

Can sacred Mormon temple covenants and ordinances be changed?

Here's a recent quote from the church's official publication, The Ensign Magazine:

From August 2001 Ensign (page 22), in big bold print above a large colorful portrait of Joseph Smith:

"The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, '**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.**'"

The church goes on to declare:

"It is this principle of consistent and unalterable requirements that gives true meaning to the performance of vicarious ordinances in the temple. The Prophet wrote that baptism for the dead and the recording of such baptisms conform to **the ordinance and preparation that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundation of the world**, for the salvation of the dead who should die without a knowledge of the gospel."

"Through time and apostasy following Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, however, the divine authority of the priesthood and **the sacred ordinances were changed** or lost, and the associated covenants were broken. **The Lord revealed His displeasure over this situation in these words: 'For they have strayed from mine ordinances**, and have broken mine everlasting covenant; They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god.' This situation required a restoration of knowledge pertaining to the importance, significance, and **appointed administration of sacred gospel ordinances, both live and vicarious**, as well as the divine authority of the priesthood and priesthood keys to administer them."

- *"Ordinances and Covenants", Church Ensign, August 2001, page 23*

This is from an article specifically on the temple ordinances. The author of the article is a General Authority, so he must know that the temple ordinances have gone through major revisions - including deletions of covenants, teachings and ordinances - over the last 160 years.

To back up the declarations in the church's official publication:

"Now the purpose in Himself in the winding up scene of the last dispensation is that all things pertaining to that dispensation should be conducted precisely in accordance with the preceding dispensations....

He set the temple ordinances to be the same forever and ever and set Adam to watch over them, to reveal them from heaven to man, or to send angels to reveal them."

- *Joseph Smith, History of the Church, vol.4, p. 208*

"No jot, iota, or tittle of the temple rites is otherwise than uplifting and sanctifying. In every detail the endowment ceremony contributes to covenants of morality of life, consecration of person to high ideals, devotion to truth, patriotism to nation, and allegiance to God."

- *Apostle James E. Talmage, The House of the Lord, 1968, p. 84*

"As temple work progresses, some members wonder if the ordinances can be changed or adjusted. These ordinances have been provided by revelation, and are in the hands of the First Presidency. Thus, the temple is protected from tampering."

- *W. Grant Bangerter, executive director of the Temple Department and a member of the First Quorum of Seventy, Deseret News, Church Section, January 16, 1982*

"...God is unchangeable, the same yesterday, today and forever... The great mistake made down through the ages by teachers of Christianity, is that they have supposed they could place their own private interpretation upon scriptures, allow their own personal convenience to become a controlling factor, and change the basis of Christian law and practice to suit themselves. This is apostasy."

- *Prophet's Message, Church News, June 5, 1965*

"...the endowments have never changed and can never change; as I understand it; it has been so testified, and that Joseph Smith Jr., himself was the founder of the endowments."

- *Senator Reed Smoot, Reed Smoot Case, vol. 3, p. 185*

"...build a house to my name, for the Most High to dwell therein. For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fullness of the priesthood.... And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein... For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fullness of times. **And I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house**, and the priesthood thereof, and the place whereon it shall be built."

- *Jesus Christ Himself, Doctrine and Covenants 124:27-28, 40-42*

"The Gospel can not possibly be changed.... the saving principles must ever be the same. They can never change.... the Gospel must always be the same in all of its parts.... no one can change the Gospel... if they attempt to do so, they only set up a man-made system which is not the Gospel, but is merely a reflection of their own views.... if we substitute 'any other Gospel,' there is no salvation in it... the Lord and His Gospel remain the same--always."

- *Prophet's Message, Church News, June 5, 1965*

Here's the Paradox:

The temple sealing ceremony (which is required for salvation) itself has gone through major changes over the years. so have the very covenants in the temple. In fact, the ordinances and teachings in the temple endowment ceremony went through a significant change as recently as April 1990!

See: <http://helpingmormons.org/Altered.htm>

If these were divinely restored in their complete form from "the foundation of the world" then why have they kept changing? And if Smith says they can never be altered OR changed, how come the Church did it? Who got it wrong, the prophet Smith or his only true Church? Either way, it smells like a hoax.

Don't take my word for it. Here' a comprehensive list of all the changes in the temple covenants, ceremonies and ordinances made in April 1990:

<http://helpingmormons.org/compare.htm>

Don't fall for the excuse that the ceremony is just a vehicle for the ordinance. If it's just a vehicle, then what IS the ordinance? If it includes the covenants, oaths, handshakes, signs, keywords or even words at the veil, then they have changed significantly over the years.

We're not talking about a blessing or a prayer that can be changed. We're talking about revealed temple ordinances that are supposed to be free from the tainting of men.

The words in the temple ordinances are just as revealed and un-alterable as the words in the sacrament prayer. The ordinance of sealing must be said correctly, just like the temple endowment ceremony or it's not valid. Every believing Mormon knows the reason for this is that they are revealed as the saving ordinances that can't change. Christ in the Book of Mormon taught this very principle when he gave the Nephites the exact same words used today for the sacrament. The temple ordinances are no different.

What about those poor young Priests in Sacrament Meeting who happen to say a word wrong in the sacrament prayer? Why embarrass them and make them say it exactly right if the words are just a "vehicle?" If the sacrament ordinance can't change, then why can the temple ordinances change?

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