

Podcast Episode 107: Renewal, Part 1

This is Part 1 of a special series on Renewal, where Denver discusses the pattern and concept, how it appears in nature, how it appears in our lives, and how it is evident in the Restoration.

DENVER: The fact that Easter is in the springtime, I don't think is any accident. I think it's intended to align with the testimony of nature about the promise of eternal life, the promise of the renewal that comes every spring, and I think the Lord intended that His death and His resurrection should associate with spring. And I think it's appropriate that that be the subject that we look at today.

Look at verse 12, and it's been a discussion of what went on at the beginning—man in the Garden of Eden, God talking to him. Verse 12:

From the foregoing we learn man's situation at his first creation: the knowledge [of] which he was endowed, and the high and exalted station in which he was placed—lord or governor of all things on [the] earth, and at the same time enjoying communion and intercourse with his Maker without a veil to separate between. (T&C 110, Lectures on Faith 2:12 RE)

That's where man began, and that's why knowledge of God existed in the first place. Because in the beginning, God talked to man. *And* if you think, “Well, yeah, that was then, what about now?”—we'll get to now. Verse 18, about halfway down:

God conversed with him face to face: in his presence he was permitted to stand, and from his own mouth he was permitted to receive instruction — he heard his voice, walked before him...gazed upon his glory, while intelligence burst upon his understanding, and enabled him to give names to the vast assemblage of his Maker's works. (T&C 110, Lectures on Faith 2:18 RE)

This was man's original condition—a condition to which the gospel is designed to return man. And in fact, at the Second Coming all who remain will be in that condition once again. The earth is going to be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory, and it's going to do so because God will come and dwell here again. And man will be able to converse [with] Him.

Beginning at verse 33, of Section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining [of] these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God. (D&C 84:33; see also T&C 82:16 RE)

“Sons”...“seed”—and it’s necessary that you become that in order that you become *“the church and kingdom...the elect of God.”* Because as we saw in the statements made to Joseph Smith, the hearts have to be turned to the fathers because this is going to be reconstructing a Holy Family at some point.

And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord (D&C 84:35; see also T&C 82:17). Now, many of you read that verse 35 and you think that what that means is if you fetch this priesthood by ordination, *ipso facto*, you have fetched Jesus. “PRAISE JESUS!” (Said in the voice of Joel Olsteen.) And by the way, Joel Olsteen is coming to the E Center—you’re not going to want to miss that. “It’s a mega church! It’s a mega church in transit! It’s going to come to the E Center! SUNDAY, SUNDAY, SUNDAY!” (Again said in the voice of Joel Olsteen.) I’m sorry. I get worked up when the evangelicals show up on the horizon. He had some nice things to say about Mormons, though. So Joel Olsteen has kind of crept a little more on the positive column for me of late.

I want to suggest that verse 35 can also be read exactly as D&C section 93, verse 1 (that we were reading a moment ago) is read. And that is to say if you’re going to receive this priesthood, you’re going to get it from Him. That is, you enter into His presence—you receive *Him*. If you have it, then *when* you have it—as a consequence *of* having it—you receive Him.

Oh— *For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me* (D&C 84:36; see also T&C 82:17 RE). I want to suggest that throughout scripture, almost invariably, the word ‘servants’ is referring to angelic ministrants. And so, angels minister—that would be Aaronic. And then Christ ministers—that would be sons of Moses.

And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father [because it is the purpose of the Son to bear record of the Father. It is the purpose of the Son to bring others to the Father so that there might be many sons of God]. *And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom* [‘cause you can’t go where the Father is without entering into and receiving an inheritance] (D&C 84:37-38; see also T&C 82:17 RE).

You know, one of the things that we tend to think is that if you get something (this is based upon statements made in [section] 132)— But if you get something here, and you get it by a covenant, that you are automatically entitled to take it into the *next* world. But what if the covenant that you are to receive, in order to obtain that inheritance in the next world, doesn’t reckon merely from something handled by ordinance, but that the ordinance is pointing you to something higher and more holy? What if the thing that secures for you the inheritance in the next life is not the ordinance, but what the ordinance testifies to—that is, embracing the Lord through the veil? And then having conversed with Him, entering into His presence? And then having entered into His presence, being ministered to and taught? What if it means all that?

This is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood. Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. But whoso breaketh this

*covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come. [Oh—] And wo unto all those who come not unto this priesthood which ye...received, which I now confirm upon you who are present this day, by mine own voice **out of the heavens**; and even I have given the heavenly hosts and mine angels charge concerning you. ([Emphasis added.] D&C 84:39-42; see also T&C 82:17 RE)*

You know, that verse 42 of the oath and covenant of the priesthood— You ought to take a look at Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis chapter 14, verse 29, talking about the priesthood that was given after the Order of the Son of God. It says: *It was delivered unto men by the calling of His own voice, according to His own will, unto as many as believed on His name* (JST Genesis 14:29; see also Genesis 7:18 RE). And so, we have in section 76 (84) a testimony given, and justification for the translation Joseph rendered of Genesis chapter 14, dealing with the priesthood and qualifying it as coming from the voice of God.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants section 93, verse 36: *The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one* (D&C 93:36; see also T&C 93:11 RE). What if, instead of repentance being related to your misdeeds—which are so plentiful, and persistent, and will continue—what if, instead, it is related to the acquisition of light and truth—that is, intelligence? What if repentance requires you to take whatever it is that you have that is a foolish error, a vain tradition, a false notion, and replace it with the truth?

My suspicion is that whatever it is that is troubling you, it will trouble you considerably less if you begin to fill yourself with light and truth. Until, at last, you arrive at a point where you look back upon your sins and you say, “I have no more disposition for that because I frankly know enough not to do that anymore, and because I prefer the light, and because I prefer God's intelligence and glory over that which I used to trade to substitute for it.” You see, repentance may have a whole lot more to do with your own *feeble education* in the things of God than it does have to do with the time you spend, wasted, looking at some vile picture or other.

You know, we have this Victorian sexual mores that everyone in Wall Street tacks against—like when you're in a sailboat and there's a headwind, you “tack” against it. Quite frankly, I find most of that stuff boring, and not titillating. Some of it's medical, but it's not enticing. And from a certain perspective, if you will acquire enough light and truth, you're not going to be contaminated by exposure to the things that are degrading.

The Book of Mormon was abridged by a man who lived inside an environment that was *filled* with sex and violence. And he was untouched by it—a man of righteousness. And why is it that he could preserve himself? Because what was in him was light and truth. He had educated himself; he had learned about the things that are true. So that when you minister to someone who is suffering, their sins ought not shock you. They ought to cause compassion to well up *in* you. People struggle with some very difficult, very challenging

things. You need to try and overcome that by the light within you. The glory of God is intelligence. Be intelligent!

At one point Christ, talking to Abraham, says He is more intelligent than them all. One will be more intelligent than another: *These two [things]...exist, [if there be two beings], one [will be] more intelligent than the other...I am more intelligent than [them] all* (Abraham 3:19; see also Abraham 5:4 RE). That's what Christ said.

And Joseph Smith, talking about the Holy Ghost, says, "I... know more than all the world... [or] the Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and...[it's in] me" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 350). The fact of the matter is that you *can* fill yourself with the mind of God. And if you fill yourself with the mind of God, you're going to find yourself in a position where you, like the scriptures recite, have no more disposition to do evil but to only do good continually. *That* repentance is as a consequence of the things that you know. *That* repentance comes as a consequence of the light and truth within you.

Whoso is faithful unto the obtaining [of] these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling [see, priesthood is not simply yada, yada, yada; ipso facto; canorus mundorum; there you are! It requires— See you get it, but then "faithful to obtain," and then "faithful to magnify," and "faithful to magnify it as a calling" ('calling' being an operative word there that means service)], are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies ["sanctified by the Spirit," "renewing their body"—these things have meaning. Perhaps we'll get to that at some point]. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God. (D&C 84:33-34; see also T&C 82:16 RE)

See, they *become*—but they *become* as a consequence of having been sanctified. They become sanctified because they magnified their calling. They had to first obtain the priesthood, and the obtaining of the priesthood requires something that is *faithful*. And you ought to ask yourself, "Faithful to what?" And *always* it is faithful to *Him*, to our Lord, the One who redeems.

All of these things flow together as one continuum. It's not just, "I got ordained." It doesn't matter that you got ordained. There's a process that's involved after ordination in which you follow these steps. We read it as one sentence and say, "There it is! He was faithful—I mean, he passed the bishop's interview; he obtained it." That is, he sat down there, and they got a certificate, I mean— When I was on the high council, I was the one responsible for fetching the Melchizedek priesthood certificates and delivering it to 'em. And that was a definite point in time at which we could point and say, "On *this* day, *this* person gave *this* authority to *this* guy on *this* occasion. *And*, when that happened, he also got a line of authority."

When I got ordained to be a high priest, the stake president handed me a line of authority which, when I looked at, I found mistakes in. And I went back and I did the research, and I corrected the line of authority. Then I went back to my stake president and I said, "Uh, you

gave me your line of authority, but it was wrong. Here's the right one." And then he had to go find all of the people that he had ordained and correct that. Some fellow in the line had thought it would be more commendable to have been ordained by Marion G. Romney *after* he was an apostle rather than as he *was*—when Marion G. Romney was called to be the bishop and he called *this fellow* to be his counselor. And so, Marion G. Romney was ordained to be a high priest, to be the bishop, and he ordained this other fellow to be a high priest and his counselor. And then subsequently, when Marion G. Romney got to be an apostle, this guy hailed his priesthood line from the date on which Marion G. Romney became an apostle, which screwed the whole line up. And therefore, I had to fix that, and President Pugh was grateful. But it imposed upon him the obligation then to go back and straighten out all those whom *he* had ordained. Well, that's neither here nor there.

"They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God." I spoke in Centerville about what it meant to be the seed of Abraham. You ought to listen to that talk—we don't have time. We have to accumulate; we have to aggregate information. And we've got to assume that you've *got* what we've talked about before so that we can press on.

Once you have done those: *Also all they who receive this priesthood [now it's in the singular; now it has been reduced back to the unitary. Now we're talking about that which is the fullness. We're now talking about something other than the different portions; we're talking about this priesthood] receive me, saith the Lord* (D&C 84:35; see also T&C 82:17 RE).

We take that to mean that '*not actually the Lord, for goodness sake*'—but to mean rather instead, that if you have this priesthood, somehow the Lord has received you. Somehow, if you've got this, you belong to Him in some metaphysical sort of fashion, in which, "On account of having priesthood, I am received of Jesus." Take the words literally and say to yourself: if you've got *this*, if *this* is what you have managed to accumulate, *then* one of the evidences of having accumulated it will be receiving the Lord.

For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me (D&C 84:36; see also T&C 82:17 RE). I suggested in Centerville that the word 'servants,' in this context, meant angels. An angel—The word is derived from a Greek word that simply means 'messenger,' and the messenger can't be on their own errand. They have to have a message that is being brought *from* another—the other being the Lord. Therefore, if the message originates *with the Lord* and the message is delivered by a messenger, it does not matter if the one delivering the message is a mortal, as we find in the Book of Mormon where someone says, "Last night"—King Benjamin, I believe, said, "Last night the Lord told me this," or, "Last night the angel taught me this, and so today I'm going to teach *you* this" (See Mosiah 3:2-23; see also Mosiah 1:13-18 RE). In that context, King Benjamin *was* the angel. And therefore, as long as they bear a message from the Lord, they fit the definition.

"He that receiveth my servants receiveth me." That is, if it's the voice of God and it's coming to you from Him, and it's authentically His message, and you receive it as if it were from His

own mouth, then you've received from Him at least His voice. But, it doesn't end there: *He that receiveth me receiveth my Father* (D&C 84:37; see also T&C 82:17 RE).

In this context, what he's talking about is the same thing that you find in the 14th chapter of the book of John, in which Christ says that He will not leave you comfortless, but He will come to comfort you. And then He and His Father will take up Their abode with you (See John 14:23; see also John 9:8 RE and T&C 171 Testimony of St. John 10:13 RE). This is not an abstraction. The idea that this is something that happens in your heart (you can read in the Doctrine and Covenants) *is an old sectarian notion, and is false* (D&C 130:3). It means a literal appearance of these Holy Beings to minister, to comfort, and ultimately to take up their abode.

He that receiveth my Father [and I would add, "while yet in the flesh"] receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him. And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood. (D&C 84:38-39; see also T&C 82:17 RE)

And what is that oath and that covenant? It is *the Father's word*, which cannot be broken. It's not something you aspire to, but it's something that you accept by the conditions that are set out in Doctrine and Covenants section 84. It is something which [is] received by an oath and a covenant given by the One who *can* give covenants. Just as we talked about in Centerville, it's a covenant which originates from God. It is His word, which cannot be broken (See Ether 3:12; see also Ether 1:12 RE). Therefore, when the Father covenants that you're going to inherit, it is a covenant that *will* surely come to pass.

*Therefore, all...who receive the priesthood [singular; implying it in its fullest manifestation], receive this oath and covenant **of my Father** [this is not talking about abstractions, quorums, churches, organizations, orders, choruses. This is talking about a direct, covenantal relationship established by *the Father* with *this—this priesthood*—the one about which today I would like to speak: *this priesthood*], ...which [*He, the Father*] *he cannot break* [because if He were to break this once He has made this covenant with someone, He would cease to be God, and He *cannot* do that. Therefore, *this* covenant cannot be broken by Him], *neither can it be moved* ([Emphasis added.] D&C 84:40; see also T&C 82:17 RE). That is, once the Father has made that covenant, earth and hell cannot make it otherwise.*

You do not need to leave anything behind that is good or noble or virtuous. And you, and we, do not need to establish another entity. You can serve wherever you are. *However*, to preserve the Restoration itself, starting now, we need to more closely follow the pattern of scripture.

The baptism prayer was given by Christ. This is in 3 Nephi chapter 11, beginning at verse 19:

And Nephi arose and went forth, and bowed himself before the Lord and did kiss his feet. And the Lord commanded him that he should arise. And he arose and stood before

*him. And the Lord **said** unto him: I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people when I am again ascended into heaven. And again the Lord called others, and **said** unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. ([Emphasis added.] 3 Nephi 11:19-22; see also 3 Nephi 5:7-8 RE)*

I'm not going to take the time to do it, but if you want to check this out, you can check this out on your own. *Christ did not touch them.* He said to them, "I give you power to baptize." When Christ touches them (which will be later still in the narrative), the fact that He touches them is so remarkable in the narrative that the verse talking about it repeats three times that the Lord touched them. The presence of God touching them, being so significant that it's mentioned three times in the narrative when it happens, drives home the point that it's missing *here*.

How then does the authority to baptize come? Well, once John the Baptist came and laid his hands on Joseph— We've had a practice of continuing that and we ought to continue that. But before any of you baptize any other of you, do this! Do this! It's the same thing that Alma did in Mosiah chapter 18. If you go back to Mosiah chapter 18, before he baptized,

Alma took Helam [this is Mosiah 18:12]...stood forth in the water, and cried, saying: O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart. And when he...said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. (Mosiah 18:12-13; see also Mosiah 9:8 RE)

He got the authority to baptize. If you're going to use the priesthood—no matter what the Church has told you, and no matter what quorum leaders and respected others, including your own father perhaps, have taught you—before you do so, *ask God* to give you the authority. And if you get it, you get it from Him, and then you're not dependent upon someone else. But get the authority from Him. Power is required. It *must* come from Christ. The pattern must be followed.

John the Baptist, when he restored the authority (in Joseph Smith, verse 69— Joseph Smith History 1:69), said that it,

Holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken...from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. (Joseph Smith History 1:69; see also T&C Joseph Smith History 14:1 RE)

The Gospel of repentance is returning to face God. Baptism by immersion is for the remission of sins. And John's declaration does not say that it will not be taken from the church; it says it will "*be [not] taken...from **the earth**.*" It was restored to remain on the earth. And no matter what happens among those that choose to abuse one another, it needs to be preserved by a faithful few so that it doesn't cease from the earth. It is still here—though it has been much neglected and it has been much abused. But with you, renew it. Renew it using Alma's example.

He'd been previously ordained as one of the priests in wicked King Noah's court. And he'd been ordained by him *precisely* because he was wicked. He qualified; he was corrupt. Noah wanted him, and so he got ordained. But before he undertook to use the authority, he *asked God* to give him power. And God, seeing penitence on the earth, respected it and poured out His Spirit upon him, so that Alma could baptize with authority. And the proof of that consisted not merely in what it was that Alma experienced, with the Spirit empowering him to perform the ordinance, but it consisted also in the effect that the ordinance itself had upon *both* Helam and Alma—who himself went into the water at the same time. The Spirit was poured out upon them. Renew it!

Likewise, we need to renew a community—not an organization, but a fellowship; not a hierarchy, but a group of equals. The community needs to be renewed. Men who have been ordained already should renew this in the manner I just described. Continuing then with what Christ said:

And he said unto them: On this wise shall ye baptize; and there [should] be no disputations among you. Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them—Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water. (3 Nephi 11:22-23; see also 3 Nephi 5:8 RE and T&C 175:8 RE)

I would recommend, if it is at all possible, that the water for a living ordinance be living water. I would not perform this— I would get out of the buildings that are built by the hands of men and I would use the things of God. You're trying to connect to God; use the things that He has made. I recognize there may be circumstances where that becomes impossible. I've been baptized twice—once in the Atlantic and once in a stream in the Little Cottonwood Canyon. Both times it was so cold my lips were blue. And I recognize that some of you hardy people may not want to experience a baptism that invigorates you to the point of turning your lips blue, but I would recommend when you go down and stand in the water, that it be living water.

And in my name shall ye baptize them...now behold, these are the words...ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. (3 Nephi 11:23-25; see also 3 Nephi 5:8 RE and T&C 175:8-9 RE)

When I was baptized into the LDS Church, the baptismal prayer was: "Having been *commissioned* of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father...." When I was re-baptized, I was re-baptized by one who had authority from Christ; therefore, in that baptism the words were: "Having *authority*...of Jesus Christ." If all you're going to do is baptize someone again according to the LDS pattern, with a commission in a Church, don't bother doing it. But if you follow these principles, and if the Spirit empowers you to baptize, then baptize having authority from Christ and follow His words. We've deviated long enough. It's time to return.

Then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name; for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one. And according as I have commanded you thus shall ye baptize. (3 Nephi 11:26-28; see also 3 Nephi 5:8 RE and T&C 175:10 RE)

I'm telling you in the name of the Lord, that that commandment is renewed again *by Him* today, to you. This is His command. Do it on this wise.

And then the question is, "Do you lay on hands?" Yes, I would follow everything that has been given to this point. We're 'adding to;' we're not throwing away. We're trying to preserve, and we're trying to return, and we're trying to renew. We are not trying to tread under our feet anything that is useful, laudable, worthy, desirable, or that came down from the Restoration. It is not God's purpose to abandon the Restoration, but it is His purpose to preserve it.

There are changes presently underway that are going to *jar* the LDS community more and more in the coming years. If you are not prepared to preserve what has been given, *everything* will be lost in what will soon happen. It's necessary that there be someone who seeks for some community that tries to preserve, in its purity, what is rapidly becoming at an accelerating pace more and more corrupted. It *has* to be preserved. Every one of you have some issue that you would say to yourself, "*If this*, then I would no longer follow." All of the "*if this's*" are in the wings. Inexorably, they are coming. It has to be preserved, and it has to be preserved in a manner in which it can remain pure.

As to the Sacrament, *only an anti-Christ* would forbid you from partaking of the Sacrament in the way commanded by your Lord. *That* is an abomination. If you get together, even if it's only in your own family, partake of the Sacrament together. Let *no one* forbid you from partaking in remembrance of Christ, because *He* commanded that you do it. Follow the pattern that is given to us. In Doctrine and Covenants section 20, verse 76, one of the things that used to be practiced—that has since been abandoned and ought to be renewed among you—is that when the Sacrament is blessed, kneel. Kneel. "*Kneel with the church*" (D&C 20:76; see also T&C Joseph Smith History 16:24 RE). Remember it. Keep it. Do the things that have been instructed, in the pattern that He commanded that they be observed.

If you partake of wine— And for some reason you either are opposed to alcohol or, alternatively, you have some medical condition, use grape juice. Use red grape juice. Use the symbol of the blood of our Lord. I can tell you that, generally, red wine is *bitter* for a reason. And partaking of that *bitter* wine in remembrance of the blood that was shed is apt.

Here is the doctrine that is required for us *to be gathered*. Doctrine and Covenants section 10, beginning at verse 57:

Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I came unto mine own, and mine own received me not. I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. (D&C 10:57-58; see also T&C Joseph Smith History 10:18 and 13:10 RE)

Even today, He is the light that shines in the darkness, not comprehended because there's just too much darkness. *We forbid* His presence by quenching the Spirit and not allowing utterance in our meetings. *That's* where we should be hearing from the Spirit and edifying one another.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's talk entitled "Christ's Discourse on the Road to Emmaus," given in Fairview, Utah, on April 14, 2007,
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #2, entitled "Faith," given in Idaho Falls, Idaho, on September 28th, 2013,
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #3, entitled "Repentance," given in Logan, Utah, on September 29th, 2013,
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #5, entitled "Priesthood," given in Orem, Utah, on November 2nd, 2013, and
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #10, entitled "Preserving the Restoration," given in Mesa, Arizona, on September 9th, 2014.