

Podcast Episode 37: Temples, Part 5

QUESTION: This is the fifth 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: Jacob gave a blessing to Joseph that we find in the book of Genesis 49:26: *"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."*

As a consequence of that, the latter-day Zion must be brought through Joseph. He's the one upon whom the blessing devolved, and interestingly enough, he passed that on to Ephraim, not to Manasseh. Also interestingly enough, though Manasseh was the lineage through which Lehi's family descended, the prophecy I read you about the blessings being conferred in the last days are to come through the hand of Ephraim. There's something afoot. And it is going to come through Joseph at "the utmost bound of the everlasting hills."

I don't know how many of you have spent much in time in Missouri, but the hills there aren't everlasting. They are almost so diminutive as to be undetectable, and if you happen to be in a cornfield or around some trees, they're altogether gone. Because that terrain was never the terrain prophesied as being the location when the blessing was given by Father Jacob to Father Joseph.

Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 2:2-3: *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."* In this context, in this prophecy, "all nations" is not Russia and China and Ethiopia and Uzbekistan and Turk-crap-istan and I'm-a-nut-istan. "All nations," in this context, means all the 12 tribes of Israel. The "nations" are the 12 tribes of Israel. Period; that's it. That's who's going to flow unto it.

"The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."

The paths of God lie in the heavens. Therefore, if you are going to learn to walk in his paths, you are going to have to learn to walk in the heavens.

"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The ensign that is prophesied to be established in the context, in the meaning, of that day had reference to a zodiacal, a constellation, a depiction of the heavens themselves. So when an ensign is going to be reared, and it's going to tell you about how to walk in the paths of God, this is talking about something very, very different than what most of us today would envision.

Zion is going to be a connection between heaven and earth, and at that place you will learn of the God of Jacob's ways, and you will walk in His paths, because heaven and earth will be connected, and the stairway connecting the two will be open, and the heavens and the earth will be reunited again. And this is going to happen in the top of the mountains.

In March of 1831, there was a revelation given that we can read in D&C 49:24-25: *"But before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed."* The "mountains"—these were the prophecies at the beginning, as the Restoration was starting to roll forth.

Joseph was told that when they located in Kirtland that it would be temporary. And the location in Kirtland was temporary. When they went out and they found the "center place" (and that was found not by Joseph Smith; that was found by the four missionaries—five, because another guy joined them as a result of proselytizing in Kirtland, and so they had five when they got there), they said, "We can go so far and no further, and at this spot, we are in the center." And so that spot, given all the legal entanglements and prohibitions, that spot became as close as you could get, and as it turns out, not much was able to be done.

Later (and this is during 1841)—this is in Nauvoo, and a temple is being required of the saints in Nauvoo. There's this interesting statement within the revelation about constructing the temple in Nauvoo: *"And ye shall build it on the place where you have contemplated building it, for that is the spot which I have chosen for you to build it. If ye labor with all your might, I will consecrate that spot that it shall be made holy. And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place"* (D&C 124:43-45).

So what this opportunity in the Nauvoo temple represents is: We'd lost Kirtland. We'd been forcibly expelled from Missouri. We had attached the idea of a center temple where God would come to dwell with this people, and a place that would be a refuge that would be preserved by

the power of God, to that location. But we got kicked out of there, and we went back across the Mississippi to Nauvoo. And the Lord said, "You going to build the temple in Nauvoo? I'll command you to do that. You build it; I'll give you sufficient time within which to do it. And if you go to and you do it, I'm going to consecrate *that* spot. And I will make *that* spot holy to you. And I will make it so that you cannot be moved out of *that* spot by your enemies. And I will come there, and I will restore to you what has been lost: the fullness. I will give that to you, and I will do it in Nauvoo." And it didn't happen. And the flow of events took over.

I want to read you from Joseph Smith's history, at the very end of his life on Saturday, June 22 (five days before he would be slain)—June 22 of 1844. You can read this in the *Documentary History of the Church*, at volume 6, page 547:

"Saturday, June 22 1844— about 9 P.M. Hyrum came out of the mansion and gave his hand to Reynolds Cahoon, at the same time saying, 'A company of men are seeking to kill my brother Joseph, and the Lord has warned him to flee to the Rocky Mountains to save his life. Good-by Brother Cahoon, we shall see you again.' In a few minutes afterward Joseph came from his family, his tears were flowing fast. He held a handkerchief to his face, and followed after Brother Hyrum without uttering a word."

So Joseph received a revelation on June the 22nd of 1844 telling him, "Now, *now* go to the Rocky Mountains."

When we have an opportunity to accomplish something with the approval of the Lord, the Lord is going to be the one who ultimately decides where the actual accomplishment will take place. When it takes place, it's going to be in the mountains, and you needn't guess which mountains. The mountains are going to be out here in the west, exactly where the first missionaries were sent to try and find it but were hedged up by the confluence of what was happening in the law and in society and in the management of the Indian tribes in 1831 when they tried to cross and go out west and were told they can't. Well, if we can't go out there and find that New Jerusalem city—if we can't go out there, then we'll settle here, and we'll take these local Indians, these relocated Indians, and we'll fetch ourselves a Zion right here in this spot.

And the Lord gave a series of revelations in which He said, "If you can do that, you do that. And that is acceptable to me, and that will be Zion. Go to, have at it." And then He says, "Here's why you didn't pull it off: your jarrings, your envies, your lusts, your contentions. That's why you didn't pull it off." And He has said repeatedly in one of those extraordinarily clever things that the Lord has done throughout history: "*Zion will not be moved out of its place*" (*D&C 97:19; 101:17*).

"Zion will not be moved out of its place," which place you know not yet. But Joseph knew it was in the Rocky Mountains, and he intended to go there. And the Lord knew it was in the Rocky Mountains when He revealed that to Isaiah in his prophecy. And Father Jacob knew it when he was prophesying and blessing his son Joseph.

Now let me give the Lord the latitude that the Lord is entitled to have, because of the statement that Joseph Smith made. Joseph said, "Oh, you know nothing more than a baby in a cradle, because the whole of North and South America are Zion." Okay? So if the Lord says, "Yeah, you can build it in Missouri, that's copacetic." Time and time again the location of Zion is approved by the Lord in different spots, precisely because the entirety of North and South America would be an acceptable place to found Zion. But within those general geographic parameters, it must be in the mountains. It must be among the natives who were originally here. It must be established under the guidance of someone who hails from both the tribe of Ephraim and is a descendent of Jesse (you can read that in the Doctrine and Covenants). And it will surely come.

There is absolutely no reason for the Lord to tell you another place to go and pollute if you don't rise up to bring with you the worthiness necessary to turn, at last, a place into the New Jerusalem, where the Lord can come and dwell among you, where you can be of one heart, where you can be of one mind, where there are no poor among you, and where you have all things in common, where you meet the requirements. And there's no reason to assemble you together at any spot. You can do everything that needs to be done preliminarily from wherever it is you dwell at present. And you can prepare your hearts; and you can prepare your minds; and you can begin to understand the difficulties. And instead of judging our failure that went on before, you can rather empathize with the failures that went on before and come to some appreciation for the fact that it's not going to be any easier for you than it was for them. It's not going to be any less filled with the temptation to be envious and filled with lust and have jarrings and contentions for you than it has been for those that went and attempted before.

The only purpose behind the last-days work, both what was happening at the time of Joseph and what the Lord is offering to us today, is to accomplish that fulsome restoration of the family of God. I mean, Joseph talked about temples, and they were built incrementally, and they never reached the finish line, even on the second one before he was killed, but he laid a fabulous foundation and pointed in a direction that the Restoration necessarily must go to and complete. Because if we don't have the tabernacle of God where He comes to dwell with His people, which He does when He has a family on earth, then the prophecies are not going to be fulfilled. Then the promises that were made to Enoch will not be realized. Then the statements of what will happen in the last days through Moses will not be vindicated. Then Adam's prophecy concerning his descendants to the end of time will not be realized. All of these things point, so we know it is going to happen. The question is not, "Is it going to happen?" The question is, "Will we rise up,

or will we not?" Because what He's offering is, in fact, a legitimate opportunity for that to indeed happen.

We seem to get so easily distracted that we have a hard time staying on task. It's one of the gentile afflictions. We're very ambitious people, and we're very egocentric. And a lot of what is going to be required will require sacrifice and selflessness.

If you cannot reconstruct the family through an adoption ordinance process, the work cannot be accomplished. There just isn't time. We're in the process of walking back to how it was in the beginning. A lot of people think that by getting a New Testament church put on the ground that Joseph Smith accomplished the fulsome Restoration. It was never intended to stop there; it's supposed to go all the way back to the beginning. It's a giant chiasm, and it's a giant mirror. And today we do not live 900 years. And so the way in which it will be rebuilt at the end is going to be by ordinance in the house of the Lord, in a place that He has accepted. The only kinds of places that are legitimately the house of God are houses that God has come to dwell in, in order for those who seek His face to find Him. That happened at Kirtland. It never happened at Nauvoo or Salt Lake.

The fact is that a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of smoke by day is an allusion, an attempt to refer to things we are familiar with, to describe things that we are not familiar with. A conduit that reaches up into heaven, as the temporary appearance of the Lord to Joseph in the First Vision, is intended to be a permanent connection at some place. It will be one of the reasons why people say, "Let's not go up against the people of Zion because Zion is too terrible." The presence of God is dreadful to the wicked; it's frightening to them. They get near it, and it convicts them of their unworthiness. They dare not go up.

But the pure and the humble and the noble are drawn to it. They will want to be there. And so that conduit, that fiery pillar, that stairway to heaven, Jacob's ladder, the chariot of fire—all of those things are an attempt to describe that heavenly connection, that heavenly presence.

Now, to the unworthy and the ungodly looking at it, they may or may not be able to see anything about it, but they will sense extraordinary dread. It will frighten them. To the worthy, there will be something enlightened about the very presence of the place. It will not seem to them to just be another place. It will seem as though the God of heaven has some base established there. That's when you know that an ensign has been established in the tops of the mountains to which nations will flow saying, "Come, let us go up and learn from the God of Jacob." Because that ensign is actually something godly, holy, edifying, instructive, revelatory, filled with light, and redemptive. And the God who dwells there is going to be the Lord.

So we don't have time. And if you think about it, Enoch taught for 365 years—365 years before his people were prepared enough to go up. And we have to be prepared enough for them to come down and not destroy us by the brightness of their presence.

"The Father can, and does, acknowledge others as His. But, unlike the Son who has repeatedly visited this earth, walked upon it, been handled by people, eaten here, the Father does not come into contact with this earth in its fallen state. The only time the Father had contact with this earth was before the Fall, in the Paradisiacal setting of Eden, which was a Temple at the time. Whenever there has been contact with the Father thereafter, He has been at a distance from this earth.

"There is a formality with the Father that does not exist with the Son. For example, the Son has eaten with mortal man while He was immortal, both before His ministry in the flesh and after. As our Redeemer, He is directly responsible for us and has contact with us to perform His redemptive service. The Father, on the other hand, is different in status, responsibility, glory, and dominion. The Son can appear to mortal man without showing His glory or requiring any alteration of the mortal who beholds Him. To behold the Father, to endure His presence, one must be transfigured. Mortal man cannot behold the Father's works while mortal, for if you comprehend them you cannot afterward remain mortal in the flesh."

That's taken from pages 383-387 of *Removing the Condemnation* (©2011, Denver Snuffer), and there are a lot of footnotes to that.

Like this description of the Son, the same description should apply to His Mother. The Father is the source of glory and likened to the sun. The Mother reflects and shares this glory and is likened to the moon. She reflects God's glory, endures within it, and is empowered by it. She can participate with Him in all that is done wielding that glory. "Knowledge" is the initiator or force, and "wisdom" is the regulator, guide, apportioner, and weaver of that power. If not tempered and guided by wisdom, knowledge can be destructive. Wisdom makes the prudent adaptation required for order. The Father and Mother are one. But the Mother bridges the gulf between the throne of the Father and fallen man. She made it possible for the Son of God to enter this fallen world for the salvation of everything in it.

A great deal of reflection and study is needed to understand all this implies. This is an introduction of some basic information about the Mother of God or "the Mother of the Son of God after the manner of the flesh." More will be given in a temple—where mankind's understanding of things kept hidden from the world will be greatly increased—when God directs one be built to His name.

There was a time when Christians recognized that the stars of heaven bore witness of the significance of Mary, Christ's earthly Mother. Few Christians now look at the constellations as signs set in the firmament of God as His testimony. The light that was meant to shine on the earth was to illuminate both the eyes and mind of man. Man in the first generations understood this, and *"a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers"* was written by Abraham, who received that same understanding (Abraham 1:31).

At the time of Christ's birth there were those who understood the testimony written in the lights of the firmament. They reported they "saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." These wise men watched and waited for the heavenly alignment to testify of the birth of a promised king. The Matthew text makes such casual mention of this that we give it little notice. Today, Christians and Mormons alike have little understanding of the lights in the firmament and so, give little heed to the signs set by God in the heavens above. Our ignorance doesn't mean these signs are meaningless. It only means we are poorly informed of God's full message.

Clearly, both the Father and Mary despise the proud whose overestimation of themselves is informed by the imagination of their hearts and not God's regard. Both the Father and Mary want those who are mighty to be dispossessed from their high seats of power. The Parents of Christ prefer them of low degree whose humility and selflessness make them suitable to be exalted. The hungry are fed and the rich are sent away empty—which may not be fully realized until after this world. But the Parents of Christ will be the final judges of all people and will judge mankind based exactly upon the criteria that They have revealed.

There are Heavenly Parents, to be sure. There are two separate beings—a Father and a Mother. She exists, and Her role is acknowledged in scripture. We are supposed to find Her. And in the last-days temple (should it be finally built by a humble and obedient people), Her open presence will be there.

In the temple ceremonies, women veil their faces. Among other things, this symbolizes the hidden Heavenly Mother. Her presence is veiled because She is sacred and not to be regarded as accessible apart from Heavenly Father. That which is most holy is veiled from the vulgar and profane. Women should be regarded as daughters of the Divine Mother. Like Her, they carry the power to produce new life. Mothers are the physical veil between pre-earth spirits and physical bodied inhabited in mortality. They clothe children in the veil of flesh. This power is honored in the temple veiling of women. This power to give life has been regarded in almost all societies as something sacred and holy. In our coarse and vulgar society we have rejected, as a matter of law, the idea that women engage in a sacred and holy labor when bearing children.

The creation of woman was designed to fulfill the work and the covenants of the Father in this world and will be critical in eternity. Families come through the union of the man and woman. Women bear the souls of mankind and bring all of us into this world through childbirth. That power was inherited from the Heavenly Mother. But there are other rights belonging to women that will only be apparent in the afterlife. They have been endowed with an everlasting authority required for any man to occupy a throne in the Father's kingdom.

A fuller explanation of woman's role will require worthy people willing to be taught and to build an acceptable house for the Elohim to return. And I don't know why some things get said at one point in history that are not said at other points; I just know that as we move along the path towards what is inevitable at this point—that is the coming of the Lord and the establishment of a place of peace, a city of Zion, and a New Jerusalem—that more information needs to be in the possession of those that will find themselves there.

Last year I delivered a talk at the Sunstone Symposium titled "Other Sheep Indeed." In it I invited others with sacred writings to come and bring them. That invitation was first offered by Joseph Smith in 1840. He anticipated a temple to be built in Nauvoo to which records would be brought from all over the world: "...bring every thing you can bring and build the house of God and we will have a tremendous City which shall reverberate afar... then comes all the ancient records dig them up... where the Saints g[ather] is Zion."

Not all of God's words are in the Bible. God has spoken to every nation (meaning every religious division of people). Truth is everywhere, among all people. If we love God and truth we will want to search for it. We will not be content to leave it unexplored and undiscovered. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after more righteousness. Blessed are those who are followers of righteousness, desiring to possess great knowledge and to be a greater follower of righteousness and to possess greater knowledge. And blessed are those who do not suppose the scriptures contain all God's words and They (the Gods) have not provided more.

One of the world's greatest religious epistles was composed in Liberty Jail. It includes the following passage:

"[T]he things of God are of deep import, and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Your mind, O man, if you will lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost Heavens, and search into and contemplate the lowest considerations of the darkest abyss, and expand upon the broad considerations of Eternal expanse. You must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God than the vain imagination of the human heart? None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings,

our private as well as public conversations: too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God, according to the purposes of his will from before the foundation of the world" (T&C 138:18-19).

These words enlarge the soul. Only a great religion challenges us to stretch as high as the utmost heavens, search into, and contemplate the darkest abyss—an expansive religion that urges us to become godlike in our interest, in our search for truth. We are clearly directed to turn our attention to the heavens and learn how they function, what they are, and who is to be found there.

There was a step that was able to be taken (as a consequence of work to recover the scriptures) that occurred in a conference up in Boise where the scriptures got approved—and as part of that, a covenant allowing gentiles to accept the status of covenanting, to accept the *Book of Mormon* (which had never been done from the time of Joseph Smith until the Boise conference) as a covenant between the believers and God. The terms of the covenant are contained in the new set (the new volume) of scriptures. It's the third volume. Repent, be baptized, enter into the covenant that accepts the *Book of Mormon* as the word of God and the direction given to us. And the covenant requires some work to be done among the remnant of the Jews and some work to be done among the Native Americans.

That is something that is being attended to, but not everything that is going on is necessarily something that ought to be broadcast publicly for everyone and everywhere. But we all have our obligations, and we all have our responsibilities. And some people have very specific responsibilities that they've accepted and that they're discharging to take care of things involved in the covenant.

There's always an obligation, when God has a people, to build a temple. When God first established the original religion at the time that He created Adam and Eve, He put them in what is a temple setting. It was a garden in which God, angels, and man mingled together. They were cast out of the garden. But when He's had people on the earth, He has commanded that they construct sacred space. The purpose of the sacred space has always been to reunite heaven and earth. It's not to endlessly repeat a ceremony that you can memorize if you go often enough. It's purpose is to reunite heaven and earth and to accomplish what was originally the status of mankind in the Garden of Eden, being reunified with heaven itself.

We don't have a commandment to do that, but we have been told we are going to be commanded to do that. And so an effort has been made to begin to gather funds necessary. There's a statement that nothing is to be done in haste; haste brings pestilence. Pestilence is not just bugs and vermin; pestilence is also confusion and disorder and chaos. And so that process is underway

and at some point will culminate in an identified place and a command to build a specific, conforming structure.

In July of 1840 Joseph Smith gave a talk in which he was encouraging the people that believed in the revelations that had come through him to build a temple. A temple needed to be built. And he made a comment that if the temple could get built and he could see it finished from its top to its completion—if he could see that work completed, then he would gladly go in peace and let his life end, if he could just accomplish that work. This was in July of 1840.

In January of 1841 came the revelation commanding that the temple be built. Together with a statement at the beginning of the January 1841 revelation saying, "Joseph, your petition and your offering is acceptable to me, and I will allow them to build a temple, and it can be built on that spot, and you'll have sufficient time to do that. But at the end of the sufficient time, then instead of blessings there will be an outpouring of cursings upon the people." And in three-and-a-half years, the temple had not been completed to the second floor, and the time went out, sufficient time expired, the lives of Joseph and Hyrum were forfeit, and instead of blessings there were cursings.

Well, why did Joseph in July 1840, without a commandment from God that he knew was going to come, why did Joseph encourage the saints at that point to begin building a temple to God? Why did the commandment have to be given in January of 1841 for the temple to be built? And why were the lives of Joseph and Hyrum forfeited three-and-a-half years later when the work was still incomplete?

There were accusations about the temple committee stealing money from the temple fund. There were complaints from the mission up in Wisconsin floating wood down the Mississippi to Nauvoo for construction of the temple, that the wood was being diverted to construct houses for the leading members in Nauvoo. And houses did get built. In fact, the Nauvoo restoration has been a testament, a testimony, to how the community diverted the effort that God commanded be spent on constructing the temple into constructing the community. And so their lives were taken.

Joseph did have a covenant, and Hyrum did have a covenant. But the manner in which that covenant was to be disseminated, Joseph understood, required that the house of God be built because some things do not get put outside of God's house.

We were told in a get-together in Boise, Idaho that God's people are always required to build a temple. It will serve exactly the same purpose that was intended at the beginning of the Restoration to have been accomplished while Joseph and Hyrum were alive. To this point, we do not yet have a commandment to do so, but we know it is coming. And we know its purpose is

exactly the same. Joseph could have accomplished a great deal more. Hyrum and Joseph together could have completed the process of the Restoration. It's still a great undone work.

At about the same time that Joseph gave that talk, there were two letters—one written on July 25th, the second one written on July 27th—both of them from John C. Bennett, who was the quartermaster of the militia in the state of Illinois. The first one saying he was coming to Nauvoo and that he wanted to be there with Joseph's people; the second one said he not only wanted to come but he wanted to join, to become part of Joseph's people. And both letters end with John C. Bennett, who had become the mayor of Nauvoo, saying, "Reply to this letter immediately!" "Reply to this letter immediately," because John Bennett was a hasty man and an ambitious man and a corrupt man.

And when it comes to the construction of Zion, God has said in revelation it cannot be done in haste because haste brings pestilence. And what is pestilential is not just bugs and rodents; it's confusion. We have a season of peace, and we have a season of prosperity, and we have an opportunity in which we might be able to accomplish something with nothing more than the same thing that Joseph Smith was talking about in July of 1840. But when a command is given and sufficient time is accorded and the clock begins to run, then the tendency is to move quickly, like John Bennett. Everything's in a hurry.

When you have a season of peace upon you and an opportunity to reflect upon what went wrong with the Restoration at the beginning, and we have again the opportunity established by the word of the Lord that was read to and accepted by, for the first time in the Restoration, a covenant to accept the obligations that were devolving upon us in the Restoration, and we have an opportunity to prepare and to do something—we delay, we hesitate, and we squander the opportunity, ultimately at our peril.

I don't care how much you think you know about what God is up to, I guarantee you that unless God has shown it to you plainly, as He had done to Joseph at the beginning, you're not going to figure out what God is up to. There's a reason for that. If you could figure out what God is going to do and where and when and how, then the adversary could prevent that work from being accomplished. It is precisely because God keeps His secrets and entrusts them carefully and guardedly, that the work of God cannot be frustrated; and the covenants will be fulfilled; and the prophecies will be vindicated; and what was offered through Joseph will, in fact, be accomplished.

And we have an opportunity, if we will avail ourselves of it, at a time of peace and prosperity, to do something to prepare in order to have that day come upon us with adequate preparation having been made in advance.

Because the institution could be corrupted, and because the institution began to inflate its role—you see, at the beginning, the institution was the creature of the authority of the prophet. It did not own and control the prophet, but it was subordinate to that man who could declare what the mind of God was to them. Over time, the institution arrogated (that is, in its arrogance assumed) that it could control even the right to declare the mind of God. And so the institution puts people in a role to sit in the temple of God as if they were God, to declare to the people what things ought or needed to be done, and has amassed at this point billions of dollars in wealth (with no Zion), hundreds of billions of dollars in property (with no ability to reconnect anyone through covenants to the Fathers, to anyone other than the dead who reside in hell looking for redemption from the grave). That was *not* the plan at the beginning. That was *not* the objective of the Restoration.

Billions of dollars have been accumulated in the pursuit of the damnation of the souls of men—"damnation" meaning hedging up the way so that they cannot progress. Billions of dollars! And where is the Restoration precisely? How much closer are we now to having the covenants fulfilled, the rights vindicated, the opportunity to enter into sacred space where heaven and earth and the afterlife commune together in the process of redeeming the earth itself? There will be two of these locations on the earth before the Lord returns—one will be called Zion, and one will be at Jerusalem. And in the covenant, things were set in motion that will vindicate those promises. Not all of what is happening to do that [create Zion] can be known publicly. It's not necessary that it be known. But there are things taking place, no matter how diminutive it may seem. God will vindicate His words.

We're not going to arrive where we need to arrive if we perceive ourselves as unequal, if we think of ourselves as greater and lesser, if we don't think of ourselves as simply common servants, inadequate as we may be, to a Lord who loved and sacrificed Himself for our redemption. *He* is worthy.

We can do our best, and we can make a lot of mistakes along the way. Joseph did his best, and it just didn't work out. But what would have happened if the people—in July of 1840, when no commandment had yet been given—rose up and with alacrity decided that they were going to labor for the accomplishment of the task that Joseph was telling them was coming? What would have happened had the money raised and donated for the temple not been diverted by the temple committee to their own purposes? What would have happened if the lumber sent down from the Wisconsin mission been used for the construction of the temple rather than being diverted for the homes of the leading citizens? What would have happened if, instead of God requiring yanking on the reins to pull the bit in the mouth of the horse of the Restoration— what would have happened if all that was needed was for the reins to be lightly put on the neck of the horse of the

Restoration, to guide it where it needed to go? Horses are so sensitive that when a fly lands on their skin they can twitch to remove it. The people of the Restoration are nowhere near as sensitive to what God would have them do, then or now, as is a horse.

Given the opportunity to accomplish what the work of the Restoration is intended to result in, I would hope that we would cease from our jealousies and our ambition, our contention, our desire for one-ups-man-ship, our desire to prove our individual greatness—and to realize that none of us are ever going to be very good servants. But we're supposed to be serving the perfect Master, and if we'll serve Him faithfully, instead of our own agenda, He can lead us home.

He will lead some few home. But I hope it's not with the same sort of miserable, inadequate, self-serving distractions that had to be overcome at the beginning. I hope we can take it a bit more seriously and be a bit more sensitive when the Lord is encouraging us in a way, rather than requiring that He command and demand us to go in a way. Commandments are often the things that produce condemnation. Encouragement and invitation is almost always the thing that produces blessing. I hope there will one day be a blessed people.

The foregoing are excerpts taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #6 entitled "Zion," given in Grand Junction, CO on April 12, 2014;
- A fireside talk entitled "Cursed, Denied Priesthood," given in Sandy, UT on January 7, 2018;
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Our Divine Parents," given in Gilbert, AZ on March 25, 2018;
- The presentation of Denver's paper entitled "The Restoration's Shattered Promises and Great Hope," given at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, UT on July 28, 2018; and
- Denver's remarks given at the "Remembering the Covenants" Conference in Centerville, UT on August 4, 2018.