

Podcast 135: Equality, Part 2

This is the second part of a special series on Equality, where Denver addresses the questions, "What is the transformation process we need to undergo, in order to establish and practice equality? What lack we yet, to become equal?"

DENVER: Original Christians had no professional clergy. They operated in a way akin to a method described in the Book of Mormon: *"And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength. And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted..."* (Alma 1:26-27). This is how I believe Christianity ought to be practiced today, without a professional clergy, diverting tithes and offerings that ought to be used to help the poor, needy, sick, and afflicted. We need to, and can return, to those early days of Christianity.

Justin Martyr lived from 110-165 A.D., and he wrote in the "sub-apostolic" age. His writings give us a glimpse into how Christianity functioned in its earliest days. In his *First Apology* he describes Christian worship. They met in homes, having no church buildings.

Before being considered a Christian, a candidate was baptized "in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit." (*First Apology*, Chapter LXI-Christian Baptism.)

Meetings began with a prayer and "saluting one another with a kiss." Then sacrament is prepared and administered using bread a "cup of wine mixed with water" which is blessed by "giving praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands." (Id., Chapter LXV-Administration of the Sacraments.)

The early Christians recognized there was an obligation for "the wealthy among us [to] help the needy." Therefore, after reading scripture and "the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets" donations were collected. (Id., Chapter LXVII-*Weekly Worship of the Christians*.) Then the donations were distributed to help those who were poor or needy among that group of Christians.

These simple observances were resilient enough to preserve Christianity after the death of the apostles and before any great hierarchical magisterium arose. It was the power of

baptism, the sacrament, scripture study and financial aid among believers that gave Christianity its power.

We cannot bear one another's burdens without fellowshipping with one another. Bearing one another's burdens presumes that you know what the burdens are that someone else carries. Which means that I have been patient enough, I have been attentive enough, I have been friendly enough, and I have been trusted enough that I can find out what the burden is that they bear.

I have a very good friend, went to elementary, junior high, high school with him and I've kept in touch with him for many years and he has recently contracted a terminal form of cancer. He called me to talk about that without telling his family, without telling his neighbors, without telling his friends because he and I have a friendship that is built upon the kind of trust that allows me to share that burden with him because of the relationship.

We're supposed to help one another get through this ordeal of mortality. And it is an ordeal. It is not easy. Even the people that you think you envy. If you were living inside their world you would find out that they have burdens they are carrying as well.

Fellowshipping allows us to carry one another's burdens, and bearing one another's burdens implies a whole universe of connectivity, trust, confidence, friendship, and affection between one another before you get to the point that you even know what the burdens are. But that is supposed to be a blessing and part of what it means to worship together. Worshipping together, by assisting one another allows all of us to feel a great part of what it is that Christ is and does. It allows us to know who we worship. It allows us to know how to worship him. It allows us to know what makes us one with one another. Now, it's really hard to accomplish that across state lines, but it still can be done.

The example I use of that friend, he and I have spent a lot of time on the phone since I learned of the illness about a month ago. That's because I care and that's because he needs to talk to someone and because he finds it a relief to be able to do that with me. It can be done. It can be done across any barriers.

All of us are victims of institutional abuse. Many of us can sense it when the slightest hint of abuse appears. One recent writer on your blog has identified it as paternalism and that's not an inappropriate designation for it. We should learn how to be loving and equal with one another. The idea of equality is resisted by a lot of skeptics, who accuse me of wanting authority and control, when I despise control, but I absolutely welcome fellowship, equality, and worship with one another. This isn't easy, but it is godly to pursue. We're going to make mistakes and there are going to be a lot of institutional habits that we walk in and we want to 'whip this into shape.' The idea of a whip - when Christ resorted to the scourge to drive them out, he didn't drive them out to organize them. He drove them out to cleanse the place. If we're going to whip anything, we're going to drive them out. We would be better off practicing the kind of patience, and kindness, and to realize that in terms of Mormonism almost everyone is a refugee suffering post religious trauma syndrome and they're going to think you're abusive. They're going to think they want to be used as a tool

for someone else's power base. Someone wants to use you. The idea that there is someone who doesn't want to use them, or abuse them, but wants to fellowship with them, and help them bear a burden - that's the idea of Christianity at its core and that's what is really alien in this world. We need to bring that back again.

And so, the restoration has been in a pause for four and five generations waiting for God to begin it anew. Today marks a moment when the stirrings that have been underway for years result in God's offering to establish His people, on earth, by a covenant He ordains. The few ready to receive the Lord's offer today are scattered to the nethermost parts of His vineyard (v. 52). Despite this, a live broadcast on the Internet allows them to be grafted in at the same moment this is happening in Boise, Idaho. Correspondingly, those utterly refused to accept the offered covenant are plucked from the restoration's tree of life because they're bitter fruit, unable to meet the Lord's requirements. The Lord is taking the step to preserve part of humanity, not to destroy (v. 53). A few descendants of the covenant fathers have the natural gift of faith, that gift belongs to the natural branches (v. 54). When grafted we are connected to the natural roots or covenant Fathers as heirs of the promises made to them. Even after the covenant, there will still be those who are bitter and wild, who will be unable to produce natural fruit despite the covenant. These will remain for a time despite their bitterness (v. 56-57). Today only the most bitter, who refuse to be grafted in will be trimmed away.

We look forward to more nourishing or restoring of truths, lights and commandments which will bless those who receive, but for those who will not the continuing restoration will prune them away (v.58). These bitter and wild branches must still be cut off and cast away. These steps are necessary to preserve the opportunity for the natural fruit to fully return (v. 59). The good must overcome the evil, this takes time and it means that the Lord's patience is extended to give time to develop and further improve. We are not expected and cannot become natural fruit in a single step. But we are expected to accept the initial graft today. The Lord is taking the steps so that perhaps, that's a deliberate word, perhaps we may become natural fruit worthy to be preserved in the coming harvest (v.60). Perhaps is the right word. Some who are grafted will still be plucked away and burned. But others will bear natural fruit and be preserved. Accepting the covenant is not the final step. Our choices will determine whether we are bitter or natural fruit, that will decide our fate. Just as the ancient allegory foretold, the covenant makes us servants and laborers in the vineyard (v. 61) We are we are required to, this is from the covenant, "seek to recover the lost sheep remnant of this land and of Israel and no longer forsake them. Bring them to the Lord and teach them of his ways to walk in them." If we fail to labor to recover them we break the covenant. We must labor for this last time in the Lord's vineyard. There is an approaching, final pruning of the vineyard (v.62). The first to be the first to be grafted in are Gentiles so that the last maybe first. The lost sheep remnant next and then Israelites so that the first maybe last (v.63). But grafting is required for all, even the remnants, because God works with his people through covenant making. There will be more grafting and further pruning. As more is revealed and therefore more is required, some will find the digging and dunging too much to bear and will fall away or in other words will be pruned despite the covenant (v.64). The covenant makes it possible for natural fruit to return. The bad fruit will still continue, even among the covenant people, until there is enough strength

in the healthy branches for further pruning. It requires natural fruit to appear before the final pruning takes place (v.65). The good and bad will coexist. It will damage the tree to remove the bad at once. Therefore, the Lord's patience will continue for some time yet. The rate of removing the bad is dependent wholly upon the rate of the development of the good. It is the Lord's purpose to create equality in his vineyard.

In the allegory equality in the vineyard appears three times in verses 66, 72 and 74. We cannot be greater and lesser, nor divide ourselves into a hierarchy to achieve the equal quality required for Zion. When a group is determined to remain equal and I am personally determined to be no greater than any other, then it faces challenges that never confront unequal people. A religion of bosses and minions never deals with any of the challenges of being equals. Critics claim we will never succeed because of our determined desire for equality. None of our critics can envision what the Lord has said in verses 66, 72 and 74 about his people. But equality among us is the only way prophesied for us to succeed. That does not mean we won't have a mess as we learn how to establish equality.

Similarly, Zion cannot be established by isolated and solitary figures proclaiming a testimony of Jesus from their home keyboard. The challenge of building a community must be part of a process. Zion is a community and therefore God is a god of community and his people must learn to live together with one heart, one mind, with no poor among us. Isolated keyboardists proclaiming their resentment of community can hardly speak temperately of others. How could they ever live peacefully in a community of equals? We must become precious to each other. Although the laborers in this final effort are few, you will be the means used by the Lord to complete his work in His vineyard (v.70). You're required to labor with your might to finish the Lord's work in his vineyard (v.72). But He will labor alongside you. He, not a man or a committee, will call you to do work. When He calls do not fear, but do not run faster than you have strength. We must find His people in the highways and byways and invite them to join in. Zion will include people from every part of the world. This conference is broadcast worldwide as part of the prophecy to Enoch that God would send "righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem." (Moses 7:62)

We must proclaim this to the world. Do not despair when further pruning takes place it must be done. Only through pruning can the Lord keep his tree of life equal without those who are lofty overcoming the body (v.73). The lofty branches have always destroyed equality to prevent Zion. The final result of the Lord's labor in His vineyard is declared by the ancient prophet in unmistakable clarity "the trees have become again the natural fruit, and they became like unto one body and the fruits were equal and the Lord of the vineyard had preserved unto himself the natural fruit which was most precious unto him from the beginning." Mark those words. That's verse 74. When the Lord explained this to me I realized how foolish it was to expect natural fruit, worthy of preservation, in an instant. The Lord works patiently, methodically and does not require any to run faster than they have strength. We cannot allow ourselves to be drawn in to inequality. When the result of

this labor is to make us one body equal with one another. We cannot imitate the failures of the past by establishing a hierarchy, elevating one above another and forgetting that we must be of one heart, one mind and no poor among us.

The restoration was never intended to just restore an ancient Christian church. That is only a halfway point. It must go back further. In the words of the ancient prophet God intends to do according to his will and to preserve the natural fruit that it is good even like as it was in the beginning (v.75). This means the beginning, as in the days of Adam, with the return of the original religion and original authority, everything must be returned as it was in the beginning. Civilization began with the temple as the center of learning, law and culture. The temple was the original university because it taught of man's place with God in the universe. God will return the right of dominion once held by Adam, to man on earth to make us humble, servant, gardeners laboring to return the world to a peaceful paradise. The covenant received today restores part of that right.

There is a land inheritance given to us as part of the covenant and therefore if we keep the covenant we have the right to remain, when others will be swept away. Ultimately all rights given to us must be turned back to the Fathers who went before, who will likewise return them to Adam, who will surrender them to Christ. When Christ returns, he will come with the right to exercise complete dominion over the earth and exercise judgment over the ungodly. Things set in to motion today are part of preparing the way for the Lord's return in glory.

*And there began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard. And the natural branches began to grow and thrive exceedingly, and the **wild branches began to be plucked off and to be cast away** (Jacob 3:27 RE; emphasis added).*

Some of the plucking and some of the casting away is voluntarily done by those who submit to false spirits that stir them up to anger against one another, and they depart from fellowship thinking themselves justified before God, when in fact, all they're doing is being plucked and cast away.

And they did keep the root and the top thereof equal, according to the strength thereof (ibid). We are seeking to keep it equal. Everyone of us is on the same plain. No one's getting supported by tithing money. If they are, that's done by a local fellowship that has voluntarily determined that they have one among them in need. Because the tithes are gathered and used to help the poor. There's no general fund being accumulated, and there's no one who does anything that they get compensated for.

This is the only group of people whose religion requires, incessantly, sacrifice. No one gets paid. No one gets remunerated. Everything that is done is done at the price of sacrifice. If you are a person in need among a fellowship, the tithes are appropriately used because that's what they're for. They're for the poor. They're not for a leader.

You have to keep the root and you have to keep the top equal. If you allow inequality to creep in at the beginning, the end result is lavish palaces in which some fare sumptuously

and others ask to eat the crumbs that fall from the table because they're treated so unequally, and their despair and their poverty and their need goes ignored.

Among us, it can't go ignored, because the money is gathered at a fellowship level, and if there is someone in need among you and you don't minister to their needs, you're cruel. You're...

*And thus **they labored with all diligence, according to the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard, even until the bad had been cast away** (ibid; emphasis added). If you can't tolerate equality; if you can't tolerate the top and the root being equal; if you can't tolerate peace among brethren, then go ahead, and be bad and cast yourself away. If you feel moved upon to do that, well, that's the Lord of the vineyard getting rid of you.*

*Even until the bad had been cast away out of the vineyard and the Lord had preserved unto himself, that the trees had become again the natural fruit. And they became like unto one body, and **the fruit were equal** (ibid; emphasis added).*

That word "equal" shows up so often in the labor that the Lord of the vineyard is trying to accomplish with the people that you ought to take note. We ought to probably typeset it:

EQUAL

in double-sized font. We're not going to do that, so you have to underline the word, or circle the word, or pay attention to it. The purpose is to go and become equal with one another. As soon as you set out to create rank and position and hierarchy-

Admittedly, within the parable there is a top, and there is a root, admittedly; but the objective is to achieve equality. If you start out saying the one is greater or better than the other, you're never going to arrive at the point that is the purpose of the parable, the purpose of the labor of the Lord of the vineyard: *and the fruit were equal*.

Christ taught parables that included invited guests being barred from attending the wedding feast. In one, the guests are called "virgins" to suggest that they possess moral purity and would be welcomed to the event. In another, there are strangers on the highway invited because others refused to come. Both parables, however, have some who are ultimately excluded from the wedding, a symbol of Christ's return. These parables raise an important issue about the Lord's return. There is a reason why five of the ten virgins could not enter into the wedding celebration. Likewise, those invited to attend the wedding feast that arrive without a wedding garment will be excluded. In both cases, those excluded were not welcome as they were unprepared.

There have been only two societies in recorded history that became Zion. Because of the age of the world at the time, both were taken up into heaven. We have very little to help us understand why these two succeeded. Apart from describing them as of "one heart, one mind, and no poor among them," we know little else. But perhaps that is

one of the most important things we can know about them. Maybe the point is that nothing and no-one stood out as remarkable or different within the community. There were no heroes and no villains; no rich and no poor; no Shakespearian plot lines of betrayal, intrigue, ambition, conflict, and envy. There was no adultery, theft, robbery, murder, immorality, and drunkenness-in other words, nothing to entertain us. Because all our stories, movies, music, novels, television plots, and social media are based upon and captivated by everything that is missing from these societies.

The centuries-long period of peace described in the Book of Mormon occupies only a few short pages in 4 Nephi. Their society was marked by the presence of peace, the absence of conflict, and abiding stability. This is what they attained: *There were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another. And they had all things common among them; therefore, there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free and partakers of the Heavenly gift* (4 Nephi 1:1 RE). Because there was no future ministry for them to perform, their Zion society was not taken up to heaven. Because the world was not yet ready for the Lord to return in judgment, neither Enoch nor Melchizedek returned with their people to fall on their necks and kiss them.

These people were most remarkable for what they lacked. How they grew to lack these divisions, contentions, and disputes is described in very few, simple words: *They did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft, both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord. And it came to pass...there was no contention among all the people in all the land* (4 Nephi 1:2 RE).

What were the names of their leaders? We don't know because, apparently, there were none. Who were their great teachers? Again, we don't know because they were not identified. Who governed? Apparently no one. They had things in common, obeyed God's commandments, and spent time praying and hearing the word of the Lord. They were so very unlike us.

To make the point clear for us, the record of these people explains: *There was no contention in the land because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people; and there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness* (4 Nephi 1:3 RE). All the negatives were missing because the love of God dwelt in their hearts.

Something else describes them: *And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God* (ibid). Consider those words carefully. You cannot be happier than by allowing the love of God to dwell in you. The happiest people who have ever lived did so by the profound peace they displayed, equality they shared, fairness they showed one another, and love of God in their hearts.

This is a description of our social opposites. Reviewing the Answer to the Prayer for Covenant, the Covenant, and the recent parable of the Master's House shows that the Lord

is pleading for *us* to become *this*. It's not easy; it will require civilizing the uncivilized. However, it is necessary to become the wise virgins and the invited guests wearing the wedding garment.

Five of the virtuous virgins who were expecting the wedding party to arrive were, nevertheless, excluded. They were virgins like the others; but the others were allowed to enter, and they were not. They did not lack virginity. They did not lack notice. They were not surprised by an unexpected wedding party arriving. But they lacked "oil," which is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. They failed to acquire the necessary spirit with which to avoid conflict, envy, strife, tumult, and contention. To grow into the kind of people God will want us to welcome into His dwelling requires practice, experience, and effort. People have not done it. Devout religious people are not prepared to live in peace, with all things in common, with no poor among them. God is trying to create a civilization that does not yet exist.

It is a privilege for God to give guidance to help prepare His people. There has always been a promise from the Lord that those who inherit Zion will be given commandments from Him to follow. He declared:

Yea, blessed are they whose feet stand upon the land of Zion, who have obeyed my gospel, for they shall receive for their reward the good things of the earth, and it shall bring forth [it's] strength. And they...shall [also] be crowned with blessings from above, yea...with commandments not a few, and with revelations in their time, [that] they...are faithful and diligent[ly] before me. (T&C 46:1)

Those who mock or criticize efforts to complete the Restoration are defining themselves as unworthy by their own words. No matter how good they may otherwise be, when they embrace conflict, envy, strife, tumult, and contention, they cannot be invited to the wedding of the Lamb.

We need more commandments from God to prepare for what is coming. The example in 4 Nephi commends those people who walk after the commandments received from our Lord and God. There should be fasting and prayer. People should meet together, pray, and review the words of the Lord. Every step taken will make us more like those virgins who have oil in their lamps and less like the foolish virgins who took no effort to make the required preparation.

It's not enough to avoid outright evil. We have to be good. Being "good" means to be separate from the world, united in charity towards each other, and to have united hearts. If we are ready when the wedding party arrives, we must follow the Lord's commandments to *us*. They are for our good. He wants us to awaken and arise from an awful slumber.

The third such society will not be taken into heaven. Instead, it will welcome the return of the first two to the earth. Why would ancient, righteous societies caught up to heaven want to leave there to come and meet with a city of people on earth? Why would they fall on their necks and kiss that gathered body of believers? And above all else, why would Christ

want to occupy a tabernacle and dwell with such a community? Obviously, because there will be people living on earth whose civilization is like the society in heaven.

The Ten Commandments outline basic social norms needed for peace and stability. Christ's Sermon on the Mount was His exposition on the Ten Commandments. He expounded on the need to align the intent of the heart with God's standard to love your fellow man, do good to those who abuse you, and hold no anger. He took us deeper. Where the Ten Commandments allowed reluctant, resentful, and hard-hearted conformity, the Sermon on the Mount requires a willing readiness to obey. Christ wants us to act with alacrity to follow Him. He taught us to treat others as you would want to be treated.

The answer to these questions is easy to conceptualize and easy to verbalize. But living the answer is beyond mankind's ability to endure. We do not want to lay down our pride, ambition, jealousy, envy, strife, and lusts to become that community.

We're not going to arrive where we need to arrive if we perceive ourselves as unequal, if we think of ourselves as greater and lesser, if we don't think of ourselves as simply common servants, inadequate as we may be, to a Lord who loved and sacrificed Himself for our redemption. He is worthy. We can do our best and we can make a lot of mistakes along the way.

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 are 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 is 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 broad-minded 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 is rough and uncouth?

The adulterous and predatory will rarely reform and must often be excluded. They will victimize and destroy. We are commanded to cast out those who steal, love and make a lie, commit adultery, and refuse to repent. The instructions we have been given state:

*You shall not kill; he that kills shall die. You shall not steal...he that steals and will not repent **shall be cast out**. You shall not lie; he that lies and will not repent **shall be cast out**. You shall love your wife with all your heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else...he that looks upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the spirit, and if he repent not...**shall be cast out**. You shall not commit adultery, and he that commits adultery and repents not **shall be cast out**; and he that commits adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsakes [it] and does it no more, you shall forgive him; but if he does it again, he **shall not be forgiven, [and] shall be cast out**. You shall not speak evil of your neighbor [nor] or do him any harm. You know my laws, they are given in my scriptures. **He that sins and repents not shall be cast out**. If you love me, you shall serve me and **keep all my commandments**. (T&C 26:6, emphasis added)*

This teaching is still binding. If your fellowship includes those who ought to be "cast out" you have the obligation to do so rather than encouraging evil. Be patient, but be firm. If a person refuses to repent and forsake sins, you may end fellowship with them and include those who are interested in practicing obedience and love.

There is work to be done. Almost all of it is internal to us. The five prepared virgins and the strangers who brought a wedding garment will be those who keep the covenant. It is designed to give birth to a new society, new culture, and permit a new civilization to be founded.

The Lord's civilization will require His tabernacle at the center. Through it, a recovered religion will be fully developed. God's house will include a higher law-an education about the universe-and a divine university will be established. It will be an ensign in the mountains, and people from all over the earth will say: Come, let us go up to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us; we will learn of his paths, to walk in them (see Isaiah 1:5; 2 Nephi 8:4 RE). That place will house a new civilization. There will be no hermit gurus proud of their enlightenment.

No one will offer himself or herself up as some great idol to follow. It will be a place of equality, where people are meek and lowly, serving one another without any attempt to compete for "chief seats."

Christ's apostles competed to be greater than one another. In the New Covenants, Luke 13:6, Christ's reaction is recorded:

There was also a strife among them: who of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they who exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, but it ought not...be so with you. But he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who is chief, as he who does serve. For whether is he greater who sits at [the] meal, or he who serves? I am not as he who sits at a meal, but I am among you as he who serves.

Christ is the great example. Christ would have fit into Enoch's city, would have been welcomed among Melchizedek's people, and could have dwelt in peace with the Nephites of Fourth Nephi. Has He, as once before between Jerusalem and Emmaus, walked among them unnoticed to enjoy their peaceful company?

I cannot keep the covenant. You cannot keep the covenant. Only *we* can keep the covenant.

But if we do, God's work will continue and will include the fullness previously offered to the gentiles and rejected by them. It is impossible to understand the promises that Elijah will "turn the hearts of the children to the Fathers" unless the fullness is recovered. Joseph Smith cannot fix or finish the Restoration by returning as a resurrected being in the Millennium, as conjectured by Wilford Woodruff. If the necessary rites are not returned before the Lord's return, *the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming* (JSH 3:4 RE). There will be a new civilization built around God's tabernacle where He will dwell. We know the purpose of that house will be for the God of Jacob to teach those people to walk in His ways. We know Joseph Smith began adoption sealing as the highest ordinance and is now been lost.

We have been given a new revelation that explains resurrection and adoption to the Fathers in heaven are linked together:

I was shown that the spirits that rose were limited to a direct line back to Adam, requiring the hearts of the fathers and the hearts of the children to be bound together by sealing, confirmed by covenant and [by] the Holy Spirit of Promise. This is the reason that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have entered into their exaltation according to the promises and sit upon thrones and are not angels but are gods. (T&C 157:42-43)

The fullness can only be returned through a temple accepted by God as His House. He must return to restore that which has been lost. But ungodly people cannot build an acceptable house for God. There is no commandment to build a temple because people are not yet qualified to do so. So far we have been spared the experience in Nauvoo, where an abortive attempt to build a temple in which the fullness could be restored resulted in the Lord not performing His oath. Nor did the Lord fulfill the promise they expected to receive. Instead of blessings, the people in Nauvoo brought upon themselves cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments by their follies and abominations. If we are going to receive that same condemnation, it would be better to not begin to build a House of God.

The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #2 given in Dallas, TX on October 19th, 2017
- A Q&A session entitled "A Visit with Denver Snuffer" held on May 13, 2015
- His Opening Remarks given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, Idaho on September 3rd, 2017
- Denver's lecture entitled "Signs Follow Faith" given in Centerville, UT on March 3, 2019
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Civilization", given in Grand Junction, CO on April 21, 2019; 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