

#22: Saul to David

Monte F. Shelley, 20 June 2010

Quotes

- Preach the gospel always, use words only if necessary.
- Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely

1. Redeeming one's firstborn

The firstborn son was regarded as belonging to God, and special ordinances were provided for his redemption (Ex. 13:12–15; 22:29; Num. 3:45; Luke 2:22–23). (BD Firstborn)

The first offspring of every womb belongs to me. Redeem all your firstborn sons. No one is to appear before me empty-handed. (NIV Ex 34:19)

Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel... ⁴⁶ And for those that are to be redeemed ... ⁴⁷ Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece (Num 3:45–47)

The duty of redeeming the firstborn falls ... upon the father. If he neglects to do so or if the child is an orphan, the son redeems himself when he reaches maturity. ... The Bible fixes the redemption fee at five silver shekels (Num 18:16). ... The redemption ceremony ... is held in the presence of the kohen and invited guests, and takes place on the 31st day after the birth. ... During the ceremony, the father presents his son, often on a specially embellished tray, to the kohen who asks him ... whether he wishes to redeem the child or to leave him to the kohen. ... The father ... expresses the desire to keep his son, hands the redemption money to the kohen, and recites one benediction ... of redemption, and another of thanksgiving. The kohen, three times pronouncing “your son is redeemed,” returns the child to the father. (*EJ*- Firstborn)

2. Law of Sacrifice

Adam learned that a sacrifice “is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten” (Moses 5:7). A burnt offering or trespass offering was to be a male without blemish: bull, ram, he-goat, turtledove, or young pigeons. All animals were clean according to the law of Moses. The substitute sacrifice for Isaac was a ram.

The animal was to be (male, female), (with, without) blemish, (clean, unclean) according to the law of Moses. The sacrifice could be killed by (a priest, anyone). The blood of the animal must be _____.

The inhabitants ... have transgressed the laws, *changed the ordinance*, broken the everlasting covenant. (Isa 24:5)

- *Cain* changed what was offered: “the fruit of the ground.”
- *Eli*’s sons changed how the sacrifice was offered.
- *Saul* offered sacrifice without priesthood.
- After Christ’s apostles died, early church leaders changed the ordinances of baptism (e.g., sprinkling, infants) and the sacrament (e.g., meaning and method).

3. Sacrificial animals symbolize Christ’s atonement

“A **lamb** signifies meekness, innocence, and submissiveness qualities exhibited by Jesus during his trial ... [when] Jesus was ‘brought as a lamb to the slaughter.’ ... The Passover lamb ... like Jesus was unblemished, male, did not experience broken bones at his death, and made atonement for the people. The Passover lamb’s blood saved ancient Israelites from physical death, and Christ’s atoning blood saves souls from spiritual death. The lamb’s meat was edible and clean according to Mosaic law, and the Israelites partook of it in anticipation of Jesus’ broken flesh. In comparable ways, we now partake of sacramental bread in remembrance of his broken flesh.” (S&S 140)

“A fully grown **bull** ... presents the image of great strength. ... To offer up one of the great bulls to the Lord was a sacrifice of great economic value because its hide, meat, and ability to produce offspring were surrendered at the time of its offering. ... Christ [is] omnipotent or all-powerful. ... A **dove**... is ... an affectionate bird ... [and] a symbol of peace. ... Jesus is called the Prince of Peace.” (S&S 140–141)

4. Sacrifice of female animals

A peace offering or a sin offering could be a male or female animal without blemish. For some types of sins, the offering must be a female lamb or goat. (Lev 3–4)

Female lamb (ewes): If he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish (Lev 4:32; 14:10; Num 6:14).

Female goat: If any one of the common people sin through ignorance ... ²⁸ Or if his sin ... come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin ... ²⁹ And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering. (Lev 4:27–29)

Female lambs ... [or] ewes are the bearers of new life. They possess the capacity to give birth to one, two, or even more lambs at a time. Just as a ewe gives physical life, so Jesus gives spiritual life to his daughters and sons. “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you ... ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters” (Mosiah 5:7). ... A female goat was highly prized by an Israelite family. By giving birth to one or more kids per year, she helped the family’s economy by multiplying the herd’s size. Further, she was of great value by providing milk (which was used to make various dairy products), wool, meat, leather, and fertilizer. (S&S 142)

5. Sacrifice of the red heifer (S&S 143–145)

The way to remove corpse defilement was through the sacrifice of a red heifer. A heifer’ is young female that has not given birth. ... The heifer had to be “without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke” (Num 19:2). The heifer was slaughtered and then burned, together with hyssop, cedar wood, and scarlet wool (Num. 19:6, 18). ... Its ashes were placed in a vessel, and then fresh water (... “living water”) was poured into the vessel. ... This mixture of ashes and water constituted the water of cleansing that was sprinkled on obedient Israelites who had been defiled by the dead. ... If the defiled person failed to adhere to the appropriate rituals ..., he would be cut off from the community because he defiled the sanctuary (Num. 19:13, 20).

There is much symbolism. ... The ritual slaughter of a heifer is a genuine sacrifice of economic value because the heifer’s owner gives up all the future benefits that this animal would yield—milk, calves, leather (for clothing and scrolls), and meat. More significant, the sacrifice of the heifer is symbolic of Jesus Christ’s divine sacrifice; its blood points to Jesus’ blood, and the fact that the heifer was a female and potential life-giver anticipates the life-giving force of Jesus’ atonement. Two colors figure prominently in the ceremony: the red heifer and the scarlet wool. Both red and scarlet denote the color of blood, pointing to Jesus’ blood. The symbolism of the water of cleansing pertains to the symbolic purification of the defiled person; just as water cleanses a person who has soiled hands, even so the water of cleansing ritually purifies the defiled soul.

In regard to the corpse itself, death pertains to lifelessness and the corruption of the physical body, both of which are opposite to God’s eternal vitality and immortal life. Death, as the ultimate

state of physical corruption, separates us from God. Further, humans are entirely helpless when it comes to sustaining their mortal lives beyond the natural processes of mortality. We must rely upon God for all things that sustain life, including oxygen, water, and food. To teach the principle that death stands opposite to God's immortality and eternal life, God revealed that a corpse communicates ritual defilement to the living (Num. 19). ... When a person (male or female) touched a dead body, a human bone, or a grave, or whenever a person was in the presence of a dead body in a tent or a room, that person would be rendered ceremonially unclean (Num. 19). This defilement often came about accidentally when one inadvertently walked on a grave or entered a room where someone had recently died; or the defilement sometimes came knowingly when family members prepared a loved one for burial, buried their dead, and so forth. Defilement also came during war. When the Israelites killed others or touched the slain, they were required to adhere to the red heifer rituals. For instance, Moses required Israelite combatants ... to follow the purification procedures before returning to camp (Num. 31:19-24). ...

The touching and subsequent defilement of the living recalls other scriptural passages about touching unclean things. For example, Paul warned the Corinthians to "touch not the unclean thing," a reference to idols (2 Cor. 6:17). Alma, the high priest, taught, "Come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate, and touch not their unclean things" (Alma 5:57). Isaiah warned the righteous to "touch no unclean thing" (Isa. 52:11) and to "go ye out from Babylon" or "go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon" (D&C 133:5, 14; ... 133:7; 38:42). ...

Just as the living are defiled by the dead, even so the living are defiled by the spiritually dead and by spiritually lifeless situations. Spiritual death surrounds us during mortality in this world, and it affects our innocence and virtue to the extent that we need Christ and his atonement to remove such defilements from our hearts and minds. Paul sums up: "The ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9 13-14)

Rona: "In biblical times, the heifer was first slaughtered outside the Israelite camp and then burned. Its ashes were kept in a pure place and, when needed, were mixed with clear spring water ... (for) ... the ritually impure person ... The Bible is very specific about the kind of cow to be used. It had to be ... 'a red heifer, faultless, containing no blemish and which has never been yoked.' The rabbis interpreted 'faultless' to mean perfect in color also, ruling that even two non-red hairs in its hide were enough to disqualify it. Obviously such an animal was very rare and [costly]. ... Perhaps the strangest feature of the law of the red heifer is that, although the impure were cleansed by its ashes, all those who helped to perform the ceremony were rendered unclean by it and had themselves to be purified afterwards. Thus the red heifer was an agent of both purity and impurity. This paradox has puzzled the rabbis and the law remains one of the few in the Torah for which no rational explanation can be found.' (*EJ Jr.*)" (Rona #40) "Jews have a tradition that this red calf offering had to be high on the Mount of Olives, above the temple itself and opposite the Gate Beautiful." (Rona #30)

Encyclopedia Judaica: "According to R. Meir in all of Jewish history only seven heifers were burned, but according to the rabbis there were nine, and the tenth and last will be prepared by the Messiah.

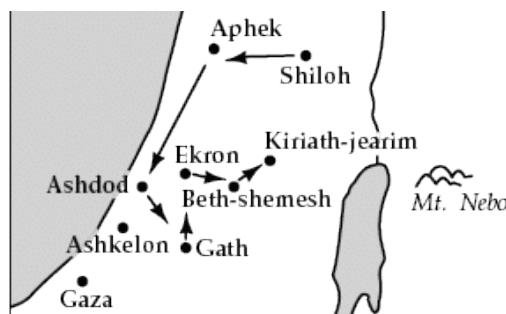
6. Example of priests and members (1 Sam 2-3)

Eli ... heard all that his sons did ... and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle. ... ²³ And he said ... I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. ... ²⁴ ye make the LORD's people to transgress. ... ²⁵ [But] they hearkened not unto the voice of their father,

²⁷ There came a man of God unto Eli, and said ..., Thus saith the LORD ... ³² There shall not be an old man in thine house. ... ³⁴ This shall be a sign, ... thy two sons ... in one day ... shall die. ... ^{3:11} The LORD said to Samuel ... I will judge [Eli's] house ... because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

7. Loss of Ark (1 Sam 4)

³ The elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant ... that ... it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. ... ⁷ The Philistines were afraid, for they said, ... ⁸ Woe unto us! ... these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues ... ⁹ Be strong, ... quit yourselves like men, and fight. ¹⁰ And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten. ... ¹¹ And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli ... were slain. ... ¹⁴ And the man ... told Eli ... ¹⁷ thy two sons ... are dead, and the ark of God is taken. ¹⁸ ... [Eli] fell ... and he died. ... ¹⁹ And his daughter in law [died in childbirth.]



8. Philistines and the ark of the covenant (1 Sam 5-6)

² When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon [their god]. ... ⁴ Early on the morrow ... Dagon was fallen ... to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both ... of his hands were cut off



⁶ "The hand of the LORD ... smote [the Philistines] with emerods" [OR tumors, boils]. Josephus said it was "a very destructive disease" involving dysentery, bleeding, and severe vomiting. It was accompanied by a great plague of mice. Philistines in Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron were plagued and slain because the ark was with them. After 7 months, the Philistines put the ark with a trespass offering of 5 golden emerods and 5 golden mice in a cart pulled by two milk cows. The cows went straight to Beth-shemesh. Thy LORD smote Israelites who "looked into the ark."

9. Samuel tells people to return to the Lord (1 Sam 7)

The ark was taken to Kirjath-jearim where it stayed for 20 years.

² "All the people ... mourned and sought after the Lord" (NIV).

³ Samuel ... [said,] If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods ... and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. ⁴ Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only. ⁵ And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. ⁶ And they gathered together to Mizpeh ... and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the

LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh. ...¹⁰ As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. ...¹³ So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into ... Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

10. Israel desires a king like other nations (1 Sam 8)

Samuel ... made his sons judges over Israel. ...³ His sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.⁴ Then all the elders ... came to Samuel. ...⁵ And said ... thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel. ... Samuel prayed ...⁷ And the LORD said ... Hearken unto the voice of the people ... for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

Samuel said a king would make their sons serve in the army, make their daughters servants, take their lands, and impose a 10% tax. "Ye shall cry out in that day ... and the LORD will not hear you. ... Nevertheless the people ... said, ... we will have a king."

11. The LORD sends Saul to Samuel (1 Sam 9)

A Benjamite had a son ... Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites—a head taller than ... others. (NIV)

⁹ He that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.

¹⁵ The LORD had told Samuel ... To morrow ... I will send thee a man ... of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over ... Israel, that he may save my people ... [from] the Philistines.

12. Saul was anointed to be king (1 Sam 10)

Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, ... the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* captain.

Anointing: (a) a change of status or setting apart to a divinely inspired calling, (b) symbol of purification. In some cases, anointing was accompanied with washing and dressing in new clothing. (c) symbol of consecration or making holy, and (d) symbol of the Spirit

⁹ God gave [Saul] another heart ...¹⁰ and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied ... among the prophets. ...²⁴ And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.²⁵ Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD.

13. Saul delivers Israel from Ammonites (1 Sam 11)

Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

"Nahash king of the Ammonites oppressed the Gadites and the Reubenites viciously. He put out the right eye of all of them and brought fear and trembling on Israel. Not one of the Israelites in the region beyond the Jordan remained whose right eye Nahash king of the Ammonites did not put out, except seven thousand men who escaped from the Ammonites and went to jabesh-gilead." (DSS 4QSam^a)

² And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a *covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.

Saul rescues them and wreaks havoc upon Ammonites—His kingship is renewed in Gilgal.

14. Samuel teaches the people (1 Sam 12)

¹ Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and ...¹³ the LORD hath set a king over you.¹⁴ If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:

15. Saul offers sacrifice (1 Sam 13)

⁹ Saul ... offered the burnt offering.¹⁰ And ... Samuel came; and ... said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because ... thou camest not within the days appointed, ...¹² I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

¹³ Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD ... for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.¹⁴ But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart ... *to be* captain over his people.

16. Saul orders a one day fast (1 Sam 14)

²⁴ The men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food. ...²⁷ But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod ... and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. ... [After the battle,] the people ... took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood. ...

⁴³ Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan ... said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod. ...⁴⁴ Saul answered, ... thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.⁴⁵ And the people said unto Saul, ... God forbid: ... there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

17. Saul commanded destroy Amalekites (1 Sam 15)

Samuel in the name of the LORD commanded Saul to destroy all the Amalekites and all that they had. Saul destroyed all of the Amalekites except king Agag, and he destroyed all but the best animals which he kept to sacrifice to the Lord.

²² Samuel said, ... to obey is better than sacrifice, ...²³ For *rebellion is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

²⁴ Saul said ... I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

²⁵ Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. ...²⁸ And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

18. David anointed to become king (1 Sam 16)

When [the sons of Jesse] were come, that [Samuel] looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him.⁷ But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed [David] ... and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. ...¹⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit [JST which was not of] from the LORD troubled him.

²¹ David came to Saul, and [Saul] loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. ... ²³ When the evil spirit ... was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played ... so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

19. David and Goliath (1 Sam 17)

³⁷ David said ..., The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. ... ⁴⁰ He took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. ... ⁴⁵ Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, ... a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

Metaphor: “David stood against the Goliath of sin, against which all others were powerless. Refusing earthly means of protection or attack, David relied on the power of God to overcome his enemy, who sought to enslave all of Israel. ... Christ stands against the monster of sin, which would enslave us all. He conquers that enemy, gaining the victory for all of us. In all this he is supported and enabled and empowered by his Father.” (S&S 97)

20. Why did God have Samuel call Saul to be king?

After God rejected Saul and David was anointed, Saul was king for another 8 years and began trying to kill David.

21. Parable of the lost Ark (*Hidden* 153)

- Israel looks to the ark (gospel) as a power that will deliver a political/military victory.
- The ark (gospel) and temple is lost from Israel.
- The ark (gospel) of the God of Israel overcomes the gods of the Philistines (Gentiles).
- The ark (gospel) afflicts the Philistines (Gentiles).
- Philistines (Gentiles) believe in the power of the God of Israel.
- The Philistines (Gentiles) repent of their wrongdoing.
- The Philistines (Gentiles) take the ark (gospel) back to Israel.
- The Israelites who don't treat the ark (gospel) with proper respect lose the ark (gospel) again and are destroyed.
- Return of ark (gospel) leads Israelites to seek after the Lord.
- Israelites repent, put away false gods, put their trust in God.
- The Lord provides a military victory.
- Israel looks for a temporal king. Saul is established as king over Israel. (The Lord is established as King over Israel.)

22. Samuel, Saul, and David are types of Christ

Samuel was a firstborn son of a miraculous birth. His mother sang a song of praise and thanksgiving. He was consecrated to God for life. He communed with God from an early age and grew in favor with God and man. The priests of the time were corrupt. He was the mouthpiece of God to his people and all of his words were fulfilled. He was not consulted in times of war and the power of God was taken from them. He exhorted the people to repent and interceded with God for Israel. He delivered the people when they accepted him as their leader. He was a seer who saw and revealed the past, present, and future. (*Hidden* 252–253)

Saul was “a choice young man” and none was “goodlier.” He obeyed his father and listened to his father's servant. He was anointed king, trusted the prophet Samuel, and displayed humility. He was captain of the army and fought their battles. He recognized God's hand in Israel's victory over Ammonites. He was beloved of people.

David was born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah. Others were considered more kingly. He was anointed to become king long

before he was accepted as king. He was a good shepherd who fed, guided, and protected his father's sheep. Although loved by many of the people, the leaders despised him and sought to kill him. He endured trials, suffering, and persecution. He never raised his hand against the Lord's anointed or Israelites trying to kill him. He loved saint and sinner alike. He became the king, united all Israel, and secured undisputed possession of the country. His reign was regarded as Israel's golden age and a type of Christ's millennial reign. As a part of the Davidic covenant, God established David and his descendants as the rightful kings of Judah until the coming of the Messiah. (*Hidden* 253–254)

Quotes

Proverbs: Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. ... Despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth. (Prov 3:5–12)

Harold B. Lee: This is a day of demonstration when we as Latter-day Saints by our lives will preach more the gospel of truth than by all the words that we may conjure up. (CR, Oct. 1945, 49)

Neal A. Maxwell: What we now are as a people is not enough. All is not yet well in Zion. Now, as in the time of Alma, the bad conduct of a few members slows missionary work.

Ezra Taft Benson: God has to work through mortals of varying degrees of spiritual progress. Sometimes he temporarily grants to men their unwise requests ... that they might learn from their own sad experiences. Some refer to this as the “Samuel principle.” The children of Israel wanted a king like all the other nations. ... Samuel gave them the warning. But they still insisted on their king. So God gave them a king and let them suffer. They learned the hard way. God wanted it to be otherwise, but within certain bounds he grants unto men according to their desires. Bad experiences are an expensive school that only fools keep going to. Sometimes in our attempts to mimic the world, and contrary to the prophet's counsel, we run after the world's false educational, political, musical, and dress ideas. New worldly standards take over, a gradual breakdown occurs, and finally, after much suffering, a humble people are ready to be taught once again a higher law. (*New Era*, May 1975, 17–18)

Dallin H. Oaks: At times all of us must stand against those who mock and revile. Some of us, sometime, will face some earthly power as mighty as Goliath. When that happens, we should emulate the courage of David. (*Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 38)

Jeffrey R. Holland: Why is rebellion (or stubbornness or disobedience in our ordinances) like witchcraft? Because rebellion makes a statement about our loyalty and our understanding of what God is really like and what he really wants. Saul, who understood the method but not the meaning of his sacrifice, and the Latter-day Saint who faithfully goes to sacrament meeting but is no more merciful or patient or forgiving as a result, are much the same as the witch and the idolator. They go through the motions of the ordinances without loyalty to or understanding of the reasons for which these ordinances were established—obedience, gentleness, and loving kindness in the search for forgiveness of their sins. Ordinances pursued in error and altered in meaning mark an apostate priesthood and an idolatrous nation. ... We can rest assured that God was not interested in the death of innocent little animals—unless the meaning of those altars truly alters the nature of our lives. (*Ensign*, Aug. 1986, 70)