

Preparing For a Command to Build a Temple: A Montage

"Love One Another" General Conference Address

Keith M. Henderson

May 21, 2023

I have proposed to speak today on the topic of preparing for a command to build a temple.

Whenever God has a people on the earth who are His, they are always *commanded to build a house, a holy habitation, a sacred place where His presence can dwell and where His Holy Spirit of Promise can minister. (T&C 157:41).* A place wherein He can come and bestow His most holy ordinances and renew His most holy covenants.

Well, hear this!

All of you who have turned from your wicked ways and repented of your evil doings, of lying, and deceiving, and all your whoredoms, and of secret combinations, idolatries,, murders, priestcraft's, envying, and strife, and from all wickedness and abominations, and have come unto me, and been baptized in my name, and have received a remission of your sins, and received the holy ghost, are now numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel. (T&C 158:10).

God has once again a covenant people upon the earth, and they are among you sitting in this congregation today. And so, with such a people once again established, it should be an easy thing to obtain a command to build His temple. There are after all only two commandments, so all we have to do is continue to love the Lord our God, and the second is like unto the first; learn to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Oh no, not that!

It has almost always been the case that for one reason or another men and women are without affection and hate their own blood. It started way before the flood with Cain, and even before that when Satan told the sons of Adam, I am a son of God also, therefore worship me. From that time with some few exceptions, it has been that way and even today continues. Men are full of jarring's, envy's, lust's, strife's, and whoredom's, and this one commandment, to love one another, seems to be beyond the grasp of most.

This time however, it appears we have a good chance of succeeding. We may actually receive a command from God to build His house. I hope we will, and my faith is such that it will not be passed to another people, because I think there are sufficient who will arise among us and turn their hearts to their God, to their children and their progenitors, and consequently to each other whom they will learn to love. It can be done.

But if it's not, a great opportunity will be taken from us and be given to another people whom God will raise up. But even so, though much will be lost among us, all will not be lost for those who have set their foot upon this path of preparation for a command to build a temple. All cannot be lost for me and thee if we choose to do this. And this is where this turns very personal.

I know some few, at least, who have been "preparing to receive a command to participate in the building of the Lord's house" for a long time now, even though at the beginning of our trek

we didn't know what to call it. For me it has been since the early 1990's. Ever since I recognized how low I had sunk and began petitioning God with my prayers by day and watering my pillow by night because of the wretched man I realized I had become. After months of this soul wrenching, God, finally, wrapped me in the arms of His mercy and brushed away my tears, along with my sins, in an experience which has lasted ever since.

As soon as God sent a servant with the words and power to propose *"If any of you have concerns about whether the baptism you received at eight years of age was fraught with any problems at all, for instance, if belief in Christ is supposed to precede baptism, but in fact follows it, does that recommend repeating the ordinance? Does Christ's establishment of an order to these things, by the commandment of the Father matter? If it matters, then why not consider being re-baptized after seeking out one you know has authority and power? If you do it and it "tastes good" then you have your answer. And if nothing changes, then you have learned something, as well."* (Denver Snuffer blog post, September 28, 2010.) Many gasped at the audacity of such a proposal, and a few sought out those they knew had received power from on high to perform such an ordinance, and those few were re-baptized.

Consequently, I and others around me were re-baptized on October 6, 2010. Denver said it took the whole of the Atlantic Ocean to wash him clean from his sins. I was baptized in Ogden Bay at the confluence of the Weber and Ogden rivers because that produced waters prodigious enough to wash away my sins and those with me, short of going to an ocean.

Shortly before this re-baptism, God had spoken again to me and offered promises which to this day I can barely comprehend. Shortly thereafter I partook of the Lord's supper with wine, with others, of my own make, representing the blood of the Savior shed for us. After that God began speaking to me almost constantly, much of it to remind and reprimand me of my weaknesses; by the voice of His Spirit and through The Holy Spirit of Promise, He communed with me.

Until, one day I received a phone call asking me if I had a witness of all the things Denver Snuffer had been saying throughout the longest talk probably any of us have listened to in our history. Saying yes, because I had attended, listened to, and read all the transcripts of the talks and consequently had a witness: He said God had requested I bear that witness publicly to all who might attend the last portion of that extremely long talk. He let me know, however that even though God wanted it, I was not his (Denver's) first choice. As he said, *"you were not the first."* (Which is a statement to me much deeper in its meaning than it appears on the surface). So, I'd like to know which of you turned him down? Which of you would have turned him down if he'd have asked you? If you can answer that you would not have turned him down regardless of any cost to you, then you and I are together at this step, because we are preparing to accept a command to build a temple, and that requires us to receive and bear our witness. Although I bore my witness to what turned out to be thousands, it was and is just one more witness to one person who would receive. All of us who would set our foot on the path to prepare for a command to build a temple, have done that.

Denver let me know because of this I'd probably be excommunicated from the LDS church, which I was just over a month later. His exact words were, *I hate to do this to you, because I know what will happen to you.* But none of this mattered because as I have said previously, I,

and hopefully all of you are in preparation to receive the command that the temple is to be built. And nothing, God willing, will stand between our preparation and that command.

Here is what I know; if there are sufficient who rise up and are willing to make the preparation required for this command, the command will be given to us and not turned over to someone else. But if me and you are alone in this desire and resolve, and all else take a different track, we cannot be harmed eternally by their refusal.

Remember there are save two commandments only. They are to love God and your neighbor as yourself. You are here today so you must love God, but there is divisiveness among us, and we do not all love each other. In fact, some of us act and speak as though we hate our own blood. We can't do that and be acceptable.

As a metaphor, it seems as though the Lion is not ready to lay down in peace with the Lamb or even eat straw like unto the ox, but this has to happen.

We are told in the book of Genesis that Shem as a child stopped the mouths of lions and quenched the violence of fire. Could it be that Shem had some lions within himself and a lion-like nature about himself that he had to tame, and thus shut its mouth, that he would be able to teach his people by example how to tame these things within themselves. So, they could come to peace with themselves, and with others.

Was there a violent consuming fire within Shem's make-up that required quenching even as a child in order to be capable of quenching the consuming fire of dispute and contention within his kingdom as the later King of Peace?

Can you picture Melchizedek's city seeking for, and achieving "Heaven" with lions of seemingly impossible strength and ferocity roaring with their spittle spewing overall, while a fire of contention and dispute raged and devoured everything in its path? No, you can't! It had to be stopped and controlled within Melchizedek first so the people would have a model to emulate. He conquered these things within himself during the years he was still considered a child. He then was able to teach these things to his people after the flood, so well that Christ re-named him with one of His own names -- "Melchizedek" -- (King of Righteousness.)

And his people loved him, insomuch, that they became like him.

Are we like the people of Melchizedek? Do we have a king of righteousness within our midst who is teaching these very same things: To stop your roaring and quench your fires and come lay down together in peace with the proverbial Lamb and the Lion? The one is not intimidating the other and the other has nothing to fear in the slightest from the first. Are we all like these? If you cannot honestly answer yes, then there is probably no room for you in Zion. The rules are the same for all who would come.

Now I'm going to speak about another relatively unknown covenant God has made to us who prefer His way. It was given through Joseph Smith on August 30, 1831. It is contained in our new scriptures in Teachings and Commandments section 50, paragraphs 11 & 12, and is perhaps one of the most merciful things God has, and/or will do for us who choose his ways, regardless of the outcome for others.

11 “Yea, and blessed are the dead that die in the Lord **from henceforth**. When the Lord shall come, and old things shall pass away, and all things become new, they shall rise from the dead and shall not die after, and shall receive an inheritance before the Lord in the holy city.” And he that lives when the Lord shall come, and has kept the faith, blessed is he; nevertheless, it is appointed to him to die at the age of a man. Wherefore, children shall grow up until they become old; Old men shall die, but they shall not sleep in the dust, but they shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Wherefore, for this cause preached the apostles unto the world the resurrection of the dead.

12 These things are the things that you must look for, and speaking after the manner of the Lord, they are now nigh at hand, and in a time to come, even in the day of the coming of the Son of Man. And until that hour there shall be foolish virgins among the wise, and at that hour comes an entire separation of the righteous and the wicked, and in that day will I send mine angels to pluck out the wicked and cast them into unquenchable fire.”

So, either all this comes in our time, or it doesn't. That all depends on **us**. But if it doesn't come and I am yet found loving God and all of you, that makes no difference to me and my outcome, because it is up to **me** to be found, righteous and preparing for a commandment to build this temple unto the Most High God.

Over the years I have sought insight as to what it is to be righteous. What follows here are my impressions and what seems to flesh it out for me, realizing, of course, that righteousness can probably be boiled down to simply being obedient to God, and that often times being “righteous before God” may not mean the same thing “righteousness” means.

“A righteous person neither aspires to the honors of men nor seeks to amass worldly things. Rather, he cherishes the esteem of God. For strength he binds himself to the powers of heaven, knowing that those powers can only be controlled by righteousness. He does not conceal, minimize, or excuse his sins. He does not pamper his pride, pursue vain ambitions, seek to manipulate, or control others, in any degree of unrighteousness. A righteous person does not compel in order to lead. He does not insist on domination. His is the quiet act of loving service. He is gentle. He encourages those who are struggling and weak, with meekness and genuine love, demonstrating patience and rejoicing in minute steps of progression. A righteous person is kind. He embraces pure knowledge from God, which enlarges the soul without pride or pretense. He stands firm and always defends the truth. When he reproves sinful acts, he does so with absolute love, and then only when directed by the Holy spirit, so that his reprimand does not discourage. A righteous person is charitable toward his family and strangers. Virtue ever fills his thoughts. He knows his standing before God—neither considering himself below others, which is self-pity, nor appraising himself as above others, which is pride. With this honesty and divine assurance, he has the confidence to stand in the presence of God and not shrink. The sublime doctrines of godliness distill upon him until he is saturated in truth. The Holy Spirit is his constant companion. A righteous person will advance the cause of truth. He remains in the sure path and is not moved to the right or to the left. As evidence of his righteousness, all good things flow unto him naturally without being compelled. As for his trials, the Lord will prepare for him a way of escape, including the hearts of his enemies being turned to him or their being moved out of the way. He finds no lasting charm in the things of this world. His movement is away and up.”

These are the characteristics of those who are truly Zion.

Now for the rest of this montage you may consider that I begin here with quote marks, for the remainder will be direct quotes which have been made over the years from 2014 to several years later by Denver Snuffer exclusively, extrapolated from his talks and writings. These quotes have been compiled by Karen Strong who has given me permission to use her work and. She has even given me permission to call her work my own; but I don't want to do that because there might be some mistakes herein which I can attribute to her if I just let it stand that she did it.

We will proceed in chronological order so you can pick up where you joined this movement and see what you missed before.

From the Grand Junction Talk #6, given in May 2014

“...There is absolutely no reason “to gather to Zion” in order to fail again. We do not need another Jerusalem, Rome, or Antioch. We do not need another Kirtland, Jackson County, or Nauvoo. We certainly don't need another Salt Lake. We need Zion. And there's no reason to gather if the gathering is going to fail again. Stay home, serve in your callings and be happy. But, if you rise up, then there may be reason to gather. Not everyone will be brought. Only “one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” (Jer. 2: 3.) Zion will be where the qualified meet. It will not be where many come to get qualified.

Christ invited everyone to the wedding feast through Joseph Smith. In Joseph's Day there was an invitation to “come one, come all” to attend. But those who gathered were unqualified because of their jarring's, envy's, strife's, lusts, and covetousness. They would not attend. Therefore, the Lord's invited guests have refused. He now will gather from the highways and byways and invite you who are strangers and sojourners living outside the circle of those invited first. But beware about coming if you are not clothed with an appropriate “wedding garment” of charity to the poor, for the standards are no different in this invitation than in the earlier one. (See Matt. 10: 17-19.)

...I want to remind you, however, that throughout the scriptures, when it comes to the establishment of Zion, there is no such thing as “Hastening the work.” It can't be done in haste. 3rd Nephi chapter 20, the Lord speaking, paragraph 10: “For ye shall not go in haste, nor by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the Lord God of Israel shall be your rearward.” This is the Lord speaking. He is quoting Isaiah, but it is the Lord speaking.

...T&C 101:15, “Nevertheless, as I have said unto you in a former commandment, let not your gathering be in haste, nor by flight; but let all things be prepared before you. And in order that all things be prepared before you, observe the commandment which I have given concerning these things—Which saith, or teacheth, to purchase all the lands with money, which can be purchased for money.” **There will ultimately be an excess from your smaller gatherings in the beginnings of this work. As a result of that excess, there can be a place prepared, but not in haste.** Whether there will be a place prepared for you depends entirely on what you now do.”

...It is right to expect Zion, but it is only right to expect Zion upon the conditions that are laid out for Zion, and on no other basis. It is right to expect Zion on the terms the Lord has ordained, and none other. **You won't be able to cheat your way in there, and a group of people will not be able to accomplish it apart from the conditions the Lord has ordained.**

From the Cottonwood Canyon remarks, in September 2015

Joseph Smith proceeded with the restoration as a come-as-you-are party. He believed that with the right kind of preaching he could take any people, convert them, and turn them into Zion. There was some reason to think it may be a possibility, because of what we learn about Melchizedek in the book of Alma. Melchizedek's preaching resulted in people repenting from their wickedness and becoming righteous. So, it's not an irrational thought, nor an unscriptural thought, for Joseph to have entertained. **My conclusion, however, is that there is no reason to try iron if Edison tried it and it didn't work, and there's no reason to try copper if Edison tried it and it didn't work. There is no reason to expect that you can take people and gather them and then try to produce Zion. It makes a whole lot more sense, as the scriptures seem to indicate, that first people are taught repentance and then some few repent then are gathered, one of a city, two of a family. They are gathered by those angels to whom the keys are entrusted to do the gathering. Then you put them together.**

We know what Joseph tried to do failed. He did not produce Zion...Therefore, there is **no** reason for us to try and repeat exactly the same thing. **It's time to try something new, something other, something different.**

From the talk, Zion Will Come, given in (Moab), in April 2016

"...Mortal men have to extend the invitation for God to return. It requires the Family of God to return, or the "natural fruit" to reappear. (Jacob 3: 27.) This must happen because that invitation will evidence that the Lord can safely come without utterly destroying all who are upon the earth. (T&C 1 – JSH 3:4). Zion is required, among other reasons, in order for there to be a place and a people to whom the Lord can safely return without utterly destroying the earth. **However small, however diminutive it may be, there needs to be a Zion that extends an authorized invitation for the Lord to return.**"

"...The gathering needn't be large. There will be an orderly process in which a mortal king chosen by heaven surrenders jurisdiction over the earth back to those "fathers" who once presided over it. In turn, they will surrender jurisdiction back to the Ancient of Days—to Father Adam.

...Christ will return to have the lawful, the legal right, to possess this earth, to rule it and to govern it. Make no mistake, His returning is to govern. But before that day, groundwork has to be laid. There is a process."

From the Doctrine of Christ Conference, in Boise, on September 10, 2016, Q&A

I have been contacted by a group of women. Just like the best speakers I think have been women, a group of women are currently **organizing a mechanism for funding a temple**. Our first obligation in donating and paying tithes is to take care of the poor. But there are fellowships I know that have accumulated money beyond their needs, and there are a group of women that are organizing and **making the means available for gathering excess funds for the construction of the temple. I assume that eventually the means will be provided from among ourselves for the accomplishment of that work.** I do believe that when the command is given, that **the command to build the temple is not going to give us decades to respond.** I think that when the command is given, we're expected to act with some **dispatch to accomplish what has been requested by Him.** And so, I am personally grateful that there is no command out there at present to do so, because I don't know how we would accomplish it. **We're not supposed to do it in haste, but we're supposed to prepare every needful thing. We may be better able now to prepare every needful thing, than in a time coming with less abundance.** It may be far more convenient to accomplish it now than it will be later under more pressing circumstances.

From the Denver blog post about The Temple Fund Website posted (on December 29, 2016)

God's people are always required to build a temple. **Therefore, there needs to be preparation for the coming commandment.** When the Nauvoo Temple was commanded to be built, the resulting struggle lasted for nearly six years before it was abandoned. It was never completed. **That repeated failure will not please the Lord. I have met with the women who have done this work and they have my confidence.** I trust that any proceeds will be used for a temple and not for any other purpose. In my view **all donations belong to God alone, and must be directed toward His House to keep faith with Him.** The women share this view.

From the paper Things to keep us awake at night, given in St George, in March 2017

Now I'm changing subjects again: There is an effort underway to collect funds for a temple project that transcends every group. **Other than that one "transcending each group project," there is no general fund or aggregation of funds between fellowships.** Each fellowship is independent in its own fund. There is no general fund collected even at these conferences. But conference sponsors may ask for donations to help defray the costs of the conference. That is up to them.

The relief of “the poor among you” refers to the poor among the individual fellowship. **If there are no poor among you, then excess donations should go to the temple**, but they can be shared as your fellowship determines by common consent.

When a temple exists [not before], there will be a box in the main courtyard where people can make donations. Donations to the temple will go for two purposes: First is maintenance and repair of the temple. Second, it is a general fund for the poor. Anyone who is part of any fellowship is entitled to a request for assistance from that excess temple fund.

...The temple by its nature is general and the one place that involves all believers, wherever they are located throughout the world....

Funds that are donated to build the temple are going to be fully transparent. At present, the GofundMe site is public, and **the funds donated there are open and public.** **In time, every cent that is donated will be fully accounted for.** **The Lord requires a record of donations and expenses. They are suppose to be gathered and ultimately maintained at the temple and will be open for inspection.** When the full accounting **can be made**, I expect the information will be disclosed online at some future date.

Now I want to refer to a verse in the context of the temple. **Apply these words solely and exclusively for a moment to the temple. “Do not expect to eat the bread or wear the garment of the laborer in Zion.” (T&C 26: 10).** **If you oppose the work, if you stay your hand, if you refuse and others do the labor, don’t expect to eat the bread or wear the garment.**

From the Growing Zion Podcast [taken from two meetings in April and May 2017]

“I believe the only way you get to have Zion—and ultimately to have Zion overcome the world—is that you have **a small gathering** in which a group of people **(who are sufficiently contrite and humble and willing to be taught)** gather together in a place where a temple gets built. And they work out all of the differences that exist between them so that the division, the backbiting, the jealousies, the clamor, and all of that wind up being resolved. And after they get it right, **which will take some while, then you take another family and you bring them in**, and you disrupt the order of things, and you create chaos until they figure out how to do it, which will probably (with the first time you expand this) be a formidable problem. **And then you bring in another family**, and you go through the chaos again because you have expanded the group—except you’ve now learned how to do it because you’ve been through it once. And so, the second time you do it, it’s a little easier. **And then you bring in a third family**, except now you become reasonably adept, and you may even begin to identify the major interpersonal conflict issues that happen as you transition from out there, to in here; and you repeat the process until this body is big enough to split.”

“...Let’s assume that in your first seed you manage to get 25 families to come together. [These are hypothetical numbers not to be taken literally]. And you work out all your social, economic, interpersonal—**all your challenges**. But your ideal community is 100, not 25. As soon as you settled down and you figured it out, **and then you bring in your next family**, and you disrupt

the order of things. And **it takes awhile** for the new people to be acclimated into this, because they bring with them all of the dreadful things that the first 25 have managed to shed **because they haven't gone through that process**. So, now you are back having your old nightmares again, because you've got a foreigner in your midst, and they're reminding you of all the things you used to love and prefer and want. And it's Uglyville again. But eventually you settle down, and you acclimate them, **and so you bring in another**. And the whole nightmare starts over again, except you've been through this once before, **and you learned a few lessons last time**. Except these people are weird, and those people were not, and so they brought a new bundle of crap. And so, you've got to work that through. But you are a little better at it. **And you bring in another**. Same thing repeats itself, **and you have to work it through, but you're gaining skills**. And another. And another, and another, until you've reached your ideal community of 100. And so now you have 100 families in your ideal community, **and you've worked through all of the problem-solving that goes along with it.**"

From the New Jerusalem Podcast #22

...Again and again, the notion that this work can be hastened is denounced. Again and again, **it's to be a place in which the preparations are done first**. Again and again, **it suggests that before we can gather together, we must have that heart, that mind, which can make us one**.

from Teachings and Commandments 33, beginning at paragraph 14: ***And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you. And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord shall also be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion...***"

"...We have to learn from past errors. We have to determine not to repeat at least those. We may make new and inventive mistakes of our own, but at least they will belong to us and not be caused by our arrogance and stupidity in simply repeating what we have seen gone on before."

Now, I'm down to my last two quotes, and the next is the carrot dangling on the pole in front of the Horse. This is the reason that while the seals have been given and are upon the earth, we should prepare and give our whole soul to the building of the temple. It's...

From The Holy Order transcript, in October 2017

...Today the status of "father of many nations" still applies to the Holy Order, but the process is inverted. Instead of being the father through descendants of the body, the Holy Order contains the right to redeem the dead. But the dead do not remain as ancestors but become posterity. The living members of the Holy Order are the fathers and mothers of the dead whom they redeem. But that topic is best left for the future time when a temple exists. **If this generation**

fails to obtain the right and neglects the responsibility to prepare for the coming commandment to build a temple, then the information will be useless to those living today. Therefore, if there is ever a temple built at God's command, this topic will become important then. It is enough for now to note that the Holy Order still includes becoming a "father of many nations." But the method at the end is different than it was in the time of the first patriarchs, including Abraham.

From the That we might be one fireside, in January 2018

... "We have an opportunity. We have a bone fide, actual offer from God to allow us to be that generation in which the promises get fulfilled. But we have the freedom of choice that allows us to elect to be severed, to be contentious, to be agents of disruption, and to discourage and break the hearts of those who would willingly accept the challenge to repent and follow God.

Now it's also possible, **in fact it's probable, that at some point what the Lord will do is gather out a remnant of the remnant, gather out a few, and how many are essential in order for the promise to be fulfilled?** I'm certain there is a minimum and I'm fairly **confident that the minimum can be counted on your two hands**, but there is no maximum. We're not going to just have eight people on the ark; There can be more, there can be many more. The upper number is practically limitless. There is a minimum but heavens, why would anyone want that?" (Un-quote.)

In the name of Jesus Christ

AMEN