

## Denver Snuffer Podcast 183: The Ascent, Part 4

This is the fourth part of a series on ascension, the process of rising up to the throne of God.

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DENVER: 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 municipalities, 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.

I hope you garden. If you don't, you should garden in order to experience all the plagues of Egypt [audience laughter], because that's what happens whenever I attempt to garden. There are these loathsome pests that will come along and consume and destroy and invade your garden. They'll eat everything except zucchini, as it turns out. And zucchini produces in such abundance and so quickly—and ripens so quickly—that all you're left with is a bag of seeds, and they're dreadful.

But there is a pest that invades the garden that will eat everything and destroy and wreak havoc that eventually entombs itself in a chrysalis. And the pest, while it's inside this apparent self-made tomb, has died, and gone away, but eventually, it will arise from that cocoon, from that tomb, and it will come out, and it has assumed a wholly different form. Unlike that loathsome creature—that crawled around, ugly and haltingly, across your garden, consuming and destroying—once it emerges from the tomb, it now takes flight. It's joined with the sky, with the heavens itself. And it goes about, thereafter, taking pollen and fertilizing the garden and becoming productive. Where before it had destroyed, now it helps create; now it becomes an agent that produces fruit, that produces vegetables. This little insect is a powerful sermon embedded in nature to testify of who Christ was and, more importantly, to testify of what Christ **did** that will affect **you**, that will turn **you** from what we are now into something glorious, heavenly, and capable of ascending in flight up on high.

C.S. Lewis wrote a book called *Mere Christianity*. We ought to get back to the **mereness** of the Restoration, because in its mereness, the Restoration asks us to repent, be baptized, read the words that we get in the Book of Mormon, and then search for and find that God who caused the Restoration to come about to fulfill His purposes. And His purpose is to save us.

*...abominations, and whoredoms, they have all gone astray, save it be a few who are the humble followers of Christ* (ibid). This sounds very much like that revelation given to the missionaries being sent out during that first year of the Church, *they have all gone astray*—now the words here are slightly different:

*"They have all gone astray, save it be a few who are the humble followers of Christ. Nevertheless, **they** are led, that in many instances **they** do err because they are taught by the precepts of men. O the wise, and the learned, and the rich, that are puffed up in the pride of their hearts, and all [they that] preach false doctrines, and all [they that] commit whoredoms and pervert the right way of the Lord, **Woe, woe, woe** be unto them, saith the Lord God Almighty, for they shall be thrust down to hell."* (Ibid, vs. 2-3, emphasis added)(2Nephi 28:14-15)

"Woe, woe, woe" is a three-fold condemnation. You can be condemned with one "woe" or with two, but when you're condemned with three "woes," that follows you on into what comes next. You just don't want to wind up there, particularly when you have the means in your hands to understand how to avoid these kinds of errors and this kind of condemnation.

Well, Michael Kelly this morning referred to a statement by Paul in his letter to the Galatians:

*"Though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."* (Galatians 1:2 RE) (Galatians 1:8)

What is that gospel? See, it's almost as if when Christ set up and called twelve apostles to be the ministers He sent into the world to preach repentance unto the world, whom He called and whom He ordained—it's almost as if one of the very first acts of the Lord was to call Paul **outside** of the organization He had set up, **outside** of the group that He had authorized, **outside** of the group that He had ordained. Why would the Lord call Paul on the road to Damascus and give to him a dispensation of the gospel when there was already an **existing** dispensation of the gospel in the hands of the twelve who had been with Him all throughout His ministry? It's almost as if the Lord wanted to make the point from the outset:

**Don't ever assume you can rely on a structure.**

God will call whom He will call, and Christ made that point with Paul. And so when Paul writes to the Galatians, "Let anyone that preaches a different gospel than the one I've delivered to you be accursed," we ought to ask ourselves, "Well, what then is the gospel that Paul preaches?" It's a gospel founded upon a man who can bear witness and testimony, like the other twelve could, that Jesus Christ was the resurrected Lord who came and sacrificed, died and rose from the dead, who will draw all men to Him. And Paul knew that.

That gospel—that same God who did something very similar with Joseph Smith, who came and delivered to him a dispensation of the gospel in which Joseph could testify—that Lord (who lived, who died, and who rose again) lives and testifies and is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His gospel is unchanging; His act doesn't change. That gospel of ascension, in which men are brought up unto Him—

Amos foretold this:

(And we read these words as if they applied during a 1700/1800 year hiatus between the death of Christ and His Apostles and the opening of the heavens to Joseph Smith. We don't read these words as if anything like this began **again** at the death of Joseph and Hyrum. But I want you to consider that these words may be a description of what began immediately upon the death of Joseph and Hyrum.)

*"Behold, the days come, [saith] the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land — not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from...north even to the east. They shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and **shall not find it.**" (Amos 1:27 RE, emphasis added)(Amos 8:11)*

Oh, you'll find plenty of:

- *lo hear's* and *lo there's*;
- *I, I am the Lord's*;
- *God hath **finished** his work* and give His authority unto me—

You'll find plenty of those. You'll find plenty of preaching involving the traditions of fathers—but you also find a famine. Then, Micah said:

*"Then shall the seers be ashamed and the diviners confounded. Yea, they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer of God... The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money. Yet will they lean upon the Lord and say, Is not the Lord among us? No[ne] evil can come upon us."*  
(Micah 1:8 RE)(Michah 3:7)

Evil will come upon them, because Zion is what the Lord intends to preserve. We should be desperately seeking for that.

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.

There's a prophecy about how God intends to gather together into one in the last days and how they're gonna be. According to the Book of Mormon, it's a testimony of God's dealings with one group of ancient people. But the Book of Mormon makes it clear that God's dealings have not been limited to one or two groups, but there have been multiple groups to whom He has visited and provided information. The testimony of all of those are intended to grow together. The Book of Mormon confirms that that is ultimately an objective.

Prophecies require that there be a house built, that there be a people gathered, that there be a location where God can take up His abode. The earth ultimately is going to be redeemed and returned to an original state that was described in Scripture as being a New Creation in which there was a garden planted eastward in Eden in which God could come, and He could visit directly, face to face, with man. The purpose of the temple is to construct another prototype that is symbolically representative of that same condition in which it is possible for angels, God, men, the living and the dead to be reunited as a single spot from which a restoration and a return of everything will spread until it finally fills the whole earth. But it begins in a single spot at a single place.

My understanding of how that's going to come about is that a command will at some point be given about a location. A command will be given at some point about the facility.

Direction will be provided in order to put that into motion so it exists on the earth. And as with so many of the prophecies that God has given, we tend to view them *vast* and *macro*, and God tends to fulfill them *small* and *micro*.

The coming of Jesus Christ into this world was, on a **global** basis, almost inconsequential to the notice of mankind. It appears that the largest audience that we can confirm that Jesus Christ ever spoke to was about 7,000 people. It appears that most of them turned away from Him because of His doctrine, because of His teaching, because of what He was insisting the truth to include. It appears that by the time He gets to the end of His ministry, He is slain on the cross; and then, He is resurrected from the dead; and He ministers for a period of about 40 days in and around Jerusalem; then, He ascends into heaven; that at the moment of His ascension into heaven that His followers at that point were approximately 500 people. So, the Lord Jesus Christ comes into the world as nothing more than sort of a local disturber of the peace. And by the time that He has finished His ministry and He's resurrected and ascends into heaven, He has about 500 followers.

If you look at the scriptural prophecies, the symbols embedded in the Law of Moses, the foreshadowing of a pascal lamb that would be slain in order to rescue and save mankind; if you look at what Isaiah foretold, what the Psalms celebrated; if you look at the vast body of literature, and then you compare that to the fulfillment of all that in the life of Christ, it would be very easy (if you're being fair about it) to take a look at that and to say, "God fulfills His great designs in very small ways."

And so, in some ways, the easiest way for God to get His work done is for the world to give little heed or little notice of it until it has been completed. No man yet ever built a temple alone. It's just beyond the capacity of a single individual to do. And so, there has to be... There has to be a temple-building people, if for no other reason than to support the cost of what it would take to build a temple. Even if you, like Solomon, used professional builders from King Tyre to send down to construct the temple because the expertise did not exist among the Israelites to accomplish the work, you still had to have the Israelites to support the budget that King Solomon had to employ in order to pay the king in order to bring the people and the material to accomplish the work. Even if it's done with small professional labor, it's still gonna fulfill the prophecies. It's still gonna meet all the criteria that has been given in Scripture. And it's still going to accomplish everything that has been promised to all people.

How we then gather together all of what are called in Scripture, the *rich treasures* (see T&C 58:3) from the earth... Those rich treasures from the earth are not rubies and diamonds and gold and silver. They are records of truth. They're the truths found in the traditions in the religions.

One of the things that's required in the design of the temple is that there be a treasury. But the word "treasury"... That the room is viewed by some people as having money and gold and silver and value—it's not that. The treasury of the temple are where the records are kept. It's where the greatest truths are to be housed. They're a place for preserving the great truths that God has planted around the earth that are to be gathered together so that there is one place that houses the most valuable thing that we have. It was not the marble

temples on Mars Hill that endured. That's not where the treasure was found when the apostle Paul spoke to the Greek philosophers. It was in the truth that was taught by Paul in the sermon he delivered on Mars Hill. All those people have long since been reduced to dust. And yet, the sermon has been preserved. That's the treasure. That's what needs to be gathered.

QUESTION: So, would the attaining to the resurrection be the way I see it have our soul, our spirit and body be one substance? Or will it be a temporary spirit and a body?

DENVER: One. One with the absolute capacity to manifest itself in any condition—from blinding glory destructive to the physical elements, at one end, or the retained capacity to go down and to say, *Handle me and see, for a spirit [hath] not flesh and bones as you see me have* (Luke 14:6 RE), and then to ascend (which a body can't do... Ahh, there's some carnival acts where they use a cannon, but they need a net, or it's gonna end badly)—but it's one; it's one. But it's—at that point—it's connected in a way that all of the capacities that existed in the physical body, all of the capacities that exist in glorious exaltation are combined into one being who is a being of glory and holiness.

Unfortunately (well, fortunately—I don't know; make your own judgment on it), the Father who is sitting on the throne emanating glory that sustains the whole of the Creation (and the word "the Father" is a title which, after the resurrection, applies to Christ) in that state of glory, sustaining all things while possessing the responsibility to sustain the whole of Creation, you really can't descend. The Father has to appear in glory. And at the Second Coming (when the Lord appears in glory), it will be in part because of certain rules that apply to how things work in eternity when you become the Father. But that's neither here nor there.

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One **hieroglyph** appears in all **three** Facsimiles:

- It is figure 10 in Facsimile 1,
- At the bottom and adjacent to the figure 2 in Facsimile 2, and
- Figure 3 in Facsimile 3.

The hieroglyph is used to represent "Abraham in Egypt." The figure is a libation table (or "traditional offering stand") on which drink and food were offered. Since Abraham concluded to travel to Egypt because of famine, a **symbol** of drink and food for Abraham in Egypt would be altogether apt. But the table figure shows a lotus flower atop it. The lotus was a symbol of **ascent** to the throne of God. **That** concept is most clearly referenced in the explanation of panel 2 in Facsimile 2. It is **at least thought-provoking** that Joseph identified the food and drink offering stand and a symbol of ascending to God to be representing Abraham's presence in Egypt.

The Holy Order is approved for practice in a proper, functioning temple belonging to God. As Walton put it:

When we consider the Garden of Eden in its ancient context, we find that it is more sacred space than green space. It is the center of order, not perfection, and its significance has more to do with divine presence than human paradise.

...We did not lose paradise as much as we forfeited sacred space and the relationship it offered, thereby damaging our ability to be in relationship with God and marring his creation with our own under-developed ability to bring order on our own in our own wisdom. (*The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, p. 116, 145)

What records that remain do not give a full picture of how much was anciently included in God's temple. For example, Margaret Barker's investigation has uncovered an ancient presence of the Divine Mother who was identified as "Wisdom." She explained that Josiah's reform changed the First Temple by **removing, rejecting, and deducting**:

Wisdom was eliminated, even though her presence was never forgotten, the heavenly ascent and the vision of God were abandoned, the hosts of heaven, the angels, were declared to be unfit for the chosen people, the ark (and the presence of Yahweh which it represented) was removed, and the role of the high priest was altered in that he was no longer anointed. All of these features of the older cult were to appear in Christianity. (*The Great Angel*, p. 15)

Later Christianity, like Josiah's reforms, also abandoned these parts of the religion. Joseph Smith never had the opportunity to finish restoring them. How oft would God have gathered people together under the arms of the Holy Order, but mankind has not been willing or even interested (see 3 Nephi 4:9 RE).

To return a complete Restoration, a temple will be required. As the Lord revealed to Joseph, a temple is always required of God's people:

*For your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations, and your statutes and judgments [in]...beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and for the glory, and honor, and endowment of all her municipalities, 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)*

The required temple in Nauvoo was **not** built. The fullness was **not** restored during Joseph Smith's lifetime. Instead of blessings, the saints were cursed. Not only did the January 1841 revelation warn of cursings—including forcible expulsion from Nauvoo—but 22 months following that revelation (in an editorial on October 1, 1842), Joseph Smith **pled** for renewed focus on the temple. He wrote:

Perhaps [we've] said enough on this subject, but we feel the importance of it and therefore speak plainly. It is for you, brethren, to say whether the work shall stand or progress; one thing is certain, that unless that is done all our efforts to aggrandize or enrich ourselves will be vain and futile. We may build splendid houses but we shall not inhabit them; we may cultivate farms but we shall not enjoy them; we may plant orchards, or vineyards, but we shall not eat the fruit of them. The word of the Lord is build my house, and until that command is fulfilled we stand responsible to the great Jehovah for the fulfilment of it, and if [it is] not done in due time we may have to share the same fate that we have heretofore done in Missouri. (*JSP, Documents, Volume 11*, p. 127)

Joseph's warning **did not** inspire the saints. Their neglect and disobedience changed the warning into prophecy. They suffered the same fate as before in Missouri, even though the Lord wanted (and expected) better of them. There's no reason to repeat their failure, because the Lord does not reward the disobedient. He offers blessings, and it is up to His people to receive them through obedience. But if His offer is rejected, there are no secured promises.

In the "Answer to Prayer for Covenant," the Lord assures us that if we are faithful, we will be given His temple:

*I will visit my house, which the remnant of my people shall build, and I will dwell therein, to be among you, and no one will need...say, Know ye the Lord, for you [shall all] know me, from the least to the greatest. I will teach you things that have been hidden from the foundation of the world and your understanding will reach unto Heaven. (T&C 158:15-16)*

The first and most complete religion belonged to Adam and Eve. They lived with God, and after being cast out, they retained a memory of living in God's presence. The first Fathers were taught they could talk with God, receive answers from Him, and return to His presence. The experience of Enoch—seven generations after Adam—records that direct contact between mankind and God was part of the true religion. After the fall of mankind, the process of the ascent of man into Heaven to commune with God has remained the **heart**

of the religion. That process will reverse, and contact between mankind and God at the end will involve the **descent** of God from Heaven to visit His tabernacle:

*And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father, and he called unto the Lord, saying, Will you not come again upon the earth? For inasmuch as you are God, and I know you, and you have sworn unto me and commanded me that I should ask in the name of your Only Begotten, you have made me, and given unto me a right to your throne, and not of myself, but through your own grace. Wherefore, I ask you if you will not come again on the earth. And the Lord said unto Enoch, As I live, even so **will** I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfill the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah. And the day shall come that the earth shall rest. But before that day, the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth. And great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but **my people will I preserve**. And **righteousness** will I send down out of Heaven. **Truth** will I send forth out of the earth to bear testimony of [mine] Only Begotten, his resurrection from the dead, yea, and also the resurrection of all men. And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out [mine] own elect from the four quarters of the earth unto a place which I shall prepare, a holy city, that my people may gird up their loins and be looking forth for the time of my coming. For there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch, Then shall you and...your city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom. And they shall see us, and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; and there shall be my abode. (Genesis 4:22 RE, emphasis added)*

So that there are no false assumptions, the Scriptures explain that God's covenant with Enoch includes an **actual** temple to be **built today**. And the Lord has reiterated in His Covenant: *I will come **to** my tabernacle and dwell **with** my people in Zion, and **none will overtake** it* (T&C 157:64, emphasis added).

The religion of the Fathers involved direct communion, contact, and connection between mankind and God. The Holy Order is an important part of the return of that direct association. The original religion of the Patriarchs enabled the faithful to hear directly from the Lord **His** promise of eternal life. God would seal them by covenant into His Heavenly Family. We can, if faithful, obtain all that the original Fathers received from God at the beginning:

*What I, the Lord, have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself. And though the heaven[s] and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by my own voice or by the voice of my servants [it's] the same. For behold and lo, the Lord is God and the spirit bears record, and the record is true, and the truth abides for ever and ever. Amen. (T&C 54:7)*

**As a servant of God**, I say with **His** authority that these promises are true, and He intends to fulfill them for His covenant people Israel. In the beginning, mankind was placed in a family. The first commandment to Father Adam and Mother Eve was to multiply and

replenish the Earth. The first man and woman were married. Their union produced the family of mankind. **Every** soul born into this Creation came from parents and were all intended to be in a family.

The plan of salvation is covenantal and familial. The government of God is a family. If a family is established by covenant with God, it will be the only order that can survive death. In a very real sense, the salvation of mankind now comes only through the family of Abraham. The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob covenanted with these three successive generations that they would stand at the head of all who would be saved after them. The God of Israel requires **some** part of mankind—however small—to be sealed into that line or be utterly wasted at His coming.

Knowing God's plans does not always produce immediate joy. Solomon made this comment after a life of learning: *In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow* (Ecclesiastes 1:3 RE). We should not be surprised to learn that initiation into God's mysteries can be troubling, disquieting, and even a burden.

**If** asked to carry a burden by God, do it willingly. If not asked, do not envy. Remember Alma's statement: *Behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish, for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me* (Alma 15:12 RE). It is our common enemy who stirs us up to jealousy and envy rather than patience and meekness. Great works of God **fail because mankind will not wait on the Lord.**

*Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen, and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are [so set] upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson — that the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and that the Powers of Heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness. ...when we undertake to cover our sins or...gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion, upon the souls of the children of men in **any** degree of unrighteousness, behold, the Heavens withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.* (T&C 139:5, emphasis added)

The more God gives, the greater the peril. Weaknesses of appetites, ambitions, passions, and covetousness is akin to trying to navigate through a narrow pass, guarded by a great beast, pitiless and cruel, that destroys **all** those whose zeal and impatience brings them into the reach of the beast (see T&C 163). God has provided to us guidance on how to reach Zion. It requires self-discipline and meekness to follow the Lord rather than racing ahead of Him to destruction.

Our first Fathers experienced visions, ascended into Heaven, obtained promises of exaltation, and were transformed by their experiences **from men into angels of God.** Joseph Smith attempted to bring this back as part of the Restoration. Margaret Barker has written about the use of the term "angel" anciently **to identify those who had encountered God's presence.** She also explains a Dead Sea Scroll text foretelling a return of that religion: "The Qumran Melchizedek text has a possible reading about people in the

last days whose teachers have been kept hidden and secret; perhaps they have been preserving the older ways" (*The Great High Priest*, p. 79). The return of that religion will more likely be through a last-days' restoration rather than through a preservation. But she is correct to anticipate its return.

The Book of Mormon has account after account of prophets receiving an audience with God the Father and His Only Begotten Son. This **is** the older, heavenly ascent religion that began with Adam in the Garden.

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." 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.

Everyone here is to be added upon as a result of what happens to us in mortality. And it doesn't matter if your life is short and brutal or if your life is long. Everyone who comes into a mortal body in this sphere gets added upon. We will depart here, and we will go to a place where there aren't *bodies* in *this* form, where we'll be given a chance to think back upon what we experienced. And if it was harsh and brutal and short and mean, that will give us a chance to meditate upon the meaning of those things and why they are negative and why there ought to be something better. If your life is long and successful, you'll have a chance to reflect back upon what good you did, if any. And what more good you could have done, but you failed to do, if you were self-indulgent. We are in the process of gaining understanding, light and truth, and sometimes that comes at the expense of hurting others. And sometimes that comes at the value of helping others. But everything that goes on here will not be forfeited; it will be kept. And we will move from—as the Scriptures put it, "worlds without end"—from sphere to sphere, experience to experience, over whatever time it takes, however many lives it may take, in order to be added on so that we can become like what our Scriptures define as "the prototype of the saved man." That prototype of the saved man is Jesus Christ because death could not hold Him in the grave. The grave took Him, and He reclaimed His body, and He ascended into Heaven because He is the prototype of the saved man. And eventually, we are to arrive at that same end—but it may take worlds without end. We're here along a long, long path—an eternal path—to gain experience while we are here temporarily and to learn.

Well, there was a different order of things long ago and far away, in which the veil that exists predominantly now was easily traversed. It is for the protection of mankind that a veil was installed, so that apparently powerful, spiritual, great beings who are malevolent and evil and corrupting and who urge you to carnality and sensuality, and devilishness don't get access to you—because there has to be an **equal** opposition in all things. If your

mind ascends to the highest heights (as Joseph put it in his letter from Liberty Jail), your mind also must descend into the darkest abyss—because you cannot ascend without exposing yourself to a larger spectrum of opposition, so that you are left in the balance to choose. It is for mankind’s protection and potential salvation that limits are placed upon the adversary and his access to you. And yet there are so many people who are willingly captured by carnality/sensuality/power-over-their-fellow-man that mankind is easily corrupted into seeking for things that titillate the mind, gratify the senses, and suggest overindulgence in any of the bodily weaknesses that we all possess because we’re here in a body of dust [and] are vulnerable to.

And so, “believe [it] not,” and they believed not. So what was the requirement? Believe in the Son and repent of your sins. It’s one thing to say you believe in the Son; it’s another to repent of your sins.

Well, this is the Lord observing the state of affairs when He was here ministering among mankind. It’s something that could have been said equally by Joseph Smith when he was here ministering among us.

*But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. And blessed are you because these things have come unto you that you might understand them. And truly I say [to] you, many righteous prophets have desired to see these days which you see, and have not seen them, and to hear that which you hear, and have not heard. (Matthew 7:3 RE)*

In Galatians, the apostle Paul wrote,

*Even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness, know therefore that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture[s], foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed. So then they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Galatians 1:7 RE)*

Abraham is the father of the righteous and the prototype of the saved man in his generation because he was able to claw back out of a state of apostasy into a state of faithfulness, communing with God and renewing an order that had fallen into disuse everywhere except for a tiny enclave headed by someone who had been an antediluvian and who had the right (because the right continued right up into the flood) to be translated into Heaven, but he stayed behind to fulfill a mission. But having fulfilled the mission (that is, handing it off to Abraham), Melchizedek then likewise ascended and, with him, his city.

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The foregoing excerpts were taken from:

- Denver’s conference talk titled “Civilization”, given in Grand Junction, CO on April 21, 2019

- The Q&A Session following Denver's conference talk given in Grand Junction, CO on April 21, 2019
- Denver's comments at the Joseph Smith Restoration Conference, given in Boise, ID on June 8, 2019
- Denver's talk titled "Authority, Keys and Kingdom" given at a regional conference in Sandy, UT on July 14, 2019;
- Denver's remarks given at the "Unity in Humanity" interfaith celebration, and online event held on June 7, 2020;
- Denver's talk titled "Understanding Your Soul, Part 2," delivered in Highland, Utah on March 6, 2021;
- Denver's general conference talk titled "Religion of the Fathers," presented at Aravada, Nevada on March 27, 2021;
- Denver's comments about Easter, made during a fireside held on April 3, 2022
- Denver's comments given during the Unity in Humanity Interfaith Celebration, recorded October 22, 2022; and
- Denver's comments on "Righteousness" delivered at a fireside in Salem, Utah on November 20, 2022