

Podcast 114: Zion People

Today, Denver discusses the attributes of people who will be called to Zion, as well as the attributes and behaviors that will clearly disqualify people from being invited to that gathering.

DENVER: Zion will be cooperative, not competitive. They will be *one* in every sense of the word. No one will need to say, *Know ye the Lord*, because everyone will know Him, from the greatest to the least. He will be able to dwell among them because He will already be known by them.

Collectivist efforts are never going to work. First, we must become individually the kind of people whom the Lord can visit. Then, after that, the gathering together of like-minded people will be a gathering of equals. It will not be an hierarchical gathering of *leadership* and *drones*. There won't be a single drone in Zion. Everyone will be equal and no one will mind mowing the grass or taking out the garbage.

I envision this scene from Zion:

A man walks down the street, early in the morning, and notices that the bakery is unmanned. Its door's open because there is no need for locks in Zion. So, on an impulse, he enters, looks about for the instructions left by someone, and begins to prepare bread. As the morning goes on, a few others join him. They make bread. Others come and take the bread for their homes. At the end of the day, the man goes home. This was his first time working in a bakery. He did it because he saw it needed to be done.

He returns to the bakery because he enjoys it. Day after day he works in the bakery for months, perhaps years. One day, on his way, he notices that the grass needs to be cut and the mower has been carefully left beside a tree along the parkway; so he starts to cut the grass. He finds he likes it. And this is, now, what he does—this day and the next. And within a month, he's cut out all the grass needing cutting, in his immediate neighborhood, and starts over again, where he began. He enjoys it.

Eventually, he is asked by someone to help move clothing and journals from one home to another. A couple, whose children have all moved out, no longer need the larger home they occupy, and are moving across town. So he puts the mower carefully beside a tree and begins to help. Homes are occupied based upon need, and these people no longer have need of the larger space they once occupied.

Across town, he notices there is a new neighborhood being built. He decides, after finishing the move for the couple, that he will assist at the site. He returns there for over a year as he

provides help with stocking and distributing materials, framing, installing shingles, painting, and clean-up.

He has no job. He's never without work. He asks for no pay, because some labor to feed others. He has no need for housing, because what is available is shared.

In 4th Nephi, verse 2, it tells us that *[all] the people were...converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites* [and that's all good and well, but it goes on to say], *and there were no contentions and disputations among them.* (see also 4 Nephi 1:1 RE)

And so, it's not just being converted. See, they're narrowing it down. You get converted, but then you reach, at some point, a unanimity or an agreement upon what the Gospel really means.

So, after they manage, not only to have the same faith and to eliminate from them contentions and disputations, then they go on and *every man did deal justly one with another* (ibid). See, there's a difference between mercy and justice. Justice is a tougher standard. We don't want justice. We want a merciful Redeemer, who will come in and who will make up for our defects. But this is saying, every man (Me, inside me. This is the turf we're talking about.) did deal justly (the higher standard) with one another. You don't have to give me mercy, because I'm going to give *you* justice. I'm going to be tougher on myself. It is *fair* that I do this for you. "Oh no, no, you don't have to do that." No, no, no! The standard by which they are evaluating their conduct, internal to themselves, is the more difficult standard. They're going to deal justly with one another. I will break my heart, I will break my wallet, I will break my life before I will not deal justly with you, and give you everything that you're entitled to. See, it's putting the shoe on the other foot, and it's not the more relaxed and kindly and gentle standard; because when they're dealing with one another, they want to deal justly.

The path back to God is so that you can meet with and be instructed by our Savior. The purpose of our Savior is to prepare us in all things so that we can, at last, become Zion. Because if your heart is right and my heart is right, and if I'm looking to God and God only, and you're looking to God and God only, then the trivial things of having things in common are of so little import that they matter not.

If you're faithful to the Lord, you have no reason to pick a fight with anyone else. Our Lord was a peacemaker. We ought to be peacemakers as well.

And 76 is a transcript that is given to Joseph that was dictated, transcribed, read back, approved; then the dictation continued until he reached the end. But look at... beginning at verse 113:

This is the end of the vision which we saw, which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the Spirit. But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the

*mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion; Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter; Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy [Ghost], which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him; To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves; That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, **while in the flesh**, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory. (See also T&C 69:28-29, emphasis added)*

Is this related to not denying the power of godliness? I mean, to have the ability to *bear his presence in the world of glory*, as we get farther along in our discussion about the topic of Zion, it becomes critical that you become able to bear His presence. For those, who are unable to bear His presence, will be destroyed at His coming. Therefore, whatever this power of godliness is, I think we need to get some.

We are asked to prepare so we can begin to found Zion. But preparing or even beginning is not the same thing as accomplishing. Whether anything can or will be accomplished must be proven—cannot just be claimed. Braggarts do not impress heaven and have no claim to any title or status they have not first lived.

The Lord is offering an opportunity. He's promised to labor alongside to help us reach the prophesied Zion. With His help, Zion is possible; but we can fail. And Zion be left for another people in another time.

The greatest false spirit of all is the one that inspires you to accuse your brethren, condemn your sisters, and judge others unfairly. This is Satan. We cannot be Satan and also be the Lord's.

I believe we will see Zion established. Sadly, I do not think all can be gathered. Those, who find fault now, will surely find fault when people start to sacrifice and hard work is expected. It makes little sense to assemble the discontent, angry, and bitter souls into a community seeking to find peace. Zion *shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another* (D&C 45:69; see also T&C 31:15 RE). That promise of the Lord's cannot be fulfilled by people fighting a war of words and a tumult of opinions. It was such fighting about religious differences that inspired Joseph Smith to ask God for answers. His inquiry led to the Restoration. But Joseph's Restoration has now lapsed into infighting and dividing into separate sects. Our modest return to restoring is not yet free from a tumult of conflicting opinions.

Because the way in which Zion is going to come about, is going to necessarily be something that is so comfortable, and so familiar, on the earth (as a pattern; reflecting what it is that exists in the heavens), that they who come, not only do not burn them up, but they fall upon them and they kiss their necks. Because, at last, they have a sister and a brother, on the earth, united by belief; united by covenant; united by knowledge; united by light and truth

or, in other words, the glory of God, which is intelligence. Because the purpose of the Gospel has always been to inform, to edify, to raise up, to instruct. It was never meant to be reduced to something that is merely repetitious. It was intended to challenge you to your very core. And what you do, and what you think, and how you act—it's intended to make you godlike in your understanding.

This is Moses chapter 7, verse 27. *Enoch beheld **angels** descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son; and the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by **the powers of heaven** into Zion* (see also Genesis 4:15 RE, emphasis added). There they show up again—the powers of heaven (plural), in the same verse where it's talking about angels descending. This is the kind of thing that is littered throughout the scriptures, if you have the eyes to see it, because there is actually a structure there.

There are, within what we regard as priesthood, two brotherhoods or two fellowships:

- One is between men (or women). It is a fellowship that exists among us here on this side.
- There is a second one—there is a second fellowship *that* exists with us to the other side. And on that other side, there is a fellowship or a priesthood.

And by and large, when the scriptures speak about priesthood having authority—priesthood having power that is connected by a mortal, with a fellowship that extends into the immortal, to the other side; it's a relationship with the "Powers of Heaven."

It is particularly clear that the prophecies, about the last day's Zion, require a people to belong to God, and to be regarded, by Him, as His.

In Isaiah, foretelling the future Zion we learn:

And then shall they say, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings unto them, that publishes peace, that brings good tidings unto them of good, that publishes salvation, that says [to] Zion, Your God reigns! Your watchmen shall lift up the voice; [and] with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together [ye] waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the earths... all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart, depart, go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out of [the midst of her], be clean, ...that bear the vessels of the Lord. For you shall not go...with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. (Isaiah 52:7-12; see also Isaiah 18:8 RE)

None of us is spared from mutual failure. We are not Zion. We will never be Zion if we do not repent. All of us must repent, turn to face God with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy, or we will not establish godly peace among us.

The Answer to the Prayer for Covenant and the Covenant are the beginning blueprint. That blueprint teaches the need to be better people. Following it is more challenging than reciting it. No one can learn what is required *without doing*. Working together is the only way a society can grow together. No isolated, spiritual mystic is going to be prepared for Zion through his solitary, personal devotions. Personal devotion is necessary, of course, but the most pious hermit will collide with the next pious hermit when they're required to share and work together, in a society of equals, having all things in common. Do not pretend it will be otherwise. Failing to do the hard work, outlined in the covenant, is failing to prepare for Zion. It's failing to have oil in the lamp. It's failing to put upon you the wedding garment.

If you think you are one of the five virgins, who will be invited in when the bridegroom arrives, and have never attempted to obey the Lord's commandments, you will find yourself left outside when the door is shut. If you come from the highways and byways without a wedding garment, because you failed to keep the covenant, you'll be excluded.

As aggravating and trying as people are on one another, we need to go through this. There's no magic path to loving one another. Some people refuse, and must be left outside. When it comes to loving others, some things must be abandoned, some things must be added, some things must be forgotten, and some things must be ignored. But learning what to abandon, add, forget, or ignore is only through the doing. We chip away at ourselves, and others, by interacting and sharing.

We will learn things about one another that will distress us. And we may well wish we didn't know some things about others. How will the socially offensive become socially acceptable without help from a loving society? And how can a society become loving if people are not broadminded enough to figure out that some things just don't matter. Few things really are important. If a man is honest, just, virtuous and true, should you care if he swears? If a man has a heart of gold, and would give you assistance if he thought it was needed, should you care if he's rough and uncouth?

God knows what He's doing. This is the culmination of a plan to finish the ages and vindicate all the promises made to the fathers. The fact that there are wayward and strident children, among a people, does not mean they will be permitted to either stop the forward movement or to come to the Lord's Zion.

What amazes me is that He has continued to pour out teaching, guidance, and profound truths that have been kept hidden from the knowledge of the world, to a small body of believers. There is more light and truth being poured out now, than has been given to almost any prior generation back to the time of Adam. Few have been privileged to know what we have been allowed to speak of publicly. For some, that has made a great difference. For others, it has not affected their hearts and minds enough to remove their hardness, their strident and discordant voices, nor to remove their froward countenances. But remember, the Heavenly Parents *hate* the froward. That clearly disqualifies those individuals from being invited to the Lord's gathering.

I think the Lord knows what He is about, and everything before Him, to decide what to do, how to do it; and when to separate the chosen and bring them to a land of peace. I'm just hoping to be able to receive that invitation and bring my family there.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's blog post from May 3, 2010, entitled "Is it Your Hope to be a Part of Zion?" subsequently recorded on May 17, 2020
- His talk given at the "Zion Symposium" in Provo, Utah on February 23rd, 2008
- Denver's fireside talk on "The Temple," given in Ogden, UT on October 28th, 2012
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #1 entitled "Be of Good Cheer," given in Boise, ID on September 10th, 2013
- Denver's conference talk entitled "The Heavens are Open," given in Hurricane, UT on March 22, 2020
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #4 entitled "Covenants," given in Centerville, UT on October 6th, 2013
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #5 entitled "Priesthood," given in Orem, UT on November 2nd, 2013
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Civilization," given in Grand Junction, CO on April 21, 2019
- And his blog post from April 11, 2018, entitled "How can Zion Come from This?" subsequently recorded on May 17, 2020