

## Denver Snuffer Podcast 163: Comprehending, Part 4

This is part four of a series where Denver discusses how we can prepare ourselves to comprehend the things God wants to teach us.

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DENVER: The coming of the Lord in the future will not bring an immediate resurrection—just as the resurrection of Christ did not empty the world of spirits of even the righteous dead. Those who will be prepared at His coming will remain comparatively few still. Hence, the great need to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children—and this too by covenant and sealing through the Holy Spirit of Promise.

It was abundantly clear, according to Joseph, that the only way in which this kind of a welding link could be accomplished required a temple to be built. Not the temple that was built in Kirtland that was accepted by the Lord, but something different.

There are at least three stages in the process of restoring knowledge. The first stage is to receive it but that's just receiving it. Receiving it is not the same thing as the second stage, which is to comprehend it. It is possible that man receives something without understanding what it was that he had received. Time and careful and solemn and ponderous thoughts are required to untangle what has been received in order to comprehend what it is that you have been given. But it is altogether something of a different order of magnitude completely separate from that to teach it. You can receive it, you can comprehend it but you may not be able to teach it.

When it finally does get taught undoubtedly it will be taught in the manner that Joseph Smith was beginning to work on in Nauvoo that he never finished at the time that he was taken. That is by ceremony, by covenant, and this too by something given by God, and it to be established in a house that is acceptable to Him. If you want to know what Joseph Smith was doing in his efforts apart from the Church in a whole new effort, talking about something involving potentially the plurality of wives, you have to understand the birthright, you have to understand the sealing power, you have to understand he was trying to organize again on the earth the kingdom of god. He was trying to bring back the actual family but he was taken from us at the incipient stage because all that he was sent here today was to lay the groundwork, to lay the beginning, to come as an Elias. To come and to call to the world and to give to them, if they will pay attention to it, a basis upon which they can study and learn and potentially qualify for the Lord to resume the restoration and bring it to a completion.

All of the work that gets done for the dead, where you seal yourself to your ancestors like they are going to get you anywhere, is the inverse of the model that Joseph was establishing. Joseph had people sealed to him because he had formed a link to heaven. Sealing your kindred dead to be your superior puts you in the spirit world, living among the dead, unredeemed, unresurrected, unreturned to the flesh, where you, like your kindred righteous dead can preach to the people that are in prison but it will never get you up Jacob's Ladder back to the presence of God. It won't even get you out of the grave. If you're

going to be part of the family of god there has to be a link and the link has to form in an unbroken chain.

God could, does, and will work through anyone who awakens and then pays attention. There's an army of witnesses and awakened individuals that are being assembled by God. It's required to know him, and I know him. I've been taught and understand his gospel. The first task is to assure people that he lives and that his gospel is an authentic method for saving souls. The second task is to remember the restoration Joseph gave his life to begin.

We're ungrateful when we fail to remember and practice it. At the moment, there is almost no clear understanding of that gospel. I'm working to set that out in a comprehensive way. It's never been completed. There's a great deal prophesied to roll out as part of the restoration that has not even commenced! Do we have Zion? What about the lost teachings of the brass plates? Do we have the rest of the Book of Mormon? Do we have the testimony of John? Do we have restored knowledge of the Jaredites? The list could be very long. But the fact that there is a list, tells us that the restoration must resume at some point in order to be completed. We don't have it on the table, but we've forgotten what we once had.

So the first job is to show that we are grateful enough to remember. And to remember it in a fulsome, comprehensive way. Before God is going to say, now I will permit it to move forward. We haven't gotten to the point of remembering yet. Which is why we ought to be studying a lot more diligently the material we got in the restoration. We ignore it at our peril.

The fact is, it requires patience, and patience is an absolute necessary virtue that even Christ was required to accomplish. He thought he was ready at age twelve and eighteen years later he finally had the day come when he was allowed. He wanted to be about his Father's business and his mother told him to get back home. The fact is, there are those who, including our Lord himself, find the most difficult virtue of all is patience. It was twenty-seven years in the coming for me. Godliness, is a gradual thing. Even what is revealed is not necessarily going to be immediately understood, as that last talk I gave mentioned. It's one thing to receive, it's another thing to comprehend. And it's still another order of magnitude difficult to teach. They are a gradual process and to think that you can leap, that's remarkable, because I don't see a precedent in scripture where that was the case. What did the apostle Paul take? Fourteen years? From the encounter on the road to Emmaus before he began to preach? What did it take, forty years, from the date Enoch was ordained at twenty-five before he walked with God at sixty-five? And that was a remarkably quick accomplishment. Moses forty years in the wilderness before he had his encounter with God at age eighty. If you think you can rush it, you are probably going to be deceived.

The Holy Ghost is informational. Its purpose is to enlighten the mind and to inform you. It is a revelator. Our reaction to the information can be very emotional. How we react is up to us. I've had very strong emotional reactions to some of the things revealed by the Holy Ghost to me. Those aren't always those positive, warm feelings. It has been sometimes dread. It has been sometimes fear. It has been sometimes anxiety. And being troubled in mind, body, and spirit.

If I were to liken the Holy Ghost and its function – imagine that you were sitting in this room. Imagine that this room is absolutely pitch black, so much so that you can't even see your hand in front of your face if you put your hand there. It is just black. And you want to go about determining what is in this room. You begin by feeling. And you may be able to feel enough to determine that there is in front of you a table. You may be able to determine how wide the table is immediately in front of you. But you're going to have to get up and move around in order to find out how long the table is, because your arm will not reach to that other end. If you're going to explore that, between here and the other end of the table, you've got a lot of obstacles, including as we said here a chair that you occupy, a chair that is unoccupied, another chair that is occupied, several empty chairs down further still, and you're going to have to feel your way through all of that. And it is a long, arduous process.

Let's assume that the Holy Ghost is a light. And let's assume that the light is initially a candle, and you light the candle and set it in front of you. The first thing that you begin to realize is that sitting in front of me is not only a table, but there are papers on the table, and there's a book on the table, and there's a glass of water and a watch on the table. And that the table is actually made of wood. I can see that, because I've lit a candle, but I still cannot see the far end. I don't know what's down there, because the candle does not produce enough light for me to perceive that. It has been lost in the shadows.

The Holy Ghost illuminates something. When you get the fullness of something revealed to you, you turn the light switch on and you no longer have to feel your way to the far end of the table. At a glance you can look and you can take in the fact that there are a dozen chairs around this table, that it's probably twenty or more feet long. The ceiling in the room is vaulted and there are four lights overhead. There are windows on two of the four walls and a door through which you can enter and exit. There's wainscoting in the middle of the room. Different colored wallpaper between what is below and what is above. You can take that all in and I think I can recognize Pennsylvania Avenue and the capitol building in a painting on the wall. All because someone turned on the light. Nothing more than someone turned on a light.

I got a phone call, from a fellow asking me a question about a matter that I knew nothing about and I cared nothing about. I was about to tell him, 'stop calling me with stupid questions. I'm not interested in that. If you're interested go search the Bible and see if you can find an answer to this rubbish.' Instead, I had the impression that I ought to say, 'I'm not going to talk to you about it on the phone. Why don't you come in?' So I said, "I don't want to talk about this on the phone, why don't you come in? Let's get together in a couple weeks." Hung up the phone and I thought, 'you know I'm not even interested in this subject. But if I'm going to talk about it I probably ought to look into it.' So I spent a few minutes until I was distracted by work. Looking into it I found nothing. The two weeks came and went. I'm a busy person. I didn't have any time to look into it. The fellow arrived for the appointment. When he arrived, I thought to myself, 'oh crap, I was going to look into that and have an answer. This guy has come. I told him to come, and now he's here. I got nothing. I have absolutely nothing.'

So I went out, in fact it was two instead of one, he brought a friend with him. Brought them in, sat them down in my office and I was shutting the door to my office and taking a breath to say, 'I'm sorry I made you come in. I don't have anything to say to you.' In the time it took to take that breath, in that instant, a light came on. And I knew everything there was about the subject. I knew where it was in the scriptures. I knew what the answers were. I knew what the explanation was. I even knew nuances and details about the scriptures that are only implied that you have to tease out of them but they're not there. Because a light went on. When the light went on, I turned and for the next forty-five minutes, using these scriptures that I've got in front of me, I found and read from the scriptures the examples that proved the answer to the question that he asked.

The Holy Ghost illuminates. Your reaction is your reaction. The purpose is to enliven and enlighten and to reveal. That's what it does, but how we respond to that is up to us.

On the third day of April 1836 Joseph and Oliver were in the temple in Kirtland, Ohio, The veil was taken from their minds, and the eyes of their understanding were opened. They saw the Lord in his glory standing above them and the breastwork of the pulpit; and under his feet appeared as it were a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying: I am the Alpha and the Omega; I am he who was slain, I am he who lives; I am your advocate with the Father. Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice. Let the hearts of your brethren also rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name. For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house. Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house. Behold and see: the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings that shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants will be endowed in this house. Behold: the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessings I shall pour out upon my people. Even so. Amen. As this vision closed, the heavens were again opened to their view, and they saw and beheld, and were endowed with knowledge from the beginning of this creation to the ends thereof. And they were shown unspeakable things from the sealed record of Heaven which man is not capable of making known but must be revealed by the Powers of Heaven. They beheld Michael, the archangel; Gabriel and Raphael, and divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the end of time, showing in turns their dispensations, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the Powers of their Priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; endowing them with knowledge, even here a little, and there a little; holding forth hope for the work God was yet to perform, even the revelation of all things which are to come upon the earth until the return of the Lord in glory with His holy angels—to pour out judgment upon the world, and to reward the righteous. And they were unable to take it in; therefore they were commanded to pray and ask

to comprehend by the power of the Spirit, to bring all things to their remembrance, even the Record of Heaven which would abide in them. Amen and Amen (T&C 157:26-32)

This is Nibley:

Our search for knowledge should be ceaseless, which means that it is open-ended, never resting on laurels, degrees, or past achievements. "If we get puffed up by thinking that we have much knowledge, we are apt to get a contentious spirit," and what is the cure? "Correct knowledge is necessary to cast out that spirit." The cure for inadequate knowledge is "ever more light and knowledge." But who is going to listen patiently to correct knowledge if he thinks he has the answers already? "There are a great many wise men and women too in our midst who are too wise to be taught; therefore they must die in their ignorance." "I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them . . . [that] will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all . . . [If I] go into an investigation into anything, that is not contained in the Bible . . . I think there are so many over-wise men here, that they would cry 'treason' and put me to death." (That is Hugh Nibley quoting Joseph Smith.) But, he asks, "why be so certain that you comprehend the things of God, when all things with you are so uncertain?" True knowledge never shuts the door on more knowledge, but zeal often does. One thinks of the dictum: "We are not seeking for truth at the BYU; we have the truth!" So did Adam and Abraham have the truth, far greater and more truth than what we have, and yet the particular genius of each was that he was constantly "seeking for greater light and knowledge."

Those who've entered faithfully into the covenant this day are going to notice some things. The spirit of God is withdrawing from the world. Men are increasingly more angry without good cause. The hearts of men are waxing cold. There is increasing anger and resentment of gentiles. In political terms, it's rejection of white privilege.

Language of scriptures description of the events now underway calls it the end of the times of the gentiles. This process with the spirit withdrawing, will end on this continent, as two prior civilizations ended in fratricidal and genocidal warfare. For the rest of the world, it will be as in the days of Noah in which, as that light becomes eclipsed, the coldness of men's hearts is going to result in a constant scene of violence and bloodshed. The wicked will destroy the wicked.

The covenant, if it is kept, will prevent you from losing light and warmth of heart as the spirit now steadily recedes from the world. The time will come when you will be astonished at the gulf between the light and truth you will comprehend and the darkness of mind of the world.

Be charitable and patient and labor to reach others. They will judge you harshly, but

nevertheless be kind to them. They're going to grow to fear you, but that's only part of how darkness responds to light. Give them no reason to fear you. The time will come for us to gather, but between now and then, be leaven. Preserve the world. Be salt. Preserve the world, even if it hates you.

I hope for myself, when the time comes to gather, that I will have been proven faithful and to be among you.

May God bless you and send to each of you a growing light and warmth. As the spirit withdraws from the world may it continually shine un-eclipsed upon each of you to enlighten your minds and to warm your hearts.

The Holy Order really begins at the point that Adam, the first man, who is called "the son of God" in Luke 3:38. Adam, the first man, obtains the Holy Order in the beginning, and included within it, is the right to preside over all of the human family and then the right to minister to his posterity, and to continue to hold that presiding position until the end of time.

At this point we're at the very beginning, we haven't gotten very far. But it is essential when you begin to talk about the Holy Order that you start here. If you don't start here, if you want to start at the time of Moses and the Aaronic priests, or you want to start at the time of Joseph Smith and talk about ordinations in June 1831, or if you want to talk about the three witnesses identifying the Quorum of the Twelve and then ordaining them, you're not going to comprehend what the Holy Order is all about because the Holy Order has, as part of its implication, the right of dominion over all creation. That was what it was established for and it came down to the beginning. It belonged to God. It is why God is God. In essence the Holy Order is to create of flesh and blood a surrogate for the Father and Mother. That's what the Holy Order was designed to accomplish.

In the beginning, when you're talking about this process, the reason why we have Seth as the next person is because Cain fell, Abel was murdered, and perhaps, because of the example, Adam and Eve in their sorrow were able to inform Seth of things that secured his fidelity to God. It descended in regular course down through these fathers until you get to Shem who was called Melchizedek. Mulek, king; Zedek, priest. It's a new name for the man, Shem, and then it simply falls into disrepair or apostasy and we encounter our first gap in the descent from the days of Adam down, which lasted several generations until we get to Abraham.

Abraham also happened to have a genealogical right but that wasn't what was important. In the case of Abraham "...finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers..." The "blessings of the fathers" after which he was seeking was the Holy Order. He wanted to become one like those that had been in the beginning.

Zion won't be composed of people who are presided over by anyone other than Christ Himself. As between one another, they're brothers, and they're sisters, and they're equals, having one heart, having one mind, and having all things in common because there is no one who can exert control or authority over one another. That's what we seek; that's what we're working for. However clumsy, however awkward, however difficult it may be for siblings to get along as they grow up through their childhood and adolescence, that's exactly how the people that will form Zion are going to begin. You can't stand back and say, "Oh, I prize the orderly thing I see in the uniformity of lessons, uniformity of dress, uniformity of conduct that I can see in structured and organized congregations; and what I see among these people is clamoring disorder." That's because we're alive. That's because we're equal. That's because we respect one another, and we want to *hear* the differences; we want to *see* the differences. We want to consider an idea that isn't correlated out into the darkness and excluded from our attention. We want to know what others have to say because we might miss something if we don't allow them the equality of standing and saying to us something about which we may disagree. That's what we call healthy. That's what we call normal. That's how humans relate to one another. In a hierarchy, it's possible to suppress all of that, but we're not interested in forming a Kremlin; we're interested in forming Zion.

This discussion today of our Divine Parents fits very comfortably inside the Father's Great Plan of Happiness. Unfortunately, we have so little understanding of that Plan that the subject is left to assumptions and innuendos rather than forthright declarations. Today I will make forthright declarations.

If discussing this subject confuses you, set it aside for now and spend some time studying the scriptures. Increase your understanding of the Father's Great Plan of Happiness, including the Lectures on Faith. Those who welcome more truth eventually understand God's plan more fully and, in turn, comprehend more of the Gods' vast work. Please do not offend God by rejecting any truth coming from Him.

What was Mary's role? Who was She? Is it possible She was the Mother of God before She came into mortality? These are important questions that ought to be asked. If we can learn the answers, they would indeed be glorious.

The Greek title *Mother of God* (Θεοτοκος) has been used in Eastern Christianity since the third—perhaps as early as the second—century. The title was exclusively associated with Mary. By the fifth century the title became controversial, and a replacement term *Mother of Christ* (Χριστοτοκος) was substituted.

Since the pre-earth existence of man is not universally accepted in Christianity, most Christians have never considered even the possibility of a pre-earth identity for Mary. Despite this, She, like all mankind, existed before this world.

If God the Father obeys the same commandments He imposes upon His children, then for Him to father a child with any woman other than His Wife would violate His decrees about adultery and chastity. Marian theology is largely absent from Mormonism other than to

suggest that because the Father impregnated Her, She is destined to be added to His eternal harem as an additional spouse. Traditional Mormon teachings have been crudely fixated on the mechanics of Mary's conception. There is almost no interest in whether She has any pre-earth role with the Father or whether She was the Mother in Heaven, the Divine Spouse of the Father who condescended to come to earth to bear Their Only Begotten in the flesh. If She were to be acknowledged in that role, it would require a complete re-envisioning of Her. It would raise the issues of why or how She, an immortal and exalted God, could return from that exalted state back to mortality to bring our Redeemer and Savior into this world. It would draw a contrast between the Father's involvement with this creation and the Mother's.

The Father can, and does, acknowledge others as His. But, unlike the Son who has repeatedly visited this earth, walked upon it, been handled by people, ... eaten here, the Father does not come into contact with this earth in its fallen state. The only time the Father had contact with this earth was before the Fall, in the Paradisiacal setting of Eden—which was a Temple at the time. Whenever there has been contact with the Father thereafter, He has been at a distance from this earth.

There is a formality with the Father that does not exist with the Son. For example, the Son has eaten with mortal man while He was immortal, both before His ministry in the flesh and after. As our Redeemer, He is directly responsible for us and has contact with us to perform His redemptive service. The Father, on the other hand, is different in status, responsibility, glory and dominion. The Son can appear to mortal man without showing His glory or requiring any alteration of the mortal who beholds Him. To behold the Father, to endure His presence, one must be transfigured. Mortal man cannot behold the Father's works while mortal, for if you comprehend them you cannot afterward remain mortal in the flesh.

That's taken from pages 383-387 in *Removing the Condemnation* (see also pp. 395-396, first edition, 2010), and there are a lot of footnotes to that which will be in the paper I put up. Like this description of the Son, the same description should apply to His Mother.

The Father is the source of glory and likened to the sun. The Mother reflects and shares this glory and is likened to the moon. She reflects God's glory, endures within it, and is empowered by it. She can participate with Him in all that is done wielding that glory. Knowledge is the initiator or force, and wisdom is the regulator, guide, apportioner, and weaver of that power. If not tempered and guided by wisdom, knowledge can be destructive. Wisdom makes the prudent adaptation required for order. The Father and Mother are one. But the Mother bridges the gulf between the Throne of the Father and fallen man. She made it possible for the Son of God to enter this fallen world for the salvation of everything in it.

A great deal of reflection and study is needed to understand all this implies. This is an introduction of some basic information about the Mother of God, or *the Mother of the Son of*



*God, after the manner of the flesh* (1 Nephi 3:8 RE). More will be given in a temple where mankind's understanding of things kept hidden from the world will be greatly increased—when God directs one be built to His name.

First and foremost, for fallen man in this creation, salvation is dependent upon Jesus Christ. We have a revealed account that explains who we worship and how to worship:

*And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at...first, but received grace for grace; And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not...the fulness at the first. And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son. And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father; And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth. (D&C 93:12-17; see also T&C 93:4-6)*

The account continues:

*Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth; And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come; And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning. (D&C 93:23-25; see also T&C 93:8)*

Like Christ, we are to grow from grace to grace. Those words are in a revelation that begins with this promise: *Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;* (D&C 93:1; see also T&C 93:1). This is how we are to grow from grace to grace. This is how we can receive of His fullness. There is no mention of redirecting our obedience to another. Nor is there any name provided to us to call upon other than Christ's. Nor is there any voice we are to hearken unto other than Christ's.

We are in a fallen state and need to be saved. Like Mary acknowledged to Elizabeth when they met, we need to be rescued by a Savior. That Savior is Jesus Christ. She pointed us to Him, and if we will heed Her wise counsel, we will rely on the merits of Christ, who is mighty to save.

There are other revelations that clarify how our attention and adoration must center in Christ. It is Jesus Christ who we are to acknowledge as the great Creator and Redeemer of creation:

*God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son—He that [ascendeth] up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth*

*shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and...the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. (D&C 88:5-13; see also T&C 86:1)*

There are Heavenly Parents, to be sure. They are two separate beings: a Father and a Mother. She exists, and Her role is acknowledged in scripture. We are supposed to find Her. And in the last-days temple (should it be finally built by a humble and obedient people), Her open presence will be there.

In the temple ceremonies, women veil their faces. Among other things, this symbolizes the hidden Heavenly Mother. Her presence is veiled because She is sacred and not to be regarded as accessible apart from Heavenly Father. That which is most holy is veiled from the vulgar and profane. Women should be regarded as daughters of the Divine Mother. Like Her, they carry the power to produce new life. Mothers are the physical veil between pre-earth spirits and physical bodies inhabited in mortality. They clothe children in the veil of flesh. This power is honored in the temple veiling of women. This power to give life has been regarded in almost all societies as something sacred and holy. In our coarse and vulgar society, we have rejected, as a matter of law, the idea that women engage in a sacred and holy labor when bearing children.

The Great Weaver organizes intelligence into life itself through motherhood. It is in the womb that disorganized intelligence is organized into spirits resembling the Heavenly Parents in eternity. Mothers in this creation do likewise. That power, endowed by the Divine pattern, is present in this creation to testify of She who wove our spirits before this world. She is ever providing wisdom to guide the energy of Her Divine counterpart so balance and order are maintained.

For the present, it is enough to know She is there and that She urges us to be faithful and obedient to Her Son, our Redeemer and Savior. We need to be rescued from our fallen state, and Jesus Christ is our rescuer.

In an October 1840 proclamation to the saints, Joseph and the High Council in Nauvoo hoped to see happen in 1840 what did not happen then, has not happened, and may only happen if people honor the covenant offered last year. The proclamation said:

*The work of the Lord in these last days, is one of vast magnitude and almost beyond the comprehension of mortals; its glories are past description and its*

*grandeur insurpassable. It has been the theme which has animated the bosom of prophets and righteous men from the creation of this world down through every succeeding generation to the present time; and it is truly the dispensation of the fullness of times, which all things which are in Christ Jesus, whether in heaven or on the earth, shall be gathered together in him, and when all things shall be restored, as spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began: for in it will take place the glorious fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers[.]* (JSP Documents Vol. 7, p. 412; also *Times and Seasons*, Oct. 1840, p. 178.)

Joseph understood that the project was reclamation and restoration of what once was and had been lost. We're not trying to create something new; we're trying to reclaim that which is the oldest of all, the original religion.

That grandeur was not achieved in Joseph's day. The restoration has never reached the magnitude God intends. All the institutions of Mormonism are drifting away, aimlessly. They are more interested in preserving power for themselves than in preserving the restoration. Taking the scriptures as your guide, you will be better prepared than any other generation to arise and fulfill the promises and the prophecies. Joseph Smith did not complete the restoration. But he laid a foundation that should not be ignored. The Community of Christ and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are both being led down to destruction and are bound in the chains of hell because of their studied ignorance.

Apostasy means a deliberate rebellion against God. They are in apostasy because they are deliberately changing the ordinances, have broken the covenant, and are rejecting Joseph Smith's teachings and revelations. They have been deliberately walking away from the restoration and choosing to align themselves with a doomed world. This process was described by Alma:

*... he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word. And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until they know them in full. And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the Devil and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.* (NC Alma 9:3).

Ignorance and hell go hand in hand, you see. The loss or the failure to retain the truth is the chains of hell.

Increasingly these largest branches of the restoration are abandoning Joseph's work and, like the Egyptians, are replacing their beliefs with uninspired additions and shocking deletions because they do not know what to keep or how to keep it. You can behold the growing ignorance in the meetings, conversations, conferences and spirits of these people. Online discussions by rank-and-file members of these churches are filled with corrupt ignorance and vanity. Voluntarily they "know nothing" about the mysteries of God. This erosion of knowledge has grown year-by-year until now their meetings and conferences are

astonishingly superficial and banal. I do not rejoice in this, but mourn it. It does not need to continue. They can repent and return. Nothing would please me more than to see the Community of Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints decide to change their downward course. Like everyone else who is lost in darkness and foolishness, I invite them to repent and return.

The gospel is vast, and only the beginning, introductory part of the restoration was established through Joseph Smith. There is still a great deal left to recover. The task is daunting. Unto what can I liken it to help you see it clearly?

I stand beside a great ocean and I cannot convey it to you. I am but a man and all I have is a cup with which to show you. If I labor all my life using my cup I can never convey the ocean to you. Using the limited talent and means I have, and with only a cup at a time, I can never convey enough to allow you to comprehend the ocean's sheer size. My effort mocks the great ocean because my measure is too modest, comparatively microscopic.

Using a cup, how can I ever portray the depth and pressure of the ocean? How can you ever discover its vast range of temperature in my small cup? How will you understand the relation between temperature and current, or the great power of the ocean's current? How shall I explain the effect of the moon on the ocean's tides when I have only a cup to declare it to you? How will the great diversity of both plant and animal life living in the ocean ever be understood when I have only a cup to show you?

In the top 600 feet of the ocean lives 90% of known oceanic animal life, but the ocean is over 36,000 feet deep. Mount Everest rises 29,000 feet, and the ocean plunges down more than 7,000 feet beyond Everest's height. If 90% of the animal life we know lives in less than the top 2% of the ocean, how much life is there in the oceans we know nothing about. Life we have not even a hint exists may thrive in abundance in depths completely hidden from our knowledge.

The grandeur of Christ's gospel makes my capacity to declare it pitiful. I confess my inability, and I fear I can never do enough to help this generation to awaken and arise. If I can help you grasp even a little of it, then let me point you to God who can do the rest. Men cannot utter what you need to learn. I am not capable, and it is not lawful.

*[G]reat and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his Kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpasses 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 men 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 Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him and purify themselves before him, to whom he grants the 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. (T&C 69:29).*

You can know. God can show it to you. I testify to you that that has and does happen. But if God deigns to show you some of His great mysteries, never think that excuses you from the labor still left undone. Rejoice in your knowledge, but do not forsake God's work.

There have been some people who have been pointed to the greatness of God's work and have been so captivated by the wonder of the ocean's shoreline that they have gone astray. They have wandered off into their own exploration, thinking they have found something greater in a starfish than what has been shown to them in my cup. They have failed to continue because they think themselves independently enlightened and self-sufficient. One of the immediate casualties of their arrogance is their loss of any part in Zion. Zion will be interdependent, cooperative and community-based. Zion will not consist of a solitary spiritual sojourner wandering the vast intertidal zones of an almost infinite shoreline. No matter how much they may discover along that journey, they will not grasp the ocean's depth they could have found in Zion.

There are many paradoxes, meaning apparent contradictions, in the gospel. Very often we must accept two truths that seem opposed to one another. The gospel is more art or music than math or science. But some kinds of art require math and science to engineer its creation. The scientist and artist may believe their skills conflict, but the gospel includes all truth and therefore unites both.

You will find paradoxes. Welcome them. Often ocean life depends on the pressure of the great deep to exist. Pressure more than a thousand times our atmosphere at sea level exists at ocean depths, yet there is life there. That life exists with 15,750 pounds of pressure on each square inch, and is utterly dependent on the physical law that you cannot compress a liquid. Things that live there would explode if suddenly brought here, and if you were taken there suddenly, you would be crushed. The gospel is an ocean, and includes both.

We live with conflicts, paradoxes and opposing opinions. We must be at peace with all these.

I admire and look up to many of you. I think that in some respects, God wants to make sure that no one haughty, proud, and who thinks themselves better than another, will ever be permitted to speak on His behalf. I think God wants the weak things of the world, I think He wants the broken things, the things that have no doubt about their admiration for God because they see nothing about themselves that's worthy of admiration. Someone who only wants to be as accurate [and] as truthful as they can be, and to trust God as the author and the finisher of His work. To get themselves out of the way and let God be the one who is the mover.

I bear testimony of the things that God has said to me. I communicate them as honestly and as forthrightly as I'm able to do, but I take no credit for it. I don't pretend that I deserve to be anything. I think many of you are greater people than you hardly comprehend.

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The foregoing excerpts were taken from:

- Denver's fireside talk on "Plural Marriage", given in Sandy, UT on March 22, 2015;
- A Q&A session titled "A Visit with Denver Snuffer" held on May 13, 2015;
- The presentation of "Answer and Covenant", given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3rd, 2017;
- His talk titled "Other Sheep Indeed", given at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, UT on July 29th, 2017;
- His Closing Remarks given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, Idaho on September 3rd, 2017;
- A fireside talk titled "The Holy Order", given in Bountiful, UT on October 29, 2017;
- Denver's conference talk titled "Our Divine Parents" given in Gilbert, AZ on March 25th, 2018; and
- Denver's remarks titled "Keep the Covenant: Do the Work" given at the Remembering the Covenants Conference in Layton, UT on September 30, 2018