

Things Anew

Sacrament Meeting Talk, 10 Jan 2021

(<http://jayball.name/dc/>)

Being the beginning of a new year, the bishop asked me to speak on Things Anew.

I will be focusing my remarks on the following three passages:

- Old things are done away, and all things have become new. (3 Ne 12:46-47)
- Becoming a new creature/creation in Christ. (2 Cor 5:16-18)
- New Heaven and New Earth. (Rev 21:1-4)

Old things are done away, and all things have become new

In words not included in the Matt chapter 5 account of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ taught the Nephites:

Therefore those things which were of old time, which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled. Old things are done away, and all things have become new. (3 Ne 12:46-47)

[3 Ne 15:2](#)

What does it mean that “all things had become new?” Were the things He just said to take effect now? What of animal sacrifice? What of the other offerings? How were religious festivities to be kept, if they were to be kept at all? Which? When? (Book of Mormon Study Notes, 27 Sep 2020, pg 11, goto.jayball.name/bofm)

fulfilled: **What does it mean to fulfill the Torah?** David Bivin and Roy Blizzard wrote: **“‘Destroy’ and ‘fulfill’ are technical terms used in rabbinic argumentation. When a rabbi felt that his colleague had misinterpreted a passage of Scripture, he would say, ‘You are destroying the Law!’ Needless to say, in most cases his colleague strongly disagreed. What was ‘destroying the Law’ for one rabbi, was ‘fulfilling the Law’ (correctly interpreting Scripture) for another”** (Bivin, D. and Blizzard, R. (1983) *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*. Arcadia, CA: Makor Publishing, p. 154). **Yosef ben Yosef understood “fulfilled the law” to mean that Mashiach “magnified” the Torah and made it “honorable” and not that he destroyed it.** He said that Mashiach himself **“fulfil[l]ed all righteousness in becoming obedient to the the (sic) Law which himself had given to Moses on the mount and thereby magnified it and made it honorable instead of destroying it”** (Cook, L.W. & Ehat, A.F. (Eds.) (1980) *The Words of Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, pgs. 162-3).” (*Stick of Joseph* footnote 2 Ne 25:24 [SJ 11:8])

done away: **The underlying Hebrew may have been *chalaf* חָלַף (Strong’s 2498), which can mean “done away” but can also mean “changed, renewed, or revived.”** This same word (that is translated in the KJV as “renewed”) is found in Isa. 40:31 and 41:1. Yeshua later testifies to the Nephites (in 3 Nephi 12:46) in parallel thought that **“things which were of old time... [were] all fulfilled. Old things are done away and all things have become new”** (*Stick of Joseph* footnote 2 Ne 25:27 [SJ 11:8])

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Rom 10:4)

therefore, it has an end: In the "Introduction" to his *Jewish New Testament*, Jewish writer David Stern writes concerning a parallel verse in Rom. 10:4: "But Greek *telos*, which gives the English word 'teleology,' usually means 'goal, purpose, consummation,' not 'termination.' The Messiah did not bring the Torah to an end. Rather, as the Jewish New Testament renders it, 'the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts'" (Stern, D. (1989) *Jewish New Testament: A Translation of the New Testament that Expresses its Jewishness*. Jerusalem, Israel: Jerusalem New Testament Publications, p. xxiii). James Murdock S.T.D. (who translated the Aramaic Peshitta New Testament into English for the first time in 1893) translated the Aramaic word (used in the Aramaic Peshitta in Rom. 10:4) as "aim." A note in the margin shows that the Aramaic word is *saka* and can also be understood as "end, scope, summary." The word "end" was likely *tak'lit* תכלית (Strong's 8503), which can mean "end" but can also mean "purpose, aim, intention, or goal." There are several other passages in *The Stick of Joseph* that confirm that Yeshua HaMashiach is the "end of the Torah," not because He is the termination of the Torah, but because He is the goal of the Torah: "... for this end [goal, not termination] has the Torah of Moshe been given." (2 Nefi 8:2 [11:4]); "Behold, he offers himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the Torah unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and unto none else can the ends of the Torah be answered." (2 Nefi 1:6 [2:7]). (*Stick of Joseph* footnote 3 Ne 15:5 [SJ 7:2])

The best way I know to illustrate this point is in the story of the 10 lepers:

And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. (Luke 17:11-19)

"And when he saw them..." suggests the only reason He saw them was because they called out and came to Him. It is just like that today. Only those who seek Him will find Him. Only those who recognize their need to be freed from the disease of uncleanness will cry out to Him and ask Him to take notice of them. We are all equal before Him. Some of us recognize how much we lack, cry out, and come to Him seeking to be healed. But **we** must start the process.

When He told them to "Go shew yourselves unto the priests," they all understood what He was instructing them to do. They immediately began the trek to find priests and follow the rites of the Law of Moses.

Despite its unusual and limited occurrence, the Law of Moses included a ceremony to commemorate cleansing of a leper. The description of the full ceremony can be found in Leviticus:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, *This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest: And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper; **Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: And the priest shall command that **one of the birds be killed** in an earthen vessel over running water: As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: And **he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.** And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and **wash himself in water**, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days. But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and **he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.** And **on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil.** And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: And **the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the Lord: And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the holy place:** for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering: it is most holy: And **the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot:** And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand: And **the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord: And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering: And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed:** and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord. And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering: And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean. And if he be poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb for a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a log of oil; And two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the***

other a burnt offering. And he shall bring them on the eighth day for his cleansing unto the priest, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord. And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the Lord: And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot: And the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand: And the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the Lord: And the priest shall put of the oil that is in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering: And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the Lord. And he shall offer the one of the turtledoves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get; Even such as he is able to get, the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, with the meat offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed before the Lord. This is the law of him in whom is the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get that which pertaineth to his cleansing. (Lev 14:1-32)

These acts are steeped in symbolism and tie directly to the Lord and His atoning sacrifice. Briefly, these symbols suggest the following: The two doves, one to be killed and one to be set free, point to ceremony on the Day of Atonement. Letting the one bird free after it has been wet by the blood of the other symbolizes Christ's gift of freedom to all who live under the curse of mortal frailty and sin, but come to receive His sacrificial blood. What better symbolism of freedom than the bird in flight? This must be how the leper feels when freed from the stigma of his unclean disease.

Washing of the leper's body is another symbol of cleanliness, renewal, rebirth and baptism. All these point to Christ and the cleansing He can bring for us all.

Putting blood, then oil on the right ear, right thumb and right big toe are all important symbols. The right side is the symbol of being blessed. Christ used the right side to symbolize blessedness, and the left to symbolize cursing. He taught: "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" (Matt 25:31-34.) The blood and oil on the right thumb symbolizes putting the cleansing power of Christ's sacrifice and the Holy Spirit into the works of the man's hands. Putting these on the right ear is to symbolize listening to the words of God, hearkening to the right way, and keeping the mind focused on the words of God. Anointing the right big toe symbolizes to walk in the right path. Once a person begins to walk with the right path in the right way, their big toe goes first. The right foot, the right way, the right words and the right works are all symbolized by this anointing.

The seven days of the ceremony, the seven sprinkles of the oil, are tied to the symbolic meaning of the number seven. It symbolizes *a new creation*, perfection or completion. It means "the whole" or all. With this ceremony all the past burdens of leprosy are gone, and *the man becomes a new creation*.

The ceremony is powerful and brings the recipient into full fellowship with the Camp of Israel. For any leper wanting to return to his friends, family and society this ceremony would be a moment filled with profound meaning. One can imagine how tears would flow from the healed lepers who got the opportunity to celebrate this rite.

However, **the incident of the ten lepers records something even more profound**. There was one of the healed who, upon seeing he was freed from his disease "turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks." One returned to Christ. The other nine were still on their way to the priests to receive their washings and anointings. **The deeper meaning of the incident can only be understood by what Christ then said: "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"**

The obvious answer to Christ's question is: they were doing as He told them to do. That is, they were on their way to the priests.

But the true answer to Christ's question is: these other nine failed to understand Who the Priest really was. Nine went to the priests who performed ceremonies. They went to see the symbol of Christ. But they went without understanding the priests officiated merely as a substitute symbol which pointed to Christ. One, however, came to the True Priest. Only one understood and did exactly as Christ had directed. He alone came to the True Priest.

Nine would go through a public ceremony, be anointed, washed, reunited with society and enjoy public recognition and reunification. One would hear the words from the Great High Priest Himself declaring: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

For this leper who returned, no further ceremony was needed. **While nine were seeking comfort from the symbols and ceremonies, the one who returned received relief from the Master, Himself.** While nine were to be ceremonially clean, one was becoming clean indeed. For this one there was no need to comply with the Law of Moses, because the One who gave the Law of Moses declared him to be "whole." Christ's personal declaration to a man is more important than any ceremony or rite performed by men. Men may endlessly repeat the ceremonial return to Christ's presence, but it means nothing unless the man actually returns to Him.

Remember: The *ordinances* of the Law of Moses pointed to Christ as the "end" or "aim" of the law.

Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; (3 Ne 15:9)

Becoming a new creature/creation in Christ

Wherefore, henceforth live we no more after the flesh. Yea, though we once lived after the flesh, yet since we have known Christ, now henceforth live we no more after the flesh. Therefore, if any man live in Christ, he is a new creature (old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new), and receives all the things of God,

who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation — to know that God is, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them — and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:16-18 JST)

creature: Many translations render this word "creation", from Greek *ktisis* (Strong's 2937), the act of founding, establishing, building.

And the law is given unto men. And by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever. Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth. (2 Ne 2:5-6)

temporal law: And we read in the Midrash Rabbah: "R. Hezekiah said in the name of R. Simon b. Zabdi: 'All the Torah which you learn in this world is "vanity" in comparison with Torah in the World to Come; because in this world a man learns Torah and forgets it, but with reference to the World to Come what is written there? I will put My Torah in their inward parts (Jer. 31:32 (33))' (Midrash Rabbah Eccl. II:1). (Stick of Joseph footnote 2 Ne 2:5 [SJ 1:6])

And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (Ezek 11:19-20)

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)

From a meditation workshop I attended several years ago, LDS Chaplin Phil McLemore told us:

We are more connected with the spirit and mind of God than we realize. We tend to externalize Him and look for Him outside ourselves. When our prayers are focused outward, it becomes much like superstition. We hope if we hold our tongue just right and perform the rain dance in step with the rotation of the stars, then good things will rain down upon us.

We identify so intimately with the natural man, we think the gospel is about making him into a good guy so he qualifies to get into the kingdom... You're not supposed to make the natural man a good guy, you're supposed to do him in [or as Paul says crucify the old man, see Rom 6:6]. And be reborn. (Phil McLemore, LDS Chaplin, Meditation workshop, Salt Lake City, UT, April 2013.)

Modern Ordinances point to Christ

Where the ordinances of the Law of Moses pointed to the Messiah, so also do our modern day ordinances point us to Christ.

The purpose of baptism is to follow Christ's example. (John 10: 27, John 14: 15.) It symbolizes the death of the old man of sin, and the resurrection into a new life in Christ. (Romans 6: 4.)

In immersion the breath of life is cut off while under the water, and restored anew when you “come forth again out of the water.” (Book of Mormon Study Notes, 20 Sep 2020, 3 Ne 11:26, pg 9, goto.jayball.name/bofm)

We sometimes overlook the symbolism the sacrament ordinance contains where we join Christ in His broken body and spilt blood. Whether we are called upon to lay our lives on the altar suddenly or gradually, all our lives must be laid on the altar. (Book of Mormon Study Notes, 11 Oct 2020, 3 Ne 18:5, pg 3-4, goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Among the ordinances Christ has given mankind, water is used to baptize and to wash. Consecrated oil is used to anoint and to bless. These are the ceremonial symbols of Christ's love. His love cleanses us. His oil anoints us to glory. These liquids signify the removal of sin and stains. They cleanse us and renew us spiritually. They are symbols of the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of Christ. They signify holiness and spirituality. Both are preeminent symbols of love.

Liquid cannot be grasped nor held in the hand. The tighter the hand closes, the more liquid is forced out. Indeed, the only way to hold water or oil in our hand is to cup our palm. Only by making the hand open can these symbolic liquids be held. In the ordinances and liquids employed to show the cleansing power of His love, He reminds us of the true sign of His messengers. They, like Him, will petition. They will never come with a clenched hand but only an open, cupped hand, inviting the follower and beckoning him to come.

Is not the cupped hand recognized everywhere as the bear's petition? Is it not a symbol of beseeching? Does it not remind us of how we look to our Father in Heaven for all that we have?

Message sent to my Aunt Twyla Heath (via Facebook), 20 Jul, 2019:

Several weeks after the death of Kiyoko's mother last year I went to visit my daughter Bethany in the new mother's wing of the hospital with her newborn baby girl. As I know you are aware, there is a special newness that fills the air in the presence of a spirit fresh from heaven. As I held her tiny soul in my arms I reflected that the last time I had been in the hospital was to weep with Kiyoko and her family at her mother's passing. What an incredible contrast between these two experiences with brushing against the veil. I shared with Bethany some of my thoughts. How interesting it is that in a temple ceremony, a veil is used as a symbol to separate the initiate from the Lord. This is a symbol of the division between heaven and earth, between time and eternity, or between the sacred and the commonplace. Beyond the veil are the angels, gods and spirits. Here there are mortals. At his death, Herman passed through this veil.

Except for what happens in the womb of the woman, everything in mortality is subject to entropy. Women have the ordained power to produce new life. Everything else decays and dies. Her power defies the universal effects of entropy.

The ceremonial boundary veil that acts as the divider between worlds represents when the initiate is tested by heaven. This takes place before they are permitted to pass from earth to heaven, from time to eternity and from the commonplace to the sacred. In direct contrast, there is another veil represented in the temple. The veil of

the woman represents the transition of pre-earth eternal spirits into mortality, when the sacred becomes embodied. She, along with God, veils in flesh the spirits from beyond the veil. "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews." (Job 10:11) Therefore, the woman's veil represents the inverse of the other veil. The boundary veil symbolizes losing the flesh to leave mortality, and her veil endows the immortal spirit with mortal flesh.

Like her heavenly counterpart, the woman represents creation.

Woman is veiled to show that in a fallen world, trapped by decay and death, creation continues through her. Life springs anew and what is sacred and pure is born into mortal life.

Between these two veils, like bookends, you and I are still engaged on this stage of mortality. Bethany's little baby has just entered this stage. Herman has now left it. Alma tells us, "this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors." (Alma 34:32) It is my prayer that I use these powerful reminders to prayerfully reflect on how I can best "perform my labors" and improve my relationship with Him and fill the measure of my creation.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3)

New Heaven and New Earth

In addition to ordinances here on earth, there are ordinances written in the heavens (see Job 38:32, D&C 132:46, Abr 4:14-19). Unlike those on earth, ordinances written in heaven are beyond man's ability to touch, alter, or destroy (see Isa 24:5).

Joseph Smith declared, "Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles." (TPJS pg 308)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. (Rev 21:1-4)

The religion that was established in the beginning recognized the testimony set out in the stars above us. All of these are given, as Christ said in Genesis 1:14, for signs, and for seasons, and everything testifies of Him. President Nelson made mention of the recent sign in the heavens on December 21st of the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn – what many were calling the Christmas star (<https://www.facebook.com/russell.m.nelson/posts/3579212565479487>).

In the vernacular of scripture, events above are reckoned by the movement of the earth. The earth is moving in two ways. It is circling the sun on a tilt. Twice a year that tilt aligns so that we have an equinox, which means that there's exactly twelve hours of sunlight and twelve hours of darkness on that one day, twice a year. Then there are solstices, when in the north the days are the longest because it's leaning towards the sun, and when it gets to the other side it's leaning away, and at that moment the nights are very long because in the north you're leaning away from the sun. As the earth makes this movement in one direction it's also wobbling at the poles.

The earth is not perfectly stable on its axis. It wobbles. It takes 25,900 years roughly for it to complete one circle at the pole. Because of that wobble we have a changing pole star. It happens at this moment to be Polaris, but if you go back several thousand years we have a different pole star. That pole star changes. At the time of Abraham the pole star would have been close to what today is called Kochab¹ in the Little Dipper.

We also have, around the ecliptic, a group of constellations that everyone on earth can see. It doesn't matter if you're in the southern hemisphere or if you're in the northern hemisphere. There are a group of constellations everyone on earth can continually see. There are twelve of them. In the book of Job these are called "Mazzaroth" (Job 38:32).

When the Lord hung on the cross and the sun was darkened at noon, if you looked up in the sky to see what was overhead, you would see the sacrificial lamb in the pattern of the stars (that we call Aries today).

When the pole star changes, anciently that change was called a New Heaven. Polaris represents a change to a new heaven.

There is a different constellation that appears at sunrise on the vernal equinox, and that constellation tells you what age (Pisces, Aquarius, etc.) mankind is in. When that constellation changes from the previous constellation age (on the horizon at the vernal equinox), that's called a New Earth. There will be a New Heaven and a New Earth when Christ returns.

Conclusion

God is moving today in our time just as He has anciently as well as in the days of Joseph Smith. His ordinances, both ancient and modern are intended to point us to Him. It is up to us individually to respond.

Only the rare person realizes where light and truth, which is the glory of God, can be found. For the rest there is an abundance of rites, ordinances, observances, rituals, and symbols. While all of these point to the real thing, they are not the real thing itself. Therefore we find still that "*there are not found that return to give glory to God, save [a few].*"

Life is an open book test. We only need to realize the test is underway to be able to pass it.

¹ Which star in our sky was the star called Kolob by our Lord is unknown but Thuban in Draco was the pole star from the 4th to 2nd millennium BC. Some suggest Kochab in the Little Dipper was the North Star at the time of Abraham.

It is my prayer that we exercise the faith and courage to look beyond the symbols to find Him. That we may become "a new creation in Christ".