

Denver Snuffer Podcast 164: Comprehending, Part 5

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

DENVER: What has come of the restoration? It's reached exactly the point now that was a dead end at the beginning. What is wrong with us that we can't overlook—based upon the individual experiences, the individual study, the individual's comprehension, even the individual's prayerful reflection and guidance through that—and accept one another, when in sincerity all of us are trying to follow God?

Why have we now managed to produce (among ourselves) contention, division, disruption? What is wrong with us? Better yet, what's wrong with me? Because whatever it is, it's wrong with every one of us.

It's no different than the mess that Joseph Smith saw in the landscape of Christianity in 1820 when he went to the woods to pray.

We should be ashamed of ourselves. We should be ashamed of our division. It should repulse us so much that I should be readily willing to embrace you even if you have some idea with which I disagree. I don't have your background. I don't have your experience. I haven't lived your life. I have to assume that you've reached the conclusion that you have reached because of the life you've lived.

And perhaps if you and I were to take a long enough walk with one another, we could reach an agreement. But we don't do that, just like the Christian's didn't do that, because we're unwilling to suffer the slightest variation to pass by without commenting on it, criticizing it, and rejecting it without ever considering that there may be a wealth of information that underlies that proposition. And if we understood that well enough, we might say, "Now that I understand, I see where your point fits in to a larger gospel context, and I need to embrace it. I would like to embrace it, but to do so in this fashion, because let me give you what underlies my experience, my background, and my education." Why do we do this?

The vineyard that the Lord began the restoration in was cumbered with all sorts of strange fruit.

(I mean—I've spent a lifetime referring to it as the Jacob chapter 5. In the new Book of Mormon layouts, it's one of the very few chapters that I can actually point you to from memory. It's Jacob chapter 3 in the new layout. So I'm becoming familiar with it.)

Talking about the condition of this vineyard, and its cumbered with all sorts of strange fruit—none of it worth harvesting; none of it worth keeping; none of it worth laying up and preserving against the harvest—the allegory says:

*This is **the last time** that I shall nourish my vineyard, for the end is nigh at hand and the season speedily cometh. And if ye labor with your mights with me, ye shall have joy in the fruit with which I shall lay up unto myself against the time, which will soon come. And it came to pass that the servants did go and labor with their mights, and **the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them.** And they did **obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard in all things.** (Jacob 3:26-27 RE; emphasis added)*

Well, that's fairly critical. The Lord's going to labor with you, but He's going to expect you to obey His commandments in all things. Have you recently read the *Answer to the Prayer for Covenant*? Are you determined to obey the master of the vineyard and his commandments in all things? Maybe we ought to read that twice before we berate one another, belittle one another, argue with one another, dismiss one another. Otherwise, we're really not laboring with the Lord of the vineyard to help for the coming harvest. Instead, we're embracing a false spirit, and we're dividing one another, and we're trying—

Our ambition, whether we're willing to acknowledge it or not, our ambition is to set this into the same sort of divisive factions as the Lord condemned to Joseph in 1820. They have a *form of godliness but they [deny] the power thereof* (JSH 2:5 RE). *They teach for [commandments] the [doctrines] of men* (ibid). They're all corrupt.

*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.

Someone that has been misled by a false spirit does not necessarily mean that they are an evil person; it only means that they have been misled. Recall Christ rebuking Peter and calling Peter "Satan" because Peter was advising the Lord against the determined trip to Jerusalem where he would be crucified; and Peter told him, advised him, counseled him, and objected, *[Far] be it... from you Lord. [Don't do this thing]* (Matthew 9:2 RE). And the Lord, responding to Peter, called him "Satan."

There are many people who are only kept from the truth because they do not know where to find it. The obligation of those who can teach truth is to teach it. Overcoming most false spirits is to be done by gentleness, meekness, pure knowledge, and persuasion not by rebuking, condemning, and dismissing the honest seeker for truth. At some point every one of us has emerged from a cloud of falsehoods into acceptance of some truth. We're no better than others who remain under that cloud, but we have an obligation to invite them to join in receiving light and truth. Likewise, we have an obligation to continue to search for truth. Until you have an understanding of all things, you're still misled, at least in part.

The Lord has every intention of keeping His promise to Enoch. There will be those who are gathered. There must be people gathered to a place, a holy city that meets the description and fulfills the promises God made. The people must gird up their loins or, in other words, must be living the godly religion that declares things as they really are—a religion founded on truth. Truth requires us to know things as they were, as they are, and as they are to come. Many past things that are hidden from the world must be revealed. God’s people must know ancient truths so their hearts can turn to the Fathers. But it will be to covenant *people*, not individuals, to whom this outpouring will be given. A covenant body will belong in a New Jerusalem. The City of Enoch will *meet **them** there*, and then they and the Lord *will receive **them** [unto] our bosom*. This is something more than individual salvation. Those involved will be individually saved, but the community itself must exist as something greater than individuals. There must be a “body” or a “bride” for the Bridegroom to embrace.

The focus on community or people in these last two revelations is similar to that throughout the Old and New Testaments. It’s everywhere. 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, you 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 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 you 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 18:8 RE, emphasis added)*

John also revealed how a group must depart from Babylon to be saved: *And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, **my people**, that you be not partakers of her sins, ...that you [may] receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities (John 7:2 RE, emphasis added).*

This theme is also throughout the Book of Mormon and revelations through Joseph Smith. Christ describes the end-times’ Zion and its accompanying sign in 3 Nephi:

*And verily I say unto you, I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place, that I shall gather in from their long dispersion **my people**, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among **them** my Zion. And behold, this is the thing which I will give unto you for a sign: for verily I say unto you that when*

*these things which I declare unto you...shall be made known unto the gentiles, that they may know concerning this **people** who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, ...concerning this **my people** who shall be scattered by them, ...that the gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and know of the true points of my doctrine, that **they** [the gentiles] [that they] **may be numbered among my people**, O house of Israel — and when these things come to pass, that thy seed shall begin to know these things, it shall be a sign unto **them** that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto **[all] the people** who are of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 9:11 RE, emphasis added)*

“[All] of [them] of the house of Israel” in Christ’s prophecy includes the gentiles who have accepted a covenant with Him.

In a prophecy from Joseph about those who will be in Zion, he states:

*The Lord hath brought again Zion. The Lord hath redeemed **his people** Israel according to the election of grace, which was brought to pass by the faith and covenant of their Fathers. The Lord hath redeemed **his people**, and Satan is bound, and time is no longer. The Lord hath gathered all things in one. The Lord hath brought down Zion from above, the Lord hath brought up Zion from beneath. The Earth hath travailed and brought forth her strength, and truth is established in her bowels, and...Heavens have smiled upon her, and she is clothed with the glory of her God, for he standeth in the midst of **his people**. Glory, and Honor, and Power, and Might be ascribed to our God, for he is full of Mercy, Justice, Grace, and Truth, and Peace, for ever and ever. Amen. (T&C 82:28, emphasis added)*

These are just examples. The scriptures foretelling a return of God’s people are in all passages of prophecy describing the latter-day Zion. *You cannot keep the covenant. I cannot keep the covenant. Only we can keep the covenant.* The covenant was apparently designed by God to require *all* to labor together. This is a long way off, but God is working to bring His people along so they may be able to keep the covenant together.

Creating unified people who qualify to worship God in truth (that is, knowing accurately the past, present, and future) is an extraordinary challenge. Only God can do it, and He must have willing people. It will require a new civilization. Prophecy likens that civilization to a stone carved out of a mountain that will roll out to destroy all the corruptions of Babylon, Medes and Persians, Greeks, Romans, and modern societies.

Anciently, civilizations were founded around the temple. Hugh Nibley studied ancient temples because of the LDS temples. He saw the effects temples had in the ancient world. In *Temple & Cosmos*, he explained their role. All of what I’m about to read comes from *Temple & Cosmos*:

It is the hierocentric point around which all things are organized. It is the *omphalos* (“navel”) around which the earth was organized. The temple is a scale model of the

universe, boxed to the compass, a very important feature of every town in our contemporary civilization, as in the ancient world. (Years ago, Sir James George Frazer noticed a definite pattern among ancient religious cult practices: they all followed the same patterns throughout the whole world. He explained that as representing certain stages of evolution in which the mind naturally expressed itself in those forms. But since then the gaps between these various cultures have been filled in, to show that civilization was far more connected.) Civilization is hierocentric, centered around the holy point of the temple. The temple was certainly the center of things in [Babylon], in Egypt, in Greece—wherever you go...

It is the scale model of the universe, for teaching purposes and for the purpose of taking our bearings on the universe and in the eternities, both in time and in space...

The temple is the great teaching institution of the human race; universities are much older than we might...expect. A university began as a Greek *Mouseion*, a temple of the Muses, who represented all departments of knowledge. The Egyptian called it the "house of Life." It was an observatory, a great megalithic complex of standing stones (later columns and pylons), with amazingly sophisticated devices for observing and recording the motions of the heavens...

The creation hymn was part of the great dramatic presentation that took place yearly at the temple; it dealt with the fall and redemption of man...

In short, there is no part of our civilization which doesn't have its rise in the temple. Thanks to the power of the written word, records were kept. And in the all-embracing relationship to the divine book, everything is relevant; nothing is really dead or forgotten. In the time of gathering of all things together, we gather everything good that ever was—not just people—that nothing be lost but everything be restored in this last dispensation. In an all-embracing relationship nothing is ever really dead or forgotten. Every detail belongs in the picture. ...Where the temple that gave us birth is missing, civilization itself becomes a hollow shell.

The temple must be there. It is not just a myth, it is the core of all...our civilization. (*Temple and Cosmos*, Hugh Nibley, 1992)

I read that from *Temple and Cosmos* because I agree with those words.

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

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

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

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

What was the object of gathering the...people of God in any age of the world? ...The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose. (*Joseph Smith Papers, History, 1838–1856, Vol. D-1, p. 1572*)

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

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

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

Joseph Smith was told that God intended to restore what was lost (meaning the fullness of

the priesthood), but it was only to be accomplished through a temple. These were the Lord's words to Joseph:

For, for this cause I commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, and to build a house in the land of promise that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before [the foundation of] the world... Therefore, verily I say unto you that your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies, and your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places, wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory and honor, and endowment of all her municipals, are ordained by the ordinance of my holy house, which my people are always commanded to build unto my holy name. (T&C 141:12)

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

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

We find it really easy to do two completely contradictory things: love religion—because we want to be close with God—and take offense at our neighbor—because their religious views differ somewhat from our own when, in fact, the Author of the religion is telling us all to love one another. If we've got Christ in common, we ought to be able to de-emphasize our dissimilarities and emphasize our similarities to find peace in Him.

If you study the events that occurred following the New Testament (that immediate generation following the New Testament—you can see it in the book of Acts; you can see it in the letters of the New Testament), Christ commissioned twelve apostles, and He sent them out with a message to bear about Him. But Christianity, in the immediate aftermath of Christ's life, had various kinds of Christianity. We had a Matthean Christianity that was based upon the teachings of Matthew. We had a Pauline Christianity that was based upon the teachings of Paul. We had a Petrine Christianity, and it was based upon the teachings of Peter. (It was the Petrine version of Christianity that ultimately got the broadest sweep that resulted in the formation of the Catholic Church.) But Christianity did not start out centralized. It started out "diffused." It's almost as if what Christ wanted to do was to get the word out and let everyone have in common some very basic things, in which we could find peace and love and harmony with one another—but outside of that, to explore, perhaps, the depths of what the message could be and not to have it insular, rigid, and one-size-fits-all.

We had during that very earliest period: You had obviously-commissioned companions that had walked with Jesus, had been witnesses of His teachings. He had brought them aboard;

they had heard the Sermon on the Mount; they had witnessed miracles. John (in his Gospel) makes it clear that they weren't really up-to-speed with what Christ was doing and what He was about, because He would say things, and they wouldn't understand Him. From John's Gospel, what happened was: it was retrospective; it was post-resurrection. When they knew—now—that Christ was going to come, He was gonna die, and He was gonna be resurrected, and then He was gonna ascend into heaven to be in a position of glory—that they looked back retrospectively, and they say, "Ok, now I get it. Now I understand what He was talking about. Now those statements about the necessity that He suffer come full circle, and we get it." But walking with Him during this time period, they were really not tuned in to comprehending what the Savior was intending to do and ultimately would do.

Then after all that, we've got this guy who is a persecutor of the Christians and an opponent of Christianity who, on his way with a commission to try and bring Christians to justice, on the road to Damascus gets interrupted in what he's doing: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? [Now it's] hard for [you] to kick against the pricks* (Acts 9:4-5 KJV). The pricks were what you'd use to drive the donkey—if it kicked, it impaled itself, and it could be a fairly nasty wound; they didn't kick without suffering. And Christ is telling him, "That's what you're... You're like a mule; you're so mule-headed about what you're doing, and you're actually doing something that is, ultimately, going to be to your harm." So Paul comes aboard—he's told to go to ~~Cornelius~~ [Ananias]; he goes to ~~Cornelius~~ [Ananias]. He gets baptized, and then scales fall from his eyes (he's been blinded for awhile). "Scales" are a great word—as an English translation—because they not only imply, potentially like the scales of the fish (like a contact lens that's opaque, and you can't see through it). But they also imply judgment—that Paul's judgment about things were wrong, and the scales needed to be put aright.

So, Paul comes aboard. But Paul is just as much what Paul was "before" as he was "after." And so, Paul and Peter never do quite get on the same page. And Paul writes that he *withstood [Peter] to [his] face, because he was to be blamed* (Galatians 2:11 KJV), which makes it clear that you can be a Pauline believer in Jesus Christ, witness of His resurrection, and in communion with Him, and you can be Peter, who walked with Him and was told: upon the foundation (that he was part of) that this church would be built. And you can authentically be Christian in both cases—and the two of you absolutely not agree on much of anything. So Christ set up, at the beginning, a Christianity in which there was a necessary diversity, a necessary broad-mindedness, a necessary tolerance.

The apostle Peter would write about coming into the union of faith. It's a theme that you see in James; it's a theme that you see in Paul—about growing into unity. So, why would we have a Christian establishment at the outset, in which we have this diversity of thought, with the expectation that you will grow into unity—and we're told *love one another; as I have loved you...love one another* (John 13:34 KJV). So, why would it be set up that way if Christianity was simply supposed to be "mutually-opposing camps with differing points of view," in which your-particular-brand-of-Christianity will ex-communicate their-brand-of-Christianity, and your-brand-of-Christianity will denounce (as "the great whore") Catholicism, instead of everyone saying:

- What has the Lutheran group observed about Christianity that can help bring light, knowledge, and understanding to me?
- What has Catholicism preserved from their traditions that can help enlighten my understanding because it's a treasure that we have not preserved in our own right?
- And what is it within the Baptist movement that has developed a keen insight into some of the most penetrating beliefs that Christ taught?

Why do we separate into denominational differences and hold this hostility towards one another?

Then there is the concept of “keys.” The best way to conceive of a “key” is as knowledge or understanding; it means something that unlocks the hidden truths you did not previously comprehend. A new, true concept that acts like a catalyst to solidify an idea that eluded you is a “key.” When the term “eternal punishment” was defined as God's punishment (because God is eternal, and punishment for Him is “eternal punishment”), we had a new key given to us.

Prophets hold keys because they unlock understanding. *And this greater Priesthood administers the gospel and holds the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God (T&C 82:12).*

This, therefore, is the sealing and binding power, and in one sense of the word the keys of the kingdom, which consists in the key of knowledge (T&C 151:12).

And then we have in Proverbs: *It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings to search out a matter (Proverbs 4:1 RE).* It's an important thought; we'll return to that when we get to the Kingdom of God.

Joseph Smith taught, “Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith [TPJS hereafter]*, p.160). Joseph taught, “Where there is a prophet, a priest, or a righteous man unto whom God gives his oracle's; there is the kingdom of God and where the oracles of God are not, there the kingdom of God is not” (*TPJS*, p. 272). Joseph Smith could ask and get an answer from God. Because of this, he held the keys of the kingdom—**because God presided**. God is the King of His kingdom. When His voice is silent, you have **no kingdom** because **the King is not speaking**. When we cannot have an answer from God, there is no Kingdom of God—because the King's voice is silent.

A key concept is one that solves the riddle, answers the question, or clears up the controversy. A key removes ignorance. When God explains something to improve man's understanding, He provides us keys or knowledge.

The Book of Mormon is filled with keys, including giving us answers to:

- who (at least one of) the other sheep were that Christ mentioned to His disciples in Jerusalem. When you explore that topic and you go into the closing comments of

Nephi, you find a bit more about the other sheep because they've been divided, they've kept records, and they will be visited. When you go to the allegory in Jacob chapter 5 (LE; see also Jacob 3 RE), you learn yet more about the other sheep and how the vineyard has been populated with His sheep worldwide.

- One of the other keys of the Book of Mormon is what Christ did following His ascension into heaven. That same Jesus—two angels standing by—“that same Jesus whom you saw ascend unto heaven, shall in likewise return” (paraphrase, see Acts 1:3 RE). Well, He did that; He's gonna do it in glory to judge the world in the future, but He did that again in order to visit with the Nephites—because the description of the ascension to the Nephites in Third Nephi mirrors the description of the ascension in the book of Acts. It's symmetrical.
- Book of Mormon has keys to tell us what happened to other Israelites who were led away from Jerusalem.
- It explains and defines what it means to be redeemed from the fall.
- It explains and clarifies—in a way that the entire Christian and Jewish world could never understand—how pre-Babylonian Judaism really was practiced.
- It explains and clarifies that many Israelites were divided from the land of Jerusalem and continued as organized bodies in scattered parts of the world.
- It explains that many prophets wrote scriptures that we know nothing about.
- It tells us and promises that a great body of scripture exists, which God intends to gather into one.

There are many other keys or insights that have been kept from our knowledge, and the Book of Mormon reveals **some** of them.

Joseph Smith wrote a letter that was never canonized—an excerpt from it, altered in *its* form even, got published in the LDS canon of scriptures—but the entire letter that he wrote is now in the Teachings and Commandments, section 146. And there's a statement that gets made that I want to make sure, as part of this talk, I clarify or give a key (yeah, there's one), so you can comprehend **this** thing.

The standard of truth has been erected. The “standard of truth” is the Book of Mormon. It's been erected because it's been put into print. It's been in print, albeit in an altered form—until we fixed that with the latest set of scriptures; it goes back to manuscripts and tries to fix as much of that as possible. Nevertheless:

The standard of truth [that is, the Book of Mormon] has been erected. No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall [have been] accomplished and the great Jehovah shall say, The work is done. (T&C 146:20)

This prophecy is not about an institution. This prophecy is about the “standard of truth” going forward. And while the “standard of truth” has gone forward primarily in the hands of missionaries belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to whom credit

should be given for all of that good work, it is going to go forth **independent**, meaning no one is going to own and control and have the institutional right to profit from the “standard of truth” going forward. It will sweep the earth, and right now, one of the biggest challenges of getting the Book of Mormon to be taken seriously by people is the apparent coupling of the Book of Mormon **to** the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There are people out there who have great offense, umbrage, and opposition to the LDS Church who, for that reason alone, will not consider reading the Book of Mormon. But it is another testament, and it was always intended that it go forth **independent** of everything else.

All volumes of scripture refer to the Restoration as having the effect of turning the hearts of the children to the Fathers, and the hearts of the Fathers to the children, which is not genealogical work. Genealogical work has a place in the grand scheme of things, but the Fathers to whom the hearts are to turn are the Fathers that were in possession of the original gospel in its completeness, the original patriarchs. Because they were entitled to come forth out of the grave (and did so at the time of the resurrection of Christ), they then assumed positions back in the heavens. Joseph Smith refers to *turn[ing] the hearts of the children to [the] Fathers* (T&C 98:3), as turning our hearts to the “Fathers in heaven.”

Because the first general resurrection occurred at the time of Christ (and because the second installment of that general resurrection is going to occur at His second coming), none of your ancestors who died after the resurrection of Christ until this day are among those who are the Fathers in heaven. Rather, they are imprisoned in the spirit world, awaiting the opportunity to be resurrected at the Lord’s return (or some time following that). Turning the hearts of the children to the dead is not the objective of the promise that is made about the Restoration of the gospel having the effect of turning the hearts of the children to the Fathers.

Is it your ambition to join your kindred dead? Well, you’re going to do that. Why is it not your ambition to join the **Fathers of whom Malachi spoke**, who were the first fathers, who are the fathers now in heaven, having returned back in a resurrected and glorified form, to dwell in the heavens. **Those** are the ones about whom the promise is made. You’re one motorcycle accident away from your dead kindred. You’re one bout of some nasty, infectious disease from joining them. There’s no great accomplishment to be spoken of by dying and going into the world of the spirits. The promises are more glorious, but they are also about something **far more ancient**.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall seal the heart of the Fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their Fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Malachi 1:12 RE).

That is how the prophecy of Malachi is worded in the Old Covenants (in the scriptures that are being published now that include Joseph Smith’s interpretation or inspired rendering of the text). *"He shall **seal** the heart of the Fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the Fathers."* That’s not there in the typical rendering and not in the King James Version,

because there it says, he will **turn** the hearts of the children to the fathers (see Malachi 4:6 LE).

This is referred to, also, in the New Covenants:

"And he shall go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:3 RE) is how it's rendered in Luke.

In 3 Nephi, the Lord quotes Malachi to have this information added to the record in possession of the Nephites. This is how the Lord rendered it:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (3 Nephi 11:5 RE).

In the Joseph Smith History, when he was visited by the angelic visitor Nephi, he quoted the prophecy in these words:

"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming" (JSH 3:4 RE).

So, now we have (in various renderings of this) something that is referred to as "sealing hearts of Fathers to children and children to Fathers," something that is called "turning the hearts," and something that is called "promises made to the fathers."

"Promises made to the fathers" are covenants that God made with them concerning the last days' work, in which there would again be on the earth those who are connected to the Fathers in a way that avoids the earth becoming utterly wasted at His coming. This is something that has to be attended to through the restoration and construction of an authentic temple conforming to the pattern of heaven, in which these things can be attended to and the knowledge and understanding imputed, in order for people to comprehend what it means to be a "greater follower of righteousness."

The foregoing excerpts were taken from:

- Denver's lecture titled "Signs Follow Faith" given in Centerville, UT on March 3, 2019;
- Denver's conference talk titled "Civilization", given in Grand Junction, CO on April 21, 2019;

- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #8 given in Montgomery, Alabama on May 18, 2019;
- Denver's talk titled "Authority, Keys and Kingdom" given at a regional conference in Sandy, UT on July 14, 2019; and
- Denver's conference talk titled "The Book of Mormon Holds the Covenant Pattern for the Full Restoration" given in Boise, ID on September 22, 2019