

Podcast Episode 109: Renewal, Part 3

This is Part 3 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 first and primary question you have to ask is: Take a look around this world and ask yourself if, in this world, it makes sense to you that there is no Creator? Does it make sense to you that everything that's going on here simply is a haphazard accident? That there is no creation; there's no creator; there's no divine plan; there's nothing here that operates on any other basis than random chance? If you reach the conclusion that everything that's going on here could possibly be by random chance, then read Darwin's *Black Box*. There's a little over 200 different things that have to... have to line up perfectly in order for your blood to clot. If any one of those 200 things don't happen simultaneously (it's a little over 200), if any one of those don't happen simultaneously, you will die. For some of those, if you get a cut and they're not present, you'll bleed out. You'll simply die because you'll exsanguinate. For others of those, if you get a cut, your entire blood system will turn solid, and you will die because clotting knows no end. Darwin's *Black Box* makes the argument that it is evolutionarily impossible for trial and error to solve the problem of blood clotting, because every one of the steps that are required, if nature simply experiments with it, kills the organism. And that ends that. You don't know that you're going to succeed until you've lined them all up, and you've made them all work. It's an interesting... It's an interesting book—Darwin's *Black Box*. In essence, it's saying that the evolutionists require more faith really, than do people that believe in God; because the theory upon which they base their notion requires far too many things to occur by trial and error than is conceivably possible.

Well, if there is a creation, then there is a Creator. If there is a Creator, then the question is... I assume all of you have had a father or a grandfather—someone that you respected—a mother or a grandmother, an aunt or an uncle that over the course of a lifetime developed skills and talents and humor and character—someone that you admire—and then they pass on. How profligate a venture is it to create someone that you... a creation that you view as noble, as worthy, as admirable, as interesting, as fascinating—some person that you love; take that and just obliterate it. God, who can make such a creation, surely doesn't waste a creation. He's not burning the library at Alexandria every day by those who pass on. God had to have a purpose behind it all. I don't know how many of you have had a friend, or a loved one, or a family member who passed on who, subsequent to their death, appeared to you, had a conversation with you in a dream, in a thought. I can recall going to my father's funeral; and his casket, with his body, was in the front of the little chapel we were in, but his presence was *not* there. That may have been the hull he occupied while he was living and breathing. I had no sense at all that my father was there. I did have a sense that he was present, but he wasn't in the coffin. He was elsewhere in the room. I couldn't see him, but I could have pointed to him and said, "He's here." In fact, I made a few remarks

at my father's funeral, and I largely directed them at him.

Nature testifies over and over again. It doesn't matter when the sun goes down, there's going to be another dawn. It doesn't matter when all the leaves fall off the deciduous trees in the fall, there's going to come a spring. There's going to be a renewal of life. There are all kinds of animals in nature that go through this really loathsome, disgusting, wretched existence, and then they transform. And where they were a pest before, now they're bright, and they're colorful, and they fly, and they pollinate. Butterflies help produce the very kinds of things that their larvae stage destroyed. These are signs. These are... These are testimonies. Just like the transformation of the caterpillar into the butterfly—the pest into the thing of beauty; the thing that ate the vegetables that you were trying to grow, into the thing that helps pollinate the things that you want to grow—that's the plan for all of us. So, when you study the scriptures, the objective should not be: Can I trust the text? Can I evaluate the text? Can I... Can I use a form of criticism against the text in order to weigh, dismiss, belittle, judge? Take all that you know about nature. Take all that you know about this world and the majesty of it all. Take all that you know that informs you that there is hope, there is joy, there is love. Why do you love your children? Why do your children love you? These kinds of things exist. They're real. They're tangible. And they're important. And they're part of what God did when He created this world. Keep *that* in mind when you're studying. And search the scriptures to try and help inform you how you can better appreciate, how you can better enjoy, how you can better love, how you can better have hope. What do *they* have to say that can bring you closer to God? Not: Can I find a way to dismiss something that Joseph said or did? As soon as Joseph was gone off the scene, people that envied the position that he occupied took over custody of everything, including the documents. And what we got as a consequence of that, is a legacy that allowed a trillion dollar empire to be constructed. Religion should require our sacrifice. It should not be here to benefit us. We should have to *give*, not get. And in the giving of ourselves, what we get is in the interior—it's in the heart. It's the things of enduring beauty and value.

The Lord is equal to the challenge. He will establish a new civilization. It will be founded on the fullness of His gospel. Lost truths will be restored; the path of righteousness will be returned.

Society is broken. Everywhere we see corrupt cultures based on corrupt laws, corrupt religions, corrupt values, and ultimately, corrupt thought. Beginning again requires recivilizing people. To be free from corruption requires a change in thinking. If the Lord's to accomplish this, there will need to be a new temple at the center of that new civilization.

The Lord talked with Enoch regarding His return and started with a description of His temple. *For **there** shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem* (Moses 7:62; see also Genesis 4:22 RE, emphasis added). It can only become Zion and a New Jerusalem if the Lord's tabernacle is there. His temple will be where He teaches all that must be understood to please God. Then, when people rise up to become what the Lord expects, His risen Tabernacle of glory, and the Lord Himself, will come to dwell there.

There's a great deal of work to be done to establish a foundation. And an even greater work thereafter. When God has His people, they are always commanded to build a temple. Joseph Smith explained:

What was the object of gathering the...people of God in any age of the world?...The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose. (DHC 5:423)

Joseph Smith taught the Relief Society that “the church is not now organized into its proper order, and cannot be until the temple is completed” (*Joseph Smith Papers*, Relief Society Minute Book, p. 36). Some believe that meant temple rites would fit inside the existing church organization. However, it is possible, if the temple had been completed, the people might have been organized in a new and different order, resembling the order in the age of the patriarchs. Joseph never had the opportunity to participate in that advancement. Before the temple was finished, Joseph was dead, and those who were leading had no intention or ability to reorganize the church into the “proper order.”

The need for covenant people to cooperate in building a temple has been the same in any age. Temple builders founded the earliest civilizations. They did this to imitate the antediluvians. The Book of Abraham account suggests there was something *in* Egypt, below the floodwaters, worth waiting for the waters to recede. Some observers claim there is physical evidence that the earliest temple-complex structures in Egypt were built prior to the flood. They use archeological evidence at the Giza site to conclude the place was once under water, consistent with the description in the Book of Abraham.

When the first temples were built—or inherited by ancient civilizations—the center of life, government, education, culture, and art was at the temple. This was handed down from the first generations. The temple was founded before and will be needed to be the foundation again. When there has been an apostasy, temple building has been part of restoring. A *new* civilization will only become possible through teachings learned in the future House of God. The necessary ordinances can only be restored *in that setting*. There you will receive an uncorrupted restoration of the original faith taught to Adam and the patriarchs.

Joseph Smith was told that God intended to restore what was lost—meaning the fullness of the priesthood—but it was only to be accomplished through a temple. These were the Lord's words to Joseph:

For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise, that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before [the foundation of] the world... Therefore, verily I say unto you, that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your

memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments, for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, [and] honor, and endowment of all her municipalities, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name. (D&C 124:38-39; see also T&C 141:12)

Joseph was martyred before there was a place where God could come to restore what had been lost. Joseph began to roll out a portion of temple ceremonial worship, but it was never completed. Uninspired men, who have changed, deleted, and added to what remained from Joseph, have corrupted those incomplete ceremonies.

The gospel is for redemption. Redemption from the fall returns man to God's presence. Ascending the heavenly mount is always taught in a properly-organized temple ceremonies. Ascending to heaven, redemption, and becoming part of the Family of God are all part of the ancient temple rites and must also be part of future temple rites.

The concept of "adoption" is widely recognized as part of Christianity. The term is employed loosely to mean that a person believes in Christ and recognizes Him as their Savior. The language of Paul is often cited and understood to claim believers are adopted into God's family.

For [you] have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but [you] have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself [bears] witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if [it] so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (Romans 8:15-17; see also Romans 1:34 RE)

Language in the Book of Mormon has also been used to support a loose understanding of the term "adoption."

Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongue[s] and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters. (Mosiah 27:25; see also Mosiah 11:28 RE)

The loose understanding of "adoption" was considerably tightened around October 1843 when Joseph Smith expanded his use of sealing authority. It grew from establishing marriages to include, also, man-to-man sealing through adoption. The last eight months of his life, Joseph sealed or "adopted" other men to himself. There was no settled, formal ordinance that has been preserved; and the proof of Joseph's practice is mostly post-mortem, as those who were exposed to the practice only vaguely recalled what he had done.

Nearly a decade after Joseph died, when temple ceremonial work resumed in the

Endowment House in Salt Lake, Brigham Young declared that adoption was the crowning ordinance. It was *more* important than any other temple rites, including washing, anointing, endowment, and marriage sealing.

“This Chain must not [be] broken for mankind Cannot be saved any other way. This Priesthood must be linked together so that all the Children may be linked to Father Adam. ...we will seal men to men by the keys of the Holy Priesthood. This is the highest ordinance. It is the last ordinance of the kingdom of God on the earth and above all the endowments that can be given [to] you. It is a final sealing an Eternal Principle and when once made cannot be broken by the Devil.” (*The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 5, 13 January 1856, Vol. 2, p. 1033-1034)

In that talk, Brigham Young taught that the “turning of hearts to the fathers” foretold by Malachi was only to be fulfilled through adoption. He also taught the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham regarding “his seed” would only be fulfilled through the temple ordinance of adoption. LDS Church leaders unsuccessfully tried to sort out how to practice adoption.

In a meeting of the reorganized School of Prophets, in Salt Lake City, on January 20, 1868, attended by the church presidency (Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Daniel Wells, along with Elders John Taylor, Orson Hyde, George A. Smith, Erastus Snow, George Q. Cannon, Phineas Young, and Joseph Young) the topic of adoption was discussed. President Wells conjectured: “On Adoption he supposed it had reference to the linking together of the Priesthood...that it might reach back to the link that had long since been broken, that it might present one unbroken chain” (*Salt Lake School of the Prophets: 1867-1883*, pp. 11-12; entry of 20 January 1868). In response Orson Hyde said: “The Doctrine of Adoption he knew but little about and should decline touching it until the line is chalked out” (ibid, p. 12). Scholars struggle to make sense of what Joseph was doing. And the attempts to reconstruct Joseph’s later adoption innovation are insufficient to give any firm understanding of what took place, how, or why.

Thirty years before he would become church president, Wilford Woodruff concluded that adoptions would be something a resurrected Joseph Smith would return to sort out during the millennium: “Man also will have to be sealed to man until the chain is united from Father Adam down to the last Saint. This will be the work of the Millenium and Joseph Smith will be the man to attend...it or dictate it” (*Salt Lake School of the Prophets: 1867-1883*, p. 42; December 11, 1869).

A half-century after Joseph’s death, the apostles struggled to know how it ought to work or who should be sealed to whom—how and what effect it would have in the afterlife. In a meeting on June one, 1893, attended by Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, Francis M. Lyman, John Taylor, Marriner Merrill, Abraham Cannon, George F. Gibbs, John D. McAllister, Nephi Cannon..., and James Jack, they “had some talk about the ordinance of adoption in the temple. Joseph F. Smith said Pres. [Brigham] Young had told him to follow in ordinance work for the dead the rules which [would] ordinarily govern similar work for the living”

(*Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889-1895*, p. 388). The practice was to seal faithful children to parents, and faithful parents to Joseph Smith. Woodruff explained: "I was sealed to my father, and then had him sealed to the Prophet Joseph" (ibid, p.488).

The concept of adoption affected how people understood the afterlife. This led some people to view adoption as a chance to pursue their self-interests. People began to aspire to improve their post-mortality by recruiting and acquiring descendants using adoption. The Logan Temple president was told to end his practice of recruiting adoptees. Eventually president Wilford Woodruff announced a final adoption practice on April 8, 1894: "Pres. Woodruff announced the doctrine of the sealing of children to parents as far back as...possible to trace the genealogy, and then seal the last member to the Prophet Joseph [Smith]" (ibid, p. 496).

Family relationships were reckoned by sealing, not biology. For example, Heber J. Grant was the biological son of Jedediah Grant, but because his mother was sealed to Joseph Smith, he was regarded as Joseph Smith's son.

What Joseph Smith understood about adoption did not get passed to subsequent church leaders clearly enough to preserve the practice intact. In September 1887, two months after John Taylor died, his son-in-law, John Whitaker, wrote in his diary:

I went back to the office where I found [Apostle] Brother Lorenzo Snow and [First Council of the Seventy member] Jacob Gates. They were conversed... They conversed a long time. He finally entered into a deep subject on "The Law of Adoption." Brother Gates said he didn't believe in it as did also Brother Snow. He [?] referenced back to the time that Brigham Young was in Kirtland[;] he had a person [ask] him about it and he said, "I know nothing about it." President Taylor on one different occasion had a letter written to him for the following reason: it was [two undecipherable words followed by] of ... J[oseph] Smith or rather Sister Eliza R. Snow Smith (Brother Gates didn't know which)...about 70 persons were adopted into President J[oseph] Smith's [family;] Sister Snow Smith said "she didn't understand the law" but had no objections to them being sealed to her husband. And this led Brother Gates to write to President Taylor asking him if he knew anything about it. He never answered the letter. But on another occasion Brother Gates saw him and asked him plainly. President Taylor said he knew nothing about it. And also just lately when asked by Brother Snow, President...Woodruff knew nothing about it. ["It hadn't been revealed to him." I know this at this time to say [or show] a prevailing feeling among the Twelve that they don't understand it. George...Cannon also said he didn't understand it. ("Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 2011, p. 3; pp. 101-102)

As John Taylor's health was declining in the last month of his life, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal on June 8, 1887: "I wrote 4 Letters to Jaques Emma Clara & Roskelly. I did not rest well. Too much deep thinking to Sleep" (*Wilford Woodruff's Journals*,

Vol. 8: 1 January 1881 to 31 December 1888, p. 441). Roskelly was employed as the recorder in the Logan Utah temple. That letter included the following mention of adoption:

I have adopted this rule in Sealing and Adoptions: to take such as the Lord has given me, and leave the result[s] in His hands....Paul talked a good deal about Adoptions, but we did not understand much about it, until the Lord revealed it to Joseph Smith, and we may not, perhaps, understand it now as fully as we should. Still the Sealings and Adoptions are true principles, or our Prophets have been badly deceived. ("Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 2011, p. 3; p. 103)

Adoption became progressively more controversial as time passed. Since the idea was not well understood by church leaders, they could provide no answers to questions on the subject. While bishop, Edward Bunker denounced the idea altogether, resulting in an 1892 church court that the church president and one of his counselors attended. The former bishop was charged with teaching false doctrine, and in his defense, he wrote a letter to the high council stating:

The adoption of one man to another out of the lineage, I do not understand and for that reason I would not enter into it. And adopting the dead to the living is as adopting the father to the son. I don't believe there is a man on earth that thoroughly understands the principle. If there is, I have never heard it taught as I could understand it. I believe it is permitted [sic] more to satisfy the minds of the people for the present until the Lord reveals more fully the principle. (Edward Bunker, Letter to the Bunkerville High Council, April 25, 1891, *Edward Bunker Autobiography* (1894) 37, microfilm of holograph, MS 1581, LDS Church History Library)

In his summary of the court proceeding, Wilford Woodruff relegated the subject of adoption to one of the "mysteries" which church members ought to avoid discussing because they cause difficulties. He wrote: "June 11, 1892 We Met in the Tabernacle at 10 oclock on the trial of Bishop Bunker on Doctrin [sic]. We talked to them Plainly of the impropriety of indulging in Misteries [sic] to Create difficulties among the Saints. They professed to be Satisfied" (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, supra, 9:203).

Although John Taylor perpetuated the practice, over time it diminished and then disappeared beginning with Wilford Woodruff's presidency. Woodruff changed the policy in April 1894 to seal within biological families as far back as were known, and then to seal and adopt the last parents to Joseph Smith. This made adoption less of an issue and the genealogical search for ancestors of greater concern. But by 1922 the de-emphasis on adoption allowed it to be ignored altogether. The practice Woodruff announced in 1894 was *deleted* in the published account by the Utah Genealogical Society *and* from Clark's *Messages of The First Presidency*. Today adoption has *vanished* from the LDS church and was never practiced by the RLDS church or other branches of the Restoration.

Joseph Smith did not leave the Christian practice of “adoption” a loose idea, with believers becoming sons of God by conversion, belief, or baptism. He tied it to both authority to seal and an authoritative ordinance. Both of those were lost when Joseph and Hyrum were killed.

If adoption is (as Brigham Young thought in 1856) the highest ordinance above all the endowments that can be given, if it is needed for the gospel (as taught to Abraham) to be restored, then the loss of adoption rites is indeed a sign of apostasy. Brigham Young taught adoption would bind a person beyond the devil’s power to break. But adoption was abandoned before the end of the 1800s. Adoption will need to be restored as a rite—with an accompanying authoritative ordinance and sealing—in order for the things Joseph Smith alone understood and taught, to be renewed.

As Mormon completed the record of Christ’s visit to the Nephites, he provided this description of the Book of Mormon’s purpose:

*When the Lord shall see fit, in his wisdom, that these sayings shall come unto the Gentiles according to his word, then ye may know that the covenant which the Father hath made with the children of Israel, concerning their restoration to the **lands** of their inheritance, is already beginning to be fulfilled. And ye may know that the words of the Lord, which have been spoken by the holy prophets, **shall all be fulfilled**;...The Lord will remember his covenant which he hath made unto his people of the house of Israel (3 Nephi 29:1-3; see also 3 Nephi 13:7 RE, emphasis added).*

And as Moroni concluded the record, *he* inserted some final words of instruction for the people who would receive the Book of Mormon in the last days. These words were taught to him by his father. He says:

*Hath miracles ceased?...I say unto you, nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For...they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, [showing] themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfill and to do the work of the **covenants** of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, ...declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and [this after] the manner... and [this] after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the **covenants** which he hath made unto the children of men. (Moroni 7:6 RE, emphasis added)*

There are numerous other passages in the Book of Mormon that speak to the same thing. The Book of Mormon is a forerunner—a harbinger—that was intended to say to the people who receive it: There are covenants that go back to the very beginning, to the original Fathers. Those covenants got renewed, they got restored, they got continued in the form of Abraham (who received all that had been there originally) coming out of apostasy and

being adopted back into that line of Patriarchs. That original covenant material provoked the creation of the Book of Mormon, and it is one of the major testimonies that is given to us by the Book of Mormon about the work that God intends to do in the last days. You can believe in the Bible; you can accept Jesus as your Savior; you can be (in the words of the Evangelical community) “born again.” You can be (in the words of Latter-day Saints) someone whose calling and election is made sure. But the work of God, at this point, is not about merely individual salvation; it is the work of fulfilling the covenants that were made with the Fathers. It is the work of restoring again that original gospel, of which the law given to Moses pointed forward to, but did not comprehend.

We tend to view priesthood in institutional ways. And it’s hard to be terribly critical of misunderstandings because, quite frankly, priestly authority (following the success of the Petrine branch of original Christianity and its triumph, with emphasis on authority and priesthood and keys) predisposed the entire Christian world. Even the Christian world, after the Protestant Reformation, succeeded in finally breaking off areas in which a different form of protest Christianity could be practiced that was not subservient to the Roman “See” and papal decree. They still had this misapprehension about priesthood. So, when Joseph Smith began to talk about priesthood and to begin the process of restoring it, he gave a new kind of vocabulary, but possession of a vocabulary does not mean possession of the thing.

When Abraham talks about becoming a rightful heir and becoming a high priest, it would be best if you threw out everything that you have heard, or learned, or understood about the concept of priesthood. Priesthood includes the prerogative, the right, the obligation, or the duty to go out and perform ordinances that are effective, that God will recognize to be sure—and that’s part of it, and it’s a true principle.

However, priesthood in the original sense, was something far more vast. It included an understanding of things that relate back all the way to the beginning—or before the world was—and goes forward through all periods of time until the end. It includes a basis of knowledge. So, when you read Abraham’s description of what it was he looked for, and he mentions priesthood, you have to merge that into the entirety of what he’s talking about: knowledge, understanding, commandments, instructions; having the capacity to see things in their correctly-ordered fashion similarly to how God originally intended that it be ordered—so that you are no longer out-of-sync with this creation and doing your best to “reign with blood and horror” by subduing nature with the iron plow, and gunpowder, and lead—but instead you find yourself situated in a place that Eden itself can be renewed, and harmony can be achieved between man and the earth.

The Book of Mormon is talking about something vast, but it continually points back to Abraham. And I do not care what arguments can be made, or what a pitiful effort has been put together to defend the Book of Abraham that Joseph Smith provided us. It was essential to the Restoration that the Book of Abraham be given to us, because without it, we would not understand a great deal about the Restoration and what the final objective of the Restoration was to achieve.

If you're going to please God, you don't please Him by having your "born again" experience (or having your "calling and election made sure" experience) if the result of that is to make you proud, conceited, self-assured, and arrogant, and to disconnect you from the restoration process that was begun through Joseph Smith and has yet a greater work to be done than was achieved at the time of Joseph Smith. Go off and be saved, but you will not fulfill the work of the covenants that God intends to achieve. He has committed himself to that end.

Those who will labor alongside Him—whether they be Gentile, or Lamanite or Jew, it does not matter—if they will repent and accept the process of the Restoration, as it began through Joseph Smith, not only to say it correctly but to do what it tells us needs to be done, then you will be numbered among those people that God has covenanted to gather against the coming harvest.

But if you want to be the lone guru, whose commentaries fill pages of blogging and hours of pontification, but you're going to labor at odds, I read you the warning: All that fight against Zion are going to perish. So, you can shout your hallelujahs in the spirit world, and you can proclaim your calling and election guarantees you something, but quite frankly, practically everyone's calling and election can be made sure. You get to continue progress. You get to continue to repent. God's not gonna terminate you at the end of this cycle of creation, but you're gonna be allowed to go on, and upward, if you'll continue to repent.

You will always be free to choose, but the work of the covenants that the Book of Mormon foretell are to be accomplished through the reclaiming (by repentance and returning to Him) of Gentiles that will, ultimately, reach out to (and include) restoring the Lamanites/ restoring the Jews to a knowledge of the works of the Father, that... *that* is what is on the mind of God today. *That* is the purpose of the covenant that was given unto us in Boise, just a few years ago—two years ago. *That* is what fulfilling the covenant ultimately requires that *we* labor to achieve.

That effort began in earnest with the reclaiming of the scriptures and the presenting of those to the Lord for His acceptance; and the marvelous news, that God accepted them as adequate for His purpose for us, and the commitment that He would labor with us to go forward.

Anyone can join the party. Anyone can come into this work. Anyone can remain a Catholic or a Presbyterian, a Catholic or a Latter-day Saint. It doesn't matter. Those things are more like civic clubs. I don't care if you're a Rotarian or a Kiwanis Club member—means about the same thing as belonging to any of those organizations. Associate with whoever you like to associate with, but you *must* accept baptism. You *must* accept the Book of Mormon. It *is* a *covenant*. The covenant *must* be accepted, and you *must* help labor alongside those who seek to return Zion.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's remarks entitled "Book of Mormon as Covenant," given at the Book of Mormon Covenant Conference in Columbia, SC on January 13, 2019
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Civilization," given in Grand Junction, CO on April 21, 2019; and
- Denver's conference talk entitled "The Book of Mormon Holds the Covenant Pattern for the Full Restoration," given in Boise, ID on September 22, 2019