

Episode 96: One Eternal Round

Today, Denver answers the question, "How can God's paths be straight, when his course is one Eternal round?"

DENVER: I don't believe it is necessary to reveal any new thing in order to be able to teach in a manner that opens eyes to everything the Lord has, and is doing, other than to expound the scriptures. He didn't think it was necessary.

If you go to verse 19, of the Joseph Smith History, and you read the words that come out of the Lord's mouth when He speaks to Joseph, he quotes or paraphrases Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Paul. In just one short run-on sentence, the Lord talks about the doctrines that they teach for commandments the doctrines of men; *[they have] a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof....They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me* (JS-H 1:19; see also JS-H 2:5 RE).

Once again, when He appears to Joseph in the First Vision, our Lord is expounding the scriptures. He picks, and puts it together, and says—this is the condition in which you find yourself. This is what the prophets were speaking about. This is that day about which mankind would search the earth and not find the word of God.

When Moroni comes to visit with Joseph Smith, what does Moroni do in order to qualify Joseph for the ministry that he's about to embark upon? Moroni quotes prophecies from Malachi, from Isaiah, from Peter, from Joel. And so, it took a long time for me to be able to see the pattern, but the pattern in which the Lord reveals and discusses new truth is the same in every generation. And so, when He came, in answer to prayer, and spoke to me sitting in a barracks—despite the fact that there were no fireworks, no pillar of fire, no shining man in a robe—He used the scriptures and expounded them to increase my understanding.

So today, I want to use the scriptures in order to bear testimony of who our Lord is, and how significant His example is for us. And I told you before, in Idaho Falls, that, in my view, *The Lectures on Faith* are scripture. They were adopted as such, and I'm to read from the 7th Lecture on Faith, paragraph 9, about Christ.

Where shall we find a saved being? For if we can find a saved being, we may ascertain without much difficulty what all others must be in order to be saved. ... We think that it will not be a matter of dispute that two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved, for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the

salvation of every creature which will be saved. And if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be or else not be saved. We ask, then: Where is the prototype? Or where is the saved being? We conclude as to the answer of this question there will be no dispute among those who believe the Bible that it is Christ. All will agree [with] this, that he is the prototype or standard of salvation, or in other words, ...he is a saved being. And if we should continue our interrogation, and ask how it is that he is saved, the answer would be, because he is a just and holy being. And if he were anything different from what he is he would not be saved, for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else. For if it were possible for him to change in the least degree, so sure he would fail of salvation and lose all his dominion, power, authority, and glory, which constitutes salvation. For salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power, and dominion which Jehovah possesses, and in nothing else, and no being can possess it but himself [and] one like him. (LoF 7:9 RE)

We read this and then we immediately gloss over it, as if what salvation consists of is Him and fairy dust, which He can distribute to make us like Him. This teaching that appears, this was what Joseph Smith worked on, editing for the months prior to the publication of The Doctrine and Covenants in 1835. He doesn't say in his diaries that he spent anytime on the revelations. That was trusted to a committee, and the committee was responsible for getting those ready for publication. And they did a bunch of freelancing and embellishing and expanding; and some of the stuff they added to the revelations was remarkably more expansive than what Joseph had received—revealed to him. That's not where Joseph spent his time. He spent his time on *The Lectures on Faith*. And this is early in his ministry. This is when he wanted to make sure that the doctrine was correct—and this is the doctrine that came rolling out in that first publication. And yet despite that, we tend to read this and not take it seriously.

If you are going to be saved, you must be **exactly**, you must be **precisely** what Christ is, and **nothing else**... K? You! At that moment, that is when you are saved. As a consequence of that, to speak of Christ is necessarily to speak of salvation. To understand Christ is to understand salvation. Despite how plainly this has been put, we still stop short of comprehending the doctrine.

You say you want to obtain an *expectation* here, that will follow you into the next life. I say if the authority to seal this did not first exist, and was not handed down from before the world was, then it would not last in the after-life. Joseph held up a ring and said, "There's no beginning and there's no end, it's one eternal round". I'm telling you, you're only on part of the cycle here. But, you *are* on part of this endless cycle *here*. Now. Today matters a great

deal, therefore, what you do here matters infinitely, eternally, everlastingly. It matters! You have your doubts, but you should weigh them in the balance. Why not exercise faith? Why not change your eternal destiny? Why not choose good today?

The Gospel is delicious. Get rid of that stale wretched stuff you consume as part of an organized and stifled herd; and go on to find the life, the light, and the vigor contained in the words of scripture. The doctrine in our scriptures is delicious! Stop putting barriers around the scriptures. Stop forcing them to mean what you have been told they must mean. Let *them* tell *you* what they say about your preconceptions distorting their meaning. There's no rigid "orthodoxy" that governs or correlates their meaning. You will discover they are filled with a new religion altogether. In that religion, God is speaking to you directly. He is alive, and He is involved in your life. If you will partake of it and prepare yourselves, you can improve this estate in a way that will reflect credit into the next estate. Don't forfeit the opportunity.

Thus they become high priests forever. They become high priests when they have exercised faith and show good works that, in that status, lasts forever. They qualified before the foundation of this world. They come here, into this cycle, and they have authority here. But their authority began before the foundation of *this* world, and they can confer blessings that will continue into the *next* life. Therefore, they can bless, and you are blessed indeed.

Thus they [have] become high priests forever, after the order of the Son [of God], the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen. Now, as I said concerning the holy order, or this high priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish; Therefore, they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. (Alma 13:9-11; see also Alma 10:1 RE)

Do you see what's right before you? You say you want to be baptized and to be cleansed from all sin? I say, have at it! But in addition, the *prototype of the saved man* requires you do something more. You may only achieve a limited amount of grace in this life, but to that limited amount of grace, you must hold fast. You cannot receive more, if you will not receive what is offered to you now. But, if you will receive what is offered now, you will be added upon forever and forever. Or, in other words, you move up the ladder by how you conduct yourself in this cycle of creation; and in the next cycle, you will have so much the advantage. You can choose to move upward and to be added upon, or you can choose

instead to remain as you are, worlds without end. The scriptures speak of things that happened “before the foundation of the world” or “in the first place” or “from the foundation of the world.”

These statements make it clear what went on before *this* creation mattered and affected *who you are now*. In like manner, what you achieve in *this* life, through your heed and diligence, will affect what comes *after*. The course we are on has been ordained by God and is “one eternal round.”

God has been at this a long time. Christ has, likewise, been involved for many repeated cycles of creation. Moses was told:

By the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten. [It is endless, and it is cyclical.] ...For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them. (Moses 1:32-33,35; see also Genesis 1:6 RE)

This is God’s great work. It has been going through cycles of creation, fall, redemption, judgment, and re-creation forever. It is endless. The Lord told Moses just how vast this process has grown:

The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine. And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words. (Moses 1:37-38; see also Genesis 1:7 RE)

This is a continual, endless cycle, worlds without end. Man falls into the cold realm of the temporal, but is returned again to the spiritual. The process allows development to occur in increments, as we choose, for our development. When a cycle begins, man is spirit. When it is underway, man is temporal and physical. But when a cycle ends, man is spirit again. We are nearing another turn of the wheel when wickedness will end. As modern revelation describes it:

For the hour is nigh and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe; and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them..., saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth; For I will reveal myself from heaven

with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand. [Then] when the thousand years are ended, and men...begin to deny their God, then will I spare the earth for but a little season; And the end shall come, and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth. (D&C 29:9,11,22-23; see also T&C 9:3,7)

As one ends, another begins. The cycle repeats, but nothing is lost. The old passes away, but everything is kept to be used again, *both men and beasts, [and] the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea; And not one hair, neither mote, shall be lost, for it is the workmanship of mine hand* (ibid. vs. 24 -25). It all continues in one eternal round, worlds without end.

When men are judged and condemned, they are sent away into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. They go away and cannot ascend to God's presence, because where God is, *they cannot come, for they have no power* (D&C 29:29). But, God cautions us:

Remember that...my judgments are not given unto men; and as the [worlds], ... as the words have gone forth out of my mouth even so shall they be fulfilled, that the first shall be last, and...the last shall be first in all things whatsoever I have created by the word of my power, which is the power of my Spirit. [God set out how this cycle begins and ends]. For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal—First spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work; and again, first temporal, and [second] spiritual, which is the last of my work—Speaking unto you that you may naturally understand; but unto myself my works have no end, neither beginning; but it is given unto you that ye may understand, because ye have asked it of me and are agreed. (D&C 29:30-33; see also T&C 9:9 RE)

So, in the first place, before this world was organized from an already existing and previously used prior creation, the condition was spiritual. But it fell and became the temporal place where we presently reside—though patterned after the earlier world where we used to live, while in its spiritual state. Its present condition will be destroyed and returned again to a spiritual state. It will be quickened, and no longer the cold place it is today.

Have you ever noticed how the descriptions of the pre-earth organization and the Millennium seem alike? Have you ever wondered what *worlds without end* means? Have you ever considered how God's work never ends, and yet it has definite increments separating things from one cycle and the next?

God's works do not end. You are the developmental work God has chosen as His greatest accomplishment. He intends to bring to pass your immortality and eventual eternal life. How long that requires for any given individual depends upon how long it takes *you* to become like the prototype of the saved man. How long *you* will delay attaining to the resurrection is within your own control. I'm hoping to awaken you to the great work lying before you.

The first appearance of the Lord was in the 50th year of my life—an age considered suitable for more than a thousand years for a man to qualify for service in the Holy Order after the Order of the Son of God. The Lord has visited with and taught me on many occasions since then, but never at my insistence. I have never controlled His appearing. My experience is that He cannot be conjured nor controlled. I can petition, but *He* comes when *He* decides. The Lord has never appeared to me in a dream. I've always been awake, fully aware of my surroundings, and with my senses unimpeded. When awakened during the night, sleep has always fled, and following such an encounter, I was always unable to return to sleep.

The Lord does everything according to His higher way of teaching. By beginning with a vision of His return, He set out the foundation for understanding His course, which is one eternal round. Since His first appearance, He has sent divers angels from Adam or Michael to Hyrum and Joseph Smith, giving line upon line, to confirm my hope in Christ. The most important thing for us is to repent, be baptized, and let virtue and righteousness guide our thoughts, deeds, and words. We ought to deal fairly with one another, and to be kind. You may remember abuses from priesthood leaders in your last church. *Do not bring that with you.* Leave behind all the sins and errors found in other organizations and show Christ-like patience and charity to one another.

We follow Christ to become more like Him. He requires faith, repentance, and baptism; and bestows the Holy Ghost to bring all things back to our remembrance. When we hear Christ's message to repent and be baptized, it is our duty to respond, and then warn others so they can escape the coming judgment. The whole world struggles under a burden of sin that we are powerless to remove without Christ. He suffered and overcame the sins of the world so we can avoid the consequences of sin, on condition of repentance and baptism, as He explained in a revelation in 1829:

For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the

bitter cup, and shrink— [In that context, the word shrink means cower. Christ cowered.] Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men. Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power. (D&C 19:16-20; see also T&C 4:5-6 RE)

When the Lord spoke to Joseph in 1829 about the atonement, He mentioned only suffering in Gethsemane—not His death on the cross; because it was in Gethsemane His greatest work was accomplished. I was shown it, and have given an account in the book *Come, Let Us Adore Him*.

In order for His work to be completed, He had to die. Death allowed Him to attain the resurrection, and break the bonds of death.

For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and...marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other—either to the convincing of them unto peace and [eternal] life, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken. That's First Nephi 14: 7. (see also 1 Nephi 3:26 RE)

There will be a time when the accounts will all be settled. Everything will become everlasting, and people will either inherit eternal lives and move forward, or they will return to be destroyed both temporally and spiritually again. Joseph Smith commented in the King Follett Discourse about the process of gaining exaltation. He explained:

“You must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.” (*TPJS*, p. 348)

Death and hell are the devil's domain—he's the god of that world. And since we have death and suffering here, he calls himself the god of this world. Those who come here are subject to his buffeting and his will. They're tormented, tempted, troubled, and then they die. While captive here, they endure the insults of the flesh, and the difficulties of trying to find their way back to God. Those who find *Him*, however, are able to receive peace and life eternal through a higher process. The devil is bound for them, and they are able to be *added upon* by the experiences and the difficulties here.

All of this is called a “great and marvelous work” to occur “among the children of men.” Note, it isn’t the *remnant*, or the *gentiles*, but *the children of men*. Why so? Is everyone invited? Why, if everyone is invited, will it largely only affect the *remnant*, and the *gentiles*, and the *scattered Israel*, and *Jews*? What about the *heathen*, since they are also *the children of men*? Don’t they also have part in the first resurrection? Will even some of them be included among *the children of men*, who belong and behold this *great and marvelous work*?

Why is it *everlasting*, whether it is for *peace and eternal life*, or *captivity and destruction*? Isn’t **Everlasting** another of God’s names just like **Eternal** and **Endless**? If so, then what does the *everlasting peace and eternal life*, and *everlasting captivity and destruction* really involve?

Why does God want us to respond to His message and get out of this Telestial Kingdom into another higher kingdom? Why does He want us to become like Him? How is this experience able to make us more like Him? If one is involved in the continuation of the lives, is that distant and second-hand? Or does God, or the Gods get involved directly with His or Their children? What causes hardness of heart? What causes blindness of their eyes? Why are those whose hearts are hard, unable to receive Christ? Why are those who are blind unwilling to see Him?

This cycle of inviting people to come to the Lamb of God has been going on for some time now. When mankind generally rejected Him after the time of Noah, there was a chosen people who were given a sacred tradition. Ultimately, they got proud, failed to recognize Him when He came, rejected His message, and killed Him. Gentiles converted and became the inheritors of His teachings. Then the gentiles began to persecute the previously chosen people for generations. In this verse, the gentiles are remembered, sacred materials are entrusted to them with an obligation to spread that sacred material back to the earlier chosen people. However, for the gentiles to be able to accomplish this, they need to hold onto the sacred materials and teachings. You simply can’t spread abroad what you’ve failed to retain.

If the gentiles let the sacred materials and teachings fall into disuse, forfeit their priesthood by draining it of any power, and have nothing to offer the previously chosen people, then the gentiles will be cast off, trodden under foot, and destroyed, as we’ve seen earlier. This verse reminds us of what is at stake—*Eternity*, or at least God’s judgment. It’ll be embarrassing to return to Him unimproved, and un-added upon; particularly when His hand was stretched out to us all the day long. Gentiles, who do as they are asked, are given all the blessings of the chosen people. Those who do not are rejected and destroyed.

As a friend and I discussed last week, Hindu's advise us to get off the wheel and return to God. They may be onto something with that thought. One eternal round, indeed.

It is of note that Christ points to the Father in all things, and therefore, points to the Father in this teaching in 3rd Nephi 18:4, as well. The commandments He teaches are those which the Father hath commanded Him, that He should give unto you. In every respect the Son points to the Father. It is always the Father's will and the Father's glory that Christ seeks to uphold.

The Son seeks our glory and exaltation, while giving credit to the Father for all He does. Though the Savior occupies the central role in the process, He serves others. Selflessly, He instructs us on how we may be blessed and glorified. Selflessly, He points to the Father as the one to receive your testimony by obedience. Selflessly, He explains the Father is the one who has commanded these things. But through it all, it is Christ who has been the messenger of salvation. He's the one whose sacrifice made possible our redemption. It is Christ whose body and blood we must partake of for redemption. It is Christ of whom the Father testifies. Christ bears testimony of the Father. The Father bears record of the Son. In one eternal round, they form a circle. It is Christ's work and the Father's commandment which invites us to join in that circle and become one with Them. How simple the ways provided for us in this condescension of God. How plain the way has been given. Yet we find reasons to do more, or less, than what is asked. For that we forfeit blessings, which might otherwise have been ours.

This is a dark world, with so many options for getting it wrong. Like King Benjamin said, I cannot tell you all the ways whereby you may sin, because they are literally infinite. The challenge is not to identify errors, because that can occupy a lifetime and never move you an inch forward. The real challenge is to finally recognize there is only *One*. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, and it is His. He's the keeper of the gate and He employs no servant there. He does send people out from time to time to point to Him as He stands at the gate, but when we come ~~abroad~~ [aboard] with Him, it is through Him alone we find ourselves redeemed and forgiven.

For me there has been repeated reminders that the Lord's path is straight, and does not vary from side to side, nor is there any degree of changeableness for Him. But His course, that is the pathway we find ourselves on, is *one eternal round*. Meaning we are in orbit, so to speak, around Him and His pathway. For us, we move in an upward spiral—sometimes facing in one direction, and sometimes turned around in the opposite direction—as we move upward along His path. We are here to be “added upon,” and sometimes that process is so incremental, so slight, and so apparently limited, that we can live a lifetime and only

move a single step forward toward God. But for God, who is infinite and eternal, that fulfills His promise, and even His expectations for the most of mankind.

We are here to experience the difference between light and dark, good and bad, and gain knowledge of good and evil. If a man lives without God in the world, and his days are few and mean, he may nevertheless rejoice in eternity for what he gained by experience here. Even the abuse inflicted upon us can turn to God's glory, if we return to Him better able to know the difference between good and evil. The Gospel plan is infinite and holds out promise for every man and woman who ever lived and died. How great a step we gain, in the few years of mortality allotted to us, is not as important as the experience from which we are better able to discern between good and evil.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #7 entitled "Christ, Prototype of the Saved Man" given in Ephraim, UT on June 28, 2014, including additional explanatory comments added later to the transcript and subsequently recorded on December 8, 2019
- Denver's conference talk entitled "The Doctrine of Christ", given in Boise, ID on September 11th, 2016
- Denver's blog post entitled "1 Nephi 14:7", posted July 7, 2010, and subsequently recorded on December 8, 2019
- Denver's blog post entitled "3 Nephi 18:4", posted November 11, 2010, and subsequently recorded on December 8, 2019
- Denver's comments included in an email exchange posted March 8, 2016 on LDS Freedom Forum by user Jesef, subsequently recorded by Denver on October 26, 2019