

Denver Snuffer Podcast 168: Contradiction, Part 2

This is the second part of a series where Denver discusses how Christ faced greater contradictions than any man, and was able to reconcile them as part of the Atonement.

DENVER: There's a gulf between knowledge and wisdom. We may have access to greater knowledge, but we often display very little wisdom. Knowledge can be arrogant. Wisdom is humble. Knowledge inflates our pride, but wisdom cautions us that we are still very far from being godly people.

Great spiritual development by individuals in isolation will never equip the individual to fit into a spiritually developed society. Alone, we seek connection to God. God represents the highest ideal in compassion, acceptance, and kindness. It's **easy** to make a place for God in our hearts. But other people are not always compassionate, easy to accept, or kind. God is pure, and mankind is not. When called "good" by the rich young man, Christ responded, *Why do you call me good? None is good save one, that is God* (Luke 10:9 RE). **If Christ would not allow Himself to be called "good,"** then there is little reason to call one another "good."

Individual spiritual development and group spiritual development are two **very different challenges**. Recent revelations **focus** on the development of a **group**. Everything points to God's desire to have His **people** turn to Him and live in **harmony** with one another. It is clear the Lord's objective is Zion and not merely to make **us** better individuals.

There's a Buddhist story about an enlightened monk who lived near a city having difficulties and conflicts. People from the town asked the monk to come into town to guide them so they could resolve their conflicts, but he refused. He preferred living alone and meditating. The town sent more representatives to ask again, and the monk refused again. Finally, a great crowd of people went to ask the monk for his help because, without it, they said they could never reach peace. At last, he relented. On the way back to town, in the joyful crowd, an old woman stumbled into the monk, pushing him to the ground. This made him very angry.

It's far easier for a hermit to live in quiet meditation than to live in harmony in a community. We are called into a dispensation with **more expected than individual salvation and enlightenment**. For the salvation of souls today, the **primary** focus of God's religion is to **gather a community**. God's purpose for the end times is focused on making people of one heart and one mind.

God's spirit is withdrawing from the world. In the Covenant of Christ Conference in September 3rd, 2017, we were told:

Those who have entered faithfully into [this] 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 [Scripture] gives a description of the events now underway and calls it the end of the times of the gentiles. This process with the spirit withdrawing, will end on this continent, as it did with two prior civilizations 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 [heart] 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. ("Closing Remarks," Covenant of Christ Conference, September 3, 2017, p. 1, emphasis added)

We have seen **astonishing** increases since September 3rd, 2017 of darkness, lies, deceit, and conflict. Lies imprison people. The chain Enoch saw that Satan had over the world was constructed of lies. The "chains of darkness" that hold men in prison after death are **also lies**. Today those chains of darkness hold fast many people, and their numbers are growing. *Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter* (Isaiah 1:17 RE). Confusion over what is light and what is dark and the difference between sweet and bitter comes from widespread lies being accepted as truth.

As the light of Heaven withdraws, it is all the more important for us to keep it within us. But we also have many "thinking errors." Recent revelations from God make it clear we are **being challenged to be fit to live in peace with one another**. The Scriptures tell us we should see God **in** our fellow man.

On His way to Jerusalem to be sacrificed, Jesus was asked by a rich young man,

*Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is: Listen, and hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. **This** is the first commandment. And the **second** is like [it]: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.* (Mark 5:44 RE, emphasis added)

Why would love of your neighbor as yourself be compared to the commandment to love God with all your heart, soul, might, and mind? It is because God is **in** every person you will ever meet. All life is a gift from God. God loans us the **breath** of life:

God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted [unto you] that [you] should live in peace [with one] another — ...ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and art preserving you from day to day by lending you breath that ye may live, and move, and

do according to your own will, ...even supporting you from one moment to another...
(Mosiah 1:8 RE)

God sustains us **all** from moment to moment. Through His power, we live and move. If God is sustaining every living person from one moment to another, then God **is** within all of us. If He loves them enough to support them, lend them breath, give them power to move and do according to their will, sustaining their life continuously, how can we hate them?

There are sincere people who pray and ask God questions, and they get answers. Often the answers given to one might be different than the answer given to another. Both believe they have intelligence from God and desire to stay true to the answer they've received. In these circumstances, are conflicts inevitable? Well, of course. But does that mean that harmony is impossible? Of course not.

This conflict is like another Buddhist story about a monk who accompanied a great teacher to learn how to help others. Throughout the day, the monk listened to the teacher as he gave answers to those who came for help. At the end of the day, the monk was disappointed and told the teacher his answers contradicted one another. The teacher had told one to do the opposite of what another was told. It made no sense to the monk. The teacher replied that, "There is only one road, but those who depart to the left must be guided back to the right. And those who departed to the right must be guided back to the left. The road does not change, but finding [it] after it has been lost depends on where the individual has wandered away."

What does it mean for us when there is a contradiction between God's answer to one prayerful soul and His answer to another prayerful soul? If discussion is warranted, it means that by talking through their disagreements, they may both be guided back to the one path to be followed. Sometimes that discussion will take time, experience, and careful, solemn thoughts. Even if the communicating takes a great while, why rush through a process that is designed to bring greater understanding? What if conversation does not produce an agreement? There's nothing wrong with tabling a discussion that has not reached everyone's approval and then resuming the discussion another day. Why the rush?

In legal disputes, there's a conflict resolution process called "mediation." Mediation involves a third-party mediator who helps the parties reach a settlement. The overwhelming majority of mediated cases reach settlement. However, I've seen many cases fail to reach a resolution, and the parties walk away from the mediation table still in conflict. But later, after the parties have taken time to reflect on the mediation, most of those unresolved cases will eventually settle as well.

I think the "Answer to the Prayer for Covenant" is the Lord **pleading with us** to take the time to **talk through our differences**. There is **nothing** in those words of counsel that require us to quickly resolve matters. Quite the opposite. The "Answer" is filled with instruction to us about the **process**, leaving the result to be obtained eventually— through a respectful process, no matter how much time may be needed. To the extent the Lord cares about time at all, He warns us against "haste."

The "recommended means" to reach harmony are *persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned, by kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul; **without hypocrisy and without guile...*** (T&C 139:6, emphasis added).

During the Scriptures project, there were many conflicts and differences to resolve. These conflict's resolutions delayed the project **far** beyond what any of us thought it would take. When the two independent groups were first combined, both groups thought their respective project was complete (or nearly so). But it was quickly apparent that the projects differed, and there were issues to resolve. It took months, and when all believed the end was approaching again, new source materials and new research was uncovered that required more than half of the project to **begin again**.

More than a year after expected conclusion, the project continued. At one point, I sent an email expressing my view of how I hoped to conduct myself:

I would rather submit to the decision of the group than insist that my view be followed. For me, harmony between brethren is more important than getting what I think best to be followed. I believe harmony can lead to much greater things than can merely enforcement of even a correct view. I know how difficult it is to have a correct view, because of how often [I've] been corrected by the Lord. Sometimes [I'm] humiliated by my foolishness when the Lord reproves me. Humiliation can lead to humility, but my experience is that the humiliation is accompanied by shame, whereas humility can proceed with a clear conscience.

*My experience with others leads me to conclude that if we can have one **heart** first, eventually we can likewise come to have one mind. But if we insist on having one mind at the outset, we may never obtain one heart together. (Teachings and Commandments—Epigraph, emphasis added)*

A friend of mine sent me a Facebook rant from a man who wants to teach others and very much demands attention and respect. His angry rant ended by telling those who were insufficiently respectful of his great writings that they were "hypocrites and pollutions, and unless you fall down before God in humility, you will suffer horrors you can't imagine. ...The greater the reasons you resist, the more you will be damned." The approach reminded me of the enlightened hermit monk who became angry once jostled. Zion cannot be established in solitary meditation. It requires a community. And community requires us to see God in one another. It requires we listen to and understand one another. That cannot happen if we do not talk with each other about even **difficult subjects** and **serious disagreements**. **The sharper the disagreement, the more we need to learn!** As the Lord explained, *There have been sharp disputes between you that should have been avoided. I speak these words to **reprove** you that you may **learn**, not to upbraid you so that you mourn. I want my people to have understanding* (T&C 157:3, emphasis added). Those may be some of the greatest words God has ever condescended to give to any people, at any time—and we treat them as if they're a rebuke for someone else and not ourselves, as if we needn't heed them.

Also, we've been taught:

Study to learn how to respect your brothers and sisters and to come together by precept, reason, and persuasion, rather than sharply disputing and wrongly condemning each other, causing anger. Take care how you invoke my name. Mankind has been controlled by the adversary through anger and jealousy, which has led to bloodshed and the misery of many souls. Even strong disagreements should not provoke anger, nor to invoke my name in vain as if I had part in your every dispute. Pray together in humility and together meekly present your dispute to me, and if you are contrite before me, I will tell you my part. (Ibid. v. 54)

From the foregoing, it is clear that the Lord has, in His mercy, chosen to speak again. God has renewed His covenant and provided commandments. But His instructions and commandments are to guide a **community** into godly harmony. It is only possible to rise up and become **that** community by following the instructions of God.

I think everyone's making perfectly valid, true, and wonderful points, and it may seem like there's contradictions, but the souls of men are so differently situated that they have to be met wherever they are, in whatever circumstances you find them in, with regard to their unique view of the world.

Question: "Speaking of your comments of what Christ did in the garden, would it be accurate to say that by descending below all things, there was a dissolution of Himself as He infused Himself into all things, thus connecting Himself to all things to enable thus to draw all things to Him, like a quantum entanglement of cosmic proportions?"

Well, that's an interesting way to put it, and I don't see anything wrong with any description that will give you an understanding that the Lord comprehended it all. He says in the book of Abraham, *I am more intelligent than they all* (Abraham 5:4 RE). The reason He is more intelligent is because His experience has exposed Him to a greater variety of contradictions (as Joseph Smith put it) than the contradictions that you and I have to face. We get to face them within a limited range; He experienced them off the scale to both ends, and therefore, He did descend below it all in order to ascend above it all and to comprehend it all. And therefore, in Him is the fullness of understanding of all things. We don't come to Him with shame and embarrassment or weaknesses and He look at us and say, "Wow, I've never heard of that before" or "Ooh, you're icky." He's been there; He's done that. There is nothing about the trouble that we face that He hasn't also previously faced in a way that comprehends it.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 53, and let's look at some old familiar verses. This is Isaiah writing long before the event, but the context is almost an echo of the quizzical nature of Christ on the road to Emmaus saying, "What are you talking about?" And they're saying, "Are you dumb? Are you ignorant? Are you oblivious to what's been happening?" Isaiah in 53:

Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? (Isaiah 53:1)

See, it always gets delivered in a manner that it is possible to absolutely dismiss it. There needs to be an entire chorus of people who are yelling in opposition. There needs to be smooth arguments. There needs to be opponents who are standing there. There needs to be institutional opposition. There needs to be rejection. There needs to be an entire augmented army of skepticism opposed to whenever the Lord is doing anything so that it can always be equal.

Who's gonna believe the report? And who's gonna see the arm of the Lord?

For [Christ is gonna] grow up before [God] as a tender plant, ...as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there's] no beauty that we should desire him. (v. 2)

I really dislike the way in which that's been translated—because those meanings **are** possible with those words, but that is absolutely not how I would render them.

Chamad (חָמַד, Strong's Concordance 2530): All Hebrew is based upon... Well, almost the entirety of the Hebrew vocabulary is based upon a three-letter root. And the root of the word that gets used for "beauty" really is talking about something to be coveted, desired; some kind of precious thing that you want.

Hadar (הָדָר, Strong's Concordance 1926): ornament, honor, splendor, majesty. If I were rendering a translation on this...

I went, and I looked this morning to see how Gileadi rendered this in his *Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah*. And Gileadi rendered it: *He had no distinguished appearance that we should notice him, no pleasing aspect that we should find him attractive.* I would render it differently still. I would say, "He had no bona fide authority that we should submit to it; He had no standing, credibility, bona fides. He had no position that we should acknowledge Him."

Because you can throw around the words, and you can go to the third and the fourth and the fifth and the sixth definition, and you can mess with it. But when you miss the fact that we're talking about Christ; we're talking about Him growing up in a place that is essentially barren, devoid of the knowledge of God; and we're talking about Him coming along, and those that are in this barren wasteland looking at Him and saying, "Why should we believe you!?" Then you have to go to the definitions that let you say, "authority, majesty." I mean, "majesty" or "a desirable thing"? What do men covet more than a position of rank and authority? And Christ didn't come that way. He came "beneath all things." He came as someone that was considered renegade, an outsider; someone that was easy to dismiss; someone that it was easy to look at and say, "For that, I'm having none of it. It's too great a risk to believe this stuff."

This is the seventh of ten talks I'm going to give. I'm bearing testimony of the truth. There's no reason to think that this endeavor is anything other than some person trying to call attention to themselves **unless** what I'm declaring to you is truth and is light. And if I am, then how you respond to that...

You do not need to respond to me. You don't need to like me, and you don't ever need to mention my name again. But what I'm **saying** you need to respond to—between you and God, between how you live your life from this day forward and the Lord who is going to come to judge the quick and the dead. You need to get right with Him. I'm not going to be your leader. I'm not going to form a church. I'm not gonna do that. It wouldn't work anyway. But **you** can be healed. And **you** can come to the Lord. And **you** can live your life differently. And you can look at these same Scriptures in a new light, and let His Spirit to fill you. And you can make a difference in the lives of others.

I don't trust myself to do anything other than to say what I've been told. I fear my weakness, my inadequacy. I fear offering up my own ideas. I don't wanna rely on me; don't **you** do that, when I'm asking you not to. You rely on Him.

But just remember, when He speaks, **this** is how He came! He's not gonna do it differently. He's not gonna make it easy for you. He's not gonna tell you, "I'm gonna put my thumbprint on this, and here's the hall pass. Who wants the hall pass? That guy's got the hall pass! Follow him! He can never lead you astray. And if he were to do so, I will remove him! I am the great and powerful." Now I'm borrowing both from Cecil B. DeMille and *The Ten Commandments* and *The Wizard of Oz*, and I'm mingling those to present to you false doctrine offered by institutions who claim they possess keys of salvation that will redeem you. I offer you no such keys. I offer you a Lord, and I would have you give heed to Him. And I'll tell that **no man** can be trusted. Even Peter—the night of the Lord's trial—was a broken reed. If you put your weight on that, it would pierce your hand. That's what **men** are—but not our Lord.

He is despised and rejected of men...

...and that will be true. That will be true of whomever. They will be despised and rejected of men. He was:

...a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...

It's necessary for Him to be so, so that He might know how to understand us. He grieved because of the things He knew He had to offer, and none would receive it. It was necessary for Him to experience sorrow and be acquainted with grief.

...we hid as it were our faces from Him...

That is, we turned from Him. We would not give heed to what it was He offered.

...he was despised, ...we esteemed Him not. (v. 3)

The only person who's ever lived who deserved to have respect given to Him, and we esteemed Him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. (v. 4)

See, smitten of God, smitten of God... He was cast out of the synagogue. They were looking to stone Him. I mean, why would you expect that God would honor a man who'd been cast out of the synagogue? Smitten of God. Afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; ...with his stripes we are healed. (v. 5)

You know, don't think you're going to follow that Master and then be spared. He's gonna let you understand what it means to follow Him. And that understanding is gonna come by the experiences that help you relate to and understand our Lord in a way that you don't understand Him at present. If you're comfortable, He will make you uncomfortable. If you're certain, He will make you uncertain. If you think you've got it all figured out, He will offer up a contradiction, and then He'll leave you to struggle with it. And then when you can bear the contradiction no more and in the agony and anguish of your uncertainty, He'll delay the answer a little further still until your heart is finally soft enough to come to Him in meekness. And then He'll speak to you the words that you need to hear. Sometimes only just in time.

All we like sheep have gone astray; [we've] turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (v. 6)

All of those variances from the path, He bore **that**.

He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: [he's] brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. ...he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him... (vs. 7-10)

You know, that statement, "it **pleased** the Lord to bruise him..." Can you imagine?

In the Enoch account (I wasn't gonna do this, but I think it's an appropriate juxtaposition), Enoch is in Heaven, and he's being shown in vision this last days' event. And Enoch is talking in the bitterness of his heart as he's looking at it. This is Moses chapter 7, verses 44,

*...Enoch saw this, he had bitterness of soul, ...wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens: I will refuse to be comforted; but the Lord said unto Enoch: Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look. And it came to pass that Enoch looked; and from Noah, he beheld all the families of the earth; and he cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the Righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified and have eternal life? And the Lord said: It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance. And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and **his soul rejoiced**, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, ...**the Lamb is slain**. (Moses 7:44, emphasis added; see also Genesis 4:19 RE)*

Weeping in the bitterness of his heart: “I will refuse to be comforted.” All this loss, all this waste, all this death, all this wickedness! So much reason to mourn. “I will refuse to be comforted.”

And the Lord says, “No, no, no! Be happy! Be happy! (That song, you know?) Be happy! See? The Lamb is slaughtered!”

...it pleased the Lord to bruise him... (Isaiah 53:10)

Is there no other way? No, there's no other way.

He hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see...the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities (vs. 10-11; see also Isaiah 19:2-3 RE).

He gains the knowledge by which redemption comes through the things that He suffers—because in suffering for sin, He overcomes and finds the path **back** from sin. So far as He is cast out, that is how far He knows the path back—to return. There is no burden you bear that He does not know how to solve. There is no dilemma that you confront that He has not already found the way to resolve and come back to peace with God.

Read the chapter on “Gethsemene” in *Come, Let Us Adore Him*, and you'll read an eyewitness account of how our Lord was smitten and afflicted, even beyond what man can endure. And each time, He was able to find peace and reconciliation and love, despite what He was put through.

This is the One about whom the Scriptures are speaking. This is the Lord who's asking you to come to Him. He's not aloof, and He's not distant. If He'll speak to someone in a military barracks, He'll speak to you—every one of you. And what He has to say to you is far more important than anything I can say. But I can bear testimony of Him. And I can assure you that He will not leave your petitions unanswered. And I can also assure you that today is once again **a day of salvation**. And He has set His hand again. No matter how unlikely it may appear, no matter how much reason there is to be skeptical, no matter how many more signs you think may need to be fulfilled, I'm telling you, He has set His hand again. The Heavens are open for business, and the question is whether you're interested in becoming a customer or not.

Isaiah 53:11 states:

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

The One who shall see the travail is the Father. The Father will be “satisfied” that the suffering of the Son, the payment made for mankind’s debt of errors, has been sufficient to then inform the Son about salvation. Without descending below, the Son would have been

unable to comprehend what mankind needs to overcome. Therefore Christ's suffering needed to be complete.

Upon receiving the full "wrath" of sin, Christ was then able to know how to overcome all that mankind must overcome to return to the presence of the Father. It is "by His knowledge" that Christ is able to "justify many." He possesses the knowledge, has the experience, and suffered "for all" so that they might be instructed by Him (see D&C 19:16-17). He knows. He comprehends. By the things He suffered, He gained all that is necessary to redeem, comfort, and succor any man or woman in their extremity (see Heb. 2:18).

This great burden was, however, merely His preparation; and not His completion (see D&C 19:19). He now uses His "knowledge" to "succor" and tutor each soul who will permit Him to minister to them (see Alma 7:11-12). The most complete description of what He suffered and what He gained is set out in my testimony in *Come, Let Us Adore Him*, and now in the *Teachings and Commandments*.

Christ has gained "knowledge" which will save each of us, no matter what we are called to pass through, if we will come to Him, heed what He tells us, and follow His encouraging counsel. There is no depth we descend to which He does not already comprehend, having been there before us (see D&C 122:7-8).

To overcome all sin ourselves, we must accept His guidance and counsel. His comfort alone will rid us of our guilt. He knows how to shed the pains of sin because He has first shed them and, therefore, knows what must be done. Only in this way can we relieve ourselves of the suffering which is felt when an unclean person is exposed to God's presence (see Mormon 9: 4-5). He can lead you to cleansing because He has been made completely filthy and covered with the wrath of God (see D&C 19:15-18).

His "preparations" are complete. He can "succor" you back to God's presence. But you must choose to allow Him to use this hard won "knowledge to justify you" before the Father. He has borne your infirmities before you bear them. He knows how to heal from them. There is nothing which you are called to pass through that He does not already comprehend. It is this great "knowledge" which renders Him the greatest, "most intelligent of them all" (see Abraham 3:19). He now has no perplexity from sin.

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The foregoing excerpts were taken from:

- Denver's general conference talk titled "Religion of the Fathers," presented at Aravada, Nevada on March 27, 2021
- Denver's comments during an assembly on "Missionary Work" in Eden, UT on July 2, 2016
- Denver's comments about Easter, made during a fireside held on April 3, 2022

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #7 titled "Christ, Prototype of the Saved Man" given in Ephraim, UT on June 28, 2014; and
- Denver's blog post titled "Isaiah 53:11" originally published on May 16, 2010 and subsequently recorded for this podcast on August 28, 2022.