity) that were involved in rest: from peaceful sleep, to leisure time for entertainment and banquets, to sovereign rule. Some have interpreted the rest in Genesis 1 as representing disengagement and the enjoyment of relaxation. Thus, Levenson comments that the text "leaves us with an impression of the deity in a state of mellow euphoria, benignly fading out the world that he has finished and pronounced 'very good' [J. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 109]. It should be noted, however, that the 'disengagement' form of rest in the ancient Near East is consistently based either in polytheism (e.g., social activities among and entertainment with other gods) or in the belief that the gods had humanlike needs and desires (e.g., sleep or sexual activity). . . . In fact, however, although the idea of divine rest in the ancient Near Eastern (sic.) includes retirement as one possibility, other texts examined above showed rest as the freedom to rule. In the Hebrew Bible, Psalm 132 provides a key passage, in which not only is the temple identified as the resting place of Yahweh but we also find rest identified with rue, for in the temple he sits enthroned. In this sense, divine rest is not primarily an act of disengagement but an act of engagement. No other divine rest occurs in the Hebrew bible than the rest that is associated with his presence in his temple.

The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult, American Schools of Oriental Research Dissertation Series 2, ed. David Noel

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- Freedman (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1976), 179–80.
12. McBride, “Divine Protocol,” 14.
 13. Walton, *Lost World*, 50.
 14. For more on the relationship between the building of the temple and the creation, see Donald W. Parry, ed., “Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary,” in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism* (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book Company and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994), 126–51. See also Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic Writings* (Sheffield, GB: JSOT Press, 1992), 235–42. Weinfeld makes a salient point on the connection between the Creation and the temple: “The fact that with the completion of the instructions for the building the Tabernacle in P. there appears a commandment on the Sabbath (Ex. 31:12–17), shows also the connection which existed between Creation and the Building of the Temple. Indeed, this connection is well expressed in the congruence which is found between the description of the completion of the Tabernacle in Exodus. Gen. 1:1–2:3 and Ex. 39:1–40:33 are typologically identical. Both describe the satisfactory completion of the enterprise commanded by God, its inspection and approval, the blessing and the sanctification which are connected with it.” “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement,” 502–3. Similarly, Postell creates a link between the Garden of Eden and the temple: “In one real sense, the garden serves as the prototypical reality of which the tabernacle serves only as a copy or a type. The tabernacle and its operation are permeated with an aroma of Eden. A link is forged between God’s creation purposes and the construction of the tabernacle, whereby the Mosaic tabernacle and its priesthood perpetuate, albeit imperfectly, the ‘sanctuary’ in Eden and its ‘priesthood.’” Postell, *Adam as Israel*, 113.
 15. As of March 25, 2022, with 44 others in states of construction, 8 undergoing renovation, and another 51 announced on which construction has not yet begun. See <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/temples/list> for the most recent updates.
 16. See Jacob W. Olmstead, “From Pentecost to Administration: A Reappraisal of the History of the Hosanna Shout,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2001): 7–37, specifically 28.
 17. *TDOT*, s.v. “ševā’ām,” 12:211–15. See also *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), s.v. “Hosts, Host of Heaven,” by E. Theodore Mullen Jr., 3:301–304; and Karel Van Der Toorn, Bob Becking, Pieter W. Van Der Horst, eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, NLD; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), s.v. “Yahweh Zebaoth,” by T. N. D. Mettinger, 920–24.
 18. Day offers an interesting insight on the divine assembly:

The dominant view nowadays is that there is a reference to the heavenly court which God addressed (cf. Job 38.7, where ‘all the sons of God shouted for joy’ at the time of the creation, though admittedly it does not say that God consulted them). . . . It might be objected that in Gen. 1.28 it was only God, not the heavenly court, who actually created humanity. However, it is arguable that the momentous decision to create humanity is envisaged as a joint

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act between God and his heavenly council, even if it was only God himself who finally enacted the decision.

From Creation to Babel, 12–13.

19. See Pike, “The Sabbath in the Old Testament,” in this volume.
20. Habel, *Birth, Curse and Greening*, 34.
21. Thus this process (differentiating, naming, and declaring as good) may also be understood as a revelatory one. As Habel points out, the infinitive verb “to appear” in the clause “cause dry land to appear” may also be translated as “to be revealed”: “The Niphal form of this verb used here is used elsewhere when God or an angel of God is revealed or ‘appears’. In Gen. 18.1, ‘Yhwh appeared to Abraham (cf. Gen 12.7; 35:1). The language of God’s theophanic appearances to humans is here, in Gen. 1.9–10, associated with the appearance of Erets, highlighting the climactic significance of the event.” *Birth, Curse and Greening*, 31–32.
22. Rolf P. Knierim gives further clarification on the meaning of “good” in this context:

The created world order has certain qualitative notions which explicate Yahweh’s relationship to and presence in it. The fact of creation out of chaos alone represents more than a merely quantitative event. It is a *good event*. The priestly formulation, according to which the whole creation is *very good* in God’s judgment [see Genesis 1:31] is not superficial because the word ‘good’ is a common word. It is the most profound formulation which in essence includes all else that can be said. It cannot be said any better. It is a fundamental theological statement about the world. This goodness is not only true for the order of creation in the beginning. It is also true for the entire time in which this order exists in accordance with its beginning.

The Task of Old Testament Theology: Substance, Method, and Cases (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, GBR: Eerdmans, 1995), 199. Similarly, Walton explains the following:

The recurring formula in Genesis 1—“it was good”—offers this same assessment of the creative acts that brought order to the cosmos: the cosmos now functioned well. The evidence that this is the nuance of the Hebrew word *tob* (which admittedly has a wide semantic range) comes from the context. Contextually, it is useful to consider the nuance that the word has by asking what it would look like for something not to be good. Fortunately, the context does indicate something that is not good: “It is not good for man to be alone” (Gen. 2:18). The word *tob* in this good concerns proper functioning: it is not a negative assessment of craftsmanship or moral purity. We can therefore infer that the recurring assessment that things were good in Genesis 1 does not refer to the absence of corruption or flaw. It instead is an affirmation that the functions were set to operate according to their design.

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- Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 169–70. Habel suggests a more intimate aspect as well: “The ‘good’ that Elohim sees in ‘Erets’ is not ‘good’ in some dualistic or moral sense. ‘Good’ is Elohim’s response to what is seen, experienced in the moment of its appearance. A similar idiom is used to describe the response of Moses’ mother when he is born. When she first bonds with the child ‘she sees he is good’ (Ex. 2.1). Elohim beholds Earth emerge from the waters below and ‘sees Earth is good.’” *Birth, Curse and Greening*, 32.
23. “We conclude that holiness is exemplified by completeness.” Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), 67. For a review of the use of Douglas’s model, see Saul M. Olyan, “Mary Douglas’s Holiness/Wholeness Paradigm: Its Potential for Insight and its Limitations,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 8 (2008): 2–9.
 24. E. Jan Wilson, “Holiness” and “Purity” in Mesopotamia and Ancient Israel, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 237 (Kevelaer, DE: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn, DE: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994), 87–88. For more discussion on the distinction of these terms, see Gaye Strathearn, “‘Holiness to the Lord’ and Personal Temple Worship,” in *The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*, The 38th Annual BYU Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, ed. D. Kelly Ogden, Jared W. Ludlow, and Kerry Muhlestein (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 219–32.
 25. Habel gives a full explanation of this completed state:

The cosmos is now complete and Elohim can rest (shabat) with creation. But that rest apparently does not mean inaction or taking a vacation: the use of bara in Gen. 2.3 indicates continued divine action. And, as van Wolde suggests, this verse means that God made the seventh day by ‘separating’ it and setting it apart of the other days[. . .]. Elohim also blesses and sanctifies the day that celebrates completion—Elohim invests that day with a power comparable to the power of procreation given to living creatures of Erets. . . . Prior to that day, blessing has been dispensed to activate life as such. Now time is blessed with the inherent capacity to initiate, sustain, and restore life.

Birth, Curse and Greening, 41. See also Ellen van Wolde, “Why the Verb ברא Does Not Mean ‘to Create’ in Genesis 1.1–2.4a,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34, no. 1 (2009): 3–23.
 26. Walton, *Genesis 1*, 145–46. See also *TDOT*, s.v. “tehôm,” by Leonhard Waschke, 15:577–81, which discusses the Hebrew term for the “deep,” or the waters upon which was *tobû wâbohû* (see note 30).
 27. For a review of the literature concerning this event, see Brant A. Gardner, *Helaman through 3 Nephi*, Second Witness: Analytical & Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon 5, (Salt Lake City: Kofford Books, 2007), 301–12.
 28. Gardner makes reference to 3 Nephi 8:19: “Mormon records Nephi as saying, ‘it was said by some . . .,’ a clear indication that Nephi is integrating reports by others into his account. Despite the apparent precision of “three hours” and “three days,” it would have been difficult if not impossible to determine either duration. There were no clocks for the hours, and the darkness would have made it impossible to differentiate day from night.” *Helaman through 3 Nephi*, 5:308.

29. Walton gives clarification about this precreative state:

In [*tohu's*] twenty occurrences (more than half in Isaiah), we find that it often describes a wilderness or wasteland (e.g., Deut 32:10; Job 12:24 ;6:18; Ps 107:40). It can describe the results of destruction (Jer 4:23). It is used to convey things that have no purpose or meaning (e.g., idols, Is 41:29, and those who make them, Is 44:9). All its uses can be consolidated in the notion of things that are of no purpose or worth. They lack order and function. It now becomes clear that the starting condition in Genesis 1:2, the precreation situation that describes nonexistence, is a condition that is not lacking material. Rather, it is a situation that is lacking order and purpose.

Lost World, 29. Day gives further insight on the 'emptiness' in the precreative world:

It is clear that the word's connotations in Biblical Hebrew range from the concrete "desert" to the abstract "non-entity," the central meaning uniting these being that of 'empty' or 'nothing'. 'Empty' seems to be the meaning we have in Gen. 1.2. . . . Of course the world was not completely empty, since it was covered in water. What is meant is that the earth existed only in an inchoate state and was devoid of all its familiar features and inhabitants which are subsequently created in Genesis 1. D.T. Tsumura and Terry Fenton are right in saying that *tohu wabohu* in Gen. 1.2 has sometimes been wrongly understood as chaos. However, the term chaos is surely not inappropriately used of the raging waters that God has to do battle within some parts of the Old Testament at the time of creation (e.g., Ps. 104.6–9) and which ultimately lies behind the waters of the deep in Gen. 1.2.

From Creation, 8–9.

30. The actual creative process involving the shaping or organizing of the preexisting material begins as God speaks light into existence, thereby delineating the elemental states of light and dark. This act typifies the Creation process, as God takes the undifferentiated and unformed precosmic material and organizes or arranges the material via separation. Walton explains that "to *bara* something brings it into existence by giving it a role and function in an ordered system . . . in this view, the result of *bara* is order. The roles and functions are established by separating and naming. These are the acts of creation." *Lost World*, 30. Don Michael Hudson gives an explanation for sacred space: "Sacred space, according to Eliade and others, is space that is separated from the sameness of the creative order by differentiating a place that is symbolically or ritually different from any place like it . . . the introduction of sacred space into a predominantly profane world reflects the possibility for orientation. . . . the symbolic means to distinguish in the midst of sameness, orient himself or herself in the midst of potential wastelands, and thereby communicate ritually with the sacred world in which the gods resided." "From Chaos to Cosmos: Sacred Space in Genesis," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 108 (1996): 90–91.
31. Grant Hardy notes the same; see *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 191–92.

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32. See Jane Allis-Pike, “How Oft Would I Have Gathered You as a Hen Gathereth Her Chickens’: The Power of the Hen Metaphor in 3 Nephi 10:4–7,” in *Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner and Gaye Strathearn (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2012), 57–74. Though Allis-Pike does not examine this passage through Genesis 1:2 imagery, she does explore the passage with the symbolism of the hen as creator and mother. See also Daniel Becerra, *3rd, 4th Nephi: A Brief Theological Interpretation* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2020), 17–19, who also explores the imagery of Christ as mother and hen.
33. See Marvin H. Pope, “Hosanna: What It Really Means,” *Bible Review* 4, no. 2 (1988): 16–25; and Daniel L. Belnap, “‘They Did Fell The Tree’: The Hanging of Zemnariyah as a Ritual Resolution for Nephite Trauma,” in *They Shall Grow Together: The Bible in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Charles Swift and Nicholas J. Frederick (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2022), 143–177.
34. “We all need more faith. The Brethren are looking ahead and they are seeing what is coming.” Elder Kim B. Clark, quoted in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Leaders Hope Emphasis on Sabbath Observance Increases Faith in God,” *Church News*, December 30, 2015, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/church/news/leaders-hope-emphasis-on-sabbath-observance-increases-faith-in-god>.
35. See Brent L. Top, “The Decline of Sabbath Observance in an Increasingly Secular Society: Twenty-First Century Efforts to Reclaim the Lord’s Day,” and Andrew C. Reed, “‘The Erosion of Sabbath Worship is now Extensive’: The Imperative to Learn Holiness from Other Religious Traditions,” both of which are in this volume.