

Podcast Episode 108: Renewal, Part 2

This is Part 2 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: In Third Nephi chapter 21, the Lord talked about some things that become exceptionally relevant in light of what we've covered today.

And verily I say unto you, I give unto you a sign, that [you] may know the time when these things shall be about to take place—that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and...establish again among them my Zion. This is addressing all of those various remnants, wherever that they may be found, so long as they are some residue of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 21:1; see also 3 Nephi 9:11 RE)

And behold, this is the [sign] which I will give unto you for a sign—for verily I say unto you that when these things which I declare unto you, and which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself, and by the power of the Holy Ghost which shall be given unto you of the Father, shall be made known unto the Gentiles [see, the Gentiles had to first receive some things] that they [the Gentiles] may know concerning this people who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, and concerning this my people who shall be scattered by them [the Gentiles]. Verily, verily, I say unto you, when these things shall be made known unto them [some constituent group of Gentiles] of the Father, and shall come forth of the Father, from them unto you; (3 Nephi 21:2-3; see also 3 Nephi 9:11 RE)

It can't come from any source other than from the Father—the Father and Christ being one—the authority to minister and to deliver it coming from Them, the power to baptize being brought forth from some remnant of the Gentiles who care to bear it.

For it is wisdom in the Father that they [the Gentiles] should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with [this] people... with his people, O house of Israel. (3 Nephi 21:4; see also 3 Nephi 9:11 RE)

"O house of Israel" is much more. "O house of Israel" is that same inclusive of all bits and remnants, wherever they may be found. I talked about covenants when we were in Centerville and about the fulfillment of the covenants. *All* of the covenants which apply to people scattered everywhere, all of those included within the previous remnants—they need to be gathered into one constituent group.

*Therefore, when these works and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter shall come forth **from** the Gentiles... (3 Nephi 21:5; see also 3 Nephi 9:11 RE, emphasis added)*

Not their “book”; their *works*. Not their “book”; the works—bringing to pass the Doctrine of Christ, establishing repentance, declaring and baptizing by the authority of Christ, having people visited by fire and the Holy Ghost—these are the works. These are the works.

*Shall come forth from the Gentiles, unto your seed which shall dwindle in unbelief because of iniquity; For thus it behooveth the Father that it **should** come forth from the Gentiles, that he may show forth his power unto the Gentiles. (3 Nephi 21:5-6; see also 3 Nephi 9:11 RE, emphasis added)*

That’s what He needs now to do. That’s what He intends *to* do—if you will receive it.

*For this cause that the Gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that **they** may repent and come unto me and be baptized in my name and know of the true points of my doctrine, that **they** may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel. (3 Nephi 21:6; see also 3 Nephi 9:11 RE, emphasis added)*

You can't get there except through the power of the doctrine and the power of the ordinance that God has given, in the way that it has been given, performed with the exactness, fidelity, and language that has been given to us by Christ Himself.

When these things come to pass that thy seed shall begin to know these things—it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he...made unto the people who are of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 21:7; see also 3 Nephi 9:11 RE)

All of them. It’s a witness that His work has commenced.

And when that day shall come, it shall come to pass that kings shall shut their mouths; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and...marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them those who will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them. But behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him, for I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. Therefore it shall come to pass that whosoever will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ, which the Father shall cause him to bring forth unto the Gentiles, and shall give unto him power that he shall bring [it] forth unto the Gentiles, (it shall be done even as Moses said) they shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant. ...[whoever] will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ. (3 Nephi 21:8-11; see also 3 Nephi 9:11-12 RE)

These are Christ's words. We touched on these words all the way back in Boise. It was quoted by the angel Moroni, referring to Joseph Smith. Acts 3, verses 22 to 23:

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. (see also Acts 2:3 RE)

That prophet is Christ. It doesn't say Christ is going to come and deliver His words; it says, His "words." Those who *will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ, ...they shall be cut off* (3 Nephi 21:11; see also 3 Nephi 9:12 RE). And the angel Moroni said to Joseph, in verse 40 of the Joseph Smith History, *The day had not yet come when 'they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people,' but soon would come* (see also Joseph Smith History part 3:4 RE).

That prophet is Christ. His words are what I've spoken to you today.

And my people who are a remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, yea, in the midst of them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Their hand shall be lifted up upon their adversaries, and all their enemies shall be cut off. Yea, wo be unto the Gentiles except they repent; for it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Father, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots; And I will cut off the cities of thy [lands], and throw down all thy strongholds; And I will cut off witchcrafts out of [the] land, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers; Thy graven images will I also cut off. (3 Nephi 21:12-17; see also 3 Nephi 9:12 RE)

Graven images are people you worship. Graven images include men to whom you submit as objects or idols of authority in whom you trust, thinking that they can deliver you by some magic, using some key that they purport to hold, whether Catholic or Mormon or Fundamentalist. Graven images—they're going to be cut off.

Thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands; And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee; so will I destroy thy cities. And it shall come to pass that all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, shall be done away. For it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that at that day whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel [that's all remnants gathered together]; And I will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard. But if they... [speaking of the Gentiles] if they will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I

have given this land for their inheritance. (3 Nephi 21:17-22; see also 3 Nephi 9:12, 10:1 RE)

Because every time there's a covenant, there is always a land. And this is the land that God covenants He will give. And the people to whom He will give it are those that come back and receive the covenant, including the Gentiles *in whose ears* this first shall sound...if they will come. And coming unto the covenant—that is not yet possible. It requires more than has at present been given. It is possible to come in and become part of His church. It is possible, if you follow as you've been instructed today, to become part of the church He recognizes and will preserve. But coming fully into the covenant... That will require more than has at present been given. It will require a covenant. It will require adoption. It will require sealing. It was what Joseph looked forward to have happen at some point in the future during the days of his prophecy.

And they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven... [In this case, it is the singular—it's not the "powers"—because when you have Him present with you, you have all the authority.] then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst. And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day... (3 Nephi 21:23-26; see also 3 Nephi 10:1 RE)

Christ will come. Once the covenant has been renewed, the city of Zion will follow. The Lord's presence will come, and then the final stage begins.

Even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among...the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem. Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may [be]come [in] unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name. Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; ...they shall not go out in haste, nor...by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward. (3 Nephi 21:26-29; see also 3 Nephi 10:1 RE)

It's not gonna happen in haste. And the work of the Father that will commence in those nations, to commence the possibility for the gathering, will involve destroying a great deal of political, social, and military obstructions that prevent the gathering—prevent even the preaching to those that would gather if they could hear. But the work of the Father (and it's always masculine when it comes to destruction)... The work of the Father is going to bring this to an end. All the scattered remnants will be brought back again. The original, unified

family of God will be restored again. The Fathers will have our hearts turned to them because in that day, once it's permitted to get that far, we will be part of that family again.

Our day is *filled* with darkness and deception. Our day is the day about which Nephi wrote. If you turn to Second Nephi chapter 28, beginning halfway through verse 4; *They shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance* (see also 2 Nephi 12:1 RE).

This is why the ordinance has to be renewed. This is why the pattern has to be followed. This is why the light has to be turned on. Because the Holy Ghost has not assisted with the kind of robust assistance that it can if you're penitent. God cannot dwell in unclean vessels, and so He remedies that by cleaning the vessel—cleaning it in accordance with the pattern that He's given, thereby making it possible that the Holy Ghost *can* give to *you* utterance.

All, universally all of the various iterations of Mormonism are less and less like the foundation and we need to return. If you go back to what I said about baptism, you will find that on the topic of baptism, there is an example taken from the Book of Mormon in which Alma—who had been ordained in the court of King Noah—he was chosen precisely because he was wicked. Alma, who probably had a line of authority that was compromised by wickedness that had intervened, went out to baptize Helam, and before he did so, he asked heaven to give him the power to baptize. Kay? He got the power to baptize and he baptized Helam.

What I suggest in the talk, is that everyone who has been ordained in the LDS tradition, who fits in the category that President Boyd Packer, in general conference, lamented that we've done a good job of spreading the authority of the priesthood, but we've done a poor job of getting power in the priesthood. Go out and obtain from heaven the connection that gives the power in the priesthood. And let's have... Those who get the power from heaven, let's have them go out and baptize again, so that we know it is done with power; and not done merely with an authoritative tradition lacking in power that cannot be accepted by heaven.

The evidence of Alma's authoritative baptism was the outpouring of the Spirit. There have been those who have been baptized, and spent their life in Mormonism, or some other sect—Mormon related, who say they never felt like they had the confirmation of the Spirit. They have gone out, sought for, obtained power from heaven, baptized, and the ordinances had an effect upon people.

The purpose of renewing baptism is to take what may be a hollow gesture, performed by people who have authority with no power, and turn it into an event with power that connects people to heaven; so that we can renew the restoration like it was renewed in the days of Alma, through Alma, and in the model of the Book of Mormon—which answers so many doctrinal, imponderables for us today. 'Why do we have authority and no power?' as the president of the quorum of the twelve apostles in general conference lamented to the church. It's because we're not doing what we should be doing. It's not necessary to have a

revolution that divorces us from the restoration. It's necessary to have a revolution that connects us back to the restoration and its beginnings.

How you get from where you are now, to the point where it would be suitable and appropriate for an event like that to even be considered, is a long, long effort; because we have a restoration to complete. We have prophecies to fulfill, we have things that need to be done, and we have covenants that need to be renewed. And all of that begins again in embryo at the very basic level of faith, repentance, baptism, fellowships, collecting tithing, assisting one another, and acting like we're Christians; and acting like we care about one another. And, in fact, stopping with the notion that climbing up and having authority over someone is a *good thing*, and recognizing it for what it is—it's an evil thing. No power or influence can or ought to be exercised by one man over another. The only way that you should exercise influence is by meekness, and gentleness, and persuasion. If you know more than I do, then enlighten me. Persuade me. Teach me that my heart will resonate with what you have to say. But don't presume that you have the right to call me, and afflict me, and tell me that if I don't bend my knee at this particular moment, then you're going to use some compulsory means in order to get, from me, exactly what you hope to extract from me. No one should be imposing upon anyone else.

When Alma heard the message of Abinadi, he went out and he sought to repent. Then, when he performed the first baptism of Helam, before doing so, he did what you did before blessing the sacrament, and that was to ask God for authority to proceed. And then he proceeded to baptize both Helam and himself and started anew. The Book of Mormon mentions that people ordain according to the gifts and power that is in them, given by God. Kay?

In order for us to accomplish what presently needs to be done, we need to have the ability to spontaneously move this work forward globally. A young man who's a returned LDS missionary, who had been ordained an Elder in the LDS Church, became disaffected, kept his testimony of Joseph, the Book of Mormon, the Restoration; but what he saw in the Church convinced him that the Church itself had little, if anything, to offer him any longer. As a result of his prayerful searching and studying, he became convinced that there was something afoot that God was doing, right now, among us. He contacted people through Request Baptism and the Fellowship Locator and began a series of correspondence. Because of a whole lot of complications, no one was able to go to Africa where this fellow is located in order to minister there. But he had a line of authority from the Church. And so he was walked through the process of going to God, and praying that God ratify what he'd been given, so that he could perform baptisms. And on October... Or, excuse me, on December 29th (I don't know how many days ago that was—a week or so ago), 22 people were baptized in Uganda using authority from heaven; that once God said to him, "You may proceed," is exactly the same as Alma being told to go forward with Helam and, thereafter, with others. We do not need to send people all over the world. We have the ability, because of what has been put in place, to spontaneously have this arise globally, and we just had an example of that occurring.

Now, I've mentioned this before. Largely the purpose of Aaronic priesthood is to curse people, and the purpose of Melchizedek priesthood is to bless people. Aaronic priesthood is a fairly durable kind of priesthood. It was what was involved in all kinds of rites and performances under the Law of Moses, which were pretty easy to run afoul of and wind up in a state of uncleanness or ceremonial condemnation. And you had to renew... heavens, the High Priest had to renew, and he was the top of the pyramid. And you had to go through the Day of Atonement ceremonies. You had to purge from top to bottom, and then everyone was expected to purge with some regularity. Even a woman's regular monthly cycle resulted in ceremonial uncleanness requiring renewal. Childbirth was considered something that required a sacrifice and a ceremonial cleansing. Every time you turn around under the Law of Moses you became unclean, and every time you turned around under the Law of Moses you had to fetch another animal, run up to the temple, offer sacrifice, and undo the ceremonial uncleanness. And so what the purpose of the Aaronic priesthood ministry was, was to bring you under condemnation regularly. Well, it's pretty durable precisely because of its functionality.

When the Aaronic priesthood was restored, a promise was given, or a timeframe for its persistence was described, depending on whether you listen to the Oliver Cowdery account or the Joseph Smith account. It's supposed to endure that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering in righteousness unto the Lord, or until the sons of Levi do offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. Well, that event has not occurred. It's persistent. Offices and positions and organization are not necessarily proof of possession of priestly authority. And someone raised the problem of Heber J Grant's practice of ordaining people to an office but not conferring upon them priesthood—a practice that persisted for about twenty years. I mean John Taylor predicted that there would come a time when members put people in the church, claiming to hold priestly authority, would not know whether or not they actually did.

I guess the proof is in the pudding in whether or not angels minister and other things happen, which if they do, it's probably pretty good evidence. And if it doesn't, maybe raises a question about, well,... "Maybe I ought to be reordained." But, I would use and rely on the LDS lines of authority until they get displaced at some point in the future. But right now, for this incipient work, we really need as broad a base from which to begin to change the direction of the decay, and renew the direction in the hopes of restoration; so that we get far enough along that God approves of some of the things that we're doing, and gets behind it. I think the last conference up in Boise is evidence that God's somewhat approving even if He's somewhat scolding.

The reason why father Abraham had to go to Melchizedek in order to then rejoice and say, "I have gotten me a priesthood," was because, although, the line may have had fatherly connections from father Shem down to Abraham, the immediate ancestors of father Abraham were idolaters. True enough, his father repented for a short period of time but he didn't persist in that. And therefore, despite the fact that Melchizedek certainly held authority, there were members of the posterity of Melchizedek, between him and father

Abraham, who were lost; and then Abraham was required to come and reconnect because of the apostasy.

When you're talking about the greatest blessings that God offers for the salvation of his children—when you're talking about the family of God, if it could simply be put in one time forever, then putting it into father Adam would have solved the problem all the way down to us today. It can and it has been broken. It can and it has been restored. It can and it has been reconnected after a period of apostasy. In fact, once you reconnect Abraham with Melchizedek, you actually have, then, a family of God, beginning with Adam, that runs in one continuous line right down to Ephraim. Then you have Joseph's comment about the prophets of the Old Testament. I'm not sure that he means all of them, but he certainly means... he certainly means a number that are identifiable. All prophets held Melchizedek priesthood and were ordained by God himself. Joseph said that, okay? So I don't think what Joseph is talking about is like, you know, "I confer upon you something." I think he's talking about this very connection where you have an isolated faithful individual, who honors the fathers and is doing everything that he can in his day, but for whom there is no existing possibility for having it occur. God fixes that problem for that individual, not in order to establish a new dispensation in which salvation precedes with the gathering of a people, and a making of a people; but it's a dispensation to that individual for purposes of trying to call others to repentance. And if others were to repent, then God could do something with that.

The reason He lead away Lehi, and the family of Lehi, was to try and establish a righteous branch and a vineyard of the Lord, and the only way to do that was to get them away from the people who were corrupt in Jerusalem; and, maybe, give them the potential for holding onto and becoming a people of promise. And they were on again, off again, and faithful. A number of troubling moments in their history, but in general, they were sufficiently intact by the time that the Lord came, that He visited with them, and He renewed that with them; and that connection was certainly fulsome at that point.

The only purpose behind the last days work, both what was happening at the time of Joseph and what the Lord is offering to us today, is to accomplish that fulsome restoration of the family of God. I mean, Joseph talked about temples, and they were built incrementally, and they never reached the finish line, even on the second one before he was killed. But he laid a fabulous foundation, and pointed in a direction that the restoration necessarily must go to and complete. Because if we don't... 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... we have a hard time staying on task. It's one of the gentile afflictions. We're very ambitious people and we're very ego-centric. And a lot of what is going to be required will require sacrifice and selflessness.

This world is a place of trial and testing. Before creation, it was planned that when we came here we would be "proven" by what we experience. That happens now. Prove yourself by listening to God, hearing His voice, and obeying. Sometimes we are like Alma and want to do greater things to help God's work, but the greatest work of all is to respond to God's voice and prove you are willing to listen and obey Him.

I want to show you the depths of truth that spreads through the ocean, distances and directions that are infinite. But I must be content to use only a cup to give what little a man can measure and convey. Only God can show it because it is too great, too far above man's poor ability. *It's not lawful for man, neither is man capable to make it known, for it is only to be seen and understood by those who purify themselves before God; to whom He grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves, while in the flesh* (paraphrased from D&C 76:115-118; see also T&C 69:29 RE).

It was a year ago that a renewed covenant was given to all willing to accept it by God. New covenant people sprang into existence when a few accepted that gift. Until that moment, there were only lost and scattered remnants who, although the object of God's earlier covenants, lived in ignorance of God's renewed labor in His vineyard. Now, in addition to other remnants, there is a new covenant remnant aware of God's renewed labor. A remnant who has been asked to labor alongside the Master of the Vineyard as He sends His final invitation to come to His wedding feast. Christ spoke of this very thing when He taught the Nephites. He foretold that the barren gentiles would eventually produce more children for His Kingdom than the remnants on this land and at Jerusalem. Christ said:

And then shall that which is written come to pass: Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child, for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes, for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded for thou shalt not be put to shame, for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy maker, thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: the God of the whole earth shall he be called. (3 Nephi 10:2 RE).

We can see a new and different meaning in Christ's Book of Mormon prophecy to the Nephites. Before, Christ's words seemed to foretell that the lost and scattered remnants would build the Lord's House and the New Jerusalem. Now it appears that there are

covenant receiving gentiles who are included. Gentiles, who repent and hearken to Christ's words and do not harden their hearts, will be brought into the covenant as His people.

Christ mentions three distinct bodies. First, those who have accepted the covenant and are numbered among the remnant of Jacob to whom Christ gave this land for their inheritance. Second, the lost descendants of the remnant of Jacob, on this land, who will repent and return. Third, as many from the House of Israel who will repent and return. These three will build a city that shall be called the New Jerusalem. All three of those will come to know God in gathering and laboring to build the New Jerusalem. Then they will go out to assist all of God's people in their lost and forgotten state to be awakened to the work of God, and gathered as if one body of believers. Then all who have any of the blood of Abraham, who are scattered upon the face of the land, will come to be taught in the New Jerusalem. There the Power of Heaven will come down to be among them. The angels and Enoch, with his ten thousands, will come down. The Ancient of Days, or Adam—our first father, and Christ will also be in the midst of His people.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #10 entitled "Preserving the Restoration," given in Mesa, AZ on September 9th, 2014
- A Q&A session entitled "A Visit with Denver Snuffer," held on May 13, 2015
- A regional conference Q&A session, held at Big Cottonwood Canyon, UT on September 20, 2015
- A fireside talk entitled "Cursed, Denied Priesthood," given in Sandy, UT on January 7th, 2018; and
- Denver's remarks entitled "Keep the Covenant: Do the Work," given at the Remembering the Covenants Conference in Layton, UT on August 4, 2018