

Podcast Episode 82: Hope, Part 3

This is the final part of a special series on “Hope,” in which Denver addresses the questions: What is hope? How can hope be an anchor for the soul in times of tribulation?

DENVER: This is a discussion of hope. It’s based upon material that I’ve previously written as a chapter—chapter 4—in the book *Eighteen Verses*. That chapter is titled “Hope and Mansions.” The chapter begins with a quote from the book of Ether. The quote states,

And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have a more excellent hope. Wherefore, man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared. (Ether 12:32; see also Ether 5:6 RE)

That comment is part of an interruption in the book of Ether. The book of Ether was taken from 24 plates. During his abridgement of the Book of Mormon, Mormon (the abridger) mentioned that he intended to include a translation of those 24 plates as part of his translation of the Book of Mormon, but he died before completing that process. The plates were given to his son. His son finished out the record. And after finishing out his father’s book, he then added the book of Ether as a translation to fulfill his father’s commitment.

In the middle of doing the translation, Moroni didn’t feel that his effort was adequate. And he complained to the Lord about his own inability and how the Gentiles would mock that inability as they read his version of the translation of the book of Ether—contrasting the greatness of the words that were contained in the writings from the Jaredites with his own weakness as a translator. And in the middle of his complaining to the Lord, there’s this dialogue that happened between Christ and Moroni, and **this** is part of that interruption of the book of Ether and reflects a dialogue that happened between Christ and Moroni.

So when he says, *And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father (ibid)*, Moroni is saying that he remembers that Christ told him that Christ had prepared a house for man among the mansions of the Father of Christ, *in which man might have a more excellent hope. Wherefore, man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared (ibid)*. This statement is rather profound, connecting hope to mankind’s eternal inheritance. We’re going to look at that as part of this summary, and it’s examined in that chapter 4 of *Eighteen Verses*.

Christ is the one who prepares this house for man in the afterlife. And **Christ** links the concept of hope and the afterlife-inheritance-of-a-house clearly, in this statement in the dialogue between Him and Moroni. We are able to inherit an afterlife-house or -existence because it's made possible through our return to life by the resurrection that was brought about by Christ. We receive that house in the afterlife in order to rise up from the grave and return again into the Heavens to be where the Gods are and to renew a status there. We're going to have a place or a habitation or a resurrection provided by Christ after this life; and that, of course, is the great promise of the atonement.

But the house, says in the verse, that there's something else called "mansions" that belong to the Father (*among the mansions of thy Father*). We tend to think of mansions as some kind of a large, rolling estate that has a lot of servants taking care of it 'cause it's too large for a simple husband and wife to occupy and take care of. But the word "mansion" (in the Greek version, where the word is used in the New Testament), implies a temporary stopping point—or a hotel, in our modern language, or a hostel—someplace where you come, you stay temporarily, and you move on.

If the implication is some "great estate," then what the verse is communicating is that we'll get a house, and that house will be among a place where there are also mansions that had been created by the Father in the hopes that eventually we may likewise inherit a mansion. If, instead, it's a temporary, stopping place, then what we're being promised is an opportunity to rise up and continue on in the process of progression, rising from exaltation to exaltation, until ultimately we receive the resurrection as a right, as an achievement of our own.

A house for man and mansions—there are many of these things, and it suggests that there's going to be different kinds of inheritances in the afterlife, meaning what you choose here and how you behave here has an affect upon there. The purpose of the plan of salvation is not just to have man rise from the grave in some kind of resurrected body (whether it's telestial, terrestrial, or celestial), but the purpose is to permit man to continue on in the journey to exaltation. Everything in the plan of salvation is designed, ultimately, to bring about the celestial exaltation of **all** of the Father's descendants.

When we think of the Father in eternity, that word/that statement/that title is associated with power, glory, and dominion. He's often mentioned in connection with a throne. He presides over everything. He made possible the creation itself. He continues to use that same creative power to sustain us, to prevent us from dissolving back into chaos by preserving us from moment to moment. As King Benjamin put it, the Father *created you*

from the beginning, [and has preserved] you from day to day by lending you breath that [you] may live, and move, and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another (Mosiah 1:8 RE). Christ, when He was here in the mortal condition said, *I can of my own self do nothing* (TSJ 5:5). When we see the Father mentioned in scripture, we should think of Him who makes all things possible. It is He whose glory, might, and dominion defy all description. The use of “mansions” for mankind (which will be alongside or among the dwelling place of the Father) suggests that we can ultimately be welcomed to live with Him or, as He says in the Book of Revelation, *to sit [on] my throne even as I [have sat down upon] my Father[’s]...throne* (Revelation 1:20 RE). And that opportunity is the purpose to preserve us.

But overarching the process of inheritance is the language that Christ uses in His promise about hope—*more excellent hope*. Hope is one of the three bedrock virtues: faith, hope, and charity. A *more excellent hope* suggests a qualitative hopefulness, something of a higher sort. We need to determine how anyone can gain hope which is “more excellent.”

The verse includes this wonderful phrase on hope: *Man must hope, or he cannot receive* (Ether 12:32; see also Ether 5:6 RE). That phrase is filled with a great deal of significance. The term “hope,” particularly as it’s used here, is not that well understood. We sometimes view it as a weak virtue—something of a wisp, a phantom; something that we emote that we would like or desire. But in this context, the word “hope” is much more. It’s a **concrete assurance based upon a promise or a covenant**. Hope comes from knowing the Lord has promised a person something. As the Lord has assured us, He does not make (and then break) promises. When He promises something, He **will deliver** it. He does not excuse Himself; even *though the heavens and the earth [may] pass away, [His word] shall not pass away but shall [all] be fulfilled* (T&C 43:3). Anyone who receives a promise from Him has an absolute certainty.

However, the promises of the Lord are invariably about the future, even if it’s about the immediate future.

- To Abraham, the promise of a son preceded Isaac’s birth by many years.
- To Joseph, the promise of his brothers and father bowing to him was given in a dream many years before he was actually sitting in power in Egypt.
- From the time of the promise to Moses (that Israel would be delivered by his hand) to the time Israel was delivered out of Egypt, there were many months, trials, confrontations, and difficulties.

Between the promise given and the realization of the promise—in every one of these instances—there was only **hope**. It was hope, linked to faith—but hope, nonetheless.

This is the kind of hope spoken of in this verse. It is not a vague notion or a whimsical possibility. **It's trust and confidence springing from a promise given to a person by God.** It is something far greater, more profound, more strongly-felt, more firmly-based than just "expectancy from vague desire."

The word "hope" is commonly used to describe unlikely things. We use "hope" to describe what we want the outcome of a contest between the underdog team and the favored team to be. Hope, in that context, is more of a preference for the outcome. Used in that sense, hope is not based upon anything more than our desire to see the weaker side triumph. Such a preference or desire is not how the word is used in this scripture. As used here, **hope comes from a promise given by God and describes the state of mind of the recipient during the time interval *after* the promise but *before* its realization.** He or she is in the same position as:

- Abraham was *after* God's promise to him, *prior* to Isaac's birth.
- They're like Moses *after* the encounter with the mountainside menorah, where God promised him Israel was to be delivered, but *before* Israel's actual deliverance had taken place.
- They're like Joseph when serving Potiphar, knowing God's promises to him *had not yet happened but certainly would* come to pass.

This kind of hope relies upon the promise as an anchor to their soul. Hope means "the waiting period." Faith is being tried, but there is every reason to have confidence in the promise because it came from God. Anyone who has the faith to *obtain* such a promise from God can surely have the faith to *trust* the promise will be obtained.

Joseph uses "hope" in a letter which is part of the Teachings & Commandments. As it appears there, Joseph's letter is speaking of that very same kind of hope. He wrote,

And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from Heaven, declaring the fulfillment of the prophets, the book to be revealed! A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca County, declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book. The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the Devil when he appeared as an angel of light. The voice of Peter, James...and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna County, and Colesville, Broome County, on the Susquehanna River, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom and of the dispensation of the fullness of times. And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old father Whitmer's...in Fayette, Seneca County, and at sundry times and in diverse places, [through] all the trials and tribulations of [the] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. And the voice of

Michael the archangel, the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of diverse angels from Michael, or Adam, down to the present time, all declaring...

Their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their Priesthood.

[Giving] line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come...confirming our hope. (T&C 151:15-17, emphasis added)

Joseph uses “hope” in exactly the same way as Moroni does in his commentary in the middle of the book of Ether. The hope spoken of here has arisen from a multitude of miraculous events pointing to the **reason** for hope. He mentions the prior miraculous visits from angelic visitors; the voice of Christ to the three witnesses; Michael, the archangel, detecting the Devil; Peter, James, and John; God the Father’s voice; Gabriel (another archangel); and an unnamed host of angels who were prophets during their mortality and possessed keys during their mortal existence. From among all these were passed to Joseph the understanding that was necessary from the **prior** dispensation, in order for him to be able to discharge his responsibility in **this** dispensation. These various angelic and divine visitors caused Joseph to be consoled *by holding forth that which is to come*—meaning they had given him reason to believe in the promises which had been given. **These experiences had the effect of confirming his hope.** This is the concept in which hope is used in both Joseph’s letter and by Moroni. It is a lively expectation based upon the witness from Heaven, promising a thing shall surely be. It is because of a person’s confidence in God’s promise to them that they have this kind of hope. Joseph wrote of hope because he had had so many witnesses to him from beyond the veil that his faith was unshakable in the expectation of all the promises to be realized.

Hope involves unshakable faith or confidence. It is the thing Jacob writes about when he records in his book,

*Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy. And having all these witnesses, we **obtain a hope** and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea. (Jacob 3:2 RE, emphasis added)*

The hope comes from many **revelations** in the spirit of prophecy. It’s based upon **witnesses** coming from beyond the veil to confirm the expectations. It causes **faith**, which

is unshakable, and can cause mountains to move. It is a **power within**, confirmed by Heaven itself, which causes the person to know, through their very being, that a thing shall surely come to pass. It is hope which is **powerful, controlling, and causes a thing to come to pass because it is now their right to receive the thing promised**. God has conferred that right upon them. This is not simply a virtue; it's powerful, even controlling. It bends reality as we know it because it permits a higher power to intervene in the lives of people holding such hope. They have the power to seize upon blessings promised to them and bring them down into their lives. It is godly because it originates in trust, faith, and confidence in God who made the promise.

Hope also involves the afterlife. Our expectations for the afterlife are controlled by the faith we acquire here. Some depart this life with the firm hope of a glorious resurrection. They have this hope because they've made a suitable sacrifice while in this life to obtain the promises *here* which control the hope *there*. The account that was written of Christ's visit to the spirit world (by Joseph F. Smith) talks or mentions those who departed the mortal life firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection.

"Firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection" comes as a result of knowing before you depart from mortality that you have a promise that gives you the **right** to lay claim upon a glorious resurrection. Those who know this, know it because God promised it to them. They got this hope by the kind of lives they lived. They are the ones who have been faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they lived in mortality and have offered an acceptable sacrifice in similitude of the great sacrifice of the Son of God. From this they acquire hope.

It is clear the "hope which controls destiny" is a power. It is something greater than vague desire. It seizes upon and opens up opportunities from God. It is a power from Heaven, merited from obedience, given by the grace of God, and gives rise to a covenant which is assured to the recipient. All those having this firm hope also have a covenant, which they can seize upon to deliver themselves and obtain blessings from Heaven.

Whatever we hope to receive in the next life must come to us through this process. Whether it is something as concrete as a family relationship or as vague as an expectation, all things in the next life are secured to us only through this kind of promise or hope. Hope comes—or is delivered to us—by the Holy Spirit of Promise, when promises are made to us from the other side of the veil.

We all hope for things based upon promises made in scripture. But some hope for things precisely because they have been delivered to them by the voice of God from beyond the veil, securing for them the right to inherit something.

The heirs of exaltation are identified in the Vision of the Three Degrees of Glory: those *who overcome by faith and are sealed by [the] Holy Spirit of Promise, which the Father shed[s] forth upon all those who are just and true* (T&C 69:10), are the ones that depart this life with hope. Faith, in that sense, is related to hope and is based upon knowledge. It's the kind of knowledge that is only obtained through faith great enough for the person to personally receive a promise from God, confirmed through the Holy Spirit of Promise, assuring them they are to receive what has been promised them.

The Sixth Lecture on Faith tells us how this kind of faith (that leads to hope) is gained:

Having treated, in the preceding lectures, of the ideas of the character, perfections, and attributes of God, we next proceed to treat of the knowledge which persons must have that the course of life which they pursue is according to the will of God, in order that they may be enabled to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation.

This knowledge supplies an important place in revealed religion, for it was by reason of it that the ancients were enabled to endure as seeing him who is invisible. An actual knowledge to any person that the course of life which he pursues is according to the will of God is essentially necessary to enable him to have that confidence in God, without which no person can obtain eternal life. It was this that enabled the ancient saints to endure all their afflictions and persecutions and to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing (not [merely believing]) that they had a more enduring substance...

Having the assurance that they were pursuing a course which was agreeable to the will of God, they were enabled to take not only the spoiling of their goods and the wasting of their substance joyfully, but also to suffer death in its most horrid forms, knowing (not merely believing) that when this earthly house of their tabernacle was dissolved, they had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens...

Such was and always will be the situation of the saints of God: that unless they have an actual knowledge that the course...they are pursuing is according to the will of God, they will grow weary in their minds and faint, for such has been and always will be the opposition in the hearts of unbelievers and those that know not God, against the pure...unadulterated religion of Heaven (the only thing which ensures eternal life), that they will persecute to the utmost all that worship God according to His revelations, receive the truth in...love of it, and submit themselves to be guided and directed by His will...

For a man to lay down his all, his character...reputation, his honor and applause, his good name among men, his houses, ...lands, his brothers and sisters, ...wife and children, ...even his own life also, counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, requires more than mere belief, or supposition that he's doing the will of God, but actual knowledge, realizing that when these sufferings are ended he will enter into Eternal rest and be a partaker of the glory of God.

For unless a person does know that he is walking according to the will of God, it would be offering an insult to the dignity of the Creator were he to say that he would be a partaker of his glory when he should be done with the things of this life. But when he has this knowledge, and most assuredly knows that he is doing the will of God, his confidence can be equally strong that he will be a partaker of the glory of God.

Let us here observe that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation. For from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things: it was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life, and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know most assuredly that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.

It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they in like manner offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him. (LoF 6:1-8)

This description is a description of hope. This is how people are faithful in the testimony of Jesus while they live in mortality and, therefore, can depart this life firm in the hope or expectation of a glorious resurrection.

There's a direct relationship between faith, hope, and charity. Faith comes from obedience and sacrifice. Hope comes from the promise given to a person, by God, which their faith has secured for them. And charity comes as those holding faith and receiving hope, seek to have all others share in the same promises. The greatest gift you can give to another is eternal life. All those who have such a promise from God want everyone else to have a similar promise for themselves. They teach, preach, exhort, and write to share with everyone that same opportunity to gain hope in God. They understand how rare a thing it is to bring a soul to salvation. But they're not interested in merely making a bad-person good or a good-person better, nor are they content to move souls from a Celestial destiny to a Terrestrial destiny. Those who have such promises for themselves long, hope, pray, and preach to bring every other soul back to God to dwell with Him in Celestial glory. They seek the eternal life of all mankind. They participate with God in His great work. They join Christ in His declaration:

For behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore, he suffered the pain of all men that all men might repent and come unto him. And he ha[th] risen again from the dead that he might bring all men unto him on conditions of repentance. And how great is his joy in the soul that repent[eth]. Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people. And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people and bring save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father? And now if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me in the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me? (JSH 15:31 RE)

It's a rare thing when any person acquires the firm hope of a glorious resurrection, secured through the voice of the Father, declared by the Holy Spirit of Promise. The wonder is that it happens at all. But it does. And for those to whom such hope has come, they want all others to receive the same promise. Joseph Smith, who had such a hope in him, spoke openly of these things. He wanted all mankind to be exalted. To some extent, we have quieted our voices on this subject. And we need to raise them again.

We are not part of historic Christianity. Nor are we part of a dying Restoration. We have a better hope. We can offer a far greater understanding of God's plan for mankind. We can offer to people words that God has spoken now, in our day. We cannot be content in merely becoming part of mainstream Christianity or part of the dying Restoration movement.

The Restoration was not intended only to create a denomination or an institution. It was intended to redeem souls. It was intended to shout the glorious message that men are able to obtain hope in God, for a glorious resurrection, in which God promises to them that they

will receive a house in the next life that will equip them to dwell among the mansions of the Father.

The restored Gospel requires too high a price to ever succeed as a popular, mainstream denomination. But it offers too great a reward to merely be another Christian denomination. We cannot be content with just being a religion. We have to be the work of God in the last days. We have to be the act of God in bringing to pass the completion and fulfillment of His promises and His covenants with the Fathers. All the volumes of scriptures refer to turning the hearts of the children to the Fathers and the Fathers to the children. Promises and hope are tied to them, also.

We need to lay hold upon hope. MAN MUST HOPE! Or he cannot receive.

Hope comes from faith. When men have obtained hope for themselves, they want that hope to be shared by men and women everywhere. Concern for the salvation of others lies at the foundation of charity. If you do not have a firm hope within you, secured by the Holy Spirit of Promise, given you by God, then this verse should awaken you to have this desire. It should rally you. Jacob hoped his preaching would cause us to arouse the faculties of our souls, to shake ourselves that we might awake from the slumber of death and repent. Joseph Smith was similarly hoping to exalt others. We cannot be content with less. The commandments from God are given to us to exalt us, to lead us back. May we all receive such hope for the next life.

Man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance with the Father (Ether 5:6 RE). This verse is a shout of joy for all who are willing to hear it.

The foregoing was recorded by Denver Snuffer on August 18, 2019 in Sandy, Utah.