

"A Day of Faith and Connection"

Youth Conference Address

Denver C. Snuffer Jr.

10 June 2017

There are more of you here than I was told would be coming. So that's probably a good thing. I had prepared a short talk. Your questions might be more interesting than a short talk. So think of questions and I'm going to see if I can say something while you're composing your question that would be of use to you.

I think there's a difference between resisting temptation and avoiding temptation. And I think if you're going to choose in life to fight battles where you resist temptation, you're probably going to lose that battle a lot. But if instead you choose to avoid temptation, that's a battle you can win.

It's like confronting a giant that is stronger than you, faster than you, meaner than you, more cruel than you ever thought of being, and taking that fight on. The outcome is probably not gonna be in your favor. But if you can sneak around that giant and never take him on, then he doesn't matter.

You kids probably do not yet know what your weaknesses are. You have to be older when you confront that. But everyone's got weakness. The scriptures say—and this is the Lord talking to Moroni while Moroni is working on translating the book of Ether. He's not very happy with the job he's doing translating the Book of Ether and he complains to the Lord saying that: "the gentiles when they read this they're going to mock. They're going to be amused by what I'm doing here" (See Ether 12:23-25).

And the Lord says, "*Fools mock but [they'll] mourn;... I give [to] men weakness that they may be humble; [and if they'll come to Me I will] make weak things ... strong*" (Ether 12:26-27).

How God makes weak things strong is not necessarily making you able to resist your weakness. It might be by making you smart enough to know what your weaknesses are.

I have friends with weaknesses that I do not even understand because they aren't mine. I have friends who have literally ruined their lives with gambling. And I don't understand gambling. I can walk through a casino and laugh at what I see going on there because it does not appeal to me. When I'm in a casino and I'm going to gamble, I'm trying to get rid of the change in my pocket and I'm putting them into the one arm bandits to try and get rid of the change and if I win something that's an enormous setback because now I have more change than what I started with. Gambling doesn't appeal to me. But there are people whose lives are caught up and destroyed by that.

When it comes to the greatest example of how you avoid temptation, like everything else that's good it's Christ who sets the example. In the Book of Hebrews we find out that Christ was in all things tempted like we were. What if instead of Jesus Christ being the strongest

man in terms of his self-will that ever lived, what if Jesus was in fact the weakest, the most vulnerable, the most tempted of all men?

The Book of Hebrews says that he was tempted in all things like us. Thankfully some of us only have one or two or three weaknesses that they have to deal with in life. What if the Savior had to deal with them all? What if he had to deal with everything that you will find tempting throughout your life and more even the things you find non-tempting?

The Savior's ability to resist temptation did not come from a head-on fight. After he was baptized, He went into the wilderness for 40 days and He fasted for 40 days and at the end of 40 days when He was hungry the adversary came to Him and suggested that He use the power that he had, use the influence he had with Heavenly Father, to turn stones into bread. It's pretty clear that Jesus did not start thinking about bread and which bread would taste better right now—whether unleavened bread or flat bread or sourdough bread or leavened bread or German Schwarzbrot, which may not have been invented yet, but He's the Lord. I mean He could foresee it.

He didn't do that. He dismissed it. Man does not live by bread alone. He just put an end to it. He did not entertain the thought because certainly at that moment it would have been a temptation to him. But the thought was simply dismissed. He avoided the temptation and by avoiding it He overcame it.

When the adversary was desperate because the Savior had rebuffed two attempts, he asked the Savior to do something that the public would notice and acknowledge that this was miraculous, that this was the Lord. Do a publicity stunt. Christ was unwilling to do that. Then he offered Him everything there was in the world because Lucifer has control over that as you'll find out. And He resisted that.

We learn the secret to what the Savior did in a short statement about the Savior: *"He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them."* (D&C 20:22)

I know friends whose lives have been compromised by any number of terrible failings. But if they had given no heed to them and had gone on with life as the Savior's example said, some of their lives would have turned out remarkably different. When you recognize what your weaknesses are, don't choose to fight the battle on those grounds. Go somewhere else. Do something else. Get out of there. Don't fight it. Choose instead a different route. You can fight all day long with weaknesses or bad habits, but if you simply replace them with a good habit, if you go do something right or productive or good you won't have to fight that battle.

Don't try to fight a battle that you can't win. The weaknesses that you have been given are unique to you and given to you to help you be humble. And every man, every woman that has or ever will live has weaknesses that come from God. They're part of the human condition.

Avoid the battle. Go elsewhere and do something. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

So, I understand there are questions. Someone wanna ask a question?

[Question asked; inaudible]

The question is: “Am I going to write another book?”

A: Probably for Christians, not Latter-day Saints, but for Christians. Christianity is in terrible disarray, but because there is widespread agreement on a few principles, Christianity thinks it has survived since the time of the New Testament until today pretty much intact. The truth of the matter is that Christianity in the form that you have today whether it's Catholic, or Protestant or Eastern Orthodox really had no agreement about even the most important principles until 324 AD. Between the close of the New Testament in 324 AD, Christians were so divided about so many issues that they were actually killing one another. They were fighting battles—pitched battles about the fundamentals of Christianity. It took a Roman Emperor to impose what the Christian world now believes about the Trinity and that's why they regard Mormons as non-Christian because we don't accept the creeds.

In 324 AD and then again about two decades after that, two creeds were adopted and they include within both of them the statement that you must believe these things or else you are not Christian. And so today it doesn't matter if you're Lutheran, or if you're Catholic or if you're Methodist or if you're Presbyterian. It doesn't matter. Those creeds that were adopted back in the fourth century are what you must believe or else not be Christian. And we don't believe those creeds. In fact, when Christ appeared to Joseph Smith he said, “*their creeds [are] an abomination*” (JSH 1:19). And so, Christianity at its core is abominable and I may be trying to persuade them to take another look at Joseph Smith, take another look at the restoration, take a look at the Book of Mormon and to see if some of what the Christian world thinks is true is not better explained and better understood through the Book of Mormon and through the preaching of Joseph Smith

If the Christian world would take Joseph seriously, it would fix a lot of problems, a lot of confusion, and the inability of the Christian world to get the kind of faith that would improve their communities. I mean if you think that we exhibit weaknesses—the Christian world doesn't even know how to lay hold on some of the gifts and blessings that you're able to lay hold of because you understand God and who He is a little better. So I may be addressing that. I am gonna go give some talks, see if I can get any of them persuaded to consider the restoration, and consider Joseph Smith.

Any other..., yeah...

[Question asked; unintelligible]

Yeah, see, you have extraordinary advantages because of what your parents are doing.

[From the audience:] Can you repeat the question?

Oh, she's asking about the parents that are raising many of these children, are doing what they can and teaching what they can about the restoration and about what's going on. And the kids, on the other hand, have school and other responsibilities growing up. What can they do to help move themselves along in the process?

School is important. In fact, everything that you learn as a skill, as a talent— everything that you learn can be used to help you understand the scriptures more. And it doesn't matter if it's music or mathematics. It doesn't matter if it's geology or political science. They,...Every skill you acquire through your education can be used to help you understand and interpret the scriptures better.

There are things that because I went to law school and I learned how to be a lawyer, that I can see in the record of the Old Testament that explains the legal system that they had back in those days.

Abraham's wife Sarah died, and Abraham wanted to bury his wife. But he was in a land at that time in which he owned no land, so he needed to acquire a burial site for his wife. Well, their system in that day required that whatever the bargain was that was struck between the people that were negotiating, it had to be witnessed by at least two people. And in order for that agreement to be binding, something had to be given in exchange. If you didn't give something in exchange, then whatever you got could be taken back.

And Abraham wanted Sarah buried in a place where it could not be taken back. It would be hers as her burial spot forever. So, he goes to the people of the city to try and find out who owns the field that has the cave that he would like to bury Sarah in. Well, the field has a crop in it. He wants the land, but he doesn't necessarily want the crop. And he wants the land because of the cave and that is where he wants to bury Sarah. (See Genesis 23:1-20)

So he approaches the fellow who owns the cave in the presence of others and he says "I would like to purchase this for the burial spot." and the first response is: "Oh you don't need to buy that from me. I'll give it to you. Go ahead and use it as the burial spot." Which meant that he was really going to retain ownership and he could in fact disturb the gravesite of Sarah because nothing was being exchanged. And Abraham said "No, no you can't give it to me. I want to purchase that" because he wants his wife's remains undisturbed.

And so now that he knows he can't give it to him and therefore take it back, Efron, that was the name of the fellow that owned the field, says: "Well what is it to me to give to you something that is worth (and I think it was) 200 shekels of silver (I think that was the price he named)?" Said "that's a small sum between you and I, and it's no problem." So now Abraham knows the price that is being asked for the property. And he was overcharging. It was an unfair amount. But he had a crop on it so maybe he valued the crop. and Abraham in the presence of the witnesses paid the 200 shekels, secured the ground and he acquired for himself the burial place for Sarah that could not now be taken back. Well, there are a lot of little legal things that are going on in the process of getting an enforceable agreement so

that Abraham owns the ground and Sarah's body will not be disturbed. And I learned about those things by going to law school.

But if you go and you study mathematics, or geology or you study music—there are a lot of things in the Old Testament that are based upon music. There's incidents in the Book of Mormon in which they're singing and dancing going on in a private place among only the daughters and then the wicked priests of Noah come and abduct them and the story goes on from there. It doesn't matter what you study in school. Everything you learn can help you better understand what's in the scriptures. So don't think that education doesn't matter. And don't think that you are wasting time in getting an education because it's not focused in upon directly understanding better the volume of scriptures. That'll come. And everything should be done in its season, in its time.

In fact there is an opening set of words in the Book of Ecclesiastes which Bob Dylan turned into a folk song which The Birds then fixed because Bob Dylan has a horrible voice. The name of the song is Turn Turn Turn and it talks about: *"to everything there is a season and a time [for] every purpose under ... heaven. A time to be born, ... a time to die.... A time to cast away stones, ... a time to gather stones together"* (Ecclesiastes 3:1,2,5).

In your life there will be time for everything. And as you go through phases of life, at each interval take advantage of that. Learn when it's time to learn. Play when it is time to play. And if you get a chance to get over there in the frog pond make sure that you spend some time there. I mean if you don't have questions I could tell you stories about the frog ponds in Mountain Home Idaho that would well, probably keep you from eating for a while.

Do you have a question, 'cause I see you're standing up? Yeah.... [unintelligible from the person] No, it's good. Yeah...

[Unintelligible]

[Question asked by a young man, only partially intelligible] "What was the number one thing that you did personally that helped you cast off the scales of unbelief ... [unintelligible].

Okay, so, what was the number one thing that I did that helped me cast off the scales of unbelief to be able to come to Christ?

My greatest asset was stupidity. Because I actually thought when they, ... well it wasn't the book, it was the pamphlet that they gave me of the Joseph Smith story, I read the Joseph Smith story and I actually thought that's the kind of stuff that happened all the time among people that had become Mormons and rediscovered God's work in the last days. I knew that that was the kind of stuff that happened in the New Testament because we can read all about that. And I had some confidence that you didn't have to be necessarily really well-integrated into the right course of conduct as long as you had faith in God because the apostle Paul was going around persecuting the believers and Christ came to the apostle

Paul. Now admittedly once Christ came to him, he changed his life and he set about and he changed the course of history. In fact, it was the apostle Paul who inspired the Protestant reformation more than anything else that was written in the NT.

So if the apostle Paul who was so ill-fitted to Christianity that he is going about trying to kill Christians can qualify for God's miraculous intervention in His life, then a person of faith as long as they are headed in the right direction should be able to get the attention of God and angels. So I thought, wrongly (I mean I didn't discover through years later), I thought that angels ministering to Mormon believers was a regular occurrence.

So it did not surprise me at all when Joseph went out to pray in the grove and as he began that search he got attacked by the adversary and then calling upon God with all His strength he got delivered. It did not surprise me when I got attacked by a malevolent source before I encountered an angel. And it didn't put me off the trail. In fact, I was again stupid enough to say, "Oh, this is kind of like what happened when Joseph was trying to approach God; he encountered opposition." So to me the opposition suggested the presence of God and God's reality and God's bona fide existence and work. Because if the enemy is there, there has to be the opposite of the enemy also. It was sometime later that I encountered an angel. And I haven't talked much about the miraculous things that have gone on because I don't think it is particularly helpful to put a lot of details out about any of that stuff. But I want you to know that it does happen. And it happens as much today in people of faith as it happens in the course of the scriptures.

I do not believe for one moment that God carefully limits and cautiously apportions the things that come from Him to a select few. I think that God's abundance is meant for everyone. And the regulator, the inhibitor, the limiter isn't up there. It's within us. I think that, you know, the farther up you look the more vast- at a glance if you look up into heaven you can see distances that are so great that they are measured in the distance light will travel in a year. In fact, you can see if you look upward, distances that take billions of years for light to cross them. Those are the distant stars you're seeing up there. Heaven is vast and filled. It's us that limits that. The farther out you go, the more you see up there, and the more you should realize that the vastness of God is beyond anything that we can contain. So let a little of that in. Every one of you has some direct linkage to God. It's called a gift. Every one of you has some unique gift as a way that God talks to you. Let it in. Be sensitive to it.

I was mentioning at dinner last night- Monarch butterflies migrate. Do you see a monarch butterfly up here? Oh look right there! They migrate! That butterfly has probably flown from here to somewhere in Central America, okay? They cover thousands of miles. They do it annually - those little things, okay?. The last time we had a snowstorm (and it was a lot of snow down where we live in Sandy), my wife and I went hiking the next day. It was cold the day before, lots of snow came down, and when we went out hiking a lot of it had melted off because it was so warm the next day. And on that hike, the next day, I saw a monarch butterfly flying along the trail. A monarch butterfly will be killed by snowfall. When I saw the monarch butterfly on that hike I told my wife "It's not going to snow again. That was the last snow of the season. It's over with." Because the monarch butterfly has a life that is

dependent upon arriving when it's safe to arrive.

God talks to us through all kinds of things. When you see the geese moving, flying south, their lives depend upon knowing when to go. There's so many things in nature if you'll just observe it. If you'll just let it in. God is speaking to all of us more or less all of the time. And we determine how much of that we are willing to let in.

Was there another question?

Yeah...

[Question asked by audience; unintelligible]

Mother is trying to talk to other family members who are not willing to listen. Any advice for how you deal with that?

What I have learned by sad experience is that the best way to approach someone is by your example and not by your mouth. And they can really hate what they are hearing you say, but if what they see you do is admirable, eventually they will reach the conclusion that what you're doing is the result of what you're believing. And if what you're believing is on display in what you do, that will touch them in ways that can't be opposed, can't be argued against.

But if all you're gonna do is try to argue someone into agreement with you. Well heavens! There are people that make a living arguing against Mormonism. Well, They've had to spend a lifetime studying it in order to come up with the arguments against it. If information alone was going to persuade, some of our biggest critics would now be converted. But they're not because their hearts are hard. The way to get through to them is with kindness, is with the example. Christ in the Sermon on the Mount said: *"Blessed are [you], when men shall ... say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: ... for so persecuted they the prophets [beforehand]"* (Matt: 5:11-12)

Most people have encountered "religious" folk (and I put religious in quotes) who talk a good fight, but who will not sacrifice to benefit others. If instead you stay the course and you live the example, they're going to at first assume that you're just another religious hypocrite, because that's what we have all encountered. When, however, that example persists, and it persists against mocking, against ridicule, against criticism—when that example persists-

I mean one of the questions that it was a vision, it was a dream and therefore we did not finish the story—but fill that great and spacious building with a bunch of real people who are mocking and ridiculing and laughing at the people that are at the tree of life and let them see the great example of the people who are at the tree of life. Before long there will be some who leave the building and go and join the people at the tree of life because that's what persuades, that's what convinces, that's what touches the heart.

So I would say less preaching and more self-sacrifice and example and even hard-hearted people will find themselves touched by what they **see** being done.

How much more time am I supposed to take, 'cause I don't wanna wear out my welcome. Was there another question? Yeah...

[Question from the audience; unintelligible.]

There's, one of the more.... The question is If we enter into a covenant what does that mean for the youth?

There's more about that subject in the Book of Mormon than anyone has ever bothered to talk about. When the people of Jared were brought to the Americas, they were brought to the Americas by an act and direction of God in order for them to inherit a land of promise. When they inherited the land it was theirs, but they wore out their welcome by their rebellion, their forgetfulness, their failure to honor the God of this land. It is within the Book of Ether that we find out that this land comes with a restriction on it that those that possess it have to worship the God of this land or they will be swept away.

Now the sweeping away sometimes takes generations before it happens. But it happens. It happened to the Jaredites and then the Nephites were brought over—the party of Lehi—and they were also given the land to possess as a covenant. Throughout the time, though, that the Nephites inherited this land as their covenant land of promise, there was a constant reference to a future moment, a future time, a time in which the Nephites themselves would be destroyed. And they'd be destroyed by the Lamanites. And then the Lamanites would inherit the land, and they would in turn be displaced because they forgot the God of this land. And a new group would be brought over, and the new group would eventually likewise enter into a covenant and receive the land of promise. Now very often in order for the Lord to achieve his end you have to have three attempts. You have to have two attempts that fail before you finally have one that succeeds.

The purpose behind establishing a covenant with the gentles in the last days is not so that the gentles get to inhabit the land as a place for them to celebrate and rejoice. It's to bring about the Lord's purposes in creating Zion. If the youth enter into the covenant and then keep the covenant it has one and only one purpose and that is to bring about Zion. We've had persistent failures of humanity to create Zion, but it's happened once in the time of Enoch, it happened again in the time of Melchizedek, and it's going to happen a third time at some point on this land. The existence of Zion in this land will precede the redemption in Jerusalem, but Jerusalem will also become one of the places where for a thousand years our Lord is going to have a jurisdiction.

What the youth can and should do is enter into a covenant and then abide by it. The Lord's requests of us are achievable—faith, repentance, baptism, accepting the doctrine of Christ, living consistent with the standards. Christ may have come to fulfil the Law of Moses, and He did so, but in the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon at Bountiful He explained how

you don't need the Law of Moses. You will **not** take an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth and you will **not** slay your brother **if** you'll show kindness and love to one another. **If** instead of being angry with your brother, you kill that anger within you, you never get to the point that there is some violent outbreak if you police what's going on in your heart. The Sermon on the Mount is the way to make the Law of Moses obsolete, irrelevant, because instead of lust in your heart you are checking that beforehand. You will never have a King David fall with Bathsheba from grace because he never gets to the point of saying: "Well the only thing I have to stop short of is adultery." Instead, he's saying: "I have to check in my heart lust."

The Sermon on the Mount is a way of **evading** the temptation by not going there. And so enter into the covenant and keep the terms, and God will keep His promises. And His promises include- it's not just prospering in the land. Let me see if I can put this in a way that will get through.

If you go to the Book of Enoch (the Enoch vision chapters of the Book of Moses which will be in Genesis when the new scriptures are out). Enoch is in heaven and he's looking down at the mess that is going on, on the earth and while he is beholding the earth there is a voice that comes out of the earth itself. So this is the voice of the earth and it is a female. It is a she. Our earth is a feminine creature—creation. The earth says "Wo is me, the mother of men." (Moses 7:48). And she laments the wickedness that is upon her by what men are doing. The earth would rather rejoice at our presence and yield her abundance to us.

One of the reasons why there is no paradise on earth as there was in the Garden of Eden is because the earth herself knows the wickedness of men—the destructiveness of men. And so she withholds her abundance because of our wickedness. She asks in that Enoch account: "When shall righteousness return to my face?" (See Moses 7:48) If a group of people give the earth reason to rejoice that they are there on her surface, the earth can reward those people; indeed, the earth can protect those people. And if need be the earth can destroy whatever comes against the people she decides to protect. Rivers can turn out of their course as happened with Enoch's Zion. Mountains can be moved out of their place.

Okay. This is just an exercise for those of you that are willing to entertain the exercise. Go sometime onto YouTube and do a search for videos of landslides. Watch a few videos of landslides and ask yourself: "What army could come up against that?" If mountains are moved out of their course, there is no weapon formed against that that can prosper. It will obliterate anything. Well, the earth has an incentive to protect Zion because the earth wants righteousness to return again upon her face. It's one of the reasons why I think Zion necessarily has to be built in the mountains because it's built in a place that the earth herself can protect the residents of Zion.

Okay, maybe one more. Huh, yeah..

[Question from the audience:] You said that Enoch would be in the Book of Genesis in the new scriptures...

[Denver:] Yes.

[Question continues:] What new scriptures are you talking about?

[Denver:] There's a project underway right now to put together a new set of scriptures in which the Joseph Smith Translation is not just footnotes and parts of the Pearl of Great Price. Matthew chapter 24 is in the Pearl of Great Price right now, but it was in the Joseph Smith Translation of the bible—it was the 24th chapter of Matthew at one time. The Book of Moses chapters one to seven or eight, however long it is, in the Pearl of Great Price was part of the Book of Genesis in the Joseph Smith Translation.

So we've never had a published version of scriptures that take the entirety of the Joseph Smith Translation and put it in as a single record as a bible. In fact, even what the RLDS church has published does not include all of the Joseph Smith Translation. And what is happening right now is, effort is being made to gather all of the Joseph Smith Translation, Old Testament and New Testament and put it together as the bible in a new set of scriptures and also to get the most accurate account or record of the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon that's printed by the LDS church is a descendent of the version that got printed in Liverpool, or no, in London in 1841 which is based upon a version of the Book of Mormon that Joseph Smith revised in 1837 from the original one printed in 1830. But Joseph Smith revised the Book of Mormon in 1840. The LDS church's volumes have been based upon the '37 revision, not on the 1840 revision, and so an effort is being made to take the last version that Joseph Smith made revisions to and to publish that as the Book of Mormon.

And to pick up some of the material,... when Oliver Cowdery copied the manuscript, Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon. Emma Smith wrote part of it. Martin Harris wrote part of it. Oliver Cowdery wrote part of it. That original version was not what got put into print by EB Grandin in the 1830 version. Oliver Cowdery took that original version and he hand-copied every word of that on another one and then they took that printer's copy to EB Grandin to put it in print. On average, when Oliver Cowdery copied the original one into the printer's manuscript, he made about two mistakes on every page of his copying. Then when EB Grandin took over, he made some mistakes when he put it in print and the 1830 version of the Book Of Mormon has some copy mistakes in it and then it has some printer's mistakes in it.

Joseph tried to fix some of that in 1837 and he fixed more of it in 1840. But in 1842, Joseph's journal records that he was still going to make more corrections to it because it still had not been completely fixed. Work is being done right now to try and get the Book of Mormon as accurate and as complete, and to include everything that was intended to be part of the Book of Mormon when it first got produced. The original one and the copy that Oliver Cowdery made that he took to the printer doesn't have any punctuation. It's just one long group of words with no periods, no commas, no semicolons. The guy that provided

most of the punctuation to the Book of Mormon was an employee in EB Grandin's shop named John Gilbert. There's a picture of John Gilbert in the Joseph Smith papers. He's got kind of a fuzzy head. He's a little slight tiny guy and he looks like a dandelion kind-a-like 'cause his hair is kind of wild. You look at him and you kind of have immediate like for the guy just because of his appearance. I mean at least sympathy if not like.

Well he punctuated your Book of Mormon and most of what he did is still in what's in print now. So Joseph did some correcting in '37, some correcting in '40, but there were issues that never got addressed. Part of the punctuation that John Gilbert supplied to the Book of Mormon put commas in places that actually changed the meaning of the text. I've referred to part of what Gilbert did in his punctuation as "Trinitarian commas" because in descriptions of Christ he put commas in that made the description of Christ appear to be the trinity. And if you just move some of those commas around, then the text reads like Lectures on Faith, which was what Joseph provided to us. Well John Gilbert never studied Joseph's works. He never listened to Joseph preach a sermon and he wouldn't know how to punctuate in any way other than as a Trinitarian Christian believer in the creeds that Christ called an abomination.

[Question continues from the audience:] ...you're not adding to ... [unintelligible].

We're adding to the bible the Joseph Smith additions that have never been included and it is not just additions. Joseph eliminated some things. For example, James 1:5: "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth [unto] all ... liberally.*" The word men, Joseph crossed out. So what God gives liberally is not to men, it's to all. And it's a pretty important little deduction, because there are literally women who read "*giveth to all men liberally*" who assume that means that a man's entitled to receive from God, but not a woman. And so Joseph fixed that by crossing out the word men—"Who giveth unto **all** [including you, including you] *liberally.*" Small change. There are lots of those. And so it's not just trying to fix the text and adding in what Joseph did that ought to be added. Joseph deducted some things. Admittedly, they're small words, but they make a big difference. And so that's going on, and when it's done the text will be an account of what Joseph did on an assignment from the Lord to fix the Bible, to fix the text of the bible. And there are some surprises in it. There are some interesting things in it. The more carefully you examine it, the more you find that—

I wasn't gonna take any more, but yeah?

[Question from the audience:] What is your view on the solar eclipse happening?

Two months—It's in August 21st? August 21st. Well it is part of a pair, you know. There is one August 21st of this year and then there is a follow-on one. And they essentially, yeah, they make an X across the United States. Well, I mean it's a fairly dramatic celestial event that suggests possible meanings like the times of the gentles are coming to an end and they are about to be swept away and replaced as the possessors and the rightful owners of the land, which I've heard some people loudly proclaim.

I am of the view that how we act matters, a lot. I think Nineveh got saved because they repented. And if God will spare Nineveh because they repented, then he ought to be willing to spare other people because they are willing to repent. So the focus of action in what God has been doing shifted from the old world to the new world as a matter of prophecy, as a matter of covenant, as a matter of burden. The focus will be here on this land, primarily, until the Lord's return, and then Jerusalem will reacquire significance that they once had as well. But Zion is gonna be on this the American continent.

Since Zion must precede the Lord's return, and since this land is a land that has a restriction on it that requires those who are going to occupy it to serve the God of the land who is Jesus Christ, I would say that the sign of the eclipse is a rather ominous suggestion that we could be crossed out and we could be replaced—unless of course we choose to repent.

There are two great symbols that are identical in size and identical in the position they occupy in the heaven above us. One is the sun and one is the moon. From the surface of the earth, they are exactly the same size. Now admittedly, the moon is one sixth, ["one fourth" from someone in the audience] one fourth the size of the earth and the sun is thousands, hundreds of thousands of times bigger, but they were placed in the heavens at the relevant distances so that when you're looking at them, they are identical in the area that they occupy in the heaven above.

The sun is a symbol of Heavenly Father. The moon is a symbol of Heavenly Mother. And they occupy exactly the same position on the ecliptic. They move in the same position across the heavens. The movement of the mother as a symbol is far more complex than the movement of the sun across the sky, because the dance that the symbol of our Heavenly Mother is performing is both progressive and recessive. She moves constantly across the sky from the east to the west (once she comes into sight), but every night she moves farther east. And so she begins farther to the east every night and then moves across the night sky to the west. Her dance is far more complex than is the Father's. His is stable and relatively stationary, and relatively predictable.

The symbol of the mother blotting out the light of the sun in the eclipse, which is what you were asking about, is ominous indeed because when a mother loses hope for her children that's a lot more frightening than the father's ire that happens just about every time there is a football game on TV. When a Mother gets worked up enough to send a symbol across the land that suggests the blotting out of the light of the Father, it 's something that maybe we ought to sit up and take note about.

By the way, all these things were once part of the gospel. All of this. Everything. In fact, the D&C says everything that's above, everything that's on and everything that's beneath the earth— and beneath the earth means from the surface of the earth. It means those heavenly bodies that fall below the horizon and then reemerge like the planet Venus reemerges. It goes under. It's the evening star and then it's the morning star. It changes sides that you see the symbol on. All of these things were once part of the gospel and all of these things will

eventually again become part of the gospel once more.

All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And also, if there be bounds set to the Heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars -- All the times of their revolutions, all their appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fullness of time" [D&C 121:29-31.]

There is a message up there. It was part of the gospel. It will be restored again, but right now faith, repentance, baptism and treating one another kindly and preparing to be the kind of people that are worthy of preservation is far more important than all of that. But I mentioned school and study and I'm telling you, astronomy also has some interesting things that are gospel based. Genesis chapter one verse 14 says all that stuff up there was given us for signs. And they're talking to us. The only way you can obliterate the testimony that's up there is by our apostasy when we lose light and we're ignorant and we can't read it anymore. Because we can't touch that. We can't make copy mistakes and we can't give a poor transcription or make printing errors with that. It's fixed and it's not gonna change. But we can lose light and knowledge such that we can no longer understand that testimony.

Yeah?

[Question from the audience:] What do you think about Revelations... [unintelligible].

I think that anytime there is something going on in the heavens that God means something by it, even if we're oblivious to it. And the challenge is to not be oblivious to it, but to take it in and then assign it its proper weight. What is going to happen is more affected by your repentance and your faith than anything else. And that's really where the hard work gets done—in the hearts, in our own hearts, in our own lives, in how we treat one another.

Let me end by bearing testimony to you that when this whole process was set in motion by God on the first day of creation, He had in His heart a plan that was going to unfold through every generation until the end. Three years previous to the death of Adam, in the valley of Adam-Ondi-Ahman, Adam gathered his posterity together essentially to tell them goodbye. And in the valley of Adam-Ondi-Ahman, Christ came and appeared to those that had gathered there.

And Adam, despite the fact that he was bowed down with great age, rose up animated by the Spirit that he was taking in from the presence of our Lord, and he prophesied whatsoever should befall his descendants to the last generation. So he was talking about, among others, you.

That same plan that was ordained in the heavens before the foundation of the world was revealed through Adam in prophecy in the valley of Adam-Ondi-Ahman. And we are on

schedule to keep the appointments. Whether we are going to be on one side of the divide or on the other side of the divide, we're keeping the appointment. The times have been fixed, and the seasons unfold and the signs that show up from time to time remind us that despite how hectic and disorganized and how ill-fitted the world may be for the fulfillment of all the prophecies, it's simply going to happen. Hopefully more will repent and return and be faithful, but it really won't matter because there is always enough with the Lord. He has a way of making whoever will come aboard be sufficient for his purposes.

So I hope that as life throws its challenges at each of you, that you remember that some battles can't be won, they ought to be avoided. And that the coming days are really going to be some of the most important of all days, and you're gonna have a ringside seat to 'em. Now whether you participate in the way that you will look back on with joy and rejoicing or you'll participate by lamenting what you failed to do, you're going to participate. That's not an option. It's unavoidable. But if you live according to the light that God gives you, you can live joyfully and no matter what it is you see happening, you can still know that you have favor with God. And I hope all of you are determined to do that.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

[Transcript v2.1]