

Podcast Episode 48: Prophecy

QUESTION: What is the purpose of prophecy, and how do you know when it will be, or has been, fulfilled?

DENVER: All of prophecy is essentially focused on two events. You can always find an acceptance to this because there are all kinds of intermediate events that get covered. But essentially the burden of prophecy focuses upon two and only two events. The first one is the looking forward to the coming of the Lord in the flesh in His mortal ministry. And the second one is looking forward to the coming of the Lord in glory to judge the world. Those are the two primary events that are the burden of prophecy, the burden of scripture, and you're living on the cusp of the fulfillment of the second of those two events. And therefore, you would be well served to learn as much as you can about those two events.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants Section 107, because in this we see that first Zion: *"Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth [his son], Enos [his grandson], Cainan [the son of Enos], Mahalaleel [son of Cainan], Jared [son of Mahalaleel], Enoch [son of Jared], and Methuselah [son of Enoch], who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing."* This is the original, first patriarchal blessing being given by Adam, he having summoned them there.

And as he's giving his last blessing, three years previous to his death, the Lord appeared unto them. So the Lord comes to dwell with these seven high priests and Adam. *"The Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him [Mich-a-el] Michael, the prince, the archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam."* Ask yourself what comfort is that the Lord administers?

He *"said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. These things were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time"* (D&C 107:53-57; T&C 154:19-20).

This is the original covenant. This is the first father. This is what was set in motion before the death of Adam, under the binding influence and ratification of the Holy Ghost (or the

mind of God), in which Adam, under the influence of that Spirit, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. This is the original covenant. This is the original Father. Words spoken as a consequence of the influence of the Holy Spirit become the words of God. They will not fall to the ground unfulfilled.

The everlasting covenant in our day is "new" only as a consequence of it having been restored to our attention recently. It is not a new thing. It is a very old thing, going back to the days of Adam. It was known to him. You were known to him. What was going to happen in your day was predicted and promised as a consequence of him.

Prophecies, as I've said before, revolve around two (and primarily two) events only—one being the first coming of the Lord, the other one being the coming of the Lord in judgment at the end of the world. Now there are plenty of prophecies that reckon to other events that are intermediate. However, the primary focus is the first and the second coming of the Lord—the vindication of the promise that the Father made in the beginning that He would redeem us all from the grave, and the vindication of the promise that at some point the world would come to an end as to its wickedness, and there would be peace again on the earth. Everything revolves around those two prophetic events.

One of the problems with understanding the will of God is that religion was always intended to be proven and provable personally. I cannot prove it to you; you cannot prove it to me. But God can prove it to both of us.

When it comes to the proof of the things of God, it is necessarily anecdotal. Anecdotal proof means that someone went out, and they had an experience, and they come back, and they tell you, as an anecdote, that that is what happened to them. You cannot know whether, when they tell you what happened to them, they're telling you the truth or not. What you can do is say, "Joseph Smith seems to persuade me. Joseph Smith seems to have arrived at a point in which the things that have come to us appear to be beyond the capacity of a man to accomplish. Joseph Smith seems to say things which, because of their volume, because of their consistency, because of their apparent purity appear to me to be something which hails from God." But you must trust him. The only way in which you can know for yourself is if you go out and you encounter something for yourself, in which you come back from that experience and say, "God spoke also to me. Therefore, as a consequence of God speaking to me, I now know something which, independent of Joseph Smith and independent of these scriptures, God has covenanted with me, and I know now to be true."

Your knowledge of God is necessarily anecdotal. Your knowledge of God is necessarily yours and yours alone—your property belonging to you, your covenant in the final

analysis, in which God promises by His own voice to you, in words that He cannot break because He is a God of truth, and He is the same God today as yesterday and will be the same tomorrow. He does not change. When you fall into His orbit, you are now revolving around the center in which all truth is to be found, all the answers to the dilemmas that you have are to be given. But they're to be given to you individually by Him and not by another.

Even if a man has power to declare things that have been kept hidden from the beginning of the world until now, it's of no use if it's mere voyeurism, if it's just entertainment. It's not supposed to be entertaining. It may appropriately be inspiring, but if it is inspiring, it's only so if it results in you taking action. Because the action that's required is for you to go out and to acquire for yourself your own anecdote, your own experience—if you will, your own testimony or, more correctly, your own knowledge of the things of God.

One of the reasons why we look at the scriptures is because these are evidence of how often the Lord has, and how frequent He does, covenant with those who seek after Him.

When the Restoration began through Joseph Smith, there was already in place a restorationist movement. It was all over frontier Ohio, moving into upstate New York. That restorationist movement already knew that what was wanted was a New Testament church. What was needed was a New Testament church that was modeled, governed, patterned, and authorized in the same way in which Jesus had authorized a New Testament church in the meridian of time.

But what was Jesus up to in the meridian of time in establishing that church? He was about to launch the Gospel into the gentile world, in which you would not find those who could organize themselves as the House of Israel. Therefore, in order to accomplish that, as a substitute for the twelve princes of Israel (the twelve sons of Jacob), He called twelve apostles to model that family. And they called 70 others because the family of Israel included 70 others in Exodus 1:5. You'll find that when they went into Egypt, the family of Israel consisted of 70. And so He remodeled the ancient family of Israel in the New Testament church.

But the restoration of the Gospel in the last days is not reaching back to the meridian of time. The restoration of the Gospel in the last days is reaching back, at a minimum, to the time of Enoch. Because what you have to have is not the center. You have to have walking back in a mirror image to the beginning, so that the symmetry of the history of mankind matches at the end as it was in the beginning. It's unfolding according to a pattern. It's unfolding according to a plan. It is vindicating the promises and the prophecies that were made, beginning with Adam in the first days.

And what is wanted in the last days are those who will at last say, "I am not satisfied with my Sunday School lessons and the disappointment that I see all around me. I'm not prepared to wait on another before I rise up to know God myself."

If any of you lack wisdom, ask God. He gives to all men liberally. He does not upbraid. That is, He doesn't send you away discouraged, telling you, "Don't do that; don't ask me that."

We saw in that first talk in Boise that we were commanded to pursue after the mysteries of God. What is more mysterious than what went on in the beginning generations? Because we have so little left from which to reconstruct that, and yet we have enough to know the pattern that the Lord intended the last days to unfold in accordance with. And that pattern was to return us, in the end, to what was here in the beginning, to return us to a state of knowledge about things that He has always had in His heart, as the goal, as the ambition, as the desire to fulfill.

Go to Moses chapter 5 [6]. This is a prophecy given by Adam, which constituted one of the covenants which I referred to in the talk given at Centerville. Moses—oh excuse me, it's chapter 6:7: *"Now this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also. Now this prophecy Adam spake, as he was moved upon by the Holy Ghost..." (OC Gen 3:14)*. Therefore, it was the power of the priesthood animated by the Holy Ghost, which established as a matter of right, and therefore of covenant, the promise that this thing—this authority, this power, and this relationship which once existed in the beginning of the world—is to exist again at the end of the world. And that that, too, arises as a consequence of the covenant given in the beginning.

Well, if you go to D&C Section 68, first verses 3-4: *"And this is the ensample unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (T&C 55:1)*. Then go over to 12: *"And of as many as the Father shall bear record, to you shall be given power to seal them up unto eternal life. Amen" (T&C 55:2)*.

So this is talking in the context of someone having authority to seal when moved upon by the Holy Ghost. And that is authority which anyone of you—and the prophetess Anna in the temple at Jerusalem when Christ came into the temple, a women can use—when moved upon by the power of the Holy Ghost. And it is the word of God, and it is the power to seal, if it originates from God. That doesn't mean it's the same thing as a dispensation head. It

doesn't mean it's the same thing as an ordinance. And it doesn't mean that it's the same thing as the control of the elements given in those rare cases. But what it does mean is that the word of God will always be respected both in time and in eternity, if it is given by God, if it is the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are those who have heard that their calling and election is made sure. And they've heard that as a witness from God. Don't doubt the word of God given to you. However, don't think for one moment that's the end of the matter. Remember that in the cases that we looked at before, that one of the purposes of ascending up into the presence of the Father is to be endowed with knowledge, with light and truth and with intelligence, to possess a God-like mind and a God-like understanding. Therefore, no matter what you receive, you ought to always search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of God. Indeed we are commanded to do so, as I reminded you in Boise and won't repeat again here.

I have one, and only one, desire—to try to persuade you to believe in the Restoration through Joseph Smith. It is not and has never been completed. It is a work yet before us. It is a work largely neglected since the time Joseph and Hyrum breathed their last breath. The prophecies that were delivered to Joseph Smith—both by Christ in the first vision and by Moroni on the night of the first visit (which we began this with in Boise, Idaho)—are a rallying cry for us to rise up and lay hold upon things. It's a rallying cry, a prophecy, that does not fulfill itself. It gets fulfilled by what *you* do. Whether or not you fulfill those prophecies is dependant upon whether you will, like those ancient Israelites, elect not to go up. Or whether you, like Moses, like Joseph, like Hyrum, choose instead to forsake your sins and to move forward, even in the face of your own weakness and unworthiness.

There isn't one of us in this room that should not kneel before the presence of a just and holy being. There isn't one of us who, if instructed to stand before Him, would not keenly feel the inadequacy of doing so. Not one of us. But there are some here who have been in His presence, myself included.

Adam and Eve had sons and daughters; their children likewise were married, and they had sons and daughters. They were visited, and they were instructed by the angel. We looked at that. They were baptized, then they received the Holy Ghost. And look what is contained in the Holy Ghost in verse 66 that we read a few moments ago of chapter 6: *"Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever..."* (Mos 6:66; OC Gen 4:10). It's also referred to and defined more in verse 61: *"...it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to*

wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment" (Mos 6:61; OC Gen 4:9). So, that is what is within them.

Look what happens once they are so endowed, and they're equipped. This is Moses 5:10-11. I am so glad that these verses were restored to us, because contained in this is a much, much greater lesson if you have the eyes to see it. *"And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God."* That's Adam prophesying what is going to befall the future generations. That's what Adam is doing.

Now let's look at what Eve does. *"And Eve, his wife, heard all these things..."* the prophecy comes through Adam, Eve hears them, *"Eve...[hears] all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (OC Gen 3:4).*

There is a profound difference between the response of the power of the Spirit unfolding upon these two with respect to its effect upon Adam, on the one hand, and its effect upon Eve, on the other. These are remarkably different reactions. To the man it is that he prophesies; that is, he declares the truth. The truth being a knowledge of things as they are and as they were and as they are to come. That definition is given to us in the Doctrine and Covenants. This is the role of the man, and this is the role that he fulfills.

But to Eve, on the other hand, she obtains wisdom. The role of the man is knowledge; the role of the woman is wisdom. And you see that on display right here in these verses. It is the role of the woman to have the understanding to take the prophecy that has been delivered now by Adam, to process it, and to say, "Here is what it means." This is the role of the woman. This is the gift of the woman. This is eternally the role of the woman. This is why there is a male and why there is a female. Because in many respects, the gift of wisdom alludes the male. And in many respects, the gift of knowledge alludes the female. And together, the two of them— And I'm not talking about knowledge in the sense that a woman can't have a PhD. Two of the brightest people I know are daughters of mine. It's not that that I'm talking about. I'm talking about knowledge in the "godly" sense, knowledge in the "gift of God" sense. And I'm talking about wisdom in the "gift of God" sense and in the scriptural sense. This is an example.

Now together, look at verse 12: *"And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God...."* And how did they do that? They did that by a ritual. They did that by offering sacrifice. They did that

by observing what they understood. But they did it together. "...And **they**..." it is **they**, "...**they** made all things known unto **their** sons and daughters." This isn't Adam preaching repentance. This isn't Eve preaching repentance. This is "they." This is the two of them. They are equally yoked. This is the two of them joined together to make the declaration—"they," together. The two of them, however, beginning in verse 12, begin to "*make all things known unto their sons and daughters*" **after** they had been adequately prepared to understand and to make the declaration (Moses 5:12; OC Genesis 3:4). They were first prepared before they began to preach.

Prophecy is not given so that you know the details beforehand. Prophecy is only given so that, after the event takes place, you can look at the scriptures and understand what the Lord meant to accomplish. It's purpose is not to allow you beforehand to know the events with enough specificity so that God's will cannot be accomplished. If you knew what He was up to, you could prevent it. But because you don't, when the prophecies are fulfilled, then you know that the Lord has acted.

God can use *any* means He chooses to accomplish His promises. Everything that God is doing is not disclosed at the time He's doing it. We all know and accept John the Baptist, because history tells us we ought to accept John the Baptist. But it was not until a revelation was given through the prophet Joseph Smith that we understood the greatness of the effort behind the scenes that were involved in bringing to pass the mission entrusted to John the Baptist. We knew none of what I'm going to read to you at the time that John acted, but we know it now.

D&C section 84, beginning at verse 27: "*Which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. For he was baptized while he was yet in his childhood, and was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord, in whose hand is given all power*" (T&C 82:14).

It was because of this that Joseph observed (concerning John), John "wrested the keys, the kingdom, the power, the glory from the Jews, by the holy anointing and decree of heaven" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 276).

Did the Jews notice? In like manner, God's house is a house of order. He does it according to patterns. It is not God's purpose to abandon the Restoration. It is His purpose to preserve

the Restoration, which at this moment is in terrible jeopardy. The Restoration itself must be rescued.

Here's the reality, okay? The reality is that in order for the entire earth not to be smitten and utterly wasted at the Lord's return, it will be necessary for there to be a Zion. In fact, it's almost a cause and effect. You have to have the re-establishment of what was in the beginning of the world in the end of the world also. That was a prophecy of Adam. He made it in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. Enoch was the one that preserves it, so it appears in the Enoch portion of the book of Moses, where Enoch preserves Adam's prophecy that that same priesthood which was in the beginning of the world shall at the end of the world be also (Mos 6:7; OC Gen 3:14).

I have to tell you that's not...you know, "Yada, yada, yada, aummm" ... you're, you know, Senior Chief Apostolic High and Holy Pontificate of the 9th Order— it's not that. It's not that at all. It is re-establishing something about which we know very, very little. And that has to occur only within an environment that has been insulated from the world and accepted by God. It has to be physically accepted by the Lord. That edifice has to be located in a place that is approved by the Lord. We don't know the place; we haven't built the edifice; we don't have the right to proceed, but all of this must occur before the invitation is extended. Because God is not going to come to a planet that He utterly wastes at His coming. An invitation has to precede the return of our Lord. And that invitation needs to be done in His way, at a place of His choosing, in a manner that He ordains, that occurs according to His will, established as a consequence of Him returning what was once here back to the earth again.

Zion will be God's work, and in the end, it will be His and His alone. He will own it; He will bring it; He will be the author of it; and He is the one who says that He will take credit for it. When it happens, however, it will conform to a pattern.

This is a verse that gets attributed to Enoch, who is in turn quoting a prophecy that was given by Adam. And so this is the original prophecy given at the beginning of the world through Father Adam, who established in the beginning the covenant that God, Himself, intends to vindicate: *"Now this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also"* (Mos 6:7; OC Gen 3:14).

Well, that authority gets explained a little more fully when Abraham sought for the blessing that began in the beginning. He describes what it was that he wanted: *"...I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great*

knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers. It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me" (Abr 1:2-3; T&C Abr 1:1).

There's some very bright, well-studied Latter-day Saints who think they know what the gospel and priesthood of Abraham was. I'm here today to declare to you the truth, whether you accept it or not, whether you understand it or not, whether you think you can parse the scriptures otherwise or not; I'm telling you what the truth is today. Abraham sought for the right that came down through the Fathers, from Adam, which was the right of the firstborn, which is that priesthood which must be restored in order to bring about the purposes of God in the last days.

Abraham 2:11—the Lord says that through him: *"I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel" (T&C Abr 3:1).*

Abraham's fatherhood reckons from priesthood. Although the right will continue through the literal seed, it reckons through priesthood. He sought for the right to be one of the Fathers. We're talking about a time in the last days, prophesied and repeated by Jacob as his testimony in the Book of Mormon, when the natural fruit is going to reappear upon the earth. Natural fruit is always genealogical. It is always familial. There's going to come a time in the last days when the family of God will return again to the earth. That same priesthood includes a function that is not well understood. Abraham knew what this was when he said he desired to be a *"father of many nations."* He's identifying one of the attributes and one of the roles that necessarily must return.

God's ways are higher than man's ways. He said this to Isaiah: *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:9; OC Isa 20:2).* Jacob, a prophet who stood in the presence of God, expounded on the meaning of God's mysteries to an audience that include, now, us. Jacob 4:8: *"How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God" (NC Jacob 3:3).*

In other words, I don't care if you have a PhD in theological studies and you are the most adept scriptionist of our age—the meaning belongs to God. It does not belong to me; it does not belong to you. It is not found out by our clever or witty parsing of what it is. In large measure, the prophecies have, as their purpose, to hide from men what God intends to do until God has done it. And then having accomplished what He intended to do, the scriptures confirm that He knew the end from the beginning. But if you could know the end from the beginning, you could interfere with the plan of God by going where the prophecies say, when the prophecies say, and interfering with the hand of God in fulfilling it. Even worse still, if your inclination were to priestcraft, if you knew what the prophecies meant beforehand, you could profit from them. And the things of Heaven were never intended to be given into the hands of men so that they might profit from them.

Let me cover one more matter and that is this idea of prophecy and interpreting prophecy. Because I know that there are elaborate efforts made to parse the scriptures and come up with the meaning, the interpretation, even the timing of certain things that the Lord has now begun or that He intends to accomplish in short order.

In Isaiah chapter 48, the description is given of how prophecy works: *"I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass" (Isa 48:3; OC Isa 17:1)*. "Suddenly" can be rendered "surprisingly." "Suddenly" can be in an unexpected way. "Suddenly" can be "You got caught off guard. I declared what I was going to do, I did it, and you got caught off guard."

"Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them" (Isa 48:4-6; OC Isa 17:1). "You didn't know them. I declared them, I accomplished them, and I told you about them beforehand, and it happened suddenly. And you didn't expect it to happen." Why is that? Because the way in which the Lord intends to accomplish what He's going to accomplish is not going to be in the way that will permit you to say, "I, and my idol, have been hard at work to accomplish this great thing." No man gets to take credit for that. It's got to be surprising and unexpected in order for the Lord, once it happens, to say, "This was what I had in my heart and I have done it."

If we knew how the Lord and when the Lord was going to accomplish how and what He was going to accomplish, we would stand a chance of preventing it. Or we might make commerce out of it by profiting from it. Therefore, the way in which He will accomplish it will be according to His will, at His timing, for His purposes, without the control of man, and with man always saying, "That was sudden. That was surprising. That was unanticipated." And so He can send that Galilean, accent-speaking, carpenter's son into the world and have the world take no note of Him. Or a farm boy from upstate New York to declare the Lord has opened the heavens, and have everyone react to that in demused humor or with insults and scorn, ultimately fearing him enough to kill him and those that would follow him.

When this whole process was set in motion by God on the first day of creation, He had in His heart a plan that was going to unfold through every generation until the end. Three years previous to the death of Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, Adam gathered his posterity together essentially to tell them goodbye. And in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, Christ came and appeared to those that had gathered there. And Adam, despite the fact that he was bowed down with great age, rose up animated by the Spirit that he was taking in from the presence of our Lord, and he prophesied whatsoever should befall his descendants to the last generation. So he was talking about, among others, you. That same plan that was ordained in the heavens before the foundation of the world was revealed through Adam in prophecy in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. And we're on schedule to keep the appointments. Whether we're going to be on one side of the divide or on the other side of the divide, we're keeping the appointment. And the times have been fixed, and the seasons unfold, and the signs that show up from time to time remind us that despite how hectic and disorganized and how ill-fitted the world may be for the fulfillment of all the prophecies, it's simply going to happen. Hopefully more will repent and return and be faithful, but it really won't matter because there is always enough with the Lord. He has a way of making whoever will come aboard be sufficient for His purposes.

Within every group of chosen people, there's always those who are resilient and faithful enough to pass the test, to hold the edge, to survive when the difficulties come and when the Lord puts us through the furnace of affliction. Our burdens are designed to get us to be able to qualify. Our burdens are designed to make us a little more realistic about our own limitations.

I want to talk about a couple of things. I want to remind you that becoming a chosen people, or being chosen by God as His, is no guarantee that we aren't going to be remembered by history for our own foolishness and example of how to inspire God's ire and fall short. I'm a little more optimistic at this point in history because of the hour, because of the signs in the heavens above, because of the things that we see on the earth. And so someone's going to

do this. Someone's going to achieve it—the prophecies are not going to fall to the ground unfulfilled. So perhaps coming out of this group will be that example that is pointed to, not as folly and failure, but as vindication of the Lord's promises.

Zion is something that has only been accomplished in the known history of the world by two communities. It's prophesied that there will be a third. What is to be created is something so foreign to this world, that there is nothing in the world to use to judge how we are doing. Even the scriptures do not give a blueprint to follow. If they contained the necessary information, Zion would've been established long ago.

God alone will establish Zion; His instructions are vital and necessary for us. Once He instructs us, the scriptures can then be used to confirm that His directions to us now is consistent with what He prophesied, covenanted, and promised would happen. But the path to Zion is to be found only by following God's immediate commands to us. That is how He will bring it. He will lead us there. There is no magic; there is no sprinkling fairy dust that will take you to where God is. It does not and cannot happen that way. He will lead us, teach us, command us, guide us, but we have to be the ones who become what He commands. We have to be the ones who do what He bids us do.

The greatest instruction that I know out of, given by God at any time, to any generation, is a rule of community found in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Sermon at Bountiful. Now we have the Answer to the Prayer for Covenant, that not only resonates with the message of those two sermons but applies it directly to us in our peculiar circumstances, to fix our peculiar defects and urge us to be more like Him.

The Lord revealed His plan for our day approximately 3000 years ago. We now begin fulfilling that ancient prophecy. Our current struggles were foreseen and foretold. The Lord of the whole earth considered destroying all the wicked. But His servant plead for Him to grant more time (Jacob 5:49-50 LE). The Lord of the whole earth hearkened to His servant and decreed that He would spare it and would labor within His vineyard a final time in our day (v. 51). The Lord determined long ago He would use a covenant to graft back people who had become wild and bitter and connect them to the original roots of the tree of life, or in other words, restore a people in our day to His covenant.

The covenant offered today is from God and is the first step required to restore the family of God, or tree of life, on the earth. It will change the lost, wild, and bitter fruit and begin to recover them and turn their hearts to the Fathers. This will connect those who are living today with the natural roots—or those Fathers who still hold rights under the original covenant (v. 52-54). Work for this grafting began years ago, and it took a great leap

forward approximately two years ago with the effort to recover, as near as possible, the text of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith revelations. The initial graft happens today.

I have written up a description of a future event that's going to take place, that I was inspired to write up. But like what happens very often with things that are given to people by God, God tells you what to say and limits what you say about some things for purposes that He may understand a whole lot better than do we. You can read John's book of Revelation or Isaiah or Daniel or Ezekiel, and the debates about the content and the meaning of those more obscure passages are endless. And at the end of all the debate, what you wind up with is more confusion than understanding.

The way in which prophecies are handed to mankind by God is in a way that allows us, when the event takes place, to say, as Isaiah explained, "God knows the end from the beginning." Nothing's going to happen that surprises God. But the description that's given is not intended to tell us beforehand where to put our money in the stock market and when to sell and when to get out of stocks and bonds and when to get into real estate or when to buy gold—because it's all going to crap. And the purpose is to, once an event occurs, it is to ratify God's foreknowledge. It is to confirm to us that God knew what was going to happen. Sometimes the way that God tells us that is by giving a specific date for an event. But if He gives you a specific date for an event, the description of the event will be such that you won't understand what the event is going to be until the date arrives. Alternatively, He can give you a reasonable description of the event but no date, and so sometimes you wait generations, millennia, for prophecies to be—I mean, Isaiah was 725 B.C., and much of what Isaiah wrote about is happening now.

So what I wrote was what I was told to write and confined to what was intended to be conveyed. And despite what some people may think, I try to be exact, obedient, and to take no step to the left, no step to the right, no step forward unless I receive instruction from God. The only reason I'm here giving this talk is because this was something God wanted to have take place. So yes, I could tell you a lot more, but what I've written is what I was told to write, and therefore when it happens you'll say, "Oh yeah, God knew about that beforehand and gave a pretty good description, now that I see what it involved."

I believe Christ has spent the last 500 years inspiring mankind to restore a more correct form of Christianity. He declared He would return again in glory to judge the world, but before His return, many prophecies remain to be fulfilled. Almost the entire burden of prophecy focuses on two events: the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. And a great deal about the second coming of Christ will require that there be things that occur prior to His return in glory that will involve the Restoration and the presence of

those who speak in His name with authority, testimonies to be born. The world cannot be judged without an adequate prior warning being given. Even if the world is ignoring the message, it doesn't matter. God assumes the obligation to making clear His plans. He assumes the obligation of having the warning voice sound, and whether the world gives any heed or not, it doesn't matter. They've been warned, and they will be judged.

One of the prophecies came through Peter. He declared: *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began"* (Acts 3:19-21; NC Acts 2:3).

The time of refreshing or restoring, promised to come from the presence of the Lord has, in fact, begun. Jesus Christ has been sent again to prepare for His return.

In that first talk that I gave in Los Angeles, someone listening to that was concerned because I referred— Jesus Christ's most extensive prophecy is in the 24th chapter of Matthew, where His disciples are asking Him about the future, and among other things, they want to know about the signs of the times when He's going to come. And Christ answers them, and it's, well, you can read the 24th chapter. There's a lot of really tragic, ugly things that will go on before His coming. But it has a happy ending—He's coming, and when He comes, He's going to fix everything that's wrong with the world, primarily by destroying the wicked by the brightness of His glory. But if you're not wicked, that's still good news.

You don't live your life in contemplation of the fearful return of the Lord. You live your life in a grateful celebration for everything God has done and given to us.

As I was flying here, we had— I think we were taking off just as the first rays of the sun were creeping up in the east, and there was this brilliant scarlet ribbon on the horizon, and my wife pointed it out to me (I was sitting in an aisle; only thing I get to see is the cart they bring you treats with). As I looked across at the sunrise, it was spectacular. Where I live in Utah, we have this Wasatch Front. These are jagged granite cliffs that go upward. The top of one of the ski resorts is 11,000 feet. And we live at about 4,000 feet. When the sun sets, as you are in the valley, you see the sun go down in the west, but in the east, on the mountains, you see the sunlight creep up and creep up and creep up the mountain until finally, just the very top peaks remain with light. What happens is that the light, as it goes up the mountain in its nightly retreat, because of the refraction of the atmosphere, it tends to shift to the

blue and to the purple. And every night those mountains— and it's particularly spectacular when there's snow up there because the hues of the sunlight refraction become very colorful up there.

Now I happen to like impressionist art, and my favorite impressionist is Monet. We have a couple of Monet (I mean, they're forgeries—they were given to me as a fee; we didn't pay for them). But they're actual Monet paintings with— right down to the brush strokes being reproduced, and they're beautiful.

Every night as the sun sets, God does something on the mountains that is never the same, always beautiful, and greater in beauty and splendor than anything Monet ever put on canvas.

We ought to love life, and we ought to love one another, and we ought to pursue our education. And we shouldn't bunker down with guns and ammo, fearfully waiting for a direful end to things. Of all people, Christians should have the most hope, the most optimism, the most vitality, and the greatest amount of joy in life. We ought to celebrate every day.

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 to 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.

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 afforded and the clock begins to run, then the tendency is to move quickly, like John Bennett—everything is 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 has 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.

Dr. Walter Martin, the "Bible Answer" man, used to use this slogan in almost every other broadcast: "It is the first principle of Biblical hermeneutics that you interpret the old in light of the new." Meaning, when you encounter in the New Testament an interpretation of a prophecy that came in the Old Testament, you don't go to the Old Testament to decide whether or not that prophecy fit the events in the New Testament. You reverse that, and you say, "What does the New Testament tell us that the Old Testament means?" And the Old Testament means whatever it is that the New Testament says it means. You arrive at your Biblical interpretation always by using the *new* to tell you what the *old* meant. Which is another way of saying that prophecy is so obscure that it requires it to be fulfilled, in order for you to understand what it was all about. When it is fulfilled, then the evidence of what was in the mind of God and the prophet, when it first got composed, is apparent. But it is not apparent until the events happen, which is why all of the people trying to date and foretell all of the events are always surprised, because they missed something. They're always advising Herod when the wise men show up and say, "Now where's the king that was born?" And they're shocked there was a king that got born, and they have to search around and rummage before they say, "*O Bethlehem, thou art not least among the princes of*

Judah; for out of thee shall come a ruler," and lo and behold, "well, he must be in Bethlehem. If you find him, hey, you bring him to us so we can worship him." Wink, wink, nod, nod. Because they had the prophecies in front of them, but they didn't know what God was doing. They wouldn't know it; they couldn't know it. Just like today—God's doing things, but no one knows it because it requires its fulfillment before people can comprehend what happened.

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The foregoing excerpts were taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #2 entitled "Faith," given in Idaho Falls, ID on September 28, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #4 entitled "Covenants," given in Centerville, UT on October 6, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #5 entitled "Priesthood," given in Orem, UT on November 2, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #8 entitled "A Broken Heart," given in Las Vegas, NV on July 25, 2014;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #9 entitled "Marriage and Family," given in St. George, UT on July 26, 2014;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #10 entitled "Preserving the Restoration," given in Mesa, AZ on September 9, 2014;
- A regional conference Q&A session held at Big Cottonwood Canyon, UT on September 20, 2015;
- His talk entitled "Zion Will Come," given near Moab, UT on April 10, 2016;
- His conference talk entitled "The Doctrine of Christ," given in Boise, ID on September 11, 2016;
- His remarks at "A Day of Faith and Connection" youth conference in UT on June 10, 2017;
- His comments at the "Unity in Christ" conference in Utah County, UT on July 30, 2017;
- His Opening Remarks given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, Idaho on September 3, 2017;
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #2, given in Dallas, TX on October 19, 2017;
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #3, given in Atlanta, Georgia on November 16, 2017;

- A fireside talk entitled "Cursed, Denied Priesthood," given in Sandy, UT on January 7, 2018;
- Denver's remarks entitled "Keep the Covenant: Do the Work," given at the *Remembering the Covenants Conference* in Layton, UT on August 4, 2018; and
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #5, given in Sandy, Utah on September 7, 2018.