

## **Lecture 7: Christ: Prototype of the Saved Man**

Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

June 28, 2014

Ephraim, Utah

The topic that we're going to discuss in this get-together is Christ. In the next talk, we'll be addressing the subject of coming to Christ, but in this talk today, it is about... it is about Christ Himself. You know, very often it is easy to have confidence in a subject—in circumstances where something has happened, and you have evidence of His existence, and you feel a closeness to Him. But as soon as the cares and troubles of this world interfere and the moment passes, you wind up wondering, "Is it all true? Am I believing a myth?"

Jesus Christ came into the world unexpected and unannounced by men—unanticipated by men—but fully expected by the Heavens themselves. There were signs in the heavens, but men were oblivious, largely. And when the shepherds keeping watch over the flocks by night were interrupted, it was not by an earthly herald; it was by those from beyond the veil. The Savior crept into the world with Heaven taking notice, but precious few paying attention to what it was that was afoot in His day.

It's so easy to overlook Him in the cares of this world. I want to assure you that He's real. He exists. He was a man, every bit a man as any of us. He had flesh. He had blood. He dwelt among us. Don't doubt that. For purposes of the talk I'm going to give today, trust in Him, believe in Him, have confidence in His existence.

If I can help you envision our Lord a little more, let me describe Him in terms of His characteristics. Our Lord was and is affable, but He is not gregarious. He was approachable, and He is approachable, and He's not aloof. He's patient. He's willing to guide, and He's willing to teach. He's intelligent, but He is not overbearing. He's humble in His demeanor, even though the power that He possessed and possesses is undeniable. He is, therefore, both a Lamb and a Lion.

I want you to entertain three truths about Him in your mind as we begin the subject today. Those three truths are:

- He is quick to forgive sin.
- He allows all to come unto Him, and
- He is no respecter of persons.

In some respects, our own respect for (or our disrespect for) ourselves is the impediment in coming to Him, because we tend to think that we aren't good enough. Because He is quick to forgive sins, it really doesn't matter if you're not good enough, because one of the first orders of business when you come into His presence is He forgives you. He cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, but He has the capacity and the ability to forgive sin. Therefore, although your sins may be as scarlet, He can, He will, and He does

make you white as snow, no longer accountable. Therefore, you needn't fear, but you can approach—boldly—our Lord.

So with that prelude, it was a little over 40 years ago when I finally began to take seriously the offering that the missionaries were making to convert me to this religion of Mormonism that I'd grown up near in Idaho and knew was populated by 'nut jobs.' When I finally got around to taking it seriously and I finally got around to hesitatingly praying about whether or not this stuff I had been hearing was true... And you need to understand, I had been visited and pamphlet and filmstripped back in those days for about nine months before this. So I'd heard a lot of the message that the missionaries wanted to deliver. It didn't "take." I wasn't particularly interested. I was merely polite, but I'd heard a lot.

So, when I finally got around to praying about it, the fellow who had originally... I'd made the mistake of complimenting, loaned me his journal. And he wanted me to read about his conversion, because in his journal he had his testimony of how he had come to realize that it was the truth.

I was in the military at the time, and Steve (whose journal had been loaned to me) was converted while he was serving in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. I don't think he was in Vietnam-proper; I think he was in Cambodia. But he was in an outpost, and it was under fire. And he was converted on the night of a firefight, while he's on the perimeter, praying to know if the Book of Mormon was true.

And I had this journal, and I was alone. I was in a military barracks at night and reading the journal and felt again inclined to pray and ask if this stuff was true. And so I knelt, I prayed, and then I got up from the prayer, and there was no pillar of fire, and there was no, you know, conduit into heaven. In fact, it was rather uneventful at the moment. And I sat on the bed and just thought about what the missionaries had been saying and what they'd been asserting and the verses that they'd encouraged me to read.

Back in those days, there were quite a few Biblical sources used by the missionaries. If you haven't read, you should read the book *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* by LeGrand Richards. He was the Presiding Bishop of the Church, and then he was ~~the~~ a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. And his book, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, was really written while he was a mission pres... Well, it was developed while he was a mission president as a way to introduce and discuss, systematically, Mormonism. And the missionary discussions in those days were really based upon *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, the title of which is taken from a verse in Isaiah. And so, if you read *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, you essentially get the program of the Church back in those days, and you'll see the missionary format that I was taught.

So, after praying with nothing happening, I sat down, and I contemplated what it was the missionaries had been saying. And I first concluded that Joseph Smith couldn't be a prophet, because there weren't gonna be any more prophets. I mean, that's Bible stuff. That's not today. That doesn't happen.

As I thought about that, a verse and a question came to mind—the verse being, *By [your] fruits ye shall know them* (Matthew 7:20; see also Matthew 3:46 RE), from the New Testament, and the question was, “Well, **if** there is a test ~~to imply~~ to apply in order to determine whether or not this is a prophet, the presence of the test suggests **the possibility of** a prophet.” I mean, why would you give a test if there is not going to be another prophet? So, *by their fruits ye shall know them* suggests the possibility that there will, in fact, be someone you better apply that test to, someone about whom that test will become both relevant and important. So I couldn't categorically dismiss... Okay, I can't say Joseph's not a prophet because there's not going to be another one. Therefore, what is “his fruits”?

Now, I had... I had no universe to draw from to apply the test of Joseph Smith's fruits other than the missionaries that had been teaching me and those families whose houses I had been taught in, K? Now, you have to understand, I'm young; I'm still a teenager. I'm sitting in a barracks, and I'm trying to figure this stuff out. And I apply the “fruits” test to what little sampling I had. And you know, those missionaries were so earnest, and they were my age. And they were giving up two years of their lives. I was serving in the military, but they were serving in a church organization without being paid.

They had the same military haircut I had. They had a disciplined life. They didn't smoke, and they didn't drink—and I couldn't say that, at the time, about myself or about the people I associated with. But I could tell the difference between the lives of these young men and the lives of those that I served with (and myself). I also could see a difference between the families whose houses I'd been taught in and the families I knew from my background, although I had a wonderful family that I grew up in. I'm the son of a man whom I regard as heroic. My father was really the exception and not the rule among my friends. My father's families were populated by abusers and alcoholics and a variety of other shortcomings, none of which I saw in any of the families whose houses I had been taught in.

So, my conclusion was, well, there's some fruit. I don't know what the standard is by which you measure fruit, but there's some fruit that suggests that Joseph Smith had a rather positive influence on these people's lives.

Well, then I went on to think, “Wait a minute! The last verse of the New Testament says you can't add to the Bible. So, Joseph Smith added a whole lot to the Bible. I mean when they carry their Scriptures, the Mormons bring the Bible, and then they bring this other thing that's almost the same size! And Joseph did **that**, so you know, that can't... There's something wrong with that.”

So, I got the verse out. I looked at the verse. I thought about it. And what became apparent to me was that the verse doesn't say that **God** can't add more scripture whenever **God** chooses to do so. It says **man** is not supposed to do this. And so, if God, through Joseph, chose to add, then He certainly has the ability to do that.

Well, to make a long story short (and I give an account of this in the little vignettes in the book *The Second Comforter*), after about a little over two hours of sitting on the bed and going through doubt and question after doubt and question, and each time being able to come up with an answer to or a solution... a solution from the scriptures themselves to every doubt, to every apprehension, to every question that I had, my final question sitting alone that night was, "How do I even know there is a God? I could be spending this whole wasted effort, and there isn't even anyone up there!" And that quick [Denver snaps], as soon as I finished the thought, the thought came to me: "Who do you think you've been talking to for the last two hours?" It was a startling thought—

And I need to confess a weakness to you. The account that appears in the book *The Second Comforter* misquotes God. Because the statement that was made (and I can still remember it distinctly) was, "Who do you think you've been talking to for the last two and a half hours?" I was so apprehensive and weak-willed when I submitted the first book I'd ever written to a publisher for a publication that they wanted to correct the English and change... Because it's not "to." The correct word was "with." So, when you read the account in *The Second Comforter*, the question that comes into my mind is: "Who do you think you've been talking **with**?"—which just goes to show you that God speaks to us in our own language, in our own tongue, according to our understanding. And He doesn't use an editor. He talks to us the way **we** talk. So, if I ever do a third edition of *The Second Comforter*, I now have the confidence and the resignation to just tell the truth. And I don't care if there's a modern Simons Ryder who says, "Well, God uses incorrect grammar." I don't care about that anymore. I'm past the point where I fear what men think. I'm past the point where I worry about your own doubts. I'm simply willing to declare to you what I **know** to be true, and then I leave it up to you. And frankly, you become accountable for your reaction to it.

But having confessed that weakness (and correcting the record of what you will read in *The Second Comforter* account in those little vignettes), let me tell you, the thought that I had been talking with and had received an answer from God was a startling moment to me. It was startling, first of all, because it suggested that God was willing to talk to even some guy sitting in a barracks in New Hampshire, long away from where they grew up, on the topic of whether or not Mormonism was true.

It was followed immediately by the realization that what this answer was going to cost me was every childhood friend I had grown up with, every associate that I was associating with at that time (because about the only thing we had in common was beer and pizza); it was gonna require my life to change. If I had not acted on that answer on that occasion, I don't think that anything that followed thereafter could have happened.

At that moment, the thinnest of threads existed for me to believe in the Restoration of the Gospel, in the Book of Mormon, and in God's willingness to speak. It had all of the substance of a spider web, easily broken. The only way to hold onto that was to have **faith** and to trust it. And so I did.

But having faith and trusting that required me to act. I was gonna have to follow through. I was gonna have to be baptized. I was gonna have to join this group of eccentric people. I was gonna have to become one of them, with all of the absolute insecurity about whether I could ever measure up to being one of that, with all of the self-doubt about my own personal strength and vitality as a convert to some religion. I, nevertheless, had faith that God had spoken, and that imposed upon me an obligation—and so I acted. And when I acted and when I was baptized, it was as if a light had been turned on in the room. Everything changed. From that moment 'til now, everything has been different.

It has not been a struggle to live the life of a Latter-day Saint. It has not been a struggle to be a disciple of Christ. My life has been easier as a Latter-day Saint than it was as a godless Gentile. It's been more fun to live a life of faith than it was to hang around with a bunch of schlocks, getting drunk and doing stupid stuff. I laugh as much now as I did then, except what I'm laughing at isn't someone else's pain; it's funny stuff. (I do have a perverse sense of humor, I have to tell you that.)

So, two hours—my first encounter getting an answer from God, and the two hours was spent going through answers from God found in the Scriptures. You keep that in mind.

On the day that the Lord was resurrected, there's an account we find in the book of Luke. It begins at verse 13 of chapter 24 of the book of Luke, talking about two people that went walking to the village of Emmaus from Jerusalem. And they were talking about the things that they had seen happen in the preceding days.

*[And] Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? (Luke 24:15-17)*

This is the Lord, and although they didn't recognize or know Him, He surely knew them. But He didn't want them to recognize Him, and so they did not. This is our Lord. He sidles up beside them, walks with them, and says, "What are you talking about?" as if He didn't know. You see how gently He inserts Himself into the conversation. You see how unwilling He is to come and pontificate. You see how amenable and how approachable and how utterly unpretentious the Lord is.

*What manner of communications are these...?* And that produces almost a rebuke from Cleopas:

*Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass in these days? (Ibid, vs. 18)*

Are you utterly ignorant of what's been happening here? Are you inattentive? Are you just a new stranger? He may have even bristled a little when He asked the question, as if **this** guy who had been in **this** area during these few days had been so inattentive to the significance of the man who had just died that he took some umbrage.

And look at the Lord's reply. He says, *What things?* (Ibid, vs. 19), as if He hadn't lived them, as if He hadn't accomplished them.

*And they [now it's the plural—it's no longer Cleopas; it's both of them—start talking to] him [about this] Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. (Ibid, vs. 19)*

So essentially, they are acknowledging Him as at least a prophet.

*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: [besides] all this, today is the third day since these things were done. ...and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; ...when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. 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. (Ibid, vs. 20-24)*

So, they trusted that it should have been Him who would redeem Israel. This is the day of His resurrection, and they've heard **rumors** from **women** that He was risen. But these were, first of all, merely rumors, and second of all, they were rumors attributable to women—and we all know that women are hysterical and, therefore, require hysterectomies in order to rein them in and turn them into something credible and believable. (I put a comment up on this a few days ago about women as witnesses, and this is a reflection of that same phenomenon. Doubt is easier when the source of the information is the testimony of a woman, even though it ought not be so.)

If you trusted this was Him who should have redeemed Israel, **did He?** Did He redeem Israel? He came. He taught. He submitted. He was killed. It's three days since. There are rumors. **Did He redeem Israel?** If you're part of **that** population, in **that** group, on **that** day, sitting in **that** environment, did He redeem Israel? The Romans are still there. Annas and Caiaphas are still faring sumptuously. Christ is dead. The disciples have been scattered; they even go to return to their work even after they see Him. **Did He redeem Israel?** You can get together on Sunday, and you can sing hymns about "Redeemer of Israel," with all of the confidence that you know what you're talking about, as if it were so apparent! It is no more apparent in this account in Luke that the redemption of Israel had been accomplished than it is apparent to you what God is doing now, today, sounding in your own ears!

He came, and He redeemed Israel, and all the world ignored it. It would be hundreds of years before the world would come around to acknowledging Him. And by the time the world would come around to acknowledging Him, what He left behind would be inadequate to redeem.

The day of salvation appears tenuously, almost as gossamer as a spider web. And if you don't lay hold of it, it is lost. And generations can come and go and sing hymns to the pride

of their ancestry and the greatness of their religion—and go to Hell. Because when the Lord sets His hand, He sets it exactly the same way every time. And it requires faith to come aboard, and it requires faith to believe.

*Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe. [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? (Ibid, vs. 25-26)*

You don't understand. You don't understand, because the prophets have said this is exactly what our Lord would do. Shouldn't He have suffered? Shouldn't He have come in apparent weakness and vulnerability? Shouldn't He have come in the very manner in which He appeared and to have suffered?

*And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Ibid, vs. 27)*

Right here—right here—is how the New Testament got framed. When you go to Matthew, when you go to Mark, Luke, and John, you are seeing an echo in each of them what the Lord did on the road to Emmaus with these disciples. He proved that Christ came and suffered as He ought to have done, because all that the prophets have spoken were fulfilled in Him. Therefore, He opened unto them the scriptures that they might understand.

Our Lord, who could've borne testimony of Himself, revealing 10,000 new truths—our Lord, who could've disclosed and preached and delivered practically any new content He chose to deliver—our Lord expounded the scriptures concerning Himself. That should tell you something.

When the Lord first spoke to me, He expounded the scriptures concerning the Restoration. When He appears on the day of His resurrection, His visit with everyone that day was brief, was perfunctory, included a small amount of information—and here we have the Lord taking **hours**, walking and talking, opening up: *he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself*. They don't recognize who He was. He came in; they asked Him to stay (and you can read the rest of it there). But at the end of all this, after everything that had gone on that day,

*...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? (Ibid, vs. 32; see also Luke 14:2-3 RE)*

I don't believe it is necessary to reveal any new thing in order to be able to teach in a manner that opens eyes to everything the Lord has and is doing, other than to expound the scriptures. **He** didn't think it was necessary.

If you go to verse 19 of the Joseph Smith History and you read the words that come out of the Lord's mouth when He speaks to Joseph, He quotes or paraphrases Isaiah, Jeremiah, and

Paul. In just one short, run-on sentence, the Lord talks about the doctrines that they teach for commandments the doctrines of men, *they have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof, they draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me* (JS-H 1:19; see also JSH 2:5 RE). Once again, when He appears to Joseph in the First Vision, our Lord is expounding the scriptures. He picks and puts it together and says, “This is the condition in which you find yourself.” **This** is what the prophets were speaking about. **This** is that day about which mankind would search the earth and not find the word of God.

When Moroni comes to visit with Joseph Smith, what does Moroni do in order to qualify Joseph for the ministry that he’s about to embark upon? Moroni quotes prophecies from Malachi, from Isaiah, from Peter, from Joel.

And so, it took a long time for me to be able to see the pattern. But the pattern in which the Lord reveals and discusses new truth is the same in every generation. And so, when He came in answer to prayer and spoke to me sitting in a barracks—despite the fact that there were no fireworks, no pillar of fire, no shining man in a robe—He used the scriptures and expounded them to increase my understanding.

So, today I wanna use the scriptures in order to bear testimony of who our Lord is and how significant His example is for us. And I told you before in Idaho Falls that in my view the Lectures on Faith are scripture—they were adopted as such, and I’m gonna read from the Seventh Lecture on Faith, paragraph 9, about Christ:

*Where shall we find a saved being? for if we can find a saved being, we may ascertain without much difficulty what all others must be in order to be saved.... We think that it will not be a matter of dispute that two beings who are unlike each other cannot both be saved, for whatever constitutes the salvation of one will constitute the salvation of every creature which will be saved. And if we find one saved being in all existence, we may see what all others must be or else not be saved. We ask, then: Where is the prototype? Or where is the saved being? We conclude as to the answer of this question there will be no dispute among those who believe the Bible that it is Christ. All will agree [with] this, that he is the prototype or standard of salvation, or in other words, ...he is a saved being. And if we should continue our interrogation, and ask how [is it] that he is saved, the answer would be, because he is a just and holy being. And if he were anything different from what he is he would not be saved, for his salvation depends on his being precisely what he is and nothing else. For if it were possible for him to change in the least degree, so sure he would fail of salvation and lose all his dominion, power, authority, and glory, which constitutes salvation. For salvation consists in the glory, authority, majesty, power, and dominion which Jehovah possesses, and in nothing else, and no being can possess it but himself and one like him.*

We read this, and then we immediately gloss over it as if what salvation consists of is Him and “fairy dust,” which He can distribute to make us like Him. This teaching that appears... This was what Joseph Smith worked on editing for the months prior to the publication of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835. He doesn’t say in his diaries that he spent any time on

the revelations—that was trusted to a committee, and the committee was responsible for getting those ready for publication. And they did a bunch of freelancing and embellishing and expanding; and some of the stuff they added to the revelations was **remarkably** more expansive than what Joseph had received revealed to him. That’s not where Joseph spent his time. He spent his time on the Lectures on Faith. And this is early in his ministry—this is when he wanted to make sure that the doctrine was correct. And this is the doctrine that came rolling out in that first publication. And yet, despite that, we tend to read this and not take it seriously. **If you are going to be saved, you must be *exactly*, you must be *precisely* what Christ is and *nothing else*.** K? You! At that moment, that is when **you** are saved.

As a consequence of that, to speak of Christ is necessarily to speak of salvation. To understand Christ is to understand salvation. Despite how plainly this has been put, we still stop short of comprehending the doctrine. Joseph Smith’s mind returned to this topic again, all the way down at the end of his ministry in April of 1844—the last General Conference of the Church that Joseph Smith would be alive for. And in April—April 7th of 1844—Joseph gave a talk. I’m gonna first read to you the version that appears in *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. But then, to make sure that you realize how important the point was, I’m gonna go back to the talk as recorded by various of those who were present that day, because one matter in this is picked up by every one of those who was present in recording what was said in their diaries. Joseph says,

I wish I was in a suitable place to tell it, and that I had the trump of an archangel, so that I could tell the story in such a manner that persecution would cease forever. What did Jesus say? (Mark it, Elder Rigdon!) The Scriptures inform us that Jesus said, As the Father hath power in Himself, even so hath the Son power—to do what? Why, what the Father did. The answer is obvious—in a manner to lay down His body and take it up again. Jesus, what are you going to do? To lay down my life as my Father did, and take it up again. Do you believe it? If you do not believe it, you do not believe the Bible. The Scriptures say it, and I defy all the learning and wisdom and all the combined powers of earth and hell together to refute it. Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and **you [you]** have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as **all** Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead... (TPJS, pg. 346-347, emphasis added)

“Exaltation to exaltation”; “grace to grace”; “until you attain to the resurrection of the dead.” Christ said, *I am the resurrection and the life* (John 11:25; see also John 7:3 RE and Testimony of St. John 8:3). You must be precisely what He is and nothing else.

You hear those who say, “The Church has all the keys.” But we do not yet have the keys of the resurrection. That’s because even when **you** are resurrected, you will not have the keys of resurrection until you, like Christ, have gone from exaltation to exaltation, until you likewise attain to the power to resurrect all that depends upon you.

John 5:19, *The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise* (see also John 5:4 RE). And the Father went before, and the Son follows after. And if you think that you can, at some point, like Him, attain to the status of godhood, then you're going to have to do **precisely** what it is that the Gods do. Therefore, to understand Christ is to understand the challenging destiny about which Joseph Smith is speaking in this last Conference talk given in 1844.

Until you attain to the resurrection of the dead and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. (TPJS, pg. 347)

Even what we envision as the highest heaven is a condescension for those who sit enthroned, able to dwell in everlasting burnings. Else why in section ~~132~~ [130] would you be given a white stone that reveals things pertaining to *a higher order of kingdoms* (D&C 130:10) when you are **in** the Celestial Kingdom! It's because where you are now (at this moment, in this meeting, hearing my voice in this room today) is about halfway to where you need to grow (and it's been almost infinite in getting you here—today) in order to arrive at the point that you might be able to be as Christ. And where Christ arises to, in everlasting burnings, is about halfway to where things ultimately **can** go. You say it's necessary in this condition to have a physical body in order to come down here and perform, and you say that rightly. But there are other places beyond.

I want you to know that God, in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me. (TPJS, pg. 347)

That's Joseph talking. We preach, and we exhort; and largely we do so vainly, having not power—not having been asked and not teaching what ought to be.

But “to attain to the resurrection of the dead” means you have the power to resurrect—and not yourself, but those who are dependent upon you. It's a ways off yet.

**Now** Joseph says something in 1844 that's remarkable:

These are the first principles of consolation. How consoling to the mourners when they are called to part with a husband, wife, [daughter], mother, child, or dear relative, to know that, although the earthly tabernacle is laid down and dissolved, they shall rise again to dwell in everlasting burnings in immortal glory, not to sorrow, suffer, or die anymore; but they shall be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit the same power, the same glory and same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of a God, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before. What did Jesus do? Why; I do the things I saw my Father do when the worlds come rolling into existence. My Father worked out his kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same; and when I get my kingdom, I shall also present it to my Father, so that he may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory. He will then take a higher exaltation,

and I will take his place, and thereby become exalted myself. So that Jesus treads in the tracks of his Father, and inherits what God did before; and God is thus glorified and exalted in the salvation and exaltation of all his children. It is plain beyond disputation, and you thus learn **some of the first principles of the Gospel...** (TPJS, pg. 347-348, emphasis added)

You heard that right.

It is plain beyond disputation, and you thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said. (Ibid)

Now, the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: faith, repentance, baptism, laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. We know that, because Joseph wrote that in *The Wentworth Letter*. We lifted it out of there, we put it in the back of *The Pearl of Great Price*, and it's now *The Articles of Faith*, right? The first principles and ordinances of the Gospel. Now he's talking about "about which so much [has] been said." That's because in the Restorationist environment in which the Gospel was restored, everyone was talking about the first principles of the Gospel. "The first principles of the Gospel are..."—and you could've gone to Sidney Rigdon long before Sidney was baptized a member of the Church of Christ (when that was what it was called in Joseph's beginning era), and Sidney Rigdon would've told you that the Restorationist movement all believed that the first principles of the Gospel are faith, repentance, and baptism. That was a mantra. Parley Pratt, who was also one of the Restorationist Campbellite ministers, would've told you the same thing. That was a rallying cry for people that said that "the New Testament needs to be restored; the New Testament church needs to be returned; it needs to be revitalized; it needs to be restored and reconstituted. And the first principles, as we find in the New Testament church, are these..." And so Mormons, largely, were drawn out of the same environment, and they're talking about it, and Joseph conceded the point, and he used that. That's what he put into *The Wentworth Letter* when he sent *The Wentworth Letter* off.

But now, we're far along in the process. Now, we're in 1844, and Joseph will be dead about 60 or 90 days after this talk is given. This is the **end** of his ministry. This is not the beginning of his ministry. And so, now, he's talking to people that had been aboard for awhile. They've heard him preach. They know something more about what God intended. They had the Book of Mormon—they'd been converted through it. They had more revelations that had rolled forth. They'd been taught for awhile. And so, he returns now, and he says that... that "first principles about which so much has been said," now let me tell you what they really are. They really are this:

- Resurrection from the dead.
- Becoming Gods.
- Walking in the same path as our Lord walked.

**This** is the **first** principles of the Gospel! That's why he wished he had the trumpet of an archangel with which to declare it. He didn't have that. But I read his words as if they came from an archangel.

You thus learn some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much hath been said. When **you** climb a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you've learned them [all]. It's not all to be comprehended in this world; it'll be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave. (*TPJS*, pg. 348, emphasis added)

Wilford Woodruff recorded the same talk. And in the Wilford Woodruff account:

You've got to learn how to make yourselves God, king and priest by going from a small capacity to a great capacity, to the resurrection of the dead, to dwelling in everlasting burnings. I want you to know the first principle of this law, how consoling to the mourner when they part with a friend to know that though they lay down this [he misspells "body"], it will rise and dwell with everlasting burnings to be an heir with God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ and join the same rise, exaltation, [and] glory until you arrive at the station of a God. What did Jesus Christ do? The same thing as I see the Father do. See the Father do what? Work out a kingdom. When I do so too, I will give the Father which will add to His glory, He will take a higher exaltation, I will take His place, and am also exalted. These are the first principles of the Gospel. It will take a long time after the grave to understand the whole. If I should say anything but what was in the Bible, the cry of treason will be heard.

Thomas Bullock Report—he also says:

This is eternal life to know the only wise and true God. You've got to learn how to be Gods yourself, and to be king and priest to God, the same as all have done by going from a small capacity to another, from grace to grace until the resurrection and sit in everlasting power as they who have gone before. And God in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming His name is not trifling with us. All earthly tabernacles should be dissolved, that they shall be heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ to inherit the same power and exaltation until you ascend the throne of eternal power the same as those who have gone before. You thus learn the first principles of the Gospel. When you climb a ladder you must begin at the bottom.

This is the basics of the Gospel. This is the foundation upon which salvation itself rests. This is the way through which **you** must tread in order for **you** to be like Him. If you understand Christ, you understand salvation. He's the prototype, and therefore, **you must be like that prototype** in order for **you** to be saved.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 93, and you'll encounter some language there that sounds familiar because of what Joseph just chose to say in that General Conference talk. Doctrine and Covenants section 93, beginning at verse 7—

And this is a restoration of a part of John's record. The fullness of the record is yet to be revealed. Despite the fact that this reads very much like John the Beloved, somehow the position got taken by a number of Church leaders (and then ultimately declared to be so by Bruce R. McConkie) that what you're reading in section 93 is really the testimony of John the Baptist, and that ~~John the Baptist~~ was a disciple of... oh, excuse me: John **the Beloved** was a disciple of John the Baptist. So, when John the Beloved wrote his testimony, he began his testimony rather like the person who had mentored him, John the Baptist. And so, when you read John the Baptist's testimony here, you're getting second-hand, warmed-over John the Baptist through John the Beloved, and that's why it looks similar. I did not take issue with Bruce R. McConkie in one of the things that I've written along the way. And I simply accepted that this was a testimony of John the Baptist. Once again, it's one of those things that you do, and then you later say, "I wish I hadn't done that." I really—at that time and today—I don't believe that this is the testimony of John the Baptist. I think it's the testimony of John the Beloved and a restoration of part of John the Beloved's record. But be that as it may, it's the testimony of John.

*He bore record, saying [this is verse 7 of 93]: I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was; Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation—The light and the Redeemer of the world; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and in him was the life of men and the light of men. The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him. 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. And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at first, but received **grace for grace**; And [that] he received not...the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness; And thus he was **called the Son of God**, because he received not...the fulness at...first. (D&C 93:7-14, emphasis added)*

John bearing record of what he saw concerning our Lord before He entered into this world. This is what He did **before** He came into the flesh to dwell among us. This is who He was **before** the world was. He went *from grace to grace* **until**...*He was called the Son of God.*

(Now, because of the way we do these tape recordings, we take breaks in order to change/move CDs over. We're gonna pick it up right there with that thought and continue in section 93.)

But I want you to remember that Christ went from grace to grace (before this world and before He entered into the flesh here) through a long enough period of development that He had sufficient grace to be **called the Son of God**. And **this** is the prototype of the saved man! This is what you must be or else not be saved. This is the first principles of the Gospel,

about which we're going to spend some time today so that you might understand who it is you worship and **how** it is you're called upon **to worship** Him. Because as long as you're down here in **this** veil, clothed in **this** flesh, with the capacity to make sacrifices and the ability to exercise faith in Him, you will be amazed at the grace you can acquire, if you will only do so while in **this** dark place. You're here to accomplish a great deal. And I hope by the time we finish today, you're more fortified against accomplishing it.

(So, we'll take a break while they change over discs, and we'll start again in a few minutes.)

There was a great question asked by one of the women who came up and said, "Prototype of the saved **man**, saved **man**—I mean you're sort of Y-chromosome oriented. What about the prototype of the saved **woman**, saved **woman**?" The best way to explain it without saying something inappropriate would be this: Christ could not—**could not**—have done what He did if He had not had a woman who fulfilled a role in relation to Him. **She** anointed Him preliminary to His death and His burial. **She** was the first one to encounter Him in the resurrection. You do not get **Him** through what He needed to go through without the presence of the woman taking care of some needful things in connection with that. If it was important for the details of those kinds of things to be available to us, then the scriptures would be talking about 'em. But because that is not germane to what the challenge is that we confront (and the terrible burdens that we have to bear in order to get from where we are to where we need to be), I think the scriptures wisely allude to (but do not elaborate upon) those kinds of things. And so far, those who have been in a position to talk about it have never felt they had any right to do so.

So, our Lord (and we're talking about Him in the beginning, before the world was), *received not the fulness at first but received grace for grace*. And we think *grace for grace* consists of, "I'm going to now obey a principle, and as a result of obeying that principle, I will receive the benefit of the grace that flows from doing so." And that is true enough. That is a true enough principle. But it is also truer and more accurate to say: in connection with the long preparation that preceded the **call** of Christ to be *the Son of God*, that *grace to grace* is also something that involves the upward scale of a ladder, as Joseph alludes to it.

He was *called the Son of God because He received not of the fulness at...first*. He was **called** to be the Son of God because **that wasn't His status before**. Therefore, He had to be **called** to be the Son of God. And that was true because He *received not of the fulness at...first*.

*And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were [open], and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son. And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory of the Father; And he received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with him, for **he dwelt in him**. And it shall come to pass, that if [you're] faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John. I give unto you these sayings that [ye] may understand and know **how to** worship, and know **what** you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness. For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be*

*glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace. (Ibid, vs. 15-20; see also T&C 93:2-7, emphasis added)*

Long before the Lord assumed the role and the responsibility of descending here and being the Redeemer of this world, He qualified by grace, doing things that proved—while He was behind the veil, as you presently find yourselves situated—that demonstrated graciousness and faith by obedience to the commandments of God. Even though it would be a great while yet before He (and now you) would rise up to that level, **still** He lived His life with such grace that He qualified to receive more and to develop and to move up. Now, in the next talk, it's gonna be necessary to spend more time on this. But today we're simply alluding to this.

And I wanna move to Alma chapter 13—because in Alma chapter 13, we run up against some of the other suggestions in the scriptures about what it takes to move from grace to grace. Beginning in chapter 13 of Alma, verse 1:

*...I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of **his Son**, to teach these things unto the people. And those priests were ordained after the order of **his Son**, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward **to his Son** for redemption. And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world... (Alma 13:1-3, emphasis added)*

Did you get that? We're talking about priests. And look, *his Son...his Son...his Son*. So that you can understand who **His Son** is, there are gonna be some people who qualified *before the foundation of the world* that will be qualified to come and to teach about some things. And they're gonna be called before the foundation of the world (**like His Son was called** before the foundation of the world) to be pointing *to his Son* who will come into the world. And this qualification occurs before the world is. But it's done so that you can understand and have faith in His Son.

*Being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God... (Ibid)*

Why does God have foreknowledge about these things? Why does God know that, given the trust, they will be true to it? Why does God know that these are the kinds of people to whom trust can be given, and it will not be broken? Why does God have such foreknowledge? It's not based upon conjecture. It's based upon proof. It's not based upon merely hope. It's based upon the knowledge of God because He's not asking lead to do what He knows only iron can accomplish. Therefore, He chooses a suitable instrument, based upon His foreknowledge, *prepared from the foundation of the world*.

And what is God's foreknowledge known?

*...on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place [that is, before the foundation of this world; in the first place, long ago on some other rung of this*

ladder; long ago, a great while in the past. In the first place they were] ...*left to choose good or evil; therefore they having **chosen good**, and exercising [exceeding] great **faith, are called** with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption **for such**.* (Ibid)

You have to redeem **them** in order to have **them** reclaim so that they can come back and perform what they need to do. There has been a *preparatory redemption*. They **have** chosen what's right. And the game's afoot, and you're in it, and you're here, and this is now. And you have the opportunity, on account of your own—being left to choose between good and evil, having the opportunity to choose good. And at this moment, you have the opportunity to exercise—exceedingly—faith. And you have the opportunity, at this moment, to be identified and proven by God so that His foreknowledge of you **hereafter** includes within it a record of your exceeding faith and good works.

*And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and [the] blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great [a] privilege as their brethren.* (Ibid, vs. 4)

**Don't** have a hard heart. **Don't** be blinded by the lies, the half-truths, and the incomplete things that you are taught.

You may disagree with me, and you're entitled to do so. But I declare the things that He's declared to me. There are arguments that have been made; there are reviews that have been written about the things that I say. There is no criticism that has been offered against me, no scriptural exegesis that an orthodox member of the Church cannot advance that **I did not advance in argument with the Lord!** I made **better** scriptural arguments than those that have been leveled at me. I had **more** scriptural proof to discourage the Lord from asking that I do **any** of this stuff. I argued with Him! And the Lord has explained to me, using the scriptures, the things which I declare to you.

I'm not here on my own errand. If I were doing what I wanted to do today, it wouldn't include any of you—well, her [indicating his wife], but [laughter]... I mean, the weather's nice. I have a Harley sitting in the garage that's on a recharger that needs to be ridden, and here I am doing this. And I'm not doing this because **I** think it oughta be done. And I'm not explaining these scriptures to you because I think this **might** be the way it fits together. Like Paul, I can declare, "He whom ye ignorantly serve declare I unto you." I've read all of the accounts that Joseph has left behind of his visits with the Lord. Add them all together, and He's spent more time with me than He did with Joseph. I attribute that to the poorness of my learning, my inadequacy as a pupil, my stubbornness, and my stupidity. I was a bigger defender of the Church **to the Lord**, a bigger defen.... I was a Pharisee, explaining why He needed to honor the Church and... And let me do so too! And so, when people shake their head and say, "What a shame! What a shame! He fell off the rails. He went his own way. He's filled with pride...."

Look, growing up in Idaho, I would have said that's utter bullshit. Here, I will say it's bovine feces. There's nothing to that [laughter]. That's not who I am! That's not what's in my heart. It has never been what's in my heart. And I know what I'm talking about. And I don't care about your theories to the contrary. Because He who is more intelligent than them all has declared to me what the truth of these things is. Resist it, if you want. Reject it, if you want. But you can read right here what the consequences are, though—

*...others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and [the] blindness of their minds, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren. Or in fine, in the first place [that is, before they ever got **here**, in the first place, long ago, far away] **they** were on the same standing with their brethren [exactly the same place]. This holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would **not** harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared— ...thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto [this] high priesthood of the holy order of God, to **teach his commandments** unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest—This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things [this has been underway a long time; **this** has been underway a **long** time]—Now they were ordained after this manner—being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end— (Ibid, vs. 4-8, emphasis added)*

You say a man must be ordained by someone here in the flesh, and I say that may be true enough. But if he is not ordained, at some point, in eternity that is *without [a] beginning*, you might as well ordain a sack of flour. Because if it does not reckon from some place in eternity, it is inadequate to compensate or deal with eternal things.

You say you want to create an “expectation” into the next life; and I say, if it did not exist and the authority by which to declare it was not handed down from **before** in eternity, then it will not last after. Joseph held up a ring and said, “There is no beginning, and there is no end, it is one eternal round.” I'm telling ya, you are only on part of the cycle here. But **you are on** part of the cycle, **here**. Therefore, what you do here matters—infinitely, eternally, everlastingly. It matters! You have your doubts; weigh them in the balance.

The Gospel is delicious. Get rid of that stale, wretched stuff that you consume, and go on to find the Life, the Light, and the vigor that is contained in the words that we have in scripture. This stuff is delicious! If you'll partake of it and prepare yourself, you can improve this estate in a way that will reflect credit in the next estate. Don't forfeit the opportunity.

*Thus they become high priests forever. (Ibid, vs. 9)*

They become high priests forever. They had it before the foundation of the world. They come here. They have authority here. And that authority began there, and it will continue into the next life. Therefore, they **can** bless, and you're blessed indeed.

*Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, [of] the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen. Now, as I said concerning the holy order, or this high priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish; Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. (Ibid, vs. 9-11; see also Alma 9:10-Alma 10:1 RE)*

You say you want to be baptized and to be cleansed from all sin? I say have at it! But in addition, this "prototype of the saved man" requires that you do something in addition. You may only achieve a limited amount of grace in this life, but that limited amount of grace you must hold fast to. You cannot receive more if you will not receive what's offered now. And if you'll receive what's offered now, [long pause] you'll be added upon.

Oh, E.B. Grandin had an employee; he was a teenager when he did the typesetting for the Book of Mormon. His first name was John; I don't remember the last name. But I was looking at his picture the other day—they had a picture of him in 1890. He wasn't a teenager anymore in 1890. He was holding one of those poses like they did back then with the photography, and he looked dreadfully uncomfortable. I showed the picture to my wife, and she said, "Man, he looks like he's never recovered from the trauma of typesetting the Book of Mormon." [Laughter] Just this severe...with wild white hair (it's in the Joseph Smith papers), this big gray, white beard. John... Anyone remember the name? What is it? Anyone remember the name of the guy who set the type on the Book of Mormon? Anyway, whoever that guy John was that worked in E.B. Grandin's ~~bookstore~~ printing press, he got the printer's manuscript to the Book of Mormon, and he punctuated it. And we still live with his punctuation. The commas that you got in your text? They're all derived from this guy, the trauma of punctuating the Book of Mormon lasting with him some 60 years after the fact and making him look like a fretting chap because he knows, oh, he may have screwed up a comma or two. And I'm gonna suggest another way to read a bunch of verses. And I'm gonna lift out his commas and throw 'em on the floor. I'm not gonna use them anymore.

I'm gonna read you a description of Christ in 2 Nephi 25:12. And this is the way I would read it with my punctuation: "The Only Begotten of the Father yea even the Father of heaven and of earth."

The way it's punctuated today is: *The Only Begotten of the Father, yea, even the Father of heaven and of [the] earth* (see also 2 Nephi 11:5 RE). The way it's punctuated, it reads that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father, and Jesus Christ is the Father of heaven and of earth. The way I would punctuate it is that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father who is the

Father of heaven and of earth. Mess around with the commas and, all of a sudden, a bunch of Trinitarian theology (which was in the mind and heart of John as he typeset) suddenly becomes a whole lot less Trinitarian in the Book of Mormon. (\$&!!\*\*#!) Really screws up a bunch of people who wanna argue about theology among the Mormons. Throw out the commas. 2 Nephi 25:12, Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father. He's the Only Begotten of the Father, who is the Father of heaven and of the earth. That's who His Father is.

Mosiah 3:8, *And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary* (see also Mosiah 1:14 RE).

What if we move the commas around, and we say: "He shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary."

We've looked at language in the Lectures on Faith. We've looked at the statement that was made in the April General Conference. In them... And we've looked at D&C section 93, and in them they're talking about how the Father came and *dwelt in Him*, K? And every week you hear a sacrament prayer in which it's petitioned that you, *O God, the Eternal Father* (Moroni 4:3; see also Moroni 4:1 RE), will send Christ to have His Spirit come and dwell in you. And the Spirit that comes and dwells in Christ is the Spirit of the Father, and Christ's Spirit is going to come and dwell in you. And whose Spirit is it that dwells in Christ? And so, they all become one.

(I think that phone call I got a few moments ago was my daughter, 'cause my wife's out there talking on a cell phone. I don't know if any of you heard my bag buzzing, but now she's talking. So I can talk about her for a minute, and she'll never hear it [laughter], 'cause she doesn't listen to these recordings. Well... Although, she does read the transcripts. Well, I better... [laughter].)

So, if you go to Helaman 14:12, you see the same thing: *And also that ye might know of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and that ye might know of the signs of his coming, to the intent that ye might believe on his name.* Helaman 14:12 (see also Helaman 5:11 RE).

Again, what if we change the commas? "That ye might know of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of heaven and of earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; that ye might know of the signs of his coming." K?

I tend to view things in a way that makes sense. And I really like what happens with Abinadi. Because Abinadi gives us an explanation of Christ in which he... I think he nails it. This is in Mosiah chapter 15, verses 2-5—

*Now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he*

*dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth. And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people. (Mosiah 15:1-5; see also Mosiah 8:5 RE)*

Abinadi knew these things. And he testified of these things to a wicked group of men that would ultimately kill him. But he declared what it was and how it was.

If you read the Lectures on Faith and the definition of the Holy Ghost, what you read is that the Holy Ghost represents the mind of the Father and the Son, and They together are one. And this mind of God—this Spirit that emanates from Them—fills the immensity of space; it is part of God too. And that is as accessible to you, **if you will receive it**, as it was accessible to Christ—which is **how** you can become one with Them. *Father, I pray...for [these] whom thou hast given me...that [they] may be one [as thou and I art one]* (3 Nephi 19:29; see also 3 Nephi 19:23 and 3 Nephi 9:3-4 RE). “They may be ‘one,’ like us because They share the same mind.” And you likewise can do so.

Christ said of Himself (and I’m reading from Ether chapter 3, verse 14)—Christ said of Himself:

*Behold, **I am** he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, **I am** Jesus Christ. **I am** the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and...daughters...* (see also Ether 1:13 RE)

...so that you also might become a son of God, as the One who redeems you becomes your Father, so that He who is the Only Begotten of the Father might in turn beget many sons and daughters Himself.

If you will receive it, faith in Him comes by hearing the word of God—not by a pretender, not by someone guessing, not by someone offering up their theory of how this stuff ought to be understood, not by someone citing you a bibliography—but hearing the word of God delivered as He would have it delivered, by **whomever** it is that He may choose to deliver it.

If you receive it, **then** you might have faith and that, too, in the Son of God that **you** might receive Him. But if you will not, if you will harden your hearts, if you will blind your minds, if you will not receive what **He** offers from **His** mouth in **your** day, then **you don’t have faith in Him**. And **you** will fall short of that faith which **will** bring you to become His son and His daughter. It is that way; it has always been that way; it will always be that way. There is no other test.

Therefore, either I am a liar, and you oughta forget everything I've said, or I have been sent by someone who is greater than I, and you reject and you quibble over the things I declare to you at your peril!

And it oughta be that way. And I oughta be damned if I'm a pretender. And I ought to be damned and rejected by God if I'm saying things about which I do not know anything. But I bear testimony to you, I know what I'm talking about.

He (Christ) was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. And why did the world not know Him? The world did not know Him because—the same reason why people would not know a messenger if one were sent today—because our Lord was so very ordinary. For all the world he was just another itinerant preacher. There had been so many pretenders in the days before then. The Maccabean rebellion... The family of David had fallen into great disrepute by the time the Lord arrived. When the census was taken and everyone had to go to their own city and he went to the city of David to be enumerated, there was no room for **them** in the inn. It was... It was in His day as it is in ours.

*The Lord Omnipotent who [reigns], who was, and is from all eternity...shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay...* (Mosiah 3:5; see also Mosiah 1:14 RE). Father is a tabernacle of Spirit and Glory. The Son descended to be among us in a tabernacle of clay. To the extent that you can receive our Lord (though He was here, like you are), the only way you could tell the difference was He declared things that were filled with light.

How was the Lord able to accomplish all that He did? Abraham 3:19, the Lord tells you. He says, *I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all* (see also Abraham 5:4 RE). Why is the Lord able to say that He is more intelligent than they all? Because our Lord went from grace to grace to the point in which He **understood** all things because He had been **through** all things; He had **descended below** all things, and He had **risen above** all things—therefore, He **comprehends** all things. He's more **intelligent** than us all, because He's more **experienced** than us all. He has arrived at a state in which He is worthy, holy, sanctified. Having been left to choose between good and evil, He has chosen good. He declared who He was when He introduced Himself to the Nephites, and He said He suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

From what beginning? For **you**, why can that not be a beginning that starts now? For **you**, why can you not, from this beginning—at this moment, in this place—go forward saying that you will follow the will of the Father in all things, from this beginning? Why will you refuse to rise up and to receive grace for grace?

This is **how** you worship **who** you worship, because He was the Word of God, the embodiment of what the Father's will was. The Father declares what is true, and the Son does it. And thus the Son became the Word of God because He did what the Father bid Him

do. Would you be a son or daughter of God? Do what He bids you do. This is **how** the Son worshipped. This is what you must do if you will worship Him also.

*I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all* (Ibid). D&C 93:36, *The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth* (see also T&C 93:11).

*The light [shines] in darkness and the darkness [comprehends] it not* (D&C 88:49; see also T&C 86:8) because in the darkness, there are things that are forgotten; but in the light, there are things that are exposed and seen. Light and Truth: because you see things as they really are, because you judge things as they really are (not after the manner of men but according to the light that God shines upon it)—so that you can see and you can feel that the heart that is speaking to you is pure; that the words that are being spoken are given by the grace of God; that it doesn't matter how flawed a vessel the Lord chooses, He can cleanse any of you, every whit; that He has such power as that—so that He can take what is broken and mend it; and He can take what is unclean, even scarlet in color, and make it white as snow **by His word**, which is the word of the Father—because the two of Them are One.

And so comes this sobering ~~verse~~ two verses in D&C 130, verses 18 and 19: *Whatever principle of intelligence...*

Remember, *I'm the Lord thy God, [I'm] more intelligent than the[m] all* (Abraham 3:19). *The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth* (D&C 93:36).

So now you: *Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And 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* (D&C 130:18-19, emphasis added)

How will you gain intelligence? How will you gain knowledge? It says right here: you gain knowledge and you gain intelligence by your *diligence and obedience*. The words that are spoken are intended to cause action. When that answer came to me in the barracks, if I'd done nothing, my life would've continued as it began. And there would've been no difference the next day. And today I would be in a far different place than I am at this moment.

Hearing without heed and diligence, obedience to the things that God asks you... I mean, what good does it do you to know more about the scriptures than another person if it does not affect your behavior? What good does your knowledge give you if your knowledge is not employed to bring you and others who hear you closer to the Lord? Knowledge can be used as a point of vanity. It can be used to make you seem bigger, better, brighter. It can be a point of pride. It is power. And wielded in the wrong hands, it abuses; it subjugates; it humiliates.

The Lord is not like that. He lifts. He raises. He elevates. He endows you. He blesses your lives. If you will receive it and act upon it, if you will soften your heart, if you will allow His

Spirit to enter in, if you will receive the light that comes from Him, you will receive grace, and you will be more like Him, and you will be more gracious and patient with others—and you'll view them in their fallen state, and you'll hope for them better. And to the extent that you're able to do so, you will offer them better.

Joseph Smith, *The Teachings of the Prophet [Joseph Smith]*:

Knowledge saves a man; ...in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge... So it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on [until] you learn all the principles of exaltation... A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power.

I read those to you on the very first day that we began these series of talks in Boise, Idaho. Now that we've come to the subject of our Lord, we get back to the topic of intelligence: "A man is saved no quicker than he gains knowledge," but knowledge requires you to act because it doesn't become part of you until you have lived it. Therefore, unless you're willing to live it, you can't receive it.

Our religion is centered in Christ. Therefore, our religion is centered in intelligence. It is not enough to know what Christ knows; we must also be loving or charitable as He is. He not only created this world, He also suffered to save it.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 53, and let's look at some old familiar verses. This is Isaiah writing long before the event, but the context is almost an echo of the quizzical nature of Christ on the road to Emmaus saying, "What are you talking about?" And they're saying, "Are you dumb? Are you ignorant? Are you oblivious to what's been happening?" Isaiah in 53: *Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* (Isaiah 53:1).

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

Who's gonna believe the report? And who's gonna see the arm of the Lord? For Christ is gonna grow up before [God] as a tender plant, ...as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there's] no beauty that we should desire him (Ibid, vs. 2). I really dislike the way in which that's been translated—because those meanings **are** possible with those words, but that is absolutely not how I would render them.

*Chamad* [חָמַד, Strong's Concordance 2530]... All Hebrew is based on... Well, almost the entirety of the Hebrew vocabulary is based upon a three-letter root. And the root of the word that gets used for "beauty" really is talking about something to be coveted, desired; some kind of precious thing that you want. *Hadar* [הָדָר, Strong's Concordance 1926]: ornament, honor, splendor, majesty. If I were rendering a translation on this...

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

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

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

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

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

But just remember, when He speaks, **this** is how He came! He's not gonna do it differently. He's not gonna make it easy for you. He's not gonna tell you: "I'm gonna put my thumb print on this, and here's the hall pass. Who wants the hall pass? That guys got the hall pass!"

Follow him! He can never lead you astray. And if he were to do so, I will remove him! I am the great and powerful" [laughter]. Now I'm borrowing both from Cecil B. DeMille and *The Ten Commandments* and *The Wizard of Oz*, and I'm mingling those to present to you false doctrine offered by institutions who claim they possess keys of salvation that will redeem you.

I offer you no such keys. I offer you a Lord, and I would have you give heed to Him. And I'll tell that **no man** can be trusted. Even Peter (the night of the Lord's trial) was a broken reed. If you put your weight on that, it would pierce your hand. That's what **men** are—but not our Lord.

*[He's] despised and rejected of men...* (Isaiah 53:3), and that will be true. That will be true of whomever; they will be despised and rejected of men.

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

*We hid as it were our faces from Him...* (ibid); that is, we turned from Him. We would not give heed to what it was He offered.

*He was despised, ...we esteemed Him not* (ibid)—the only person who's ever lived who deserved to have respect given to Him, and *we esteemed Him not*.

*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted* (ibid, vs. 4). See, *smitten of God*, smitten of God—He was cast out of the synagogue. They were looking to stone Him. I mean, why would you expect that God would honor a man who'd been cast out of the synagogue? Smitten of God; afflicted.

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; ...with his stripes we are healed* (ibid, vs. 5). You know, don't think you're going to follow that Master and then be spared. He's gonna let you understand what it means to follow Him. And that understanding is gonna come by the experiences that help you relate to and understand our Lord in a way that you don't understand Him at present. If you're comfortable, He will make you uncomfortable. If you're certain, He will make you uncertain. If you think you've got it all figured out, He will offer up a contradiction, and then He'll leave you to struggle with it. And then when you can bear the contradiction no more, and in the agony and anguish of your uncertainty, He'll delay the answer a little further still, until your heart is finally soft enough to come to Him in meekness. And then He'll speak to you the words that you need to hear. Sometimes only just in time.

*All we like sheep have gone astray; [we've] turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (ibid, vs. 6). All of those variances from the path, He bore **that**.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

*It pleased the Lord to bruise him*. Is there no other way? No, there's no other way.

*He hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see...the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:10-11; see also Isaiah 19:2-3 RE).*

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

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

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

(We’re at the end of another CD. We’ll take a short break and then, hopefully, finish this.)

I got a question during the break about the punctuation in the Book of Mormon, and what I’ll do (instead of backing up and talking about that) is in the ~~transcript~~ [paper], I will elaborate on that. It was John Gilbert; I just remembered his name. John Gilbert was the one that did the punctuation. When I do the ~~transcript~~ [paper], I’ll just add additional explanations, cite you to some places where you can go read more about that. But the punctuation of the Book of Mormon was not put there by Joseph, Oliver, or anyone else. It was one long sentence. There weren’t paragraphs; there weren’t verses; just words. And when they brought in the printer’s manuscript, that got typeset; and John Gilbert was the one who did the typesetting, and John Gilbert provided us with the punctuation to the Book of Mormon. So every comma, semicolon, period, verse in the Book of Mormon, you can rearrange; no one did that. I mean, the next guy to mess with it would’ve been Orsen Hyde and Pratt in the 1878 or... You know, I have to... Dates are not one of those things I keep on the top of my head.

Christ's suffering was redemptive. It lifted the Creation as a result of what He was able to do. And if you think about it in physical terms, if you’re going to use a fulcrum to lift an object, it’s necessary to put the fulcrum underneath the whole thing. You can’t lift it unless you put the fulcrum beneath. Christ is, in effect, the fulcrum which lifted the entirety of Creation. So, in lifting the entirety of the Creation, it’s necessary for you to appreciate the extent to which Christ is bonded to all of this and, therefore, all of you.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 88. This is a **marvelous** transcript. This is a description that you need to keep in mind when you're trying to understand who our Lord is. Beginning in verse 6:

*He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; As also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth **you** light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne, who is in the bosom of eternity, who is in the midst of all things. Now, verily I say unto you, that through the redemption which is made for you is brought to pass the resurrection from the dead. And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul. And the redemption of the soul is through him that quickeneth all things, in whose bosom it is decreed that the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it. (D&C 88:6-17, emphasis added; see also T&C 86:1-2)*

Between verse 6 and verse 13, rather like bookends, the connection of Christ to *all things* appears seven times. It appears at the beginning and appears again at the end. Christ is in all things. Everything that you're acquainted with in this creation is sustained by the light of Christ. He occupies, He brings the light into, He is more intelligent than it all, and He keeps its organization together by the light that emanates from Him. This is why it is possible for redemption to come through Him. Because when He descended below it all, including death, He has the power then to bring it all with Him back into life. He is the fulcrum. He is the one which must permeate all things, in order for Him to be able to lay hold upon all things and in order, therefore, to bring you back from the grave—which means, at this very moment, **you are in contact with Him** through His Spirit. **He** is giving **you** the life which you are presently living.

He is not a distant God. He is an immediate and an intimate God. You say He knows your thoughts, and that is true enough! Because He is giving you the ability and the freedom to entertain the thoughts. Therefore, He knows how to judge you—because everything that you have done, you have done using the power and the light He lends to you. You have the **illusion** of privacy. You have the **actuality** of agency, but that agency is being employed by you, using an instrumentality that belongs to **Him**.

And the scriptures make it abundantly apparent that that is in fact the case. Mosiah chapter 2, verse 21:

*I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say [unto you] if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants...*

...because the energy being used at present to power this life that you're living is borrowed from Him; it is His light. It is His light; it is His truth; it is His intelligence. He is sustaining you from moment to moment.

Verse 25:

*Now I ask [you], can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you. (See also Mosiah 1:8-9 RE)*

So, this mortal frame that you're walking about in temporarily, belongs to Him. And ultimately, He's gonna take it back, and reduce it back to dust, and re-form it in something else, and do something else with it. And someday He will resurrect you, but when He does that, that's Him also—because it will be a long time before you “attain to the resurrection of the dead” (TPJS, pg. 346). You're gonna borrow this from Him for yet some time.

Look in Alma chapter 7, beginning at verse 11. This is Him descending below all things. Alma 7:11,

*And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. ...he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; ...he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities. Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me. Now I say unto you that ye must repent, and be born again; for the Spirit saith if [you're] not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore come and be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. (Alma 7:11-14; see also Alma 5:3-4 RE)*

He did this stuff precisely so that whatever it is that is infirm in you, He can blot it out. Whatever it is that you need to have “succor” to remedy, He has the knowledge required to do that. He is not experimenting when He deals with us. He knows what He is doing. He has descended below it all in order to acquire the capacity to lift it all. And the things that He

intends to lift back include all of you. He intends to save everything—and by saving everything, allow it to continue on in its course.

Those who will receive less, will continue on in a lesser course. Those who will receive more, will continue on in a greater course. But all will continue on, freely using what God freely gives to both the righteous and the wicked. He makes the sun to shine on the righteous and the wicked. He makes the rain to fall on both the righteous and the wicked. And He does so while merely asking you to repent and turn to Him. He does not demand obedience. He offers you, if you will obey, grace for grace, that you too might receive more **of Him in you**, and that you might be **better** animated by a **higher** source than the one that animates you at the moment. No matter where you are situated, He continuously offers you more.

Now we go back to Abinadi. And I said a few moments ago that he knows what he's talking about. Let me read you just how very much Abinadi knows. This is Mosiah chapter 15, beginning at verse 8:

*And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion toward the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice. ...now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? Behold, I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed. Now what say ye? And who [are] **his seed**? Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words **of the prophets**, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that **these are his seed**, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God. (Mosiah 15:8-11, emphasis added; see also Mosiah 8:6-7 RE)*

A while ago we read a quote from Joseph [Smith] in Orem about where the kingdom of God is. And Joseph said, “If you can find anyone sent by God, there is the kingdom of God.” It was good doctrine when Joseph declared it. It was good doctrine when ~~Mosiah~~ [Abinadi] declared it. It's good doctrine when I declare it. Because any of you who will hear and then who will hearken unto their words, you become His seed. You have to hear it. You have to hear it from someone who has been sent. But it does you no good at all if you will not hearken to it. Because it is in the hearkening that **you** will meet God. **You** will find redemption. **You** will hear His voice, and **you** will become a holy vessel because His word will be animated in you. And you will have no doubts about your salvation, because **you** will hear Him declare it in His own voice. And **you** will know that He's no respecter of persons. And you'll know that **you**, like any other person, can come unto Him, and look to Him (and Him alone) for your salvation, and not be dependent upon any other person or system. And you too can join in singing the song of redeeming love.

We will get to more of this as we move along. But today it's only necessary that we begin to introduce the fact that Christ is the redemption of all. When His religion is here, then His religion, when it appears, is the same in every day.

Turn to Mormon chapter 9, beginning at verse 7:

*And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healings, nor speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; Behold I say unto you, that he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the [scripture]; if so, he does not understand them. For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing? ...now, if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is [a] shadow of changing, then [you have] imagined...unto your[self] a god who is not a God of miracles. But behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is [the] same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. Behold, he created Adam, and by Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man. And because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord. (Mormon 9:7-13; see also Mormon 4:7 RE)*

It's true that that will happen in the resurrection, but I wanna pause on that. *Because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord, yea this is wherein all men are redeemed....* If I were punctuating it, I'd put a period there, and I'd start a new thought in a new verse.

**Now** is the day of redemption. *Because of the redemption of man which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord, yea **this** is wherein all men are redeemed.*

What is the fall of man? It's to be cast out from the presence of God. What is the redemption of man? It's to be brought back into the presence of God. Today is the day of redemption. Today is the day of salvation. Come back into His presence.

Ether chapter 3, beginning at verse 13: *When he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you (see also Ether 1:13 RE).*

This is the gospel of Christ. What is it that you know? You know Him. *And this is life eternal that you might know [Him]* (John 17:3; see also John 9:19 RE). "Because you know these things, I'm coming to see you. I return you to my presence. I redeem you from the Fall—*because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall.*" This is Christ speaking in the first person. He's defining redemption. Who better is able to define what it

means to be redeemed than the Redeemer? Reconciliation comes **through** Christ. Reconciliation comes **with** Christ. Reconciliation is **by** Christ. And Christ has the power to redeem you all.

I wanna pay attention to the coming again of the Lord, and if you read about His return in the Doctrine and Covenants.... Maybe we oughta pick a couple of these just to look at. D&C 45, verse 16; let's look at that one. He says, *I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood...* This is verse 16 of D&C 45. I'm sorry—verse 16. *I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh, ...spake unto them, saying: As ye have asked...me concerning the signs of my coming, **in the day when I shall come in my glory in the clouds of heaven**, to fulfill the promises that [I've] made unto your fathers...* (emphasis added; see also T&C 31:4). This is a description of how He intends to return.

If you go to 49, D&C 49, beginning at verse 22, He says:

*Verily I say unto you, the Son of Man cometh not in the form of a woman, neither...a man traveling on the earth. Wherefore, be not deceived, but continue in steadfastness, looking forth for the heavens to be shaken, and the earth to tremble and...reel to and fro as a drunken man, ...for the valleys to be exalted, and for the mountains to be made low, and for the rough places to become smooth—and...this when the angel shall sound his [trump]. (See also T&C 35:7)*

And this is how He intends to come. He may send people who are messengers. He may send people who have things to say from Him. But when He returns, He's going to return in glory.

Section 133, if you go there and you read, beginning at verse 46:

*And it shall be said: Who is this that cometh down from God in heaven with dyed garments; yea, from the regions which are not known, clothed in his glorious apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? And he shall say: I am he who spake in righteousness, mighty to save. And the Lord shall be red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine-vat. (D&C 133:46-48)*

I just add, parenthetically, that His apparel is red, period. Period. He will be clothed in red. And if someone offers you a vision in which they vary from this, I'll add my voice to Joseph's and bear testimony that when He appears, His apparel—apparel—will be red.

*And so great shall be the glory of his presence that the sun shall hide his face in shame, and the moon shall withhold its light, and the stars shall be hurled from their places (ibid, vs. 49; see also T&C 58:6).*

Doesn't sound to me like an event that is going to take place in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, Utah [laughter].

But as I've said, hearken to whatever voice you wanna hearken to. Chase every tempting tattletale that you hear from someone. The Lord has expounded to me the scriptures. I have no interest in telling you all the things I've been shown. I'm interested in you going and being shown them by Him. He's the Keeper of the Gate. He's the One who's mighty to save. He can tell you what He thinks **you** need to know, as He has told me what **I** need to know.

But there will always be 10,000 voices that rise up in opposition to say, Lo here, lo there; come and hearken to my precept (see JS-H 1:5; see also JSH 1:11 RE). I don't ask you to hearken to anything other than what we find in the scriptures. But you should ask yourself the same question that Malachi posed, *Who may abide the day of his coming? ...who shall stand when he appeareth? for [he's] like a refiner's fire, and like [a] fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver* (Malachi 3:2-3; see also Malachi 1:6 RE). Yeah, who shall stand? *The day [comes] that shall burn them up [so] that it shall leave them neither root nor branch* (3 Nephi 25:1; see also 3 Nephi 11:4 RE). And who shall abide that day?

Well, we have an answer to that, I guess, in Third Nephi chapter 9—which the Book of Mormon was designed as the scripture, as the foundation, as the keystone for our day. Go to chapter 9 of Third Nephi, and read what is said there. And this is the Lord speaking. Third Nephi chapter 9, verse 12 and 13:

*Many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and their abominations. O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?* (See also 3 Nephi 4:6-7 RE)

These people were *more righteous* not because they were sin-free. They were more righteous because they hearkened to what the Lord was telling them to hearken to. It didn't mean that they weren't a project, that they weren't a work-in-process. It simply meant they did, in fact, hear His voice and, therefore, responded to it. These were the people who were spared.

Go to chapter 10 and verse 12: *And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared* (3 Nephi 10:12; see also 3 Nephi 4:10 RE). Did you notice that? It's the definition. This is how you get spared. This is how you become His seed. ***They who received the prophets and stoned them not.***

Understand, this is Christ speaking. And put it in the timeframe in which He is speaking by looking at Third Nephi chapter 9, verse 22: *Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me ye ends of the earth, and be saved* (see also 3 Nephi 4:7 RE). The Lord has achieved the triumph of the resurrection from the dead at the time that He's saying these words. And in that state, in that condition, He has destroyed the wicked. I read it a little while ago. Look, let's read those words again: "I want you to know that God, in the[se] last days, while certain

individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me" (TPJS, pg. 347). K? He is going to come. He's going to come in judgment. There are gonna be those who pay the price. He told them how they could be the more righteous and be spared.

Do not think for one moment that Christ's coming judgment will not be terrible. Do not think its scope will not be cosmic. Do not think that all things are going to continue as they always have been. Do not be misled by thinking that you can hearken to just any principle and listen to any false, unredemptive gospel proclaimed by any pretender and survive the day of His coming. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. And the word of God comes only when **He** is the author of it.

Well, remember that you should not look for a Messiah to come which has already come, and *the Son of Man cometh not in the form of a woman, neither a man traveling on the earth.* He is going to *come down in heaven from the presence of [God] and consume the wicked with unquenchable fire.* That's D&C section 63, verse 34 (see also T&C 50:8).

Listen. Religion is, or ought to be, deeply personal. Religion is not something that... At its most intimate level, it's not even something that can be shared.

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 76. There's some closing verses in the vision in 76. Beginning at verse 114:

*Great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion; Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter; Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him; **To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing** for themselves; That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, **while in the flesh**, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory. (D&C 76:114-118, emphasis added; see also T&C 69:29)*

I have been in that world of glory. I have abided in His presence. I know things not lawful to be uttered. But everything I've uttered today is lawful to be said, is contained in scripture, is the Lord's invitation to you.

And you need to realize that this language is your invitation. Because God did not say, "There's some folks I don't love." He says He bestows it on any who love **Him**. The question isn't His love of **us**; that is a given. Those few of you who are sitting in this room with a hard heart, rejecting what I have to say, He loves every bit as much as those of you whose hearts are soft and are open and are willing. It is not that God loves one more than another; it is that some of you love Him, and others do not. And by this He knows whether you love Him: it's whether your heart is soft and willing to receive, or you deliberately choose to be

blinded by the false traditions that you've studied through and hold fast to because you have not faith.

Religion is intended to be between you and God, deeply personal, individually redemptive. Christ is as accessible to you as He was to Moses on the mount. And what was Moses' ambition? It was to bring everyone up on the mount to see God too. And what did the children of Israel say? "No, you go talk to Him. We don't want to." And why don't we want to? "Because I can study about God, and I can develop a set of authorities, and I can expound upon the history of the church, and I can parse through the vocabulary of the Restoration, and I can **prove**, I can **prove** what God is going to do next and that what's going on right now today in Ephraim, Utah isn't it." And in the pride of your heart, and in the blindness of your mind, and in the hardness of your soul, you will not receive God saying, "Ignore the man with the microphone, and come to Me." You will not say, "Perhaps the words of scripture mean something different and more intensely personal than I have ever taken them to mean before."

I'm not the best messenger. I wish I had the voice of an archangel. I wish I could do something to soften the heart. Christ is, in fact, holy. And I'm deeply aware of the fact that I am not. I can't redeem any of you, but He can. I can testify of Him, but when it comes down to it, at the end of the day, you can feel faith, and you can feel that something important is being communicated by God to you.

But if you read in the Doctrine and Covenants, look at the process: the wicked one comes, and he takes away the light from you, and he does this through your disobedience. And what is your disobedience? *That wicked one cometh and take away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, **and** because of the tradition of their fathers* (D&C 93:9; see also T&C 93:11). My voice is gonna fall silent in your ears in a few moments. And you're gonna leave here, and you're gonna go on, and there are gonna be a thousand voices and traditions that intervene. And come the morrow, you're going to attend meetings in which you're gonna hear a lot of things expounded that just aren't true. And their traditions will take over, and your families are gonna impose upon you the traditions that they have handed down, and you're going to sing about "blessed, noble pioneer." And the cacophony of voices will rise. And the critics will chirp up. And the wicked one will come and take away light and truth.

And I cannot be with you always. And if I were, it would only cripple you. And I'm not here to cripple you. I hate the fact that these are ten talks given by me. I wish they were ten talks given by ten different people. That way you wouldn't say, "Well, he's, you know, something." I'm nothing. I'm keenly aware of my own limitations. But I am keenly aware of our Lord. When I have had discussions with Him, they have invariably been parsing through the scriptures, explaining things. When I have inquired and gotten answers, it has been because of things that are in the scriptures that I do not understand.

I bear witness of Christ. I have seen Him! I know He lives! I know He is coming in judgment. And I know that before His coming, He has wanted some things to be declared. I have been

as faithful as I can be in declaring the things that I've been asked to declare. I sense keenly my own inadequacy. I beg you to overlook all that. Look at the scriptures. Look at the words of Christ. Look at the explanations we got from Joseph. Look at the things that are true, and go to Him in faith believing.

When I started out, I gave you a description of Him. I wanna repeat that:

The Lord is affable, but He is not gregarious. He is approachable. He is not aloof. He is patient, and He is willing to guide, and He's willing to teach. He is intelligent, but He is not overbearing. He is humble and approachable in His demeanor, even though His power is absolutely undeniable. Therefore, He is both a Lamb and a Lion. And if you come to Him in the day that He offers redemption, you will be coming to the Lamb. But if you wait for His coming in judgment, you are waiting on the Lion, and you will not like what it is that you will see.

I asked you to remember: He is quick to forgive sin. He allows all to come to Him. He is no respecter of persons. I said that when I began; I'm saying it again as we end today.

**He is real!** He lives! His work of redemption continues right now, just as it continued throughout His mortal life, just as it continued as He hung on the cross, just as it continued in His resurrection in Palestine and as He came to visit with the Nephites. He ministered to other sheep. And for the life of me I can't understand why the Nephites didn't ask Him about those other sheep. It's one of the things about which mankind has had absolutely no curiosity, for some reason. He's ministered to other sheep. He's called other people. And there are, in fact, *holy men [whom] ye know not of* (D&C 49:8; see also T&C 35:3) that still remain.

If there was anything more I could do or say that I thought would convince or persuade you to believe in Him, I would do it, or I would say it. But despite it all, I realize some of you are gonna walk out of here thinking that I'm just another one of these latter-day blowhards. And that's all good and well. Please, however, give heed to the scriptures I've read, the words of Joseph I've quoted, and the fact that I do have a witness that He's approachable, and that He's every bit as much alive today as He was when He walked on the road to Emmaus. And He's every bit as much willing to come and redeem you from the Fall as He is willing to redeem anyone. His work and His glory is culminated in **you**. His success is redeeming **you**.

If you think that, "Well, He's aloof; He's distant; and this is an impossibly high thing to achieve," the fact of the matter is, it is a greater achievement on **His** end to redeem you than it is at your end to be redeemed. There's more anxiety, there's more desire, there's more **rejoicing in heaven** when He redeems someone from the Fall than there is here.

He came. He suffered. He lived. He died. He did what He did in order to lift all of Creation, and you are inextricably connected to Him. Therefore, trust that. Receive Him. It may start very slow, very small, very distant. Act on that! Harken to that! It gets louder. You will

never wind up in the company of Gods and angels, if you're not willing to have faith in those preliminary things that you receive that ask you to go and to do.

When I first got an answer to prayer sitting in a barracks in New Hampshire, if I hadn't acted on that, if I hadn'ta gone and done, I would never have beheld the Lord, much less been taught by Him. But I did—and I do. And whatever He asks of me, that's what I do now. And it doesn't matter how unpleasant I may find it or how reluctant in my heart I may be to go and do. I go, and I do.

You need to do that. May not even make much sense to you when you're going and you're doing. You may think you're giving offenses where you absolutely do not intend to do so. You may find the people that you love rejecting you, finding a new family and then having that family reject you again. I've laid it all on the line for the Lord, and I've done it twice now in a single lifetime. I can't tell you what sacrifices He may ask of you. But whatever He asks of you, that do you.

Let me end by bearing testimony and witness to you, that the things I've been saying (beginning in Boise and going on through Phoenix), the beginning date, the ending date, the content, the fact that there are ten of them, the timeframe in which they're being delivered, the fact that He wanted this to begin on the "first day of the 40th year," and He wanted this to end on the "last day of the 40th year"—those things are not my doing.

Hearken to the word of the Lord.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.