

**Christ's Discourse on the Road to Emmaus  
with Q&A Session**

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**MAN:** Denver Snuffer is his name. It's a real name; it's not a pen name.

**DENVER:** Actually, it's Denver Snuffer, Jr. My grandparents are responsible for the name. Both of them predeceased me, so I've never been able to hold anyone to account for naming me that.

I was asked to talk today by a rather insistent Doug Mendenhall. If you know him well enough, then you know that he's nothing if he isn't insistent. And I'm not really here as a volunteer; I'm here as a draftee (and a reluctant one).

But I've given some thought to what I would say if I were sequestered in a room with people who were interested in the subject of the Second Comforter. And I don't want to promote the book, and I'm not here to talk about the book (except indirectly, with some material that I think yields additional light on the subject).

What I looked at today is something that I don't think anyone who is LDS has commented on before. If they have, I'm not aware of it. So as far as I know, this is original material.

We just finished the Easter celebration last weekend. And as a result of celebrating Easter, I wanted to take some comments from the account of that very first day when the Lord came out of the grave. The fact that Easter is in the springtime I don't think is any accident. I think it's intended to align with the testimony of nature about the promise of eternal life, the promise of the renewal that comes every spring, and I think the Lord intended that His death and His resurrection should associate with spring. And I think it's appropriate that that be the subject that we look at today.

The incident that I want to look at is recorded only one place in Scripture. And even though it only appears one place in the Scripture, I think it's one of the most thought-provoking and potentially rewarding discussions about the Lord that appears anywhere else. I'm talking about the incident that Luke records of two disciples who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day that the Lord rose from the dead. I'm gonna be using the Luke material throughout this as the exclusive source if Luke talks about it. If someone else talks about it and Luke didn't, then we'll look at that.

But the distance that they're going to walk is beyond what was then viewed as a Sabbath days' journey, so they couldn't take this walk on the Sabbath. They had to wait until the first day of the week when the Sabbath was over, which was also the day on which the Lord would be resurrected.

The incident appears in Luke chapter 24, and it begins in chapter 24: *Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared* (Luke 24:1; see also Luke 14:1 RE).

He doesn't tell us this, but there's a detail you can find over in John chapter 20: *The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark* (John 20:1; see also John 11:1 RE and Testimony of St. John 12:1 RE). All that Luke says is it was "very early in the morning." John lets us know that this was not only very early in the morning, it was still dark out. If you brought your Scriptures it might be useful to use them as we go along.

So, there is a walk that's going to take place in which two disciples (we have the names of only one of the two) are walking back to Emmaus, and this is what the account reads, beginning in verse 13:

*Behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.* (Luke 24:13; see also Luke 14:2 RE)

That's about seven miles, which (clearly, under their tradition) would have been too far.

*And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.* (vs. 14-16; see also 14:2 RE)

"Their eyes were holden." The Lord is with them. He's resurrected. He's walking along with them, and they don't recognize Him. Christ has the capacity to withhold His identity. As Paul reminded us in Hebrews chapter 13, verse 2: *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.* From this incident, on this day with the Lord, we learn that the strangers can include the Lord Himself. And so when He says to be careful how you treat "the least of these my brethren," you ought not be surprised if, on the day of judgment, one of those "least" was the Lord Himself, and your eyes were holden that you should not know Him.

*And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that [you] have one to another, as [you] walk, and are sad?* (v. 17; see also 14:2 RE)

Clearly a rhetorical question. This is the risen Lord joining this fellowship in their walk, and He's asking them, "What are you talking about?" That ought to tell you something about Him. The Lord doesn't make any effort to displace their attention from the subject they're discussing. He joins them right where they are, on the subject that they're focused on, as a ready participant in the subject that's already on the table. That tells you something else about us. He really does want to help us where He finds us. **Our** concerns are really His concerns.

*And...one of them, whose name was Cleopas...* (v. 18; see also 14:2 RE)

Now, I think that's interesting, because I don't want to read too much into that, but I think it's very interesting that we have a name given to one of the two of them. And the name that's given to the one of the two is Cleopas, which is the male... It's like Stephanie and Stephen. The female is Cleopatra; the male is Cleopas. This is a male version of the name, Cleopatra, which we all think is an Egyptian name. But that's not true, because Egypt was dominated at that point by the Ptolemies. And Ptolemy was one of Alexander the Great's

generals. He got that quadrant of the empire after Alexander's death. So it's really a Greek name derived from the Greeks. And I have a slight suspicion that the presence of that Greek name tells us something about him, maybe tells us something about his parents, maybe suggests that this guy was Hellenized, and if so (because he has kind of a Greek viewpoint), it explains why he's going to omit from the text (or from his testimony or from Luke's account of it, anyway) the thing that **I** want to talk about today. (You can't be sure of that, and I don't want to read too much in it because "Jesus" is a Greek name, as well, and He clearly was non-Greek. "Yeshua" or Joshua would have been His given name, but it was turned into the Greek name "Jesus," and we call Him by that.) A truly Hebrew mind, however, would have been very interested in something different than what the text is gonna tell us about. In any event:

*...Cleopas, answering said unto them, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem...*

That's kind of an amusing thought. See, Christ is not well informed about the local issues, he thinks.

*[...Are you] a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which have come to pass there in these days? And he said unto [him], What things? (v. 19; see also 14:2 RE)*

This is the Lord: "What things? Tell me about it."

At the time of the First Vision, the Lord says to Joseph: *This is My Beloved Son. Hear [ye] Him!* (JS-H 1:17; see also Joseph Smith History 2:4 RE). And then you have the Father and the Son—and a pause. "No sooner had I collected myself than..." Joseph writes. He goes on and asks his question. You have the controlling power of the Universe on standby, waiting for Joseph to formulate and ask the question. That ought to tell you something.

"What things?" Christ asks, although He clearly knows. The Lord clearly prefers a dialogue with us. He doesn't pontificate. He talks. He communicates. He wants it to be... I mean, He insists upon prayer for a reason; He'd like to hear from you—because in the process of hearing from you, you expose something to Him, and you expose something to yourself **about** yourself. He almost insists on treating us like we're equals—even though, clearly, we're not. And that ought to tell you something about yourself as well. All of these things are extraordinary revelations that the Lord is giving to us about who **we** are and who **He** is.

*...And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But **we** trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. (vs. 19-23, emphasis added; see also 14:2 RE)*

That's not what happened. That's not what happened. This is a stranger they're talking with, and this is what they're willing to say to the stranger that they're talking with about

what happened. Now, I don't know if they're filtering the story because they don't want to come right out with it or if, in fact, the way they heard it omitted the appearance of the Lord Himself or if they heard the version that was told about the Lord Himself appearing but just couldn't bring themselves to believe that. But in this account, they admit that certain women went, that they made at least **these** two astonished. They were early at the sepulcher, no body was found, and they had a vision. That's all the further they'll go. But the vision, the "angel," said He was alive. I have to assume that what Luke is setting out in this story is the version that Luke got from these people.

You know, it's **also** possible... In fact, this is a good text to go to, to answer one of the criticisms about Joseph Smith. One of the criticisms is that he wrote multiple versions of the First Vision. Yeah, he did—and they're all instructive, and they're all useful, but we've canonized only one of them. But there's multiple versions of what went on on the very first day of the Lord having risen from the dead. In one account, we **know** that the Lord Himself appeared and that, among other things, He told Mary not to hold Him. The King James version says, "Don't touch me," but Joseph changes that in the Inspired Version to "Don't **hold** me," because I think implicit in the Joseph Smith change is that she did touch Him. She was not just a witness, but she was someone who felt free to embrace Him, and He said, "Don't hold me, I have to go appear to my Father and your Father," which is different than the version that we've got here where women are seeing the vision of angels, and they omit the Lord. Well, Joseph gave a version of the First Vision in which he discusses angels, but he omits the Lord. Now, is Luke lying? No more so than Joseph was. But we ought to be consistent in our treatment of Scripture anciently and modern and as fair with Joseph as we are with Luke.

The first witnesses of the resurrection were women. This is another confirmation that the Second Comforter is not inhibited by priestly office or limited in His ministry to the brethren. The first witnesses were women, and that should tell us something. I am constantly amazed, however, at **our** ability to ignore the obvious. We tend to read into texts things that aren't there, and we tend to read out of texts things that are glaringly apparent. We have encumbered ourselves with a trailer-hitch to the Catholic legacy of what it means to have a priestly class among you. And we tend to say, "Well there's been a restoration, and that means something new is going on," while at the same time putting on the same spectacles that cripple all of those in historic Christianity that needed the Restoration to occur. So, we ought to feel required to read the text and let it inform us without any predisposition.

Okay. In verse 24:

*And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.* (Luke 24:24; see also Luke 14:2 RE)

Sure enough, the tomb was empty; He wasn't there anymore. But they didn't see anything.

So far, you see, the men have only the witness of an empty tomb and the testimony of the women. I would suggest that if law governs all blessings—and it does. The statement isn't just "some"; the statement is "all." And we probably ought to read it: *There is a law,*

*irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of [the] world, upon which **all** blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated (D&C 130:20-21, emphasis added).* Well, if there is a law, and if it is inviolate and it governs, then perhaps there were those who needed to grow more in **their** faith before they could encounter this experience, and the Lord was working to furnish witnesses who were **already** predisposed or prepared in order to help others come along as well. Perhaps faith needed to grow in the brethren before they could get what the sisters had already themselves witnessed.

*Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27; see also Luke 14:3 RE)*

This discourse would probably rival the Sermon on the Mount **if we had it**. Other than mentioning the subject, we don't have anything left of this talk that He gave. What they will tell us is, "He lives!" The headline news is, "He lives; He's come out of the grave." Okay, what did He say when He came out of the grave? Because He's going to take a seven-mile walk, and He's going to begin at Moses and all the prophets and expound unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. That's sort of an odd way to spend the day with the Lord until you think about it. That's what He does. That's what angels do. That's what... "Which church should I join?" whereupon, in a mingling of Isaiah and the apostle Paul, the Lord essentially quotes Scripture to Joseph Smith. "I undertook to find out what my standing was before Him because I had every confidence of obtaining a vision as I had had one before" (see JS-H 1:29; see also Joseph Smith History 3:1 RE). A column of light comes down, the ceiling opens, a man with a robe comes and appears and quotes Scripture. And here we have the Lord taking a seven-mile hike, beginning at Moses and all the prophets and expounding the Scriptures.

Well, these disciples are more interested in the physicality of His rising from the dead, "Look! It's a body, and it's animated again!" because that solves the problem that the Greeks had, and it also proves that the Pharisees were right. So, the headline news is: "Pharisees got one up on the Sadducees" in this little cultural setting. But what the Lord wanted was to impart some intelligence about the Scriptures so that understanding the Scriptures, they might be believing. And if they by being believing through understanding what the Scriptures had to say about Him, they might then be able to move to where He would like them to go. He wanted them to understand how these things foreshadowed everything about His life.

*And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. (Luke 24:28; see also Luke 14:4 RE)*

The Lord's gonna leave 'em now. He's talked to 'em for seven miles, He's told 'em about the Scriptures, and He's going to leave. He's going to leave unless **something** happens. They either constrain Him to stay with them and abide with them, or He's gone. That ought to tell you something else about the Lord. If they hadn't constrained Him, He may very well have just left. Verse 29:

*But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. (v. 29; see also 14:4 RE)*

That inspired a hymn, you know. So, they have been walking—we don't know how long, but approximately seven miles—and the discourse has taken the better part of the day as they have walked. And towards evening, they're getting ready to pull over... It may be that this was one of the reasons why Cleopas never attempted a reconstruction; it may have overwhelmed him even at the thought of trying to reduce to writing everything that was there—although that's the purpose of the Holy Ghost, to enable you to be able to do that. But **we are the poorer** for not having this talk preserved.

*And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake [it], and gave [it] to them. (vs. 29-30; see also 14:4 RE)*

Now, what does that sound like? Yeah, it sounds like an ordinance. It sounds like the Lord has slipped seamlessly into the role of Presiding High Priest, and it sounds like, at the moment that He begins priestly officiating, these people are finally able to see what it is that's going on. The breaking of the bread is the signal event for the opening of these disciples' eyes.

*And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (vs. 31-32; see also 14:4 RE)*

In *The Second Comforter*, I wrote about their heart burning within 'em. Today I'd like to talk about the second part (which is not in that book): "While he opened the scriptures to us." I want to look at what would necessarily have been included in the talk that the Lord gave on the road to Emmaus as an example of what it is the Lord would have **us** understand, preparatory to **our eyes** being opened. We cannot now recreate that talk without revelation, but we can, I think, isolate the things that are necessarily included within it in order for these people (who had just witnessed the events of the last few days) to understand.

So what I want to do is turn to "Moses and all the prophets" and try and determine what was necessarily included in the Lord's remarks. I'd like you to imagine, as we do this, a newly-risen Lord—in the throes of celebrating the resurrection—walking on a dusty back-road and trying to persuade people that the Scriptures testify of Him.

The ordinances of the Old Testament, beginning with Exodus, were revealed through Moses, and so when you speak about "Moses and all the prophets," you should expect Christ would necessarily begin with the ordinances of the Law of Moses. When those ordinances are their most relevant, they're talking about the sacrifices that took place there, and they point to the great atoning sacrifice which He would perform. And when Christ asked: *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?* in His discourse, He's talking about the things that were necessary for Him to fulfill the Law of Moses.

In the tabernacle and, subsequently, in the temple that was built by Solomon, the temple divided up into three areas. There was an outer court into which was welcomed all of Israel. You had to enter Israel whether you were a priest or not a priest; all of Israel entered into the outer court. There was a Holy Place into which, on a rotating basis, the priests alone were allowed to come. (They would come for the morning service; they would come for the evening service.) And then there was the Holy of Holies, into which one priest (the presiding High Priest) would enter one time each year—for one specific ordinance—on Yom Kippur or the Holy of Holies. So you had, as a matter of separation, you had:

- Everyone, and
- Then you had a smaller group, and
- Then you had a single person.

Or—if you were to draw it out in terms of how the divisions looked—you create, in the structure of the temple itself, the mountain of the Lord’s house.

In the Holy Place, there was a separation between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies by a veil. In front of the veil, there was an altar on which incense would be burned. On the one side, there was a menorah (or a candlestick). On the other, there was the table of the shewbread. And this is the structure into which the priests would pass for their ordinances. In the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, together with the Mercy Seat and the symbolic presence of God the Father and Christ.

These represented ascending levels of holiness which were symbolically separated by who got to enter. The three degrees—the three levels of holiness—are represented there. It is inside the Holy Place, this spot right here [referring to whiteboard visual]—that is the place in which the New Testament begins, and the New Testament ends. It begins chronologically in that room, and it ends in its narrative in the Book of Revelation, where Christ appears in that same room in John’s vision of Patmos.

So, I want to turn back to the beginning of the dispensation in which Christ will come, and turn to Luke chapter 1, beginning at verse 5:

*There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of **the course of Abia**... (Luke 1:5, emphasis added; see also Luke 1:2 RE)*

This is what James Talmage wrote about this course:

About fifteen months prior to the Savior’s birth, Zacharias, a priest of the Aaronic order, was officiating in the functions of his office in the temple at Jerusalem. His wife, Elisabeth, was also of a priestly family, being numbered among the descendants of Aaron. The couple had never been blessed with children; and at the time of which we speak they were both well stricken in years and had sorrowfully given up hope of posterity. Zacharias belonged to the course of priests named after Abijah, [later] known in later time as the course of Abia. This was the eighth in the order of...twenty-four courses established by David the king, each course being appointed to serve in turn a week at the sanctuary...

During his week of service each priest was required to maintain scrupulously a state of ceremonial cleanliness of person; he had to abstain from wine, and from food except that specifically prescribed; he had to bathe frequently; he lived within the temple precincts and thus was cut off from [his] family association; he was[n't] allowed to come near the dead, [or] to mourn in [any] formal manner if death [occurred to] rob him of even his nearest [or] dearest of kin. [They select daily] the priest who should enter the Holy Place, and there burn incense on the golden altar, ...by lot; and...we gather, from non-scriptural history, that because of the great number of priests [and] the honor of so officiating seldom [this honor] fell twice [in] the same person. (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*: Deseret Book: Salt Lake City, p.71)

That's from *Jesus the Christ* at page 71.

Not only was it "seldom," later Jewish tradition has it that a person, a priest, who got to go in there and to do that in this room was considered rich, having been allowed to do this on one occasion.

Zacharias is well stricken in years. The lot hasn't fallen on him, he's spent his lifetime hoping for it, and now the lot falls onto him—and by the way, there are no coincidences. This was, at it turns out, exactly the right time.

*...and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, ...her name was Elisabeth. (Luke 1:5; see also Luke 1:2 RE)*

Both sides of this family are Aaronic/Levitical so that there's no doubt about the right—the inherited right—that John will have to officiate in the ordinances that he will later officiate in.

*They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.*

*And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. (vs. 6-9; see also 1:2-3 RE)*

So, his job was to come with coals from off of the outer altar and bring it into the inner altar and put the coals of the altar and then put on top of it incense—and then he had a job to do, and his job was to offer a prayer. The altar of incense, which had horns at its corner, would have burned with the smoke of the incense ascending upward in the Holy Place. When it hit the ceiling, it would then move outward, the rising of the incense column being a symbol of the prayers ascending to God from the Israelite nation. When it hit the ceiling and began to spread out, it represented (as well) the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, with the trunk and with the upper limbs extending—this was a symbol of the original Garden of Eden setting, all of this occurring within the Holy Place.

*And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. (vs. 10-11; see also 1:3 RE)*

See, this—the veil—was fastened hard on the left but ended on the right in front, and behind it, it was fastened hard on the right and ended on the left, so that a person could pass through. But if you passed through and you came from inside the ~~Holy Place~~ or the Holy of Holies **into** the Holy Place, you would be standing, as it turns out, on the right side of the altar. Symbolically that meant that this person who has now come to stand on the right side of the altar has just emerged from the symbolic presence of God. We tend to think of things as being non-physical, but when these encounters occur, it gets very concrete and very specific—and there we have the right side of the altar of incense, and that description fixes the angel in the right location for him, inside the temple, to have emerged from this symbolic presence. But look what he says:

*And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard... (vs. 12-13; see also 1:3 RE)*

Well, what was his prayer?

*...Thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, ...thou shalt call his name John. (v. 13; see also 1:3 RE)*

You shouldn't leap to the conclusion that he's praying for a son. Because a man and a woman "well stricken in years," sent into the temple to officiate in an ordinance with people standing outside, everyone knowing what he was going to be praying, everyone knowing the timing that would be involved with that prayer, had a certain expectation of when he would come back out. He wasn't in there freelancing. He wasn't in there just praying. He wasn't in there saying, "And I'd like you to invent the Porsche... And I'd like a Porsche!" (My friends all drive Porsches. I must make amends.)

Alfred Edersheim tells us what the prayer would have been. And here is an excerpt from the prayer that Zacharias would have been offering:

*...Be graciously pleased, Jehovah our God with thy people Israel, and with their prayer. Restore the service to the oracle of Thy house... So preserve us and keep us, and **gather the scattered ones into Thy holy courts**, to keep Thy statutes, and to do Thy good pleasure, and to serve Thee with our whole heart...**Bless us, O our Father, all of us as one, with the light of Thy countenance...***

*And may it please Thee to bless Thy people Israel at all times, and [in] every hour with Thy peace. (Edersheim, Alfred. *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*. Hendrickson: Peabody, Mass., 1994, p. 129)*

And the angel says, "Your prayer has been heard. Your prayer has been heard, and your wife, Elizabeth, is gonna bear a son," which means, "The Lord is about to bless Israel with the light of His countenance, and as a part of that process, your wife is going to have a son."

His prayer has been heard. Israel was to be gathered. Israel was to be visited by the Lord. The angel's association of gathering and visitation, on the one hand, with the promise of the son, on the other hand, would have been—at a minimum—unexpected.

“Now, angel... You know I'm an old man, right? My wife's old, too. You're here to tell me you're about to visit Israel with the countenance—the light of Your countenance—that the Lord is gonna shine upon us. I get that. But this whole son thing, we've... You've got to back up on that.”

The angel continues:

*Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.* (Luke 1:14; see also Luke 1:3 RE)

You know, there's no record of that. In the context of the statement that's being given here, it's saying that “many” are going to rejoice at the birth of John the Baptist. We don't know that. I mean, we have the testimony of an angel that that is going to happen, but it's omitted from the scriptural account. Later on—it will be about two years after the birth of the Savior because they went to kill all the children that were two years old and younger, it's gonna be some later time—they will hunt specifically for John. In one account, they come to Zacharias and demand John be surrendered three times before they finally kill (on Herod's order) Zacharias for not surrendering the son. They **knew** about John. He arrived as headline news because his father had been officiating in the temple—not at all like the One before whom he would go to prepare the way, who would be born in obscurity. John was someone whose birth would be heralded, and this says that “many will rejoice at his birth,” which suggests that the publicity stunt worked.

Well, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, he wrote:

Let us come into [the] New Testament times—so many are ever praising the Lord and His apostles. We will commence with John the Baptist. When Herod's edict went forth to destroy the young children, John was about six months older than Jesus, and came under this hellish edict, and Zacharias caused his mother to take him into the mountains, where he was raised on locusts and wild honey. When his father refused to disclose his hiding place, and being the officiating High Priest at the Temple that year, was slain by Herod's order, between the porch and the altar, as Jesus said. John's head was taken to Herod, the son of this infant murderer, in a charger. Not with standing there was never a greater prophet born of a woman than him!

(That's from the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.261.)

John was known. Herod targeted him. His reputation was known because of the circumstances of his birth, and apparently, there were those who rejoiced and, clearly, others who feared. The angel continues:

*For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, ...shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; ...shall be filled with the Holy Ghost...*

*And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. ...**he** shall go before **him** [**he**, John, shall go before **Him**, the Lord their God] in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people... (Luke 1:15-17, emphasis added; see also Luke 1:3 RE)*

In this context, what the angel is telling Zacharias is the “light of God’s countenance” is, in fact, about to break forth. So Zacharias asked the reasonable question,

*Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. (v. 18; see also 1:4 RE)*

It’s the elephant in the room. “We haven’t been talking about this problem. We don’t have latter-day pharmaceuticals. This isn’t going to work.” Well, the angel answers him and says,

***I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.** (v. 19, emphasis added; see also 1:4 RE)*

“I’m not walking through a curtain. I’m not coming from the **symbolic** presence of the room next to us. I’m coming **from God Himself**. Do you understand that, Zacharias? Do you get the picture here? I don’t think you should be disbelieving. Here’s a sign!”

*...thou shalt be [struck] dumb, and not able to speak, until the day...these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which **shall** be fulfilled in their season. (vs. 20, emphasis added; see also 1:4 RE)*

Well, all the more publicity for John because you see:

*...the people waited for Zacharias... (vs. 21; see also 1:4 RE)*

There’s a time involved in the visit and the dialogue between the angel and Zacharias. We tend to somehow think that spiritual phenomenon are outside of time and space (and while they **are** outside of time and space—because we don’t control them in our environment; they control this environment, we don’t control theirs), the fact is that when they come to our time and space, they are **in** our time and space, and time lapses. And this dialogue took a while. And the people knew how long the prayer ought last, and it was taking longer. And this is an awkward moment for everyone because if the guy died in there (and he’s old and well stricken in years), no one else can enter until the evening sacrifice. And when you clean the altar off and you shovel the dust into the bucket, you can grab the guy by his wrist and bring the bucket and the old guy out. But between now and then, what are we gonna do? Because there is no ordinance for extraction of one each dead Zacharias. It’s a problem.

So, they’re all sitting about talking,

*...marvel[ing] that he tarried so long in the temple. (v. 21; see also 1:4 RE)*

“I don’t know. What do you think we oughtta do?”

“Ask Annas.”

“Annas is a jerk! You can’t ask him anything.”

So, they wait, and they wonder, and they speculate.

“Do you think he’s in there eating shewbread?”

“I mean, he’s been waiting his whole life to get in there. He’s gonna have fingerprints all over the Menorah!”

“I’ll bet right now he’s in there... He’s in the Holy of Holies, and he’s rolling around on the floor. Right now. I’ll bet it.”

“Zacharias, what’s he up to?”

*When he came out, he could not speak unto them...*

Ooh! What do you suppose that did to the attention of the people? What do you think the reaction to that would be? He couldn’t speak to them. Well,

*...they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. (v. 22; see also 1:4 RE)*

And so, the publicity stunt is afoot. Everyone knows something happened. There’s something going on here. And we know that:

*Elizabeth conceived, and [she] hid herself... (v. 24; see also 1:4 RE)*

...and so on. So, the dispensation of the meridian of time when the Lord is going to come begins right here in this spot. That ought to tell us something too about the terrible significance of—tying into everything that the Lord does—the temple.

So, here we are, standing on this side of the veil with the dispensation launched with an angel who has emerged, not from just the figurative or symbolic, but from the literal presence of the Lord, and we’re going to have to, as part of this dispensation, at some point pass through that veil and enter into the Holy of Holies.

(I’m told we have to take a break at one point, so I’m checking my watch on that.)

When Moses passed through the veil, the presence of the Lord was shielded by a covering of a thick cloud. The cloud operated as a veil to the onlookers of Israel, but Moses was allowed to pass through or enter through the cloud into the very presence of God. We have an account of that in Exodus chapter 24, in verses 15-18.

*And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and [on] the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights. (Exodus 24:15-18; see also Exodus 13:26 RE)*

See, just like in the mountain of the Lord's house you have the pinnacle (the spot at the top of the mountain at which, when one stands there, they are no longer of the earth but they have become a part of the sky—that is one of the reasons why the “mountain of the Lord's house” is the symbol that gets used in Scripture to describe the phenomenon because it is no longer connecting you to the earth; the only thing that touches is the soles of your feet; you have become part of the heavens), Moses ascends up, and the ascension that's being talked about here in the cloud at the top of the mountain of the Lord's house—inside there is where we find the presence of the Lord.

Similarly, as Christ asked, “Ought not these things to have happened?” one of the things that had happened was, in the dispensation of the meridian of time, Christ also passed through the cloud and entered into the presence of the Father. There were three disciples who were able to see Moses [and] Elias, but they were not permitted to see the Father, though they heard His voice. They heard the voice speaking from inside the cloud; only Christ passed into the Father's presence. That is recorded in Matthew chapter 17, verses 1-8. The relevant part:

*After six days Jesus [take] Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them...to an high mountain apart, ...was transfigured before them: ...his face did shine as the sun, ...his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, [it's] good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make [thee] three tabernacles; one for thee, ...one for Moses, ...one for Elias.*

*While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. [It's intimidating.] ...Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, ...be not afraid. And when they...lifted...their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. (Matthew 17:1-8; see also Matthew 9:4 RE)*

See, Christ tells these disciples to tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man shall be risen again from the dead. Well, on the road to Emmaus, He **was** risen again from the dead—there is no reason now to withhold the information about the Lord having passed through the veil on the Mount of Transfiguration into the presence of God the Father. So this would have been available subject fodder for the discussion on the road as well.

In the rites of Moses, there was one occasion when it was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies. It took place only one time each year on a specific day. The day is set out in Leviticus chapter 23 where it says:

*On the tenth day of [the] seventh month there shall be a day of atonement... [Thou] shall do no work in that...day: ...it is a day of atonement. (Leviticus 23:27-28; see also Leviticus 11:8 RE)*

This orientation as to time and number orients us on the tenth day to remind us of the “Ten Commandments” at Sinai. Ten is whole; it's complete. We use ten because of our fingers as the basis for a numbering system. And seven (on the seventh month) is a symbol of creation

or completion or perfection. These two numbers combined in a symbolic testimony of the significance of the Day of Atonement, which is also testament of the perfection, the completion, the exactness of the timing of the actual atonement. It was no accident the Lord came and did what He did at the very moment that He did it, and it's no accident that the angel appeared at the very moment he did.

The Day of Atonement (or Yom Kippur) was originally associated with the deaths of Aaron's two sons. (That's sort of an odd thing to think about. That's where it comes from; that's where it gets started.) They had taken incense into the Holy of Holies and burned it there in an unauthorized manner, and that offense (in entering into the presence of God in an unauthorized way) resulted in Nadab and Abihu being killed. Fire came out and devoured them. They were killed. The Day of Atonement was the day in which there was a method provided for Aaron to enter into the Holy of Holies without being destroyed. The entirety of the ordinance reaches out, first, to cleanse Aaron (or Aaron's successor as the High Priest), and then to cleanse the temple, and then to cleanse all of Israel. It was a progression in three degrees—as if the atonement were intended to include redemption for the Celestial, the Terrestrial, and the Telesial, as if the mercy of God was intended to extend to every living creature regardless of their obedience to Him. It was intended to be all-inclusive and all-encompassing.

In the context of the Day of Atonement, there was a prescribed use for incense. It symbolizes the cloud covering the presence of God, just as the cloud covering Sinai when Moses entered the presence of God—and the full account of the rite is set out in chapter 16 of Leviticus. Well, I want to take a look at what that says only for purposes of saying what necessarily the Lord **had to suffer** in order to enter into His glory. We don't look at these old books anymore. We tend to think that they were all done away with—and they were. We don't celebrate them anymore, but they were intended to give an orientation to who it was the Messiah was and what it was the Messiah was intended to do. It is a **testimony**. See, if God knows all things beforehand—and He does—then He knows how to set out in a ritual all of the details of what it is He's about to do.

So, between now and the time that we get started again, I want you all to have read Leviticus chapter 16, verses 1-34 [audience laughter], and maybe you can mock up a Holy of Holies and practice burning incense and entering into the veil and... We're gonna need an animal 'cuz we're gonna need some blood—but ketchup will work if you've got... You can bring some of that over from the...

Because it is fascinating to take a look at what the Lord **suffered** in the actual atonement in order to see what the rites were intended to reveal about it. You don't understand the Lord until you understand what He set out in symbol to testify about Himself.

[Break]

I'm reasonably confident that we will arrive at Emmaus just about the time the tables are set.

So, if we go to Leviticus chapter 16, verse 1:

*The LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron [that incident occurred in Leviticus chapter 10, verses 1-3], when they [had] offered before the Lord, and died; ...the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. (vs 1-2; see also Leviticus 6:1 RE)*

So, you don't get to control the timing of events. The Lord reserves to Himself the timing of events. If you think that there are moments when you're ready for something, you may not be. It's the Lord who decides and the Lord who fixes the time, and those things are determined according to the mercy and the wisdom of the Lord, just as it was when Zacharias was surprised in the Holy Place. Verse 12 says:

*He [that is, Aaron, when he goes in—and his descendants] shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. (vs. 12-13; see also 6:3 RE)*

So, he's supposed to bring from off of the altar a burnt sacrifice (coals) with him, and he's supposed to bring a collection of incense with him, and he's to enter into—through the veil—into the Holy of Holies, and there he is supposed to set the coals and set the incense in order for a cloud to be produced inside the Holy of Holies. So, he's inside the veil of the temple, but he's also being drawn into a further cloud (or veil) inside the Holy Place, "that he die not."

Well, unlike the room in which the altar of incense appears, the room in which this takes place is literally a cube. Every dimension is exactly the same inside this room. It is a perfect cube, and it's significantly smaller than the room from which he's traversed to get there. The incense behaves in a different way, and the cloud that's produced there does not become columnar; it fills the room because it's a much smaller space. And so while he's in there ministering, he is inside the cloud and in the symbolic presence of God (just as Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration had accomplished that—and the elements from Sinai are brought as well). You have Moses on the Mount Sinai, you have Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, and you have an ordinance. And the ordinance is symbolically recreating these actual events: one that had occurred at the beginning of the Dispensation; one that will occur in the Lord's own life, and it is to be modeled every year on the Day of Atonement.

The Messiah's life necessarily included an ascension through a cloud or veil into the presence of God. He was touching on one of the required elements of His ministry when this ordinance was established and when He said: "Ought not these things to have occurred?" One of the things that ought to have occurred was the incident on the Mount of Transfiguration. It satisfied one of the elements of the Law of Moses which would **identify Him** as the Anointed One, as the Lord, as the promised Messiah. In all things, Christ was required to fulfill what had been foretold of Him.

When He asked: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?” on the road to Emmaus, it’s the same sort of question that He and John the Baptist exchanged at His baptism. “Suffer it to be so because we need these things. There’s a pattern here. I must conform to the pattern. I am the one who will fulfill the pattern, therefore, I must do this, John. It’s necessary. It’s essential.” And if so for Him, then for us also. When He said, “Come, follow me,” I don’t think He had in mind merely walking around Palestine, much to the rather organic view of Islam about what we ought to be doing. The Savior was talking about things that were transcendent.

The great Day of Atonement had elements included throughout the ritual which associate with the events of Christ’s life and of Christ’s sacrifice. This conversation on the road to Emmaus surely turned, therefore, to the Day of Atonement to show the necessity of what He suffered. Let’s look at how Luke described some of what happened, in Luke chapter 22, verses 39-46:

*And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives. (v. 39; see also Luke 13:9 RE)*

This is after He has introduced the sacrament ordinance, after Judas has disassociated himself. The Savior now goes out to the Mount of Olives (Luke 22, verse 39).

*And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

*And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, And [he] said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. (vs. 40-46; see also 13:9 RE)*

Here Luke identifies three elements of the Day of Atonement:

- First, he orients us to the place involved. It’s the Mount of Olives. This mount (the Mount of Olives) was east of the temple.
- Second, he identifies the sprinkling of blood upon the ground. Luke tells us Christ (at the eastern location) suffers until “drops” of His blood are sprinkled upon the ground.
- Third, Luke tells us that Christ was left alone at the moment of these events. No **man** accompanies Him. Those who were a stone’s throw away have lapsed into sleep so, as the blood is sprinkled on the ground, Christ is alone. Interestingly, the place that the priest would enter alone on the Day of Atonement is about a stone’s throw away from those that would be in the outer court waiting as he performed the ordinance inside the Holy of Holies.

In our dispensation, the Lord confirms His suffering in section 133 of the Doctrine and Covenants: *I have trodden the wine-press alone, and have brought judgment upon all people;*

*and none were with me* (D&C 133:50; see also T&C 58:6). This had to be a solitary event. So, if we go to ~~Luke~~ [Leviticus] chapter 16 and look at the Day of Atonement, look at verse 14. The High Priest, when he comes in:

*He shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward...*

He comes into the east side of the mercy seat, and he sprinkles there the blood of the sacrifice that's been offered, just as Christ went eastward from the temple into the Garden of Gethsemane, where he sprinkles the blood upon the ground.

*...before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle...the blood with his finger seven times. Then [he shall] kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring **his** blood within the vail, and do with **that** blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, [he shall] sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: And he shall make an atonement for the holy place...*

[Verse 17:] *...there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place.* (Leviticus 16:14-17, emphasis added; see also Leviticus 6:3-4 RE)

Christ's suffering and the "sprinkling" of His blood on the Mount of Olives was **necessary** to fulfill the Law of Moses. He needed to suffer these things in order to fulfill the symbols that identify Him as the Messiah, in the rites that He had established as the way to identify who He would be. It would be more correct to say that the rites needed to include these elements because the **events** would include the elements—because He foresaw the elements of what He would suffer before He ordained the ordinance itself, and the two of them fit together.

Continuing with the events in Luke, we read that Christ was taken before Israel, and an option was given to Israel to either let Him or let another man go free. As Luke describes it (this is in 23, Luke 23, verse 16—Pilate is speaking):

*I will therefore chastise him, and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they [all] cried out...at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)*

*Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again [un]to them. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.*

*And he said unto them the third time [Interesting that it has to be repeated three times], Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.*

*And they were [insistent] with loud voices, requiring that **he**...be crucified. And the voices of them and...the chief priests prevailed. ...Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And [they] **released** unto them **him that for sedition and murder***

*was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered **Jesus** to their will. (Luke 23:16-25, emphasis added; see also Luke 13:17-18 RE)*

Well! Knock me over with a feather—if the Day of Atonement doesn't do this exact same thing (in one of the parts of the Day of Atonement that has generated, I would guess, more doctoral theses in the divinity schools of Christendom than probably any other speculative point). This account conforms to the Day of Atonement:

- First, you offer one to be sacrificed and one to be released.
- Second, the choice is made before all the congregation of Israel.
- Third, after the choice is made, **one** is sacrificed for sin, and
- Fourth, the one to be released is **laden** with sin when it is turned free.

So, Leviticus chapter 16, verses 7-10 and 20-22:

*He shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one...for the LORD, and the other...for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer **him** for a [sacrifice]. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let **him** go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.*

*...And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:7-10,21-22, emphasis added; see also Leviticus 6:2,5 RE)*

He shall let the goat go in the wilderness, confess over him all their sins, release him who “that for sedition and murder was cast into prison.” So the one laden with sin is let go.

The elements of the ritual in the book of Leviticus and the events in the life of Christ are not inadvertent. The Lord saw the events of the day when His own life was going to be laid down. The rituals of Moses were fashioned by the Lord in the revelation given to Moses to reflect the events that were actually going to occur.

The “two goats” are alike in the ritual. Just so, too, are the positions of Christ (the Son of God) and Barabbas, on the other hand:

- *Bar* meaning: “the son of” and
- *Abba* meaning: “the father.”

Whether that was his given name or the name he assumed as a zealot, I don't know. But this name-title co-identified “the Son of God” and “the son of God (*Bar Abba*),” Barabbas. So we have the actual Son of God, on the one hand, and a man whose name refers to him also as “the son of God” standing co-equally before the congregations of Israel. “And whom shall I free?” And the lot falls upon the Savior.

The “two goats” are treated differently in the ritual. One is killed; the other (laden with sins) is set free. Barabbas is set free. Well, the similarities are striking. No doubt the risen Lord would have pointed **these** things out as they walked on the road to Emmaus, about how all these things ought to have occurred and were necessarily so.

The next element was the location. Luke describes the place of Christ’s killing in Luke 23:33,

*And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, ...the other on the left. (Luke 23:33; see also Luke 13:20 RE)*

You know, there’s some controversy over the location of things. When Constantine converted... (Actually, that really overstates the case.) When Constantine determined that Christianity was going to become the state religion of Rome to help him govern an unruly group of people... He wouldn’t get baptized until about a month before his death, many years later, and (presumably) the reason—notwithstanding the Catholic apologists’ reason for it—he just wanted an insurance policy on the off-chance that Sol Invictus wasn’t going to help him and on the possibility that this “Jesus Jew-boy” might; he got baptized before his death and his final illness. But at the moment of his conversion, he was more interested in the political advantages of having Christianity become the state religion of Rome than he was in a sincere belief that it had something to offer him.

His mother, on the other hand, appears to have been rather converted and zealous in the cause. She was the one who went to Palestine and located all of those sacred sites that we now have: the Church of the Sepulchre and the church in Bethlehem (the birth site). All of those areas were discovered by Queen Helen, the mother of Constantine.

And she, too, fixed the place of the crucifixion, which the apostles and prophets of the Restoration have never accepted. There have been no efforts by the Church to **officially** identify the spot where the crucifixion took place, but there have been a number of statements, including one by President Spencer Kimball, about “feeling by the Spirit” that certain places were likely to be. No one’s ever tried to fix it, but in our Scriptures, map #12 (in the back of your Scriptures) gives you a probable location of Golgotha, and there’s a picture of it. The picture is back here, photo 13: Golgotha. “A prominent tradition holds the Lord Jesus was crucified near here, ‘place of the skull.’” And the skull there appears to be the features of the mountainside.

Assuming for a moment that that orientation is correct and that Queen Helen was wrong, then the place where the crucifixion occurred would be to the north of the location of the temple mount. Inside the temple environment—inside the larger temple area—the place where the animals were killed on the grounds was the place of slaughter, and it was located to the north of the altar for burnt sacrifice and outside of the temple itself but in the court of the temple, just as the Scriptures make clear it was outside the city wall and at a location to the north of Jerusalem.

Leviticus 16:14 [11],

*Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, ...shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself. (Leviticus 16:11; see also Leviticus 6:3 RE)*

This site would have been in the northern part of the outer court of the temple, the location of the **actual crucifixion** corresponding to the location of the rites performed within the temple. Crucifixion outside the temple walls (or outside the walls of Jerusalem), corresponding once again with killing the sacrifice outside the walls of the temple building. So, then once this has occurred, once this slaughter has occurred, it's necessary to bring the blood in verse 15:

*Then shall he [Aaron (or the successor High Priest)]...bring his blood within the veil...and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat. (v. 15; see also 6:4 RE)*

So, it has to come into the presence of and the attention of (symbolically) God the Father. The mercy seat is inside the Holy of Holies. It's inside the veil of the temple. It's the most holy spot of the temple. When, therefore, the actual events of the Day of Atonement occur, it should be necessary for the offering to be brought into the holiest place and offered to the attention of the Father.

So, in Luke 23:45, at the moment of Christ's death, after He shouts with a loud voice and gives up the ghost: *And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst* (see also Luke 13:26 RE). Matthew 27:51 says: *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks [were] rent* (see also Matthew 12:30 RE).

Christianity says, "Oh, that's 'cuz they did away with all that stuff! It had now been superseded, fulfilled, and it was no more." The rites of Moses suggest it was necessary for the offering to be accepted within the Holy Place. And as no one who was officiating would draw aside the veil to allow the presence of God the Father to acknowledge the sacrifice, God the Father Himself drew it apart with an earthquake, rending the veil of the temple to accept the sacrifice. As Christ completed His sacrifice, the Holy of Holies opened to acknowledge and accept the offering.

It should not be a mystery to us why this happened. It completes the acts required under the rites to confirm that this was the Anointed One, to whom all the rites and ordinances pointed as our common hope for the One who would enter in and make atonement for us.

Well, Christ's discourse on the road to Emmaus was not limited to the rites of Moses. He says, **Beginning** [with] *Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself* (Luke 24:27, emphasis added; see also Luke 14:3 RE). It had to include more than just Moses. So, there are a few other Scriptures that I think we have to consider in order to conclude what was necessarily included within Christ's dialogue.

Matthew's Gospel brings up details of Christ's humiliation in Matthew 27, beginning at verse 33:

*When they were come [to the] place called Golgotha, that is, [the] place of [the] skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: ...when he...tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

*Then [there were] two thieves crucified with him, [the] one on the right hand, [the] another on the left [forming rather a presidency of the damned and outcast and executed]. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, ...saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.*

*[And] now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour [Christ] cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard [this], said, This man calleth for Elias. ...straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, ...filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, [to give] him...drink. The rest said, Let be, [let's] see whether Elias will come to save him.*

*[And] when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; ...the earth did quake, ...the rocks [were] rent; ...when the centurion, [there] that [was] with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and [the] things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. (Matthew 27:33-54; see also Matthew 12:24-31 RE)*

One of the prophets, no doubt, that Christ would have referred to is one that Matthew just referred to. If you get out Psalms 22, you'll read this account:

*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, ...am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and [not a] man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing [that] he delighted in him.*

*...Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*

*...They [gape] upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and...roaring lion. I am poured out like water, ...all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted*

*in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; ...my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of [the earth]. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, [they] cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.*

*...My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. All [of] the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations. (Psalms 22:1-8,11,13-19,25-28; see also Psalms 22:1-2,4-5 RE)*

Ought not these things to be and for Christ to enter into His glory? It had to be! The disappointment and the confusion and the uncertainty of these disciples, walking after the apparent defeat of the Lord in Jerusalem, didn't understand. Everything about these events were essential for the Messiah—if he BE the Messiah—to accomplish.

Isaiah chapter 53, verses 2-12:

*For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground [as a root out of a dry ground—there was no drier ground than that; it's remarkable that the Lord was able to take root there]: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. (v. 2; see also Isaiah 19:2 RE)*

You know, that “There is no beauty that we should desire him,” is the King James' way of putting the verse. The Jewish Study Bible published by the Oxford University says, “There is no **charm** that we should find him pleasing.” Avraham Gileadi in his *Apocalyptic Isaiah* renders it, “There's no **pleasing aspect**, that we should find him attractive.” If I were going to say what the gist of the idea is that's being communicated here, I would say: He was uncredentialed; there was nothing about him that made him bona fide. If you wanted to recognize the Lord, it had to be in the content of His message. “Did not our hearts burn within us?” and not in the majesty of the office He held; for although He held the only true High Priest office of that day, at that moment, all of society was otherwise oriented. He didn't don priestly robes; He didn't own possession of the temple courts; He didn't come through the lineage of Aaron—indeed, not even of the lineage of Levi. He was uncredentialed. There is nothing about His lowly position inside a society that was organized as it was that would recognize Him as being bona fide. Only those willing to “let their hearts burn within them” would recognize Him. As to everyone else? Just another common man.

*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: ...we hid as it were our faces from him...*

Look away, look away. We still do that, you know. Walking alongside on the road to Emmaus we still hide, as it were, our faces from Him.

*...he was despised, and we esteemed him not.* (v. 3; see also 19:2 RE)

Yeah, it's popular to disrespect, to question, to doubt, to trouble over. I love the question someone called Doug [Mendenhall] with yesterday. I have no credentials. I am no one. I am a member of the Church with a testimony. I preside over nothing. I hold no keys, and yet, I know Him.

*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried [away] our sorrows...*

You know, that's not just a statement about what it is He's accomplished. That's a statement of trust. That's a statement of your confidence in Him. Because if He's borne your griefs, it means you have to allow Him to do so. And if He's carried away your sorrows, you have to permit Him to be the one who makes the carrying away.

*...yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* (v. 4; see also 19:2 RE)

"Can...any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (see John 1:46; see also John 1:7 RE). Or—as some think—can any good thing come of this Nazarene?

*But he was wounded for **our** transgressions, he was bruised for **our** iniquities: the chastisement of **our** peace was upon him; and with **his** stripes **we** are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way...* (vs. 5-6, emphasis added; see also 19:2 RE)

We don't like His way, you know? We like to meddle with it, adjust it, adapt it, toy with it, alter it. We like to turn to our own way.

*...and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he open[ed] not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: ...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...* (vs. 6-9; see also 19:2 RE)

In a borrowed tomb from a rich man, He was buried; but with two thieves, He was hung on the cross, you see.

*...because [he'd] done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.* (v. 9; see also 19:2 RE)

When he said, "Tell me, are you the son of God?" and in response, "Thou sayest" (meaning, "What you've said"; meaning, "That's right"), there was no deceit in His mouth.

*Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; 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.* (v. 10; see also 19:2-3 RE)

It "pleased" the Lord to bruise Him. Well, fortunately, we have an Anglican bishop who came to our rescue advocating, as he is, ordination of homosexuals (among other things) and the

“utter nonsense” of the sacrifice of Christ. He wants Christianity and the Anglican Church to become a homosexual social movement. How you turn Christ into that is sort of an oddity, but... I mean, if the dispensation began with an old man reproducing, I would rather think it's a heterosexual dispensation we're talking about. But this bishop argues (in an article he published within the last month) the phrase, “...it pleased the Lord to bruise him” is absolute nonsense. But no less a prophet and seer than Enoch took joy in the Savior's sacrifice. He describes it in Moses chapter 7, verses 45-47:

*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, and the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world; and through faith I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me. (Moses 7:45-47, emphasis added; see also Genesis 4:19 RE)*

It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. It pleased Enoch that Christ was bruised. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and enter into His glory? It's a delightful moment. It is the moment at which the atonement gets worked out. It confers such blessings upon mankind that it was a happy event, causing actual joy for those who behold it with understanding, even now.

Returning to Isaiah:

*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. Therefore [I will] divide him a portion with the great, ...he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:11-12; see also Isaiah 19:3 RE)*

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? Enter into His glory... See, there's a statement that we've got, Jacob in the Book of Mormon (Jacob chapter 4, verse 4): *For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but also all the holy prophets which were before us* (see also Jacob 3:1 RE).

“Enter into His glory.” “A hope of His glory.” What is His glory? *Behold, this is my work and my glory...* (Moses 1:39; see also Genesis 1:7 RE). What is that? What is His glory? **It's you.** It's you. See, as He's talking to them about the things that He ought to suffer in order for Him to be able to enter into His glory, He's talking to them about **them**. He's talking to you about **you**.

I had a Baptist mother who suffered from all of the handicaps of not only being Baptist but devoutly so. She was always worried when I was growing up that I was going to hell

because I never became a Baptist—and then I became a Mormon and removed all doubt. After I finally took the missionaries seriously, one of the reasons my attention was drawn to the Church was because of section 76 of the Doctrine and Covenants (see also T&C 69). It furnished a description of the afterlife unlike anything I'd ever heard before.

Well, in one of those passing religious colloquies that my mom and I engaged in after I was “a Mormon and consigned to hell” and she was “a Baptist and interested in reclaiming me,” I asked her, “What do you think you'll do in Heaven?” That's a great mystery to the Baptists. Mark Twain tried to help them out in an extract from *Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* (which if you haven't read, you ought to read; it's really good doctrine). Joseph and Mark Twain had the same vision. Well, this was her answer, and it was a studied answer, derived from the teaching of devout Baptist ministers who had been her friends over the years: She “would spend all eternity blissfully gazing into the face of Jesus.” I mean, not that the Lord isn't a good-looking man and all, but I can't imagine blissfully looking into the face of any person/object/animal/thing for all eternity. It's an oxymoron. I don't get the “bliss” from that. “Oh, he winked! Ah, did you see that? It will be another ten thousand years before something else happens. We'll be blissful in the interim.”

Well, the notion that Christ has a mission/has a destiny for mankind, the idea that His glory necessarily encompasses us, the idea that the temple anciently divided things into three levels of holiness, and the idea that His plan is robust enough—that His glory is robust enough—to provide for both the immortality (on the one hand) and eternal life (on the other hand) of mankind suggests a Lord who is collegial, who is friendly, who is social, who is as interested in you as you may be curious about Him—a person who, in describing His own glory, necessarily includes within it others, is the kind of being worthy of worship and worthy of admiration.

Well, some interesting things unfold. I want to do a quick summary before I turn to those, though. From the little bit that we've looked at on this discussion that we've gotten to so far, we can safely conclude the following: The Lord is willing to answer our questions. He's never said, “Don't ask that.” On the contrary, He said, “Ask.” He said, “Seek.” He said, “Knock.” And He hasn't said, “Es prohibito that stuff.” You can ask about anything—and probably ought to. He accepts us where we are, walking down a dusty road, confused and befuddled and thinking that **He** was a failure; He'll come join you. There's no elitist cabal. There's no limitation. He went to the women at the grave, and now He's associating with a couple of chaps tramping seven miles to Emmaus who needed Him. He accepts us where we are. We need to impose upon Him to have Him stay with us. Otherwise, He'll move on. Places to go, fish to fry—literally—in Galilee. “I have other fish to fry.” (He has a sense of humor; someone asked me about that.)

The Lord is a teacher, first and foremost. He is a teacher; that's His great role—is to teach. When He says, “If you want to be serving in the Church, you need to learn how to preach, teach, exhort, expound, visit, associate...” this is a very social being that we're talking about—and first and foremost, He's a teacher.

“Should we render taxes to Caesar? Good question. Do you have a coin? Whose picture?” What a brilliant and insightful little episode, an off-the-hand remark. I imagine it given with

just absolute wit: “Great question! You got a coin? Hey, whose image is that? Look, give the things to Caesar that belong to him.”

He is not necessarily able to get His message through to us, however, because **we** are not **His equal** as students. He does His best to compensate for that, but the teaching agenda of any teacher is always limited to the capacity of the students. He would like us to understand and appreciate the wonderful mosaic of symbolic information that **He took the trouble** to build into the script of Scripture, the prose of the prophets, and the rites of His religion. (That’s some Maxwellian alliteration for those of you who miss him. Oh, you know, I wrote this too: “Elder Neil Maxwell’s sermons as an apostle were punctuated by his proclivity to produce prose with panache.” [Audience laughter] Some of us delighted in his command of the language.)

He has appeared to women and to men in the flesh after His resurrection. He appeared to the women first, then to two disciples (who required some considerable teaching and, perhaps, even an ordinance in breaking bread before them before they were able to open their eyes and see Him). He was **unable** to visit with His apostolic witnesses until they had been prepared to see Him by the testimony of the women first and the testimony of the two disciples second. Then they, the apostolic witnesses, saw Him third. If all things come in obedience to law, then perhaps the apostolic witnesses needed the Law of Moses itself satisfied with two witnesses (or three) to come bear testimony to them before they felt obliged under the Law of Moses to accept that testimony and to allow their faith to grow.

From this, we can also conclude that there is no controlling or managing the Lord through hierarchical limitations. You don’t have to get someone’s permission, nor does someone have to gain access simply by virtue of status, as was anticipated with the words, *no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood* (D&C 121:41; see also T&C 139:6). The rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of Heaven.

One of the first witnesses of the resurrection was named Cleopas. Other than this single mention of him, we don’t have any other reliable information about him. On the day of the resurrection, when the Lord took the trouble to walk seven miles as a companion with this fellow, we know nothing else but a name. Another of the witnesses of the Lord’s resurrection does not even have a name given to him. “Great in the eyes of the Lord” does not necessarily mean you or the world will ever even notice them. Notice or recognition, let alone fame, is not required of someone who has seen the resurrected Lord; indeed, it’s irrelevant. It’s possible that these witnesses withheld information about the Lord’s communication to them because they were asked to do so. Although there are scriptural limitations on what we may teach or disclose from personal revelation, there is no limit on what the Lord may choose to reveal to any given disciple.

All Scriptures are focused on the Lord’s ministry and message. They are one, and we err when we fail to see a consistent overall testimony of the Lord’s great plan of happiness for all of us within it. Christ’s apparent defeat and death were but a prelude to His great triumph over death itself. For those who follow Him, defeat while alive is irrelevant and

ultimate defeat in death itself is irrelevant—because if you follow Him here below, you'll be invited to follow Him to greater things above.

Well, ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to have entered into His glory? The answer is, of course, everything that He did was according to a plan. Every step He took and everything that He taught was intended to bear witness of the ministry and the mission that He had. He satisfied all of the requirements—not only of the Law of Moses but of the law of the gospel as well, which He was in the process of introducing to them. I find it always amusing to consider what was going on on Mars Hill when Paul arrived there. And they were always interested in hearing some new thing—when, in fact, what Christ (on the road to Emmaus) wanted was not “some new thing” but a clearer understanding of the things that had already been given, a clearer understanding of the testimonies that mankind had entrusted to them already, a clearer understanding that His work and His glory was intended to encompass not only Himself as the Father of all those who will receive Him but also intended to encompass our own immortality and eternal life.

In the spring of each year, all nature reawakens from the sleep of winter to bear testimony of the resurrection. And similarly, I want to add my testimony to those others that the Lord has risen. He conformed perfectly to the Father's plan. His rhetorical question still remains, in my view, the best way to think of Him: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

## Christ's Discourse on the Road to Emmaus Q&A Session

**Denver:** Now, Doug warned me about questions and answers, but I'm a foolhardy fellow, and so for the last few minutes (before we have our dinner thing set up here), if anyone's got any questions, I'd be glad to respond to them.

I had decided, by the way, to put this stuff down in writing, and I've done that. And I'm working on a third book that I'm hoping to get out sometime later this year. Even though it's completely unrelated... Well, nothing's completely unrelated because it's all one, but the book that I'm working on now is Book of Mormon material, and this is New Testament and Leviticus stuff. I intend to put the talk as it was written into an appendix in the back of that. So, if you're interested in a hard copy of this, it'll be in the back of a book whose working title at the moment is *Eighteen Verses*. It takes eighteen separate verses of the Book of Mormon from widely separated spots and simply discusses what doctrine are contained within those verses. It's all written up here, and 80% of it is typed. I've got to get the rest of it down and hope to do that and get it to the editors and have it out later this year—and this will be in an appendix in the back of that if anyone's interested in it. Not that I'm interested in trying to sell anything to anyone anywhere. I don't do that; Doug does that.

Yeah? Yeah?

**Question 1:** There's a rumor about how long it took you to write *The Second Comforter*. Have you heard that?

**Denver:** No, I'll tell you the truth, ok. But...you shouldn't know this before you read the book, k? 'Cuz you need to read it in order to get why it's even significant. It took approximately 70 hours from April to July. It took a whole lot longer than that to suffer through the butchery of the publishing process, in which I don't know how many errors were introduced into the typing and the punctuation, and there's **still**... There's a statement in the book that says (as I wrote it), "I will doubt doubt itself." Somewhere along the line, the spell checker got rid of the second "doubt" because it's redundant. But if you happen across that sentence, it will be corrected at some point, but it just hasn't been done yet—again, because of the violence of the publishing process.

I started in April; it was finished in July as a manuscript. It took approximately 70 hours. It took a whole lot more than that to get it into print because getting books into print... I'm absolutely convinced that there is no perfect book. In my copy of *Rough Stone Rolling* (Bushman, Richard Lyman. *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*. 2005), I found four printing errors—and I wasn't looking for them, so they've got to be glaring in order for me to notice them. But, man! Publishers are just horrific.

Was there a hand over here? Yeah?

**Question 2:** You read a Scripture in Isaiah 53:10: *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.* Would you mind explaining that particular statement: "...he shall see his seed"?

**Denver:** Well, who are the seed of the Lord? The seed of the Lord are those who accept Christ as their Father, those who receive Him to be their parent and His offspring, those who become the “begotten sons and daughters of God.” They are spirit children of God the Father to be sure, but they have to come **here** and become born again and become the seed of Christ, who is both the Father and the Son—the seed of Christ. And so those who benefit from all this and who are the seed of the Savior are those who are connected with Him by adoption, by affiliation, and otherwise.

There is a secondary meaning to that (and one that is a bit more controversial) which relates to the normal process of being a parent. You’ll have to appeal to Dan Brown and *The DaVinci Code*; *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*; Orson Pratt and *The Seer*; well, and a few other sources in order to sort out the **literal** meaning of the seed. But boy, that sells a lot of books, that “seed of Christ” thing.

Yeah?

**Question 3:** Are you aware of the ... translation that was made by ministers of ...?

**Denver:** Yeah, the “Drama of the Lost Disciples.” Yeah, there is a lot on that. There is a whole body of literature, some of it real interesting. Who knows, some may even be true. Yeah.

The fellow next to you had his hand up.

**Question 3 (continued):** ... so John has a ... bearing Christ’s name ... talks a lot about patterns and all ... what do you think about it repeating ... ?

**Denver:** Interesting question. There was a hand here. [Audience laughter] Look, we’re enacting **ancient** events. We’re part of a process that began a long time ago and is going on still. You read (What is it? Genesis chapter 49?) the patriarchal blessings of the various patriarchs, you look at the lives of those men in the flesh. We’re just reenacting them on a grander scale (and with more of us, to be sure)—but the patterns are there. The records of the prophets are not just history—as the Book of Mormon demonstrates very ably—it’s not history. It’s highly edited, very limited, highly selected (at one point, they estimate less than one percent of their history even gets alluded to) material that has been selected on account of prophetic foreknowledge of our circumstance. And so it constitutes not merely a history but a prophetic pattern, in which they try to get us to see the process that we ought to be reenacting **in our lives** to do the things that they did that brought them to **know** the Lord. Nephi couldn’t have been more plain if he had said, “Here’s my guidebook. Here’s my rule book. Here’s my pattern recognition sequence. You know, go and do likewise.” He’s trying to get us to get our hands around (as Joseph Smith put it) “the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” And the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ involves the path to and through the veil into the presence of God, becoming joint-heir, becoming a son of God. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 375, he refers to (I don’t have a copy of it with me, but I think I can quote it) “sons of God who exalt themselves to be God even before they were born, and all can cry Abba, Father.” Joseph wanted us to take the religion that he restored to the earth rather seriously and to search into and contemplate both the heavens and the darkest abyss.

In a (I don't want to use the word "evangelical"; I'll use "evangelistic"), in a proselytizing church, in a church in which at any given moment the largest segment of the adult population are *novices*—introductory novices to a faith—you should never expect the church to forfeit the interests of the *novices* (who rightly need to be fed and nurtured) for the interests of those who are maybe a little more mature and have a little more robust comprehension of what the Savior was trying to teach us all. And it's probably rightly so that the Church makes no effort to really address that—and rightly so that you're left to your own. We **have** the Scriptures. I mean, when the rich man said to Abraham (in Christ's parable), "Well, send Lazarus back so he can warn my brothers," Abraham's response in Christ's parable was: "They have Moses, and they have the prophets. And if they won't believe them, they won't believe Lazarus, even though one rise from the dead," which is a very interesting foreshadowing of how people would treat the Lord.

Here's the problem: People do not believe **Him**, even though **He** rose from the dead—period. Today—US—you and I do not believe Him, even though He rose from the dead. It was not intended to be a one-off event that occurred in the meridian of time. It was intended to be a gathering. I mean, the little seed grows up into the great mustard plant into which the birds (or as Joseph put it, the angels) were intended to come and lodge. It was intended to be a superstructure for housing contact between the divine and the mortal. It was intended to be the moment of intersection between all that is in eternity and the life of the mortal. It was intended to be the journey into the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God.

In the ordinances as they have been restored in the temple today, everyone who enters in is expected to come to the veil possessing certain knowledge, capable of identifying themselves as having been true and faithful, and be received in an embrace, and then welcomed into the presence of God. It's a normal and expected part of the ordinances as they have been restored. Those ordinances are supposed to be teaching us something. They are the Lord's way of shouting in a multimedia presentation, "Here is how I did what I did and what I would like you to do in the process of you becoming like me, a son of God, a daughter of God, a member of the household of faith, and part of the church and kingdom of the Firstborn." You have to become the Firstborn. You have to become one with Him. You have to become part of that, not in an organized group-think kind of way, in an individual way in which you connect up with Holiness in which you become a vessel of Holiness. You are someone to whom sacred things have been entrusted and you become, in turn, sacred as the bearer of them.

The Law of Moses prescribed the death penalty for a variety of offenses. One of the ways to avoid the execution of the penalty was to go to one of the safe harbor cities. Another way was to go and to come in contact with the altar—because if you came in contact with the altar, it was considered "most holy." Things that are "most holy" communicate holiness. You can't profane them. If you come in contact with them and you are unholy, you don't make **it** unholy—it makes **you** holy because it is "most sacred." Part of the rites in the temple are intended to communicate to you things that are most holy. They are intended to make you holy. They are intended to make you a suitable recipient for an audience. They are intended to make you a suitable companion for a walk down a dusty road with the risen Lord who's

trying to get you to notice exactly who it is that speaks to you. It's intended to have you understand that He lives and that He's willing to associate with **you**. And that it's not (as Joseph Smith put it) relying on the words of an old book, the people who lived once long ago, that's going to save anyone. It's the dialogue that you engage in with Him **now**. It's the living, breathing, vital... He uses the figure of the living vine, and you have to connect to the living vine; and He's the vine, and you connect to it, and you get life through that. Words could not be more plain! He's trying to get...

I mean, what does it mean to be connected up with the vine and to derive sustenance from it? I mean, you have to be alive, which is not inert or an object that you move from there to there. If it's alive, it's going to grow. It's going to increase. It's going to improve. It's gonna have "connection with." I gonna have... And Christ was extraordinary in His selection of the things that He wanted to use to communicate to us what He intended the gospel to be. And we read them and say, "That's cool. I'll pay my tithing; I'm connected. I got a card; I'm connected."

Well, it's intended to be more than that, and the way that it becomes more than that is an individual journey in which you receive from Him and become a part of Him—and He does His best to try and use analogies and parables and stories to make it clear to us. And the history of the events that are recorded in Scripture are intended to try and make it clear to us. But at the end of the day, it's up to you to have the a-ha moment and realize He really is talking to and inviting YOU: You, individually, whoever you are, wherever you're at, whatever your confusion, whatever your doubts, whatever your uncertainties, He wants to talk to **you** about them.

Yeah, her and then you. Yeah?

**Question 4:** In the beginning, you said that there was a woman first who saw Christ had risen. Was there any special reason you did not give her name?

**Denver:** No, it was Mary. Any reason why I didn't use the name of the woman? The reason I use the **category** is because we are categorical. Our defect and our impairment is we have the brilliant, the ingenious capacity for looking out over people and filtering out all the females. It's a gift. I don't know how we manage that, but we do; we do manage that.

And the Scriptures plainly tell a different story. And it's that "different story" that's our problem, not the personal identity of the woman involved or her relation to the Lord or her obvious reaction to Him. And Joseph altering the text to say, "Don't hold me," as opposed to, "Don't touch me," which means that he removed "Don't touch me" from the text (she WAS touching Him) and tells you something else potentially about their relationship—because if she was embracing and attempting to hold Him and He was saying, "I've got another appointment to keep; I'll be back, but don't **hold** me," it suggests something else about what was going on there. I mean, why was **she** there at that point in the morning? Why was it still dark? And why did He elect **that** moment to come and rejoin **her**? I mean, there's more to that story, but heavens—we'll leave that to **Dave** [Dan] Brown and the rest of them to get into.

**Question 5:** You made an interesting comment earlier about the Church and how... And I can't quote you exactly, but it was something along the lines that it made no effort to get into more advanced understanding of some of these doctrines that may or may not be important. I am generally interested to know if you believe that the essential requirements exist within the Church today, all the members...?

**Denver:** Yeah, I think all of the tools are in the Church. I think that the Church has been organized for a wise purpose, and it does its purpose rather well. I have no quibbling or qualms at all about the question asked in the temple recommend interview about whether we sustain the brethren (and in particular, the President of the Church) as holding the keys—because the keys were restored, and they exist, and the Church is a repository, and it has a job to do, and its job is sort of business-like, and it does that job well. And if it were not for the Church doing its job well, it would never have come to **my** attention. And I wasn't looking for it. And when it did come to my attention, I wasn't particularly interested in it. It was insistent and persistent, and you read a little about that in *The Second Comforter*. I wasn't an eager volunteer to become a Mormon. I mean, the people I knew who were Mormon were weird. My Baptist mom told me they were, and I trusted her. It was only when I got a little older that I started seeing that maybe my Baptist mom didn't comprehend the entirety of it all.

I have a testimony of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I take no issue with the organization, the structure, the ordinances that they perform, their right to do them, the responsibility to do them, or the necessity of the Church being the instrument through which the great latter-day work that's going on is gonna unfold. But I do think that it's gonna take a few twists and turns before the end of this story is written.

And you know, we are a very Americanized church, at the moment, that is growing primarily in Africa, Latin America, and some parts of the Orient. We tend to try and export cultural baggage that—if you read the Book of Mormon alone and read the commandments alone—do not necessarily require that baggage to go along with it. I suspect we're gonna have some trauma to go through before we finally segregate what's true and right and pure and necessary/essential and what are just old habits or traditions. That's the way the Book of Mormon puts it: "the traditions of your fathers."

But all of that is as a result of good and sufficient reasons. We had the Army of the United States, the majesty of Congress, and the Supreme Court arraigned against the Latter-day Saints. It's the product of history. The Church was outcast. It was the object of the targeted, intentional, systematic dismantling by the Government of the United States. And in order to win over the right to exist, the right to hold property, the right to keep our temples, the right to have a state in which we could enact laws to protect and preserve our own property, the right to sit on juries (because we had that right taken away from us), we had to become American, and we had to give up some things, and we had to acknowledge some things. And in the process of doing that, the Republicans (who were the primary persecutors of the saints) we have gone so far to appease, at this point, that we ARE Republicans. It's just the most bizarre transformation of all.

We are now part and parcel not just Americans, but we're **conservative** Americans. We are (oh, what's his name? Billy Graham)... We are Billy Graham Americans. We are Norman Rockwell Americans. We are Americans from the 1950s trying to take into Generation X and rap music a Norman Rockwell persona. We are trying to be "uber" Americans. And in some respects, we just ought to relax. You know?

The fact is that... I should probably not admit this, but I will. For Father's Day... (I don't know that I should admit this.) For Father's Day, my wife gave me (now she's laughing because she knows what I'm going to say)... She gave me a Kid Rock CD, who happens to be, by the way, an extraordinarily talented musician—obscene, to be sure. The label had a price tag that had been strategically placed to block the parental warning, so when I opened it and the price tag came off with the outside plastic, I said, "Parental warning? Did you know that?" "Oh, no." Well, it has the one song that he did as a duet with Sheryl Crow on it. It has some other stuff that's really good on it, but it also has some obscenity. Well, I like to bust out Kid Rock from time to time to shock the folks who come to my house that need shocking.

Look, there's no reason for us to be as uptight as we are. We are so anxious. Being anxiously engaged does not require anxiety. We tend to view ourselves as being... If we're straight and narrow, we must be rigid. And you know, sometimes the best way to conform to the surface is to be limber, is to be adaptable, is to be willing to accept some new ideas.

Brigham Young had this attitude about whatever truth there is out there, we want it. I don't know how many of you have read the Van Der Donckt/B.H. Roberts' debates. They were gathered up... I don't know the name of the book. I think it's called the "B.H. Roberts Van Der Donckt Debates" (Roberts, B.H. *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity: The Roberts-Van Der Donckt Discussion*. 1903). But Van Der Donckt was the chaplain of the United States Senate and evangelical minister who was given the tabernacle to come and preach **against** us, come revile against us, and he did! And then B.H. Roberts delivered a sermon to tell the other side of the story, and then Van Der Donckt was invited to rebut B.H. Roberts. And then B.H. Roberts gave a surrebuttal to that, and the whole exchange was welcomed. Everyone was welcome to give their ideas.

You know, on occasion, the guys who are standing outside of the Conference Center with all their vitriolic nonsense, on occasion they stumble on a defect of ours, and we ought to be able to accept the criticism and say, "You know what? On that score, we suck." And we ought to be willing to say, "We ought to do better, and we can do better, and we're embarrassed that..." As possessors of the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we're unwilling to shed some of that or to welcome in some other truths. I think that what we have restored to us anticipates that there will be other streams of thought which converge with our own, and as they converge with our own, those other streams of thought are gonna inform us about ideas we haven't quite got our hands around yet. I think as we grow into the Buddhist world, Buddhist converts to the Church are gonna bring to our attention understanding about the Book of Mormon that we don't penetrate just yet. I believe that Islam is going to bring to us some understandings and insights from the Book of Mormon that we won't get without them. I believe that the gospel program was intended to welcome these divergent

streams of thoughts and to help us flesh it out and to help us see, “Ah, there’s more to this than we (in our little, narrow, Western vantage point) have yet been able to discern.”

OK, thank all of you. And we have a song that I’m informed we are going to have played now.