

## Personal Revelation

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Sandy, Utah

...And since no one's paying me...

You know, the other problem is this: in the Doctrine and Covenants there's a mandatory statement. It's much ignored, but it's a mandatory statement. It says...

[inaudible comment]

So, I have to talk loud? Do Bob Dylan? Bob's always swallowing the mic. Can you turn it up?

[comments about the mic]

Talk normal. Can you hear me? Is it...? Can you hear me back there? Alright.

The other problem with treating you as if you were a jury is the mandatory statement in the Doctrine and Covenants—much ignored by us but nevertheless the case—which says *if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach* (D&C 42:14). I view that as mandatory. *If ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not...* is one of the prohibitions on what we ought to be doing. I'm always amazed at those who are **eager** to do this kind of thing. I am a **reluctant** draftee. I don't want to do this. I don't think I will ever do this again. Doug **nags** me to these things. And so, I'm telling you that if he tells you I'm coming again, don't believe him, because I view this as a terrible responsibility. Anytime you're going to take up the subject of truth and you're going to speak, I think you have an obligation to do so by the spirit, and if you don't, then the requirement is: shut up; just don't do it.

We have this erroneous reading of the description given in section 138 about those that were called to be rulers. There's a parallel drawn between the statement in section 138 and the section the description given by Abraham in the pre-existence about how Abraham, you were chosen, you were one of them, you were one of the rulers that were chosen before the world began to be a ruler. And we equate *ruler*...

Well, in the Book of Mormon, the equation between *ruler* is **teacher**. It has nothing to do with position or rank or authority. It has everything to do with whether or not you teach. And so, in the Book of Mormon what Nephi says is that my brothers are always angry at me because I'm going to be a teacher and a ruler over them. Teacher and ruler are an equivalent.

Abraham presided over a family, but Abraham learned great truths, and he taught great truths, and he is distinguished as a consequence of the things which he learned and he taught. You can occupy a position of authority and never say one thing worth anyone remembering, and therefore, you are not (by definition, using the Book of Mormon) a *ruler*.

On the other hand, you can be one of the least of the Lord's. I have heard... In fact, the most memorable statements I have heard in church meetings came from a stake president bearing testimony while talking about the David and Goliath incident in the Old Testament, came from an elderly woman, widowed and in ill health, bearing testimony in a Fast and Testimony Meeting. When I think about those talks that have affected me, that have enlightened me, that have enlivened me, it is the rule that they come from **odd** places. And it is the exception when I hear something like Hugh B. Brown's "Profile of a Prophet" that still resonates with me. There are talks, the greatness of which will endure forever. Paul (on Mars Hill) talking is still resonating in the world.

(Ya know, I don't know how you're gonna get that up here. But if you got it here, I'd use it.)

[inaudible comment]

(It has a wide base? Just turn it into a mosh pit and bring it/hand over to the front.)

In any event, so we've got this a...

(Well, I'll be quiet while we move the chalkboard. I surrender to the chaos of... There it is. Just out of curiosity, do we have a marker and an eraser? 'Cuz it's a lot of trouble to go to. Oh, we do. We do. OK, I'm gonna be wary of the microphone and try and stay close to it, but I can still reach part of this.)

So, the obligation becomes—if you read section 42, and you read what the Scriptures generally have to say about the subject—the obligation becomes: if you're going to say something, to say it by the spirit. And so, I'm hoping that the trip to and from the airport, the soccer game that I've had to go to, and the fact that when I leave here I am in a hurry to get my daughter and get her to the pet store to buy the frozen pinky mice for her pet snake, and then get her to her babysitting appointment at 6 o'clock will all come together somehow happily, and that I can forget about that while I'm here. (It's a corn snake. Have you seen her corn snake? It's this pink, light-colored... It's a pretty snake, as snakes go.) But...

In one of the latest offerings in the... By the way, all of this bears on a subject that we'll get to, but you have to triangulate in if you're really gonna... If you're gonna say something meaningful.

One of the latest offerings about our greatest controversy, we now have *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* in publication. We have listed... I mean, everyone refers to this as "Turley's book" when it was coming out, but listed (in order of priority) the authors are:

- Ronald Walker, who's an independent historian and writer of Latter-day Saint history;
- Richard Turley is listed second, he's an Assistant Church Historian for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;

- and then Glen Leonard is listed as the third author, as the former director of the LDS Museum of Church History and Art.

It was published (or it **is** published) by Oxford University, carried by Deseret Book. And it was the intention that it be published by ~~Deseret Book~~ in order for the book to bear—or excuse me, published by Oxford Press—to bear the imprimatur of independent scholarly approval on the book and not be something that is simply an apology.

But when you go back to the acknowledgements portion of the book, and you look at who all was involved in getting this into print, he references:

Colleagues in the Family and Church History Department and other departments of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Brigham Young University traveled to many librar[y], archives, and other historical institutions...

...and they list all of them that they went to, and it is formidable. And they give special thanks to all of those from those various church institutional sources who participated in this information gathering and give credit to them.

Then they thank “the professionalism of several editors,” and they list the editors, many of them inside the Church or Deseret Book, but then they also thank an editor from Oxford Press. They thank:

Others at church headquarters or Brigham Young University who gave countless hours of assistance with their various skills and knowledge includ[ing]...

...and they give a page-and-a-half list of names. These are **names** that are involved in doing the review, and included among them is Dean C. Jessee, who is working on *The Joseph Smith Papers*.

And then they also thank “the skills and knowledge of archivists, librarians, historians” and others, some of whom reviewed and provided information or critiqued the manuscript. And included among them are some very interesting names like:

- Lavina Fielding Anderson
- Richard L. Anderson
- Sharon Avery
- Lowell Bennion
- Ed Firmage
- John Groberg
- Steve Robison
- John Welch

(He's ubiquitous, ok? You can't get anything into print without John Welch's name appearing somewhere.) And then there is thanks given to doctors who helped them and to others who are scholars that looked into it and pages of names.

- Richard Bushman's name appears.
- John Carmack's name
- Sheri Dew
- Ronald Esplin
- Armaud Mauss
- Cory Maxwell (well, Cory and Karen Maxwell; my suspicion is Karen did more than Cory did, but that's just my suspicion)
- Jan Shipps.

And then they end all this—and this is pages; this is pages, and it's "Who's Who," k? They end all this with:

We also express appreciation for the support and feedback of Russell M. Nelson and Dallin Oaks, advisors to the Family and Church History Department, and of Marlin K. Jensen, Church Historian.

So, I assume, therefore, that this is a very deliberate book. This is a very calculated and intentional book. And that the words that appear in this have been weighed carefully in the balance and chosen in order to have an effect. K, let's accept that as a given for a moment. Go read the Acknowledgments if you would like to check that and reach your own conclusion.

There are precious few things which appear in this book, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, which touch upon the subject of revelation or visitations. I think I can read all of them to you. (I may have missed some because I just finished the book a few hours ago and may not have been as deliberate as I went through it as they were in preparing it, but I think these are the quotes.)

This is talking about the primary villain responsible—ultimately, the only one that will be executed for the crime of murder of over a hundred and twenty people at Mountain Meadows. This is Brother Lee:

During missionary tours to Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee, Lee said he beheld heavenly visions, contested with evil spirits, and defeated other Christian ministers with strong, inspired words. Although at first timid and inexperienced before a congregation, he soon believed he was transformed by a higher power. "My tongue was like the pen of a ready writer. I scarcely knew what I was saying," he reflected, after speaking to a congregation for an hour and a half.

"I grew in grace from day to day," he said...

So, "beheld heavenly visions, contested with evil spirits, ...defeated other Christian ministers with strong, inspired words." That's from page 60.

Beginning on page 65, there's another source they quote at some length, speaking also about John D. Lee on the subject of inspiration and the spirit:

Thomas D. Brown...wrote an extended passage in his diary that accused Lee of having an "abundance of dreams, visions and revelations" that he used for his own purposes. Brown believed the actual source of Lee's information was more ordinary. "He listened behind a fence to Bros. P[eter] Shirts and W[illia]m Young who are talking of his immeasurable selfishness, and he repeated it next meeting as having read it from a sheet let down from...[heaven] before his eyes," Brown claimed.

Then there was the incident in which Lee, thinking he was temporarily out of favor with Brigham Young (his adopted father), was troubled over whether he would get the appointment to be the U.S. Indian farmer, which was a governmental position, and Brigham Young was at the time the governor. And so, as the governor and as his adopted father, he could make an official appointment. And Lee was sweating over that 'cuz it meant an income for him. And Brigham Young, sure enough, **did** make the appointment, which gratified him because **he** now knew he was not out of sync with his adopted father. And again, this is from page 66:

When Lee learned of his appointment, he wept—not because it satisfied his ambition, he said, but because it allowed him to continue to serve. He **later** said that several days before Young's letter arrived, "an angel of the Lord....stood by [his] bedside and talked....about these and many other things."

Now, are you picking up a pattern yet about how spiritual phenomena are being dealt with? Since we're confining it exclusively to Lee in this account (and since Lee will ultimately turn out to be filled with all manner of wickedness and chicanery)...

Well, after he had led the early abortive attack and personally become involved in the surrounding of the emigrant wagon (when they were dug in), in the fracas that ensued and the bullet fire that was going on, he got hit several times in his clothing, but he did not get injured. Then, a couple of Mormon communication bearers, Willden and Clewes, arrived; the incident occurs (and this is set out on page 172) in this way. (And this account, by the way, will... You'll want, in your own mind, to juxtapose this account with Willard Richards' statement about why he escaped **Liberty** [Carthage] Jail without any injury and what some people believe that possession of the temple rites do for you—but that's not mentioned, but keep that in mind.) So, reading now on page 172:

At one point—perhaps after getting bullet holes in his clothing—

Well, undoubtedly, because that's the point. I mean, he has the bullet holes, but this is between dashes. So, it's just to remind you that we've got that background.

At one point—perhaps after getting bullet holes in his clothing—Lee had told the Paiutes "that the bullets of the emigrants would not hurt the 'Mormons' the same as the Indians." Seeing Willden and Clewes, the Paiutes decided to test Lee's claim[s]. They "demanded that Willden and Clewes should put on Indian attire and run unarmed past the emigrant train within easy range of the rifles, to a neighboring

point about a hundred yards distan[ce]." It may have been the same route Jackson's brother took when he was shot. The two white men concluded that they would have to "take their chances" in doing what the Indians demanded "or risk being killed by them. So they ran, amid a shower of bullets from the emigrant camp and reached the opposite point in safety." The men then returned to the Paiute camp, where they "were heartily cheered for their bravery after their perilous run. Soon," said Clewes, "we were hailed from a ridge on our left; we looked around and there stood John D. Lee." Lee told the Indians to return to their camp—"pacif[ying] their feelings by making explanations to them"—then sat down and talked to [them].

Well, we get that. And in the context of this book and this treatment, and given the fact that the focus of the tale is upon what's the worst crime committed in the history of the Church, this is the first words. This is the Preface:

On September 11, 1857, Mormon settlers in southern Utah used a false flag of truce to lull a group of California-bound emigrants from their circled wagons and then slaughter[ed] them. When the killing was over, more than one hundred butchered bodies lay strewn across half a mile stretch of an upland meadow. Most of the victims were women and children. The perpetrators were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints aided by Indians.

It makes no apology for the Church's involvement. It exposes it. It limits the damage to those who were locally involved in perpetrating it and doesn't gloss it over. It's a very raw, candid description (including of the killings themselves). And I've read to you from this book (deliberately prepared), those statements that exist in it with respect to the subject of visions, revelations, and visitations.

And so, if you are going to form an opinion about how we regard the subject of visitations, and this is the latest statement from all of the gathered, well, "powers that be," blue-bloods, insiders, credentialed folk—all the good people that we rely upon—if that's what they had to say about it, you would have a hard time reconciling that with what our nineteen-year-old missionaries do.

The nineteen-year-old missionaries go out, they hand people the Book of Mormon, and they say, "Look, look! Here in Moroni 10:4, it says, *Ask God*, and He's gonna tell you. And oh, by the way, this whole thing started/this whole thing began when Joseph Smith read in Scripture, *Ask God*. And Joseph read that *God...giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not*. And Moroni says if you *ask with a sincere heart*, God's going to answer you." And so, our missionaries go about saying to everyone, "You go get revelation."

And then we encounter the Church Historian and the director of the...well, the Assistant Church Historian, reviewed by the Church Historian, Marlin Jensen (who I knew when he was still practicing law), and no one seems to have said, "Wait a minute, for a church whose bedrock remains—indispensably remains—the presence of the spirit, and for a church who, in order to expands, requires those that would like to join to go ask of God and get an answer to prayer, ought we not to do something more with the passing mention of

revelation then to simply confine it to the guy who gets executed for the crime/the guy who led the charge that created the problem/the guy who shot someone (and we had to now cover it up because white men were involved in this incident, and if the emigrants got out, the emigrants were going to spread the word of that), ought we not put revelation in the hands of someone else and in some other context?

Well, there is a little bit more, and to be fair I probably ought to read that, 'cuz the sisters were involved. "At 2:00 that afternoon..." This is after the group had set off from Cedar City—the militia had set off—to finish the deed and to kill 'em, under the direction of the stake president.

At 2:00 that afternoon, leaders of the Cedar City Female Benevolent Society held their regular meeting. "Sister Haight" reported that she had been visiting some of the Cedar women and "taught them the necessity of being obedient to their husbands" and not to be fearful in these "troublesome" and "squally times." ...They had advised the women they visited "to attend strictly to secret prayer in behalf of the brethren that are out acting in our defence."

So, **prayer** creeps in here, too. And then, there's this comment in the...umm...as they got ready for the final killings (in the chapter, "Decoyed Out and Destroyed")—I'm reading on page 187:

The men sat in a circle off by themselves and began by praying for "Divine guidance," a sacrilege that only the passions of the time could explain.

So, we do have prayer. We do have prayer in the book, too.

Now, I find this troublesome. I find it more than troublesome. I find it troubling enough that it's worth commenting on as we get into the subject of revelation. Because there is a competition afoot. It is a competition that if history should inform us of anything, it should inform us of this tension. This is **always** the case. There is **always** an effort to turn the gospel of Christ into religion and to turn religion into something that is very different. And you have to be on your guard, and the church has to be on its guard. And every one of us have to wage war against this process, because this process is foreseeable/predictable/knowable. If you want to know how it happened in the past, all you have to do is study the past. I was surprised in reading...

(I watched the soccer game, okay? I did. But there were timeouts. There were... I don't know **what** they did to bring that little girl into that crumpled ball off the... I mean, it didn't look like that, but the girl that kicked her **was** rather big. And then we had halftime, and so there long periods when I was reading this just a few hours ago.)

Yeah. In any event...

This is the book I'm waging into at the moment. It's the latest in the Hugh Nibley Collected Works, *Eloquent Witness: Nibley on Himself, Others, and the Temple*. And some of **this** stuff

struck me. **This**—a publication of “The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Hugh Nibley and Associates, LLC” (see, there didn’t used to be a Hugh Nibley and Associates—yeah, Tom, the next generation, LLC’d up)—and printed by Deseret Book Company. So, there’s hope! I mean, there’s happy news. **This** squeaked through. Let me read you... I mean, these two books came out at virtually the same time. They were hot on the shelves when I walked in and took them off a few days ago.

This is Nibley in an interview that they’ve published, and so, here we go:

And the two marks of the Church I see are and have been for a long time these: a reverence for wealth and a contempt for the scriptures. Naturally, the two go hand in hand. We should call attention to the fact that these things we are doing are against the work of the Lord. There is one saying of Joseph Smith I think of quite often. If the heavens seem silent at a time when we desperately need revelation, [it's] because of covetousness in the Church. “God had often sealed up the heavens because of covetousness in the Church.” And now the Church isn’t just shot through with covetousness, it is **saturated** with covetousness. And so the heavens are going to be closed. We’re told we don’t get revelation if we put our trust in money in the bank.

Well, okay, what do you do? Well, that’s answered a little later in the same book: if you seal the heavens up because you’re covetous, then...

**This** is a description of what happened in the Christian church, k?—the history of Christianity and the church fathers. We’re now a couple of hundred years post-Christ and into the era when the apostles are gone, and we’ve got a limit on ongoing revelation. So, here, I’m reading from page 127, here:

When the Church lost revelation it had to turn to another source for guidance and so it threw itself into the arms of the established schools of learning. The schoolmen, as one of them expresses it, took over the office and function once belonging to the prophets and once in power guarded their authority with jealous care, quickly and violently suppressing any suggestion of a recurrent inspiration.

Oh, I shouldn’t read this, but this is a great comment:

... I was forced to admit that the Berkeley institution is if anything less anti-religious than BYU, where religion is under more conscious and deliberate attack. But I do not for that reason hold my BYU colleagues culpable—they cannot help themselves. By its very nature the university is the rival of the Church; its historic mission has been to supply the guiding light which passed away with a loss of revelation, and it can make no concessions to its absolute authority without forfeiting that authority.

Yeah. Huh. Here’s another quote a couple of pages later:

The celebrations of the learned men and **not** the utterances of the prophets comprise the gospel [according to the university]. This has been the credo of the

Christian schoolmen since the days of Clement of Alexandria: the universities—Christian, Moslem, Jewish, or pagan—has its own religion, and the basic tenet of that religion is the denial of revelation.

(And then he quotes from C.S. Lewis; I'm not gonna read that, but in any event...) So, there's hope because this is ~~the~~ some of the same folks... I'm sure (I didn't look), but I'm sure Jack [John] Welch's name's in here somewhere, too. You can't... Yeah, you can't get it out into print without him appearing here as he does in the other. So, there **is** hope—there's perhaps some schizophrenia—but hope nonetheless, in the way that it all unfolds.

So, what of it all? You know, there was a time when... Our language is still permeated by words of usage and descriptors which presumed a whole different world than the one we live in now, words like "envision" or "light." I mean, we accept the idea of anything that is not in front of your face being described and using the word "envision" as the manner/the proper word to use when you're talking about it. Can you envision what Utah will look like in 2050? Can you envision what the new temple in Draper will look like when it is completed? Can you envision this or that? It's a holdover from another period of time in which the visionary experience was so commonplace that it leaked into the vocabulary, permeated the vocabulary, and we all thought it perfectly appropriate. "Can you give me further light on that subject?" "Can you shed some light on that?" "Are we enlightened on the subject yet?"

And you can be talking about anything from General Motors to solving the problem of sabermetrics (a subject that is worthy of devotion). If anyone here wants to devote themselves to a Ph.D. effort, that's the study of mathematics and baseball and figuring out what really wins games. I think Billy... We owe a lot to Billy Beane, I'm telling ya—the Oakland A's. If you have a resistance to reading obscenities in print, then you ought not get it. But if you'd really like to know what baseball is all about, that book, *Moneyball*, is just... It's full of light and truth (and a number of obscenities at the same time).

So, then we get, we encounter... Joseph defies categorization. Joseph brought a flood of light, literally a flood of light. And...

I appreciate the efforts of the scholars. I applaud the work that they do, but they don't give us the answers. You have to find a revelator if you would like to get the answers. And the preeminent one for our time was and is Joseph Smith. He covered the turf. What we're trying to do is catch up with him and to figure out what it was that he was talking about. Joseph repeatedly said, "Hey, I can't go any further than this. The Lord forbid me from saying anymore. And many more things did he reveal unto me, which I cannot at this time put into write. But great and marvelous were the things which the Lord showed unto me, and the mysteries of his kingdom which surpass all understanding, which we were commanded we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit" (see D&C 76:114-115).

I mean, the account of the First Vision, the account that we find in section 76, repeatedly in the Book of Mormon, we get right up to the precipice, and then we draw the curtain. And the Scriptures say, "Naw, we're not gonna go there." And why aren't we gonna go there?

We're not gonna go there because, well, we would profane it. We would take and we desecrate it if we put it on public view.

Well, doesn't the Lord want us to know this stuff? Well, of course He does! Of course He does! In the proper setting, with the proper person, in the proper light, so that you know that it will not be profaned or desecrated, the Lord will show anything to anyone that anyone would like to see. He's told us that. Joseph said that repeatedly: "He didn't show me," this is Joseph speaking, "...anything that he won't show unto the least of you."

(Hey, Benjamin, can you come here? Make sure you lock it when you come back. But in the middle, I left the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. It's a small, leather-bound copy, and it's right in-between the seats. Yeah. We need Joseph...in more ways than one.)

See, Joseph was way, way out ahead; we still haven't caught up, and we display the **least** amount of curiosity about the things which are **most** enticing. He throws out a statement, and he just dangles it, and then...no more. And what was the reaction of Nephi to the dangling statements versus the reaction of Laman and Lemuel to the dangling statements? We know what Laman and Lemuel said. They said, "The Lord maketh no such thing known unto us."

And what did Nephi say? He said, "Hey, have ye inquired of Him? Have you asked? Have you asked? Have you asked?"

"No, we haven't asked; the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us."

Well, I've got this, and then I've got this. Now, you be careful; you be very careful. In the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* on the subject of "Revelation," one of the great precautionary statements there is the devil—the devil's gonna crop up and mislead you.

I noticed that on the... It was the 20th anniversary, I think (it may have been the 25th anniversary because that... I mean, that was in the intro; I didn't keep that in mind), to a news article on KSL this last week. We had a... (Hey, thanks.) We had a repetition of the woman who threw her children off of the 11th floor and killed them, and then she jumped off and killed ~~them~~ [herself], and then the brother-in-law to the woman (the uncle to the children) giving his explanation of how the husband—his brother/her husband—was Jesus Christ and was God the Father and that because he had died, that the family had committed mass suicide to be with him again, and "Can you imagine...the faith that [that] took?"

And that incident, again, is another cautionary tale: Be careful. Be afraid; be very, very afraid. Revelation: You could be John D. Lee! Revelation: You could throw people off a balcony! Be very afraid.

These are not just random happenstances. This is the era in which we find ourselves. This is the times in which we live.

Well, this is from the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, a comment that Joseph made. (And again, there's so much of this that I would canonize in the teachings if I were given discretion to ask you to sustain things in adding to Scripture. We'd have a bigger quad; we'd all look like high priests.) So, this is from page 51:

We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments....

So, he's... I mean, this is Joseph Smith using, really, prose to describe the process, because for Joseph it was prosaic; it was poetry; it was a thing of beauty. "Light communicated from heaven to the intellect." "A mind capable of instruction....a faculty [that] may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence [it's] given." These aren't just idle words. These are Joseph trying to put into the English language a description of a process. And the process works.

Well, a couple of other Scriptures before we start on to something. This is from Doctrine and Covenants section 93, one of Joseph's most **profound** revelations. In section 93, he says, beginning in verse 27:

*No man receive[s] a fulness until he keepeth his commandments. He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.*

Well, that's interesting: keeping commandments, receiving truth and light, glorified in truth, knows all things. Then he adds,

*Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth. Light and truth forsake that evil one....that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.*

Huh, yeah, well, we're fetching up on that, aren't we?

So, we've got these interesting statements. And there's this notion that there is some relationship between keeping commandments, on the one hand, and receiving truth and light, on the other hand. And then, there is this statement about "intelligence, or the light of truth, [wasn't] created or made"—intelligence wasn't created or made. Intelligence or "the light of truth" and "the glory of God," then... It's redefined "glory of God," "intelligence," "light of truth." K? In two separate statements, in verse 36 and 29, it's reiterated for us twice that intelligence (that which can't be created or destroyed—and **can't** be created or destroyed—intelligence) **is** light and truth. Light and truth, co-equal with God.

Now, that's an interesting statement because here we have the word "intelligence," and it appears here in the **singular**. When you go back to Abraham chapter 3, beginning in verse 22, it says,

*Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the **intelligences** that were organized.*

Now we've encountered something that has a **plural** to it. And in Abraham chapter 3, when it talks about the plural form of this,

*...the intelligences that were organized before the world was; ...among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; ...he stood among those that were....*

From what then were your spirits organized? Light and truth. Okay... At your core, at your nub, at the very essence of what it is that constitutes you to be you, what is it that constitutes you to be you? Light and truth.

There's another place where a description is given of the Lord—Christ—in the pre-existence: *In the beginning was the Word*. Now, that's an interesting thought, that word. So, what you have at your core is light and truth or intelligence, which is...what? The glory of God—God the Father; you're derivative from Him. He is the Creator or the Organizer. But what He created or organized you from is light and truth.

Okay. Now, this ought to become increasingly obvious to you as you look at what we were reading in section 93. Why, why is it necessary, therefore, for you to keep his commandments in order for you to receive truth and light? Why? Why is that the way it works? Why must you keep the commandments if you want to get more of this?

[audience comment]

Exactly! We're trying to harmonize ourselves with Him. We're trying to get back to Him. We're trying to get ourselves aligned correctly so that when we resonate in the same way that He resonates, we can pick up on things that are not pick-up-able in the absence of that resonance. We're trying to get in harmony with God.

So, what are the commandments? What use are they? Well, He's giving us a blueprint. And some portions of the blueprint may appear altogether ridiculous. We're supposed to do them anyway. And why are we supposed to do the things that may seem even ridiculous anyway? Because at your very core, you **know**... You know if it comes from Him. And you know when you're getting light and truth from Him. There is never a futile act. You know when you pay tithing that you're doing something **He asked you** to do. And you know what? If it involves a sacrifice, you know all the more **by** that sacrifice.

This is what Joseph was trying to get across in the Lectures on Faith. Would you like to know God? Then go inconvenience yourself by following what He asks of you, and you will

unlock inside yourself resonance with the light and truth of God. And it's an unfolding process.

It grows... (Oh, you gotta go back to 50 for that). It grows... Let me find that, which is really also borrowed from the **Psalms** or the Proverbs, rather:

*That which is of God is light, and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.*

Proverbs 4:18 is a similar thought. But it's a dynamic process. It involves your (again, you know, we're victims of our time), your interface with God. (Another 500 years and the gospel will be perverted by computer terminology, but...) The way you link up to God (see? There it goes again) is by this mechanism of obeying the commandments that He's given you. And it's never futile, and it's never superfluous. It's how you, as a being at your core made of light and truth, **know** that you're pleasing God.

In the Lectures on Faith, Joseph said you had to know that the sacrifice that you are making was pleasing to God. How can you **know** that? You can know that because in your core you have light and truth, that's why I read the quote a few minutes ago. The nearer you come to God and the more obedient you are—the more “heed and diligence” were the words he used in that statement—the more heed and diligence that you give, the more correct your understanding will be. Well, why is **that** the case? Because you are enlightened, because you are enlivened, because you are drawing closer to Him.

One of the great descriptions of how Christ did what He did—in addition to 93—is in section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants, beginning at verse 21:

*Wherefore, the Almighty God...*

And by the way, since we're not in church, you can actually get your Scriptures out and read along. I talk in a ward tomorrow as the High Council representative, and it *es prohibito* tomorrow, but today you can get your Scriptures out. This is D&C section 20, beginning at verse 21.

(Can you hear that annoying rustling of the pages? Because these things aren't made of paper. They're made of fabric; that's cotton you're hearing. And it's just annoying. It grieves the spirit and withdraws itself.)

[ audience comment]

Yeah, some of mine won't. Okay, so, we're reading, beginning in verse 21:

*Wherefore, the Almighty God...*

And by the way, if we can't laugh at ourselves, there's something really, really wrong with us. I mean, if we take ourselves so seriously that we can't look at and say the most comedic thing on Earth is a Mormon trying to live his religion, then you missed the point.

I mean, we do **not** attain to perfection in this life. The visions that we read in Scripture all have a constant theme. And the constant theme is a **wretch** managed to make it into the presence of God, and then **God** fixes the wretch. What was the very first thing—not in our current version of the First Vision, but it is in the earlier versions that Joseph wrote—what is the very first thing God does when Joseph's in His presence? He forgives his sins; He cleans the mess up. "Joseph, you know you're a wretch; let's fix that. Okay, now, now you can endure My presence." Isaiah, in the temple:

*Woe is me! ...I am undone; ...I am a man of unclean lips, ...I dwell [among] a people of unclean lips.*

Fetch the coal; fix the guy. Coals from the altar, touched to the lips—there; purged; you're okay.

You do... Look, we really are comedic. Our religion promises the fantastic, it promises the perfection of us frail, messed up, insecure human souls. We get hungry; we get thirsty; we get tired. We're vulnerable; we're subject to pain; we're gonna ultimately die, every one of us. We have infirmities, and they progress over time. What about us can possibly be perfected? And you look at it and say, I can't detect a thing. Oh, wait there **is** one thing. You **can** be perfect in your desire. You **can** hope for it. And for God that's enough. As long as you make the kind of sacrifice that He would like to have you make preliminarily. And we're talking about that at this point. And we're reading from verse 21 of D&C section 20, where it says:

*Wherefore, the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son, as it is written in those scriptures which have been given of him. He suffered temptations but **gave no heed unto them**. He was crucified, died, and rose again the third day; And ascended into heaven....*

See, "**He** suffered temptations but **gave no heed** unto them." Turn back to D&C section 130. Verse 19 in section 130 says,

*If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.*

That's what Christ did. Christ gave **no heed** to the things that were pulling him in the one direction, and He gave **strict** heed to the things that were enticing Him to the other direction. And He obtained (as section 93 explains) a fullness of that. So, if there is an increasing flow of light/an increasing flow of truth that comes to someone by their heed and diligence in following the commandments, then that seems like a fairly simple formula for someone to follow if they're interested in obtaining further light and knowledge.

There was a time when all of these words crept into our language, and their usage in our common vernacular became popular when everyone simply **assumed** that we all were in contact with the mystic, with the mythic, with the forces that were around you. Everyone simply **assumed** that was the case. There was a way of describing the phenomenon. And the way that the idea was reduced to words was by using the concept of a third eye. Well, why that? It was because physically your eyes are the source that light gets into you. You perceive light through your eyes. So, if you're gonna collect light from somewhere else, two things are essential. The first thing is you have to realize that it's there, and then you have to be willing to see it. Well, it was a fairly common thing because people weren't as well educated as they are now. They weren't...yeah. They weren't schooled in naturalism and the philosophies of men, which we have so successfully commingled with Scripture that we have essentially supplanted, in all of Christendom, the gospel of Christ and replaced it with the doctrines of men and the precepts of men and the creeds of men. And we're beginning to develop our own set of creeds.

You see, it's hard. It's hard to keep the commandments. It involves inconvenience and sacrifice. It's hard. And for some folks, in a trial and error kind of way, it's like riding a bicycle. And when you start riding a bicycle you get bloodied elbows and bloodied knees, and you make mistakes, and it's unhappy. But you know what? You can write a Ph.D. thesis on riding a bicycle without ever getting **on** a bike or ever suffering an injury. Well, isn't that interesting? Because that's essentially the trade-off that we've made. That's the trade-off that Christendom made, and that's the trade-off that is rapidly, rapidly advancing right now...

I... Why would Satan ever change his agenda? Why would he ever invent a new tool if the old one works perfectly well? If I can use the sexual appetite of men to destroy a David, well, why not just bust that thing out all the time and aim it at whoever happens to promiscuously get in front of me? (In that context, the word means "randomly," and it was a pun.) In any event, why invent a new way of corrupting the truth when the old way has been so entirely serviceable?

When the Jews returned from the discipline of Babylon, they learned the wrong lesson. And they became sophisticates in the Babylonian system of thought—which, as Lehi would tell us, was necessary because they were the only people that would kill their God, and they had to be in the right frame of mind (which is to say, "screwed up") in order to be willing to kill their God, because no one else would do it.

It takes a lot of learning to really be in hell, because the gospel of Christ beckons people to become childlike and to become simple. That's not to say the gospel is simplistic, because it comprehends all truth, and it involves light, and it involves everything that is—everything that was, everything that is, and everything that will be. And there are enormous surprises along the way. The gospel of Christ ought to be a delightful process of discovering new things all the time.

Well, at a time when people understood this idea that you could take in light, that it was possible to tune in and to receive information... And by the way, this information was so

readily available that you just had to be sensitized to the awareness of its existence and the willingness to look into the matter for you to begin receiving it, whether you were Lutheran or Calvinist or involved in folk magic. In fact, folk magic largely grew out of the idea that you **can** tune into these things.

This has been a war that has been waged (and waged successfully), and...it's my own people that did it. I'm just... The Scottish Enlightenment, my ancestors, they're... They just—you know, David Hume and the gang—they won. And whether **you** know it or not, **your minds are full of that crap**. And Joseph Smith brought... He was carefully selected at the time that he came at the end of one epoch And the American Revolution was a war against some of that stuff; we wanted to preserve an island/a place where you could still be in touch with the deity and be free to accept and receive things from the deity. There were more things in play at the time of the American Revolution than simply a new form of representative government. It was trying to preserve an ideal—an ideal that was rapidly fading—and allow an environment in which people could continue to be in touch with God, however you envisioned your God to be, because there were things available that, if you would let them in, would speak to you (if you were willing to see them).

Why does a mother suddenly know that her child is in danger at the edge of the camp, with her back turned, and drops everything and runs and catches her child before he or she falls in the creek? Well, we've all read stories about that. Oooh, ummm, **tuition** or intuition or PMS? Somehow it's ovarian. I... See, we tend to reduce that to the biological function now. But there was a time when everyone accepted the fact that that was **sight**, that was vision, that was light. She **saw** it. She envisioned it.

You know, you do fall down, and you do scuff your elbows and your knees when you learn to ride a bike. But when you finally master it, it's the closest thing you will do to flight other than flying. And I don't even think an airplane feels like flight as much as riding a bicycle does. (I'm so converted to the principle that I own four Harleys, and I fly about on them. Yeah, it's cost me a few tickets, that flight.)

But you can't... You can talk about bicycles; you can build them; you can repair them; you can have discourses on them without ever having experienced the bike. And what the school men are trying to do is change the subject. The subject **ceases** to be that sensation/that wonderment/that childlike experience of getting in the seat and running down the road and leaning as you propel yourself under your own strength into something that nearly replicates flight itself—and changes that into something that can be controlled and bona fide, and we can credential it, and we can give you a Bachelors of Bicycle-dom, and we can give you a Masters of Derailleurs. Now we're getting even more specialized, because it's not simply the bicycle as one component. At the Masters level, we're talking derailleurs. And if you would like to go on to and graduate to axles, well, that's a Ph.D.

And so, we never encounter the **vision**. We can fill libraries up with crap **talking** about it and never **do** it. And the gospel that Christ delivered and the thing that Joseph was trying to describe for us was the **doing** of it.

There was another analogy, and I like it a lot, too. It's an analogy I borrow from Jon Larsen, and it's not original with me. He likens it to the launch pad that's built down at Cape Canaveral, where we have this enormous infrastructure, and it's all kept and preserved and polished and... But if you never fly anything out of it, then all you've got is a launch pad. The gospel of Christ was designed to be a launch pad. One of the unfortunate things about launching is you melt a bunch of stuff, and you make a mess. I mean, anytime you fire one off, it gets kind of ugly for a while.

And of all things we Mormons would like to be, it's orderly and punctual and uniform. We would hate to have the mess, the chaos, the disaster of... I mean, we all remember ~~John~~ [Hiram] Page, right? And we got a section in the Doctrine and Covenants about Page. And he's the guy with the peep stone/the seer stone that got rebuked for having visions because it came from the wrong place.

Well, you know, **we learned the wrong lesson from that!** The lesson from that is not that ~~John~~ [Hiram] Page got misled and had a false revelation using a peep stone that gave him bad information. The message from that is spirits were afoot. Now, let's get... Let's weed them out, let's figure out which ones are bad and which ones are good, but let's stay in touch with them. Let's keep the dialogue going. Take that stone, and take a hammer to it. Go find some others, because as far as I know, ~~John~~ [Hiram] Page is the only one (other than Joseph) in this dispensation who claimed to have contemporaneous revelation using a seer stone. Although I'm sure there were others, they aren't published. Well, yeah. I mean, the whole idea... The idea of the crystal ball gazing, the Urim and Thummim—these things... They're traditions, they're echoes; they're found everywhere, and they're based upon the truth.

Well, look. Ether chapter 4, verse 11 (I'm going to the last sentence of it—Ether 4, verse 11):

*For because of my Spirit he shall know that these things are true; for it persuadeth men to do good. And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good; he that will not believe my words will not believe me—that I am.*

See, "he that will not believe my words will not believe me." It's a real simple test. Did the words you heard originate from God? You should be able to tell that. You should be able to say, sitting and listening, "I hear God in that." And then whoever it is that is speaking, it doesn't matter if she's an elderly widow. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if he's the stake president—it doesn't matter. You have to hear **Him** in the words that come. And then, it ceases to be the woman or the man who is standing in front of you, and it becomes the Lord. And the person is simply... I mean, good for them; they resonated with Him, and they caught on to something.

Turn back to Moroni chapter 7; it's the same thing. Moroni chapter 7, verse 16: *For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man.* Wow, now there's another thought. The Spirit of Christ given to everyone. You have a link to Christ. By virtue of the fact that you're here, you have a link to Christ. K?

*The Spirit of Christ is given to every man [and in this sense, “man” means mankind; it’s not sexist], that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God. But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.*

Satan is so committed to doing evil that he's treacherous even to those that'll follow him. He won't support those who say, "I'll follow you, Satan, if you'll do something for me." And Satan'll say, "I'll do it. Come, follow me." And you come follow him, and he doesn't support you, and you say, "Wait a minute. You said you'd make that bargain!" And he says, "I'm a liar from the beginning. I'll always tell you what you what to hear, because I'm a liar."

[audience comment]

Yeah, he is unreliable. He doesn't even support those who follow him, as the Book of Mormon makes the point (repeatedly) with those who, after having followed him and succeeded in bringing others to apostatize, are not sustained by him.

Well, the thing to fear is not the existence of Satan or the fact that you may be deceived. That's a given. Turn on your TV. Uh, I don't know...do Toyota trucks really get that mileage? I mean, you're being deceived every time Wall Street has your attention. The glitter, the glitz, the garbage they're trying to sell you. If you love your family, you'll buy some wretched piece of trinkery from someone somewhere because they know you like families. If you love your wife, you'll do some hopelessly pathetic physical acquisition and make an offering to the goddess, and then she'll be pleased. And it doesn't work that way! Because if you come bearing rings and trinkets and you're a jerk, she's gonna see right through the rings and the trinket to the jerk. It's just... They're not fooled! Hollywood says, "Hey! Trick them this way, and you know, we've got Viagra for the elderly. It could work out."

It's not difficult (as Moroni points out, both in his interlude in Ether and again in chapter 7 of Moroni), it's not difficult to tell the difference. It's really not. "Satan deceived me!" Well, why did he deceive me? "Well, he deceived me primarily because I wanted to be deceived. I knew it was a crappy deal. I knew what I was up to was no good. I had this nagging feeling at my core, because I am, after all, made of light and truth, that something was wrong with this. But I did it anyway." I mean, how many times do those who are caught—the primary antagonists of the Book of Mormon, when they're caught, and they're not supported by Satan, and they collapse at the last day—how many times do they confess, "Yeah, I knew all along I was deceived. I knew all along it was wrong, but I did it, I taught it, I preached it, I participated in it, I urged it. I knew it was a lie, but I nearly believed it myself because I had success at it. It looked good; it felt good. It was fun."

There is nothing more fun, however, than gathering light and truth. We're sent down here on a journey in which we are supposed to be getting "added upon." Those are the words. That was the goal. We're gonna send people down to the second estate, and what's the goal? The goal is to be added upon. But what are we adding? What are you **adding** to yourself that you didn't have before? You're adding light and truth. You came with a certain amount of it. You're supposed to leave with a greater **quantity** of it.

The description given in section 93 of Christ:

*I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory [this is verse 11 of section 93, *his glory*], as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father.*

You know, you're just gonna have to do your best with this. We've got this idea that God the Father and his unnamed Consort (Mrs. God the Father) had a Son (and we know Him as Jesus or Jehovah) and then had another son or sons and some others, and then we got a Lucifer. And then some others and what have you. And then this group, these are called "sons of morning." And then there's this birth order, and eventually, we get down to the rabble that we were among. And that that picture is this linear development of the family of God.

If you read very carefully what we find in section 93, there's another picture. And that picture is that you have this group of... Imagine all of these being little stick figures because I don't have the time to draw them. You have them all, and...

Oh, I think I can read you something on this. Yeah:

*This is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercis[ed exceeding] great faith, are called with a holy calling...Or in fine, **in the first place** they were on the same standing with their brethren.*

K? This is chapter 13 of Alma. So, let's change that picture, and let's say that instead of this [referencing the original picture Denver drew], everyone was on the same... "In the first place..." In the first place everyone was just alike. Everyone had the same potential. Everyone had the same light and truth. Everyone was made of that. Everyone was just like one another.

**Where did the birth order come from? Where did Christ come from?** 93, beginning at verse 11, this is John (and I'm starting at verse 11, but we'll back up in a minute):

*And I, John, bear record that I beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, **full** of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us...*

K? This is Him; He came, and He dwelt here. “[But] I...” I’m talking about the pre-existence...

*...I saw that he received not...the fulness at first [He received not the fulness at first], but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; ...thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not...the fulness at the first.*

What did He do? One of this group/one of this family/one of this assortment of people/one of them went from grace to grace until He received a fullness. **He proved** it could be done. **He showed** the way. **He** was **called** the Only Begotten of the Father. He was called that because **He** embodied the word of God. Would you like to know what God the Father’s word was? Look at Him. Look at the Only Begotten. Did you make it without Him? No, you didn’t. You didn’t make it **here** without Him. **Christ proved the word of the Father by the things which He did.** As a consequence of Christ doing it, some few others, in turn, were also able to rise up. And they became “sons of the morning.”

You see, the picture that we get in D&C section 93 (coupled with Alma chapter 13) is different than the picture that you sometimes pick out or get described for you. Look at verse 30 of section 93:

*All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.*

Did Christ exist? If Christ existed, He had to be free to choose for Himself. This had to be a **voluntary** act on His part. He had to be willing to receive the light and truth.

Believe it or not, we’re all just talking about the same thing. This is just about personal revelation. All of it is. And it’s about how **you** receive light and truth. Because we’re acting out again here what we acted out once before, and the process is the same here as the process was there—although here it’s coupled with a lot of illusions that are guaranteed to make you progress whether you want to or not—it’s coming.

So, when you look at the **word of God**, what you’re seeing in Christ is the embodiment or the fulfillment of what the Father **said**. When Christ defines Himself in 3rd Nephi chapter 11, and He tells you who He is, He can’t tell you who He is without referring to the Father three times in a very brief introduction: *I...suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning*, He tells us. He is the word of the Father. He is the embodiment of the things that the Father would like to have for us. So, why do we obey the commandments? Why do we follow the process? Why do **we** want to go from grace to grace, and **how** do we open the third eye to be able to resonate with and receive light and truth into ourselves from the Being who is defined as light and truth?

Well, I read another book just a few days ago. (I’ve heard that he’s written a good book. I was challenged to read this one, and I was challenged **by** reading it.) You just... You can’t pick up that title without... Well, maybe **you** can: *Odds Are, You’re Going to Be Exalted*. Well, he’s got a “Master’s degree in theology and a Ph.D. in biblical studies.” So, he has

credentials: Alonzo Gaskill—actually, I was gonna leave him alone, but I heard him on the radio a couple of days ago, and it was that... It was the tone in his voice—it was the absolute, resolute, bitter, hostile conviction that “God wouldn’t do that!” on the radio that just struck me, convinced me I don’t want to talk to the man. But in any event, here’s a quote from his book:

The thought that God would promote something that would ensure that the vast majority of His children would never again be able to dwell in His presence is **incomprehensible**. And the assumption that our mother in heaven would idly sit back and allow such a guaranteed flop to eternally strip her of any interaction with her spirit offspring is equally unfathomable. Such could not—and did not—happen!

I couldn’t contain myself, and I wrote, **Why?** You see, nature tells us that of all the male turtles that are born, precious few of them are ever going to survive long enough to reproduce. And of all the bull elk that are born, precious few of them are gonna survive long enough to ever reproduce.

And he’s made the cataclysmic leap of presuming that all children who die under the age of eight are promised something other than the Celestial kingdom (which is what the Scriptures say that they’re promised—they inherit the Celestial kingdom); he’s leapt to “exaltation,” which is a different kind of life within the Celestial kingdom. And he does some math calculations based upon the Millennium, based upon the number of children infant mortality tells us will die before the age of eight, and the city of Enoch, and people who are unaccountable because they’re mentally impaired—which I presume would include most of the faculty of many of our learned universities>equals, in his computation, that the odds are you’re gonna be exalted.

The problem is none of us fit in the category about which he’s exalting. You’ve lived beyond the age of eight (except the kids that aren’t listening). And you’re... Well, I was gonna say you’re not retarded—I need to at least hesitate on that point—I don’t think you’re mentally impaired, although some of us are. And you don’t live during the Millennium, and you weren’t in the city of Enoch, and you’re not part of the Nephite centuries and the post-visitation by Christ. I mean, the audience... You know, odds are you’re gonna be exalted... Peddle that to children under eight, peddle it during the Millennium, maybe you got an audience. But the audience to which this is directed is **you**. And he’s trying to tell you that this isn’t hard, when everything that the Savior said implies very strongly that this **is** hard, and that “few there be that make it,” and that it’s designed (just like nature is designed) to start with a lot and to end up with a few. And the lessons of nature tell us that you will start with a lot, and you will end up with a few. Just like this overly generous outpouring of priesthood ordination to anyone who is twelve years old or older who happens to be baptized in the Church results in just the most promiscuous series of priesthood certificates of any dispensation ever. But then we read,

*Behold, there **are** many called, but **few** are [then] chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are [so set] upon the things of this world, [they] aspire to the honors of men, ...they [don't] learn this one lesson—That the rights of the*

*priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and...the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, [it's] true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or...gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when [it's] withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.*

See, odds are you are going to be...a priest? Well, "that they may be conferred upon us, [it's] true." But I just read a bunch of limitations.

Odds are you're gonna be exalted? Well, you can go to the temple and fetch an ordinance, but unless it's sealed upon you by the Holy Spirit of Promise, you know, all those things are conditional. And so, it's not... The call is to **do** this. The call is to come down here and be a gatherer of light. And it doesn't matter if the process seems so ephemeral; it seems gossamer. It seems like the web of a spider and so delicate that the blowing of the wind can tear it apart. That's exactly how it's supposed to be. Because you're trying to get in harmony with God. And you're trying to gather a substance that proves your existence by your free will choice to accept light and truth. When you do, Joseph said you could **taste** the truth. When you do, you can **feel** the truth. You can sense its presence; you can let it in to you; you can resonate with it. The...umm...

(Boy, we're not going to have the time to get through this stuff. And I have to go buy frozen pinky mice. Yeah.)

When you go back to the account that's given in section 93 and you go back to the description that's given in Abraham chapter 3, you learn in Abraham chapter 3 that the Father shows (Christ shows, acting in the role as the Father) all of the organized intelligences that existed before the world was; and among this all there were a subset called "many" that were noble and great (if you can read that scratch).

*...saw many that were noble and great. And God saw **these souls** that they were good...*

**These** souls, that they were good,

*...and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers.*

These are the people that are gonna teach truth and light. These are the ones that are gonna come down and bring to you revelation. These are the ones that are gonna shed forth light and truth. They're not administrators.

*These [will I] make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, ...he saw...they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham...*

So, we know that one of them is like the Son of God, but another one is Abraham.

*Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born. ...there stood one among them that was like unto God...*

And that's Christ. Christ stood among them, k? He (Christ),

*...he said [to] those [that] were with him:*

K? Christ talking to "noble and great," He says to them, "We, we will go down." **This group...**

*We will go down, for there is space there, ...we will take of these materials, ...we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove **them**...to see if **they** will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; And they who keep their first estate...*

...and so on. Well...

This is from the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, from page 375:

"Now," says God, when He visited Moses in the bush, (Moses was a stammering sort of a boy like me) God said, "Thou shalt be a God unto the children of Israel." God said, "Thou shalt be a God unto Aaron, and he shall be thy spokesman."

I [this is Joseph, I] believe those Gods that God reveals as Gods to **be** sons of God, and all can cry, "Abba, Father!" Sons of God who exalt themselves to **be** Gods, even from before the foundation of the world, and are the only Gods I have a reverence for.

This is Joseph, just in the middle of a talk, saying that there is a group who exalted themselves to **be** gods even before they were born, and all of them can cry, "Abba, Father!"

Well, Abraham served as the prophet-leader of a little, tiny family. We read about him now and think him "big cheese," but at the time, he led a badly-fractured family and presided over a small group. His apparent one public ministry in Jerusalem resulted in him getting run out of town. From then on, he ministered only inside his own family. Abraham (while he had a fairly interesting career in a varied climate and managed to get to sit on Pharaoh's throne because he taught some things about the heavens and ingratiated himself to Pharaoh—not the least of reason was his wife and her beauty) went on to lead a relatively private life in a **family**—in a family. And we all call him the father of the righteous.

Christ's largest audience was, in all likelihood, the group He spoke to at the temple in Bountiful **after** His resurrection. During His mortal ministry, in all probability, even in the temple He didn't have as big an audience as He did at the temple in Bountiful. Perhaps as He hung on the cross, as the crowds were gathering to attend the festivities at the Passover in Jerusalem, more people passed by Him and wagged their tongue at Him in His final state of making the sacrifice, but we don't know that.

The folks who the Scriptures identify as being most clearly “noble and great” are people that really didn’t have much more responsibility in life than every one of you have inside your own family. You know, we get filled with covetousness because celebrity-dom has come to Zion. And I mean this in all sincerity: I do not intend to be a celebrity, and it’s one of the reasons why I don’t like talking at these things. Because I think to the extent that you attract attention for yourself, you’re missing the mark. The best of us are horribly flawed, the **best** of us are. Anyone that would attract light or distract people for themselves and take it off of the perfect example that you find in Christ is a fool. They practice the wrong sort of religion.

We’re down here to gather light. Whether you recognize it or not, **you** are a son or a daughter of light. That’s what you are. You’re down here to gather more of it. And the place where you’re primarily responsible for presiding and conducting is inside the confines of your own family. That’s why Abraham is remembered. That’s why Lehi is remembered. For the most part, the public ministry of ancient prophets was met with almost universal failure. Noah saved his own family. You rarely find a prophet or prophetess (and they are in Scripture, as well) who succeeds in their own lifetime.

Christ got it right when He was saying the only words of the prophets that you really respect are the dead ones. And why do you respect the dead ones? Well, because then the professors of religion can take over, and they can package them and parse them and explain them—or explain them away. Without the living oracle there to be able to say, “Not so fast!” you can take the words of any of them and parlay them into whatever you want them to become. Hence, Joseph’s insistence that every one of us become a prophet and prophetess, every one of us get in touch with the things of the spirit, every one of us receive what is out there in the way of light and welcome it into yourself. Vessels of light—that’s what you’re supposed to be.

You know, it’s very basic, and I think it’s (in all likelihood) the case that the first principles and ordinances of the gospel are not the **first** principles (meaning the beginning), but they are the first principles meaning the primary/the essentials/the ones that **must** be kept/the ones that are always in front of you:

- *Faith*—you have to have faith in the existence of that light and that truth.
- *Repentance*—why? Because you’re made of light and truth, and if you won’t reconcile and resonate with it, you won’t welcome it in. You create a barrier to it; it can’t be shed into you.
- Faith. Repentance. *Baptism*—you’re supposed to be doing that every week when you partake of the sacrament (that ordinance that Christ celebrated repeatedly with the Nephites over and over). He’s taking the time to do the sacrament, and we’re supposed to be taking the time to doing that.
- And then after you have had faith, and after you’ve repented, and after you’ve partaken of the sacrament or received baptism, then what happens? Yeah, you *receive the Holy Ghost*.

You receive the Holy Ghost. D&C section 130, “The Father...” This is verse 22:

*The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us.*

Receive the Holy Ghost, and let it **dwell** in you.

Well, you know, it's... I don't know if the odds are you're gonna be exalted or not, but I can tell you that the way in which that will happen, if it does happen, is going to be through—unlike the way revelation is portrayed in this, the latest offering by the powers that be, as something perverse and something that only the nutcases engage in—it will be by your connection with the spirit.

Moroni chapter 7 is a dissertation on all of those things of the spirit, and it says, "Hey, if these things have ceased, then there is no faith, and no one's being saved." And it's just that simple. If it doesn't happen, no one's being saved. You're a child of light; you're a son or a daughter of light. You proceed from the glory of God or the intelligence of God, which is light and truth. At your core, what is there is light and truth. But it has been made independent. It gets to choose for itself. Otherwise, there is no existence.

And you—each of you—need to receive the Holy Ghost—each of you—and to permit it to dwell in you. You know, there are a lot of symbols that get employed in the Scriptures. One of the words that gets employed to describe the Holy Ghost (which should dwell in **you**), is "the third member of the godhead." Would you like to be like your Father in Heaven? Well, then, receive ye the Holy Ghost. He is as close, He is as intimate, He is as in connection with you as the very substance out of which you were originally organized. If you would like to be in touch with Him, keep His commandments.

Follow Him. You're not... Even if you do your best, you're not gonna do a very good job. But the Scriptures talk in terms of your sincerity: those who keep all His commandments or **seek earnestly to do so**. Even the best of us are doing things wrong that we don't even know are wrong yet, because we haven't **got** that much light and truth **yet**. And so, we proceed to blunder around in the china shop, breaking the furniture and damaging all of the things that we ought to be holding sacred, and we do it with reckless abandon. And God doesn't care about that, because He hasn't brought us that far up the ladder yet to respect the furniture. He's just trying to get us to stop messing our pants and stop putting graffiti on the walls—if we'll just settle down enough to do that.

The atonement of Christ is a work in progress. He's trying to fix us, and He does that by giving us a little light, and a little more light, and a little more yet. Until finally you look back upon yourself from two decades earlier, and you say, "What a wretch was I!" Well, it's a progression in light and truth. You're still a wretch, you're just 20 years away from recognizing it still. **Start obeying further** and getting more light and truth, and you'll be astonished at what it is you're going to become.

Well, let me end by bearing testimony to you that, in my view, the Church is exactly what it ought to be, staffed exactly as it should be, filled with all you good people, with all of the things that you bring with you to the party. And that this is a perfect environment in which each one of you get the opportunity to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before the Lord. And you ought to be afraid. You ought to be fearful, because the things that you hold onto in your secret sins are the very things that you ought to be abandoning. And the fact that you're holding on to them means you have not yet chosen the light and the truth. You ought to be abandoning that junk, whatever it is.

We all have our shortcomings. We all have our temptations. We all have our failings.:

- **Despite** the bundle of insecurities (and there were **many** in the prophet Joseph Smith), the prophet Joseph Smith met the Lord.
- Despite the fact that **Abraham** [Isaiah] was a self-confessed man of unclean lips in the presence of the Lord didn't stop him from entering into the presence of the Lord.
- The fact that Peter is... Peter is not even a personality; he's a syndrome. OK? He's got pathologies. This... Peter: the chief apostle, the rock, the one that the Lord relied upon, the one that He put first and preeminent.
- And Paul? Well, look... You have to trust Paul to someone with far more... They have to have prescription authority to deal with him. You can't... A psychologist is insufficient.

**These people met with the Lord.** It is not a distant mountain. It is not an insurmountable problem. Have faith, repent, go and partake of the sacrament—do so (and I use the word advisedly), do so **worthily**.

By the way, do you know how to determine if you're worthy or not? You ask the Lord. You don't do as brother Gaskill suggests and simply presume it. You do as Joseph said: And after thinking about his native cheery temperament and his inclination towards irreverence, he decided to inquire of the Lord to find out what his standing was. It had been four years since the First Vision, and Joseph wanted to know. Joseph didn't presume. In fact, if he were presuming, he would have presumed to the contrary that he was worthy. "How am I doing, Lord?" And the Lord answered, in the form of the angel Moroni.

You know, don't settle for a book about riding the bike. Don't settle for polishing up the launch pad. It was designed to be set in motion. It was designed to engage you. You're supposed to be part of this. The prophetic history of all that we read needs to come down to and be embodied in you and your life.

You have whole generations of people that went before you and you have people that are coming after whose faith, just like our faith in the pre-existence, was stimulated by the word of God embodied in the life of Christ. You have people looking upon you and having faith as a consequence of what you're doing. You're called "saviors on Mount Zion" not simply because you trek to the temple, and you fall asleep during the endowment. You're called that because all of those that went before and all who come after have an investment in your life. **You! You** are the source of faith. **You** are the source of light for many.

Live your life as if you're on stage because, believe me, you are. There are people who are being redeemed as a consequence of the investment that they have in you. A failing, flagging, despondent ancestor is being buoyed up by the example you set. You have no private moments, and you have no private sins, so stop holding on to them. For goodness sake, they're not only being shouted on the rooftops in the day of judgment, they're being shouted on the rooftops right now. This is only the illusion of privacy. Everything you do is on display, which is why it is so important that you be one who gathers light and truth.

You be one who is open to receiving these things, which **God offers liberally**—liberally, however perverse that may be in political terms in Utah, that's a descriptor of God. He spends money like a Democrat with the federal budget when it comes to giving you light and truth. God giveth liberally. Deficit spending doesn't matter. He gives liberally, so where's the impediment?

The impediment is that we lack the faith to bring ourselves into harmony with perfect perpendicularity to the Earth—because as long as you're in sympathy with the Earth, you're out of sync with heaven. You have to get perpendicular to it. You have to draw a line between you and it. And when you draw a line... That's one of the reasons why we have gravity. That's one of the symbols that God gave us in this life. If you can walk, you're walking around teaching a lesson about "getting in harmony with God" to yourself. All things testify of Christ. They all do.

And I bear testimony of Him in His name, Amen.