
WASHINGS AND ANOINTINGS

Ritual anointings were a prominent part of religious rites in the biblical world. Recipients of the anointing included temple officiants (Ex. 28:41), prophets (1 Kgs. 19:16), and kings (1 Sam. 16:3; 1 Kgs. 1:39). In addition, sacral objects associated with the Israelite sanctuary were anointed (Ex. 30:22–29). Of equal importance in the religion of the Israelites were ablutions or ceremonial washings (Ex. 29:4–7). To ensure religious purity, Mosaic law required that designated individuals receive a ritual washing, sometimes in preparation for entering the temple (Ex. 30:17–21; Lev. 14:7–8; 15:5–27).

The washings and anointings of the biblical period have a parallel today in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In response to a COMMANDMENT to gather the SAINTS and to build a house “to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings, and anointings” (*TPJS*, p. 308), these ordinances were introduced in the KIRTLAND TEMPLE on January 21, 1836 (*HC* 2:379–83). In many respects similar in purpose to ancient Israelite practice and to the washing of feet by Jesus among his disciples, these modern LDS rites are performed only in temples set apart and dedicated for sacred purposes (D&C 124:37–38; *HC* 6:318–19).

Many symbolic meanings of washings and anointings are traceable in the scriptures. Ritual washings (Heb. 9:10; D&C 124:37) symbolize the cleansing of the soul from sins and iniquities. They signify the washing-away of the pollutions of the Lord’s people (Isa. 4:4). Psalm 51:2 expresses the human longing and divine promise: “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (cf. Ps. 73:13; Isa. 1:16).

The anointing of a person or object with sacred ointment represents SANCTIFICATION (Lev. 8:10–12) and CONSECRATION (Ex. 28:41), so that both become “most holy” (Ex. 30:29) unto the Lord. In this manner, profane persons and things are sanctified in similitude of the MESSIAH (Hebrew “anointed one”), who is Christ (Greek “anointed one”).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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WEALTH, ATTITUDES TOWARD

[For related articles, see Business; Consecration; Equality; Financial Contributions; Poverty, Attitudes Toward; Zion. *The blessings of eternal wealth are discussed in Riches of Eternity.*]

Latter-day Saints view wealth as a blessing and also as a test. The Lord has repeatedly promised his people, “Inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land” (Alma 36:30). But wealth can lead to pride and inequality: “Woe unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures” (2 Ne. 9:30). Therefore, attitudes toward wealth and the use of material abundance reveal a person’s priorities: “Before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good” (Jacob 2:18–19). To those who will inherit the celestial kingdom, God has promised the RICHES OF ETERNITY.

LDS beliefs about the nature and purpose of life influence Church members’ attitudes toward wealth. Thus, the concept of wealth has both materialistic and spiritual dimensions: wealth is an accumulation of worldly possessions; it is also an acquisition of knowledge or talents. Since MATTER and SPIRIT are of the same order, material wealth can become refined and sanctified by the influence of God’s spirit as it is consecrated to his purposes. Latter-day Saints are encouraged to increase in all honorable forms of wealth, knowledge, and obedience, which increase the “wealth” or worth of the human soul and to “lay up . . . treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:20; D&C 18:10; 130:19; see EDUCATION, ATTITUDES TOWARD).

The world and its resources belong to the Creator. Material blessings may be delivered from heaven if the recipient conforms to the Christian ideals of integrity, honesty, and charity. All people are of divine origin and have come to earth to know good and evil and to be tested to see if they will choose the good. By the grace of God and by their diligent labors consistent with divine law, both the earth and mankind can be perfected and glorified.

If the earth’s resources are not wisely and carefully husbanded, however, wealth can become a curse. It is the “love of money,” not money itself, that is identified as the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10).