

Podcast Episode 33: Temples, Part 2

QUESTION: This is the second installment in a multi-part series about the temple, where Denver addresses the meaning behind both ancient and modern temple worship, as well as some of the features and purposes of the temple to be built in New Jerusalem.

DENVER: God pointed Joseph, and in turn us, towards something more ancient. God was attempting to return to the earth the original faith taught to Adam in the beginning. The religion of Adam was the objective of Mormonism. Joseph Smith was unable to fully restore that first religion of man. Joseph predicted the religion would include a future gathering in the "everlasting hills" (in all probability, the Rocky Mountains), where returning tribes would be "crowned" with glory in a New Jerusalem to be God's last Zion.

This, in my view, is the reason why Elijah must return. In the last days, that system that began at first with Zion going up to heaven is going to invert. It's going to open again, but this time instead of Zion leaving, Zion is going to stay, and it is going to be joined by those who went away. They will come again. And there is this marvelous description of how when they return they will fall on one another's necks, and they will kiss one another. Because Zion below and Zion above will be joined.

The purpose of the return of Elijah, which Joseph talked about being a yet future event in Nauvoo, has everything to do with the return and the Second Coming.

In January of 1844— now this is some eight years post Kirtland temple, Joseph is talking about Elijah and he said:

"The Bible says, 'I will send you Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come that he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children & the hearts of the Children to their fathers lest I Come & smite the whole earth with a Curse,' Now the word turn here should be translated (bind or seal) But what is the object of this important mission or how is it to be fulfilled, The keys are to be delivered the spirit of Elijah is to Come, to be delivered, to come, the gospel to be established, the Saints of God gathered, Zion built up, & and the Saints to Come up as saviors on Mount Zion but how are they to become Saviors on mount Zion[?] by building temples erecting Baptismal fonts & going forth & receiving all the ordinances, Baptisms, Confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations & sealing powers upon our heads in behalf of all our

Progenitors who are dead & redeem them that they may Come forth in the first resurrection & be exalted to thrones..." and so on.

And then Joseph laments: "I would to God that this temple was now done that we might go into it & go to work & improve our time & make use of the seals while they are on the earth & the Saints have none too much time to save & redeem their dead, & gather together their living relatives that they may be saved also, before the earth will be smitten."

And then this is the place where Joseph says— he's talking about Elijah. He's talking about the seals being on the earth, and he's talking about preparing for Zion. And in this context, in January of 1844, this is where Joseph says:

"There has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation it has been like splitting hemlock knots with a Corn dog for a wedge & a pumpkin for a beetle, Even the Saints are slow to understand I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God, but we frequently see some of them after suffering all they have for the work of God will fly to pieces like glass as soon as any thing Comes that is Contrary to their traditions, they Cannot stand the fire at all, How many will be able to abide a Celestial law & go through to receive their exaltation I am unable to say but many are Called & few are Chosen."

Then in March of 1844 he picks up the subject again— the 10th of March, 1844. And this time, when he's talking about Elijah, he says: "The spirit & calling of Elijah is to have power to hold the keys of the revelations ordinances, oracles powers & endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood & of the Kingdom of God on the Earth & to receive, obtain and perform all the ordinances belonging to the Kingdom of God even unto the sealing of the hearts of the fathers unto the children & the hearts of the children unto the fathers even those who are in heaven."

The hearts of the fathers who are in heaven— that's the mission of Elijah. If you will receive it, this is the spirit of Elijah: That we redeem our dead and connect ourselves with our "fathers which are in heaven" — our dead through us, us to our "fathers in heaven." Who are our "fathers in heaven?" Who are our "father's in heaven" to whom we are to be connected? We want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those which dwell in heaven. Those who are in the spirit world, our dead, the ones that need redemption from us, are not redeemed. They cannot be in heaven because they need us to be redeemed. We need to be redeemed by our connecting to the "fathers who are in heaven." The dead have to be redeemed. The Fathers are in heaven. Joseph understood this doctrine.

It is my view that the notion that you go to the temple and do genealogical work to answer the coming of Elijah does not conform to the description we are reading here from Joseph Smith. Our ancestors, our kindred dead— they need to be redeemed. They all have an interest in you and your life. And the work that is being done needs to be done. But the gulf that needs to be bridged through the work of Elijah, in the words of Joseph Smith, is "to form a bond or a connection." And of course now, who was the last one who lived on the earth, not to hold the sealing power, but to ascend to heaven and to draw together heaven and earth by his ascent, representing the opening of that way through which Zion above and Zion below will be connected with one another? Who was the last guide, as a mortal man, to have walked this path? Because when the Lord comes He's coming with an entourage, and the path needs to be opened beforehand. And the path, once it's opened, allows men on the earth to be prepared for the coming again of those who are Zion above. Well, Elijah answers, because Elijah is the one who made that connection.

Again, the doctrine of sealing power of Elijah is as follows: "If you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be Crafty, the first thing you do is you go & seal on earth your sons and daughters unto yourself, & yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory."

"Unto your fathers in eternal glory." That is not your kindred dead— they are relying upon you to be redeemed. The connection that needs to be formed is between you and the Fathers who dwell in glory.

And who are the "fathers who dwell in glory?" If we go back to the revelation in which Joseph Smith received the sealing power, and he received the sealing power some time before 1831, in that portion of the revelation known as D&C 132:49: *"I the Lord thy God will be with thee even unto the end of the world and through all eternity for verily I seal upon your exaltation. Prepare your throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father."*

"...I say unto you, that whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, in my name by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins are remitted on earth shall be remitted eternally in the heavens..." (verse 46), and so on.

Just before that portion of the revelation, in verse 37, he talks about Abraham, he talks about Isaac, and he talks about Jacob. And then concerning those three, the Lord says to Joseph: *"...because they did none other things in that which they were commanded they have entered into their exaltation according to the promises and sit upon thrones and are not angels but are gods."*

This is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These are the ones who are Gods.

Therefore, when I consider these things, I reach a different conclusion than the Elijah narrative that we generally talk about. And the conclusion that I reach is that when it comes to Elijah's role and Elijah's mission, the purpose was, in the last days on the cusp of the Lord's return, in order to open the channel through which the Zion that has been taken above can return, there will be a ministry, just as Joseph put it, still future in 1844 (March, April, May, June— three months before the death of the Prophet, yet future), the purpose of which is to make possible the reuniting of those that dwell above with those that dwell below— formed by a people who are capable of bearing the presence of the Lord, coming back into His presence, and not withering at the sight; coming back into His presence and being able to dwell at peace.

Which leads us then to the subject of the temple, which is the only thing I'm talking about tonight. Everything I have said so far bears only upon the temple. And that's the purpose of getting here—is to discuss about what the temple's purpose is, what it means, and what it's trying to convey to us.

Is the temple an end, or is the temple a means? If the temple is an end, then everyone who goes through the temple obtains everything that the temple has to offer by virtue of going in and participating in the ceremony. But if the temple ceremony is instead a means, a means of trying to take you somewhere—if it is a means, then what is it a means to? Because one possible meaning that you should come away with is that it is a means to inform you that there is a veil, and not a wall, to permit you to talk through and to touch through and to feel your way through to the symbolic presence of God. And then, that veil is not a wall but something that can be, with merely the brush of the hand of our Lord, drawn aside so that you may enter into His presence. And the way you get there is by being prepared in all things, having been true and faithful in all things, coming to learn something from Him; not coming to tell Him something, not coming to impose upon Him, but coming to learn from Him.

Our Savior was, and is, first and foremost, a teacher. By His knowledge, Isaiah and Nephi wrote, He shall justify many. By His Knowledge. He possesses things which we do not yet comprehend. He possesses things which He would like us to comprehend. How, then, are we to comprehend the things which only He can teach? By permitting Him to do so, by coming to Him.

In the ceremony, it only takes some two hours before you are called "true and faithful in all things." Well, if that's an end and not a means, then in two-and-a-half hours in sitting and occasionally standing and agreeing to some things, you have become "true and faithful in all things." I would suggest that the temple rite, as an end, makes that notion preposterous because you are the same person walking out of the temple as you were walking into it two hours earlier. You are no more faithful in the temptations that you face on the street, you are no more lovely in the way that you deal with your family, you are no more honest in your business dealings with

your fellow man than you were two hours earlier when you walked in, but the ceremony is saying that you have been "true and faithful in all things."

I'd suggest that's a means, and it's an admonition. And it's an invitation, even begging you to recognize that the challenge you face in your life requires you, invariably, to lay aside those things that pull you away and that you always turn and face the Lord. That's what repentance means. It means to turn and face the Lord. And you know when you face Him the first time, you're just not going to be that good or that different than you were the moment before. But if you'll face Him, He'll work with you. It does not matter how badly damaged you are. That's irrelevant. He fixed the apostle Paul. He fixed Alma the younger and the sons of Mosiah, whose deliberate purpose was to overthrow the things of God. I don't care what you've done, the malignancies of those men are highlighted in scripture in order to assure you that you can all be reclaimed.

Turn and face Him, and then walk with Him. He does all the guiding and most of the heavy lifting. The fact of the matter remains that we all have the freedom to choose to leave behind whatever it is that becomes the door against which the Savior has to knock, hoping that you'll hear his voice. We have to become as a little child because it's only the little children who are willing to open themselves up and become vulnerable enough to believe, and then hopeful enough to act on that belief so that they develop faith, and then persistent enough to ask again and again and again, "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?"

In the parable that Joseph was given in the *Doctrine and Covenants* about the unjust judge and the aggrieved woman, it was a constant petitioning. Little children not only don't know a lot of things, they know that they don't know, and they ask persistently, incessantly, because they desire to know what they don't know. They're like sponges, and we're like rocks. You can throw a rock into the water and pull it out again, and it's still a rock. But you throw a sponge in, and you pull it out, and it is greatly increased. Children are like the sponge—they're porous, and we are not.

Well, D&C 93:1—you probably all can recite that in your head, I hope. I'm not going to read it.

Moses 6:57: *"Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence; for, in the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time."*

So, in order to come into the presence of the Lord, we have to be clean. Well, in the ceremony of the temple, the way in which you become ceremonially clean is by borrowing things from the Lord through the ceremony. You are washed, though not quite as vigorously as you may have been in Nauvoo. You are anointed, though not perhaps as thoroughly as you might have been in Nauvoo. You know that strong drinks—next time you have a Word of Wisdom lesson and they're talking about strong drinks and the washing of the body, they used cinnamon-flavored or included mixed whiskey to wash you in the Kirtland and then again in Nauvoo. And, as it turns out, for washing the body, it's really a pretty good antiseptic. One of the things that Joseph talked about in the Nauvoo era was about how angels sometimes have a hard time visiting with men because they stink, and that we really ought to clean ourselves up because we'll offend the sensibilities of the angels. There's a notion for you. One of the doors to barring entry... anyway.

In the temple you borrow cleanliness through the ceremony itself, which washes you, which anoints you, which dresses you in new and clean clothes, and then progressively confers upon you symbols that suggest all of creation. Symbolically, the entirety of creation comes through and is redeemed as a consequence of your own redemption. Because if you are redeemed you are infinite and eternal and creation itself goes on. But here, no unclean thing can dwell there or dwell in His presence, which then leads to the reason for the temple.

The purpose of the temple is not merely to inspire you with the conviction that it is possible to rend the veil, to pass through the veil, to see and meet with our Lord who has promised us repeatedly that the stories in the *Book of Mormon* are stories designed to tell you over and over and over again about coming back into the presence of the Lord. Even wicked Lamanite converts—many of them have what we, in our scholarly language would call a "throne theophany," and they did so upon conversion because their conversion was with real intent. Therefore, the *Book of Mormon* is a text about the Second Comforter.

But what is being talked about in this verse in Moses 6 is about dwelling in His presence. And when it comes—Again, this is Moses 6:57, it says when it comes to dwelling there, "...*no unclean thing can dwell there*" because He's the Man of Holiness. This presents the real message, or the real meaning, of what the temple is trying to convey to us in our day. And we're just about running out of time to accomplish that in our day. And if we don't, then, you know, He passes on and maybe starts this up with another people in another day, as He has so often done before.

To come to the veil and to meet with the Savior: He can clean you up. He, through His grace, can give you all that you lack. To dwell in the presence of God requires something more, something different. It requires that you grow from where you are now to the place where the Lord intends to lead you. He intends to have you *be* true and faithful in all things. Because in the ceremony in

the temple, once you go through the veil, you don't come back; you stay there. And the purpose of going there in this day, in this setting, is to enable the return of Zion.

We don't need a profoundly new and far reaching economic system to make us have all things in common in order to bring again Zion. And we don't need possession of the real estate in Jackson County, Missouri to bring again Zion. We don't need any of the implements or locations or infrastructure to have Zion return. We need one thing, and that's *you*—you to be clean, you to be holy, to leave behind you not only the door, but the house in which you dwell, that you established that door to bar Him through. You need to come and live with Him. It is possible.

But the fact of the matter is, that it is the glory of the Fathers which Joseph was trying to explain in the last two talks he gave in Nauvoo.

The promise made by Elijah is about reconnecting us to the Fathers. Joseph called them the "fathers in heaven." These are not our kindred dead because our kindred dead are required to be redeemed by us. These are the Fathers in heaven. Among them would be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and because of this dispensation being what it is, Peter, James, and John.

The purpose of the Holy Ghost is to allow you to see things in their true light with the underlying intent behind them and to allow you to do that without distortion and without confusion. The temple is a ceremony designed to teach you about the path back to God—the very same thing that the *Book of Mormon* teaches repeatedly. The path back to God is so that you can meet with and be instructed by our Savior. The purpose of our Savior is to prepare us in all things so that we can, at last, become Zion. Because if your heart is right and my heart is right, and if I'm looking to God and God only, and you're looking to God and God only, then the trivial things of having things in common are of so little import that they matter not.

If you're faithful to the Lord, you have no reason to pick a fight with anyone else. Our Lord was a peacemaker. We ought to be peacemakers as well.

Moroni 10:4-5, particularly 10:5, tells you that: "*By the power of the Holy Ghost you may know the truth of all things.*" The truth of *all* things. There is nothing off-limits. There's nothing about which you're going to be upbraided and told, "Don't ask. Don't inquire. I won't tell."

Now you may ask for something that you are unprepared to hear an answer for because there is some preparation yet left. But if you ask, you set in motion, on the other side, permission to fix what's wrong with you.

Have you read the 10th Parable ["The Missing Virtue," *Ten Parables*, Denver C. Snuffer]? If you've read the 10th Parable you know there is a time lag in which a missing virtue gets supplied as a consequence of real world experience. The answer gets set in motion as a consequence of the laws of God upon which all blessings are predicated, which mandate, as we are seeing here in this verse, that you must ask! And by the way, the answer to the question that you ask from God will always be "yes." However, if you're not ready for the "yes," then you're going to go through a period of renovation and repair. How long you need to be renovated and repaired depends upon just how much of the toxic nonsense you've drunk in and how much of it you continue to drink in that opposes the ability of God to speak to you. So soon as you will lay down that nonsense and in faith be believing, so soon will God be able to plug the leaks, repair the hinge, fix the broken window. He really does have a house of order, or better put, a temple that is holy. The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple. But it must not be defiled; clean yourselves up.

If you want to know what your state and standing is because you are uncertain—we're reading in the Joseph Smith testimony. Look at the next verse: *"While I was thus in the act of calling upon God..." (JS-H 1:30)*. In the act of calling upon God! If you are in the right way with the right faith looking for the right answers, you don't even get to finish the sentence. God knows what you have need of even "before ye ask" (Matthew 6:8). That's from the Sermon on the Mount. Christ tells you that. That horrible aching, that longing, that hollowness, that emptiness within you is what Christ was designed to fill. That's His purpose in coming to His temple.

So while he was in the act of calling upon God, he discovered a light appearing in his room *"which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor."* (As an interesting aside, I want to ask the question, Why? Why did Moroni stand in the air, his feet not touching the ground? It's an interesting topic we're not going to talk about here. It's off subject; it won't get us Zion anyway. But there's "stuff" here.)

Oh, and look at this: *"He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom"* (verse 32).

Notice this—this is not ceremonial garb, as a consequence of which, I can tell you that it's okay to be buried without temple regalia because you're not going to be wearing that stuff in the

resurrection anyway, if you inherit what the angels of God, including Moroni (who is certainly exalted), wear.

You read about the description of what Christ wears in the scriptures, as well. Ceremonial garb is just that: it is ceremonial garb. It is designed to teach you about the Creation, to endow you with certain knowledge about the process of being exalted. But it is not the attire that you'll see on the streets of heaven. I actually think—I think they look Egyptian. I think their attire looks Egyptian, but that's neither here nor there.

This is a guy who was wearing only a robe. It's not ceremonial. He doesn't have shoes on his feet; he doesn't have a bonnet on; he doesn't have a variety of things that we would associate with ceremonial dress. You can read a description of Christ's attire in 3 Nephi 11:8. And the description there is very much like the description that we have here, Christ and Moroni wearing the same kind of thing.

And then hey, just for the fun of it, let's go back to Exodus 28. I want to revert back to my Cecil B. Demille-esque stuff [spoken in vocal imitation]: *"And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen" (verses 4-5) ...and yellow and green and purple and orange and white and.... [Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat]. I'm sorry. You can read it; it's in here. Ooh, the "ouches of gold," and the "chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work..." (verses 13-14)—I mean, He dresses you in funny attire, okay?*

God goes through in the ceremonial attire, and He dresses you up. And the purpose of the dress is ceremonial, to communicate to you, through symbolism, knowledge about certain things. But they are not an end; they are a symbol: six days of creation, six articles of clothing, each one of which can be associated with one of the days of creation. Therefore, as you enter through the veil it is as if the entirety of all creation is redeemed in your person. You represent salvation for the entirety of creation because in you, should you be able to be rescued, creation itself continues. These are symbols. They communicate to the mind ideas, ideas that are eternal. They're not ends in themselves.

Well, keep that in mind, because you're here to be trained. You're here to learn something. You're here to learn about the power of godliness. And by "here" I don't mean this room tonight, although I think that is certainly true. I'm talking about this lifetime in which you find yourself—this place, this terrible fallen world, this glorious opportunity in which sacrifice is actually possible. You don't avoid it, and you don't necessarily seek it out. But when it comes upon you,

you face it down bravely. And you stand where God places you. And you don't let any man move you from where it is that God would have you be. Because therein lies salvation. You're obeying a law ordained before the foundation of the world. You can't lay hold upon such blessings, unless you obey the law upon which it is predicated. There will always be, in absolute numbers, only a few who will find that straight and narrow path. There will be an overflowing abundance of those who will fight against it, because they serve their master. You don't have time to worry about them. You serve yours. And that Master needs to be Christ.

Go about halfway down in verse 19 of Section 132. There's a dash, and after the dash it says—and it's talking about conditions that you need to fulfill and covenants that you need to have. It says: *"Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection..."* which is, by the way, one of the proofs that this is a revelation given by God to Joseph Smith, and it's one of the things that vouches for this being God, not man, writing this stuff. Because if it were Joseph, he'd be worried about coming forth in the first resurrection. But since God is giving a commandment here through Joseph that was intended to survive on into the end of the Millennium, God's anticipating, He foresees, that there will be generations that arise even after the Millennium and after the first resurrection has been sounded. And so God's saying, "Yeah, for those people, if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection."

And it says: *"...shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths...."* Well these are not just words. These are descriptions of various levels of activity that take place in the afterlife. A "throne" is not the same thing as a "kingdom," nor a "kingdom" the same as a "principality," nor a "power" the same thing as a "dominion." These are describing different things, different levels, until finally you arrive up to the state of the Seraphim which dwell in fire. They are the flaming ones.

Doctrine and Covenants 109 has something to say about that. I'll look at that—section 109:79, *"And also this church, to put upon it thy name. And help us by the power of thy Spirit, that we may mingle our voices with those bright, shining seraphs around thy throne."* See, "around the throne" it is a place of everlasting, eternal burnings. Therefore, the Seraphs who gather there have to be "the flaming ones." They have mounted up to that point.

You know, there was a verse I alluded to in Boise. Isaiah 6—this is an incident I alluded to, I even (I think) gave the scripture, but I didn't talk about it using the scripture in front of me. Isaiah chapter 6, beginning at verse 1: *"IN the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."* The Lord sitting upon the throne would be this condition of glory.

"Above it stood the seraphims...." The seraphim are the ones who are flaming, the ones who dwell in this everlasting burning. *"Each one had six wings...."* This is metaphor because these folks have climbed through six stages of the ladder, Jacob's ladder, to arrive where they were. And they cry out: *"...Holy, holy, holy,"* and the posts of the door moved, and Isaiah says in verse 5: *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar...."* Now we usually read that as "he took the tongs, and with the tongs he touched the lips." But it doesn't say that. He took the tongs to get it off the altar and brought it in his hand. Because being one of the flaming ones, he is able to bear this kind of glory. *"And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged"*—improvising an ordinance using the prayer altar, the altar with the ascending smoke which is a symbol of the prayers that ascend to heaven; that worthy speech uttered by you in faith that ascends to heaven, that the altar symbolized—the flame, the coals, the incense put upon it to build a column of smoke that reaches then the roof, and it spreads out rather like the Tree of Life that it symbolizes—all of this stuff taking place in the temple of Solomon, and the ordinance being improvised by one of the flaming ones that dwells in these conditions of burning and of glory.

Take a look at *Doctrine and Covenants* 128. And you ought to be looking into all this stuff because if you look into all this stuff you don't have time to waste on that crap that besets you. And this is a lot more interesting than the junk that you fill your skulls with. Go *here*, do *this* stuff.

The fact of the matter is that you can make a vow to God, but you can't make a covenant with God. God can make a covenant which you can fulfill by your performance. God can offer you something, but it's up to you to accept it, and you accept it by what you do. It's not enough to say, "Yea Lord, I'll go out, and I'll do as I'm bidden." You have to *do* it. Because it's only in the doing that the covenant is kept. It's only in the doing that the covenant is able to be empowered sufficient to give you the blessing upon which a law has been established for the blessing to be predicated. You can't get there without God offering and you accepting.

So now we should realize, I hope, that that city which Melchizedek, the King of Peace, was able to teach righteousness sufficiently so that it was taken up from the earth, reserved to the last days at the end of the world. The next time we have such an event on the earth, the next time there is this kind of a gathering and this kind of a population anywhere, it will not be for the purpose of going up. It will be for the purpose of permitting those who have gone up to come back down. It will be for the purpose of having those who can endure the presence of those who will come.

Because those who come will burn up all those who are unworthy, and therefore, some few need to be gathered so that the earth is not utterly wasted at His coming.

"As it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man" (JS-Matthew 1:41). How many people were required in order to have the Ark be an acceptable place in which God could preserve all of humanity? It was a portable Ark of the Covenant, in which a family was preserved. And so if it's going to be as it was in the days of Noah, there is this net that has been cast out to gather together all manner of "fish" (Matthew 13:47-50). But as the Lord tells the parable, the angels are going to come, and they're going to pick through all manner of "fish," and they're going to keep the good and the rest are going to be scheduled for burning.

And so the question is, how diligent ought the search be into the things of God? How carefully ought we to consider the things that have been restored to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith? The fact is that this stuff is assigned to our dispensation. All of you have this information in front of you. All of this material has been restored through someone that we claim we honor and regard as a prophet.

Well, they who come will burn up those who are unprepared. And therefore, what should we be doing in order to make sure that we are included among those who are prepared?

I want to look more into Enoch, so let's go back to the book of Moses. Moses chapter 7, beginning at verse 60: *"And the Lord said unto Enoch: As I live...."* This is covenant language. This is God swearing by His own life. This is God promising that if He lives, so shall this word live. If He's alive, He shall vindicate what He's about to say.

"As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah; And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there...." These are they who, when they come, will burn up those unprepared for the coming, so that it leaves neither root nor branch.

"...we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest. And it came to pass that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years; But before that day he saw great tribulations among the wicked; and he also saw the sea, that it was troubled, and men's hearts failing them, looking forth with fear for the judgments of the Almighty God, which should come upon the wicked" (Moses 7:60-66).

This is the Lord describing to Enoch what would happen by way of covenant, the Lord swearing "As I live, even so will..." and He tells him what's going to come to pass in the last days.

This is among the promises that were made to one of the Fathers. And this *is* one of the Fathers, and these *are* the covenants whose time is now upon us. This is the day in which we need to be prepared, so that those who went before and ascended up the ladder can return and fall upon your neck and kiss you, and you fall upon their neck and kiss them—a sacred embrace through the veil, evidencing fellowship between you here and them there, the Lord promising and covenanting these things are going to happen.

But notice, there has to be a tabernacle. He has to come and take up His abode. There has to be preparation made. These things require some effort to be made here in order to prepare for His return. If there is no one here who is willing to engage in what's necessary to bring this to pass (because everyone looks around and expects someone else to do it), then you're neglecting the duty that's devolving upon you as one of those who was assigned to come down in this day, in order to honor the Fathers and honor the Lord by allowing the covenants that have been made to be fulfilled.

Rest assured that God intends to establish, in the last days, a Zion in which we will see the return of exactly what was here at the beginning. There will be a return. I mean, the reason why they're coming to the children of Ephraim in the everlasting mountains is because there will be a New Jerusalem. They will bring rich treasures when they come because they have records that they, themselves, are going to need to have translated. And they're going to be crowned because the family of God consists of people who are, in fact, kings and priests.

All of that infrastructure has to be put in place by the Lord before His return. And therefore, He intends to accomplish this work. And when He accomplishes this work, you're not going to find, at the top of it, a king like the gentiles expect. You're going to find something or someone or some group who are meek and lowly, who are rather more like our Savior than the kings who ruled during our Savior's day.

Well there's a parable—it's just one verse; it's a very short parable. It moves along, but it's a response that Christ gave to the question that was put to Him by His disciples, asking Him, "Tell us what the signs of your return is going to be." And He goes through a list of things, but He ends with a little parable at the end. And our translation makes it seem kind of morbid, so I'm going to substitute "body" for "carcass," because it sounds like what you're dealing with in the current King James version is morbid, not a living body. But He says one of the signs that is going to be at His return is "where the body is, that's where the eagles will gather" (JST-Matthew 1:27; Luke 17:37). The body is the New Jerusalem. The eagles are going to be angelic ministrants who are going to come.

There has to be an opening that occurs in order to prepare the way. The opening at this end is going to be handled by someone who has remained behind, and the opening at the far end is going to be the one to whom the assignment was given to open the way for His return—Elijah, the one who was promised.

Now, I want to be really clear. I don't expect either of those individuals to have any public ministry again. They have a role in Zion, and those who dwell in Zion are going to have some contact with them. The three Nephites are a great example. They, like John, were given a similar ministry to remain around and to minister until the end of the earth. And they did minister. Two of the people to whom they ministered were Mormon and Moroni. They, like ministering angels, ministered to Mormon, who in turn ministered to the public. They ministered to Moroni (he kept his hope up in the waning days of that dispensation), but they did not minister publicly.

John will have a role, but the work of Zion is the work of flesh and blood. Men have to extend the invitation for God to return so that men who extend that invitation are worthy of His return, and the Lord can safely come without utterly destroying all who are upon the earth. Therefore, you need Zion, among other reasons, in order for there to be a place and a people to whom the Lord can safely return without utterly destroying the earth at His coming. However small, however diminutive it may be, there needs to be a Zion that extends the invitation for the Lord to return.

The foregoing are excerpts taken from:

- The presentation of Denver's paper entitled "Was There an Original," given at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, UT on July 29, 2016;
- His talk entitled "The Mission of Elijah Reconsidered," given in Spanish Fork, UT on October 14, 2011;

- A fireside talk on "The Temple," given in Ogden, UT on October 28, 2012;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #1 entitled "Be of Good Cheer," given in Boise, ID on September 10, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #3 entitled "Repentance," given in Logan, UT on September 29, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #4 entitled "Covenants," given in Centerville, UT on October 6, 2013; and
- His talk entitled "Zion Will Come," given near Moab, UT on April 10, 2016.