

Q&A with Denver

*The Answer to Prayer for Covenant as an Assignment from the Lord:
Love One Another as I Have Loved You, Spring General Conference*

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Denver Snuffer: Now, I said to whoever it was who called me... I think it was you, Taylor. Yeah. I said that I have two grandbabies—a four- and a two-year-old's (grandbabies born in the same month, within, I think, three days of one another)—whose birthday is being celebrated down in Sandy. And I'm heading there to eat birthday cake and forget about this. And I said that I would have a few minutes... They wanted to open it up for questions—and I've heard that there is a microphone... And there's Reed, Mr. Microphone himself, (which kind of reminds me of a story that I'll tell at some point).

They're trying to record this stuff—and so you can put the mic there, and if anyone's got a question, you can feel free to come up, ask your question into the mic. A question is a sentence that ends with a question mark.

My wife taught a class yesterday, and she said she was interrupting people and saying, "That's not a question. What's your question?" So getting her counsel before I came up here, I decided I'd *define question* in advance: It's a short statement, and it ends with a question mark—and normally, you raise your voice at the end of the question to make it clear you're done and now something's on the table, deal with it.

Now, you can ask **absolutely any question** you want to ask. And I **might** answer some of them. So does anyone have a question? Oh, look, there we are.

Question 1: All right. So I'm new to all this...

DS: Oh, good. Yeah.

Q1: ...just so to preface. I want to know: What exactly does God expect of us—here, as a covenant people—to actually accomplish in our lives?

DS: Most of what the Lord would like us to do at the moment is internal to ourselves. There's a kind of analogy/a description that's given when Ezra returns and they're rebuilding the temple, of how they had the scroll/the Scriptures in one hand and a trowel in the other. The people that returned to rebuild the temple in the Second Temple era were only a *remnant* of the people that were taken, a remnant of the descendants of the people that had been taken captive into Babylon. So you have a large body of believers who got exiled from the holy land, taken captive into Babylon. The overwhelming majority of those people remained behind in Babylon, and only a remnant returned back—because returning back from Babylon meant you were leaving a kind of secure economy, a kind of stable society, a place where things were stable and good. You... It took a lot of faith for someone to leave there and go to a city that had been destroyed, in order to rebuild and re-civilize. So the environmental circumstances were such that they'd already made up their mind that they were going to follow the Lord and accepted the reality that following the Lord meant a

sojourn into difficulty and hardship. They were willing to do that; that was what they knew would come by doing that.

In our day, we're being asked, for the moment, to stay put but to adopt a new set of values, rules, scriptural understanding, a body of teachings that really have been dissipated and lost. And we're doing that in the face of unrelenting criticism. ~~Many of it~~ Much of the criticism that gets leveled against the Restoration gets leveled against Joseph Smith specifically and gets done against a body of lies and falsehoods. The library of material that has been produced in order to suggest that Joseph Smith was a liar and an adulterer and someone who loved and made a lie—which, by the way, in and of itself tells you that he's damned to hell, based upon the “Three Degrees of Glory” revelation. Those who love and make a lie are those that are going to be cast down/thrust down to hell, and in the Book of Mormon text, it says the liar shall be thrust down to hell. And the body of information that people spread now, even within the “Answers to Gospel Questions” by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, states that Joseph Smith was unequivocally a liar because there were “some truths that are just so special and sacred” that one can't divulge that they're out there bed-hopping because that would not be understood by the “moral Gentiles” who accepted the ten commandments that included, among them, *Thou shalt not commit adultery!* It's just irony upon irony.

What is expected of you at this moment, is to recognize the truth, accept the truth, and change from within you. Then the even **greater change** is to get along with other people. I'd like you to meet Rob Adolpho; he's sitting about...

You're good? Okay! He's solved the riddle! You're there.

Any other questions? (I hope you're getting up to leave and not to ask a question.)

You wrote it down?

Question 2: I did! So you mentioned that we need to acknowledge our failure. What does He mean by “acknowledge”?

DS: Well, there's a... I think it's a psalm, but it could be a proverb. I wrote it down in the front cover of my quad, but I don't use my quad anymore, so it's home on a shelf. There's a statement that says, “I've inherited the heritage of the righteous.” Okay? And that was a psalm that was given at a time when, well, like... It's like Ruth and Naomi, where someone comes in and accepts the covenant, and then they're welcomed within the family of Israel. And by doing so, they become really an inheritor of everything that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Judah... Well, Joseph more than Judah. Ah, Judah—and we're supposed to get rid of the envy and the jealousy between Joseph and Judah. So strike that last part.

We inherited a mess. So when we start out...

There's an expression—it's a baseball expression—that someone was “born on third base and thinks they hit a triple.” Well, **we** were born *outside of the ball field* and don't even have the opportunity to enter the dugout—because the way in which the Lord has treated the

Restoration, based upon the response of the people to the Lord in offering the Restoration, is, “You're gonna get kicked out of Missouri. You're gonna get kicked out of Independence (where you think you belong) and driven into another county, you're gonna found a county...” They literally created new counties in order to, you know, put the city of Far West together and start their own local government. And then because they still couldn't get along with people, they wind up with the militia of the state of Missouri driving them out to Illinois. And Illinois was so sympathetic because the one thing that the church has always been really good at is propaganda. I mean, when they arrived in Illinois, the propaganda that had come out of the mouth of the Latter-day Saints made everyone there, you know, dry an eye and say, “How can we help?” but it didn't take long for them to, you know, gain the reputation of being—back then it was called, “making bogus”; today, it's counterfeit money making. Money all along the Mississippi River was plagued with counterfeit money, and a significant part of that appears to have been produced by the printing press that was in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Mark Twain was born in 1835 in Hannibal, Missouri, and he would have been like nine years old when Joseph Smith was killed in 1844. And, you know, despite all of what Mark Twain would have heard, he actually came out in *Roughing It* and visited Salt Lake and gave a pretty fair description of the Mormons. Funny! I mean, Mark Twain was! But it gives a pretty fair description of us. **We've** inherited that.

So when we start out, we are painted with the same ugly yellow paint, and we're leaving handprints and fingerprints all over everything, covered in unworthiness and offensive stuff. We can't even sit on the Lord's furniture without wrecking it. That's where we start out from. So what **we** have to do is largely what the Lord instructed us to do in the Prayer for the Covenant—that gets answered with the Answer to the Prayer for Covenant and then the Covenant itself—and that involves a real sober assessment of exactly where we stand in God's eyes at the beginning of this and the acceptance of grace. And if He bestows grace upon us... It's like the apostle Paul writing to the Romans: “What? Shall we continue to sin so that **grace** can abound? Do we benefit ourselves by having even more grace because we don't repent, and we continue sinning, and then God's grace can be, you know, even more rapidly and widespread applied?”

We're not supposed to be doing that. I mean, he says—after posing that question—he says, “God forbid!” He's saying, “Don't impose upon God's patience by getting forgiven of your messes and then turning around and making another mess!” Part of what the saints did was not... It wasn't just a defect internal. Envyings and strifes and all of the conflict that went on, that's not just a Latter-day Saint treating a Latter-day Saint that way. That's not just people in this room dealing with people in this room in an inappropriate manner. I've never heard of anyone financially cheating anyone else that's among the body of believers; that was going on back in Missouri and in Illinois and in early Utah—and it goes on right now, except the perpetrator is the Corporation of the President, and victims are everyone that was willing to donate money to 'em.

But it was a problem that existed between the body of believers and the “outsiders” who they treated with the kind of... If you could put it over on them, then, you know, “Good on us! Our side wins,” you know? We're not supposed to be doing that. We ought to approach

the people with whom we are dealing with the same kind of humility and respect that we would hope they would show to us or for us. We ought to be really good neighbors. The last thing we want is to have Independence, Missouri repeat itself or Far West repeat itself or Nauvoo repeat itself, where neighbors are... The neighbors felt themselves **defined** as “outsiders.” It’s just... You know, “You’re a Gentile.” You know, “We’re a saint!” I mean, the word “saint” has a kind of hallowed meaning because of Catholicism. So when you say, “We’re saints,” you’re... It’s offensive. I mean, if I’m... “You should be building magnetic statuary to me, and putting it on the dashboard of your car.”

I don’t care if it rains or freezes
Long as I got my plastic Jesus
Sitting on the dashboard of my car.

Who did that song? Okay, anyway, the...

Yeah, you were at the microphone. Save us.

Question 3: You read in Matthew 11 ~~verses~~ paragraph 11 that “the people of Noah were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and took them away.” Does that mean that we need to be careful about eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage? And if so, how do we do that?

DS: Well, there's two ways to look at that. One way is exactly like the question you posed. The other is to say: While you're eating and while you're drinking and while you're giving in marriage, be aware that the end is just around the corner—which will make you eat a little more carefully and share your food with others, drink a little less and be sober-minded, and only marry—in righteousness—someone for whom you have shared values and respect. And of the two readings, I would say I favor the latter.

Yeah?

Question 4: In 2019, you made a statement that you felt like we were getting... There’s a chance that we were getting close...

[replying to the microphone being repositioned] Oh, thanks.

There’s a chance we were getting close to gaining the spirit of Elijah. And I was curious as to where you think... It’s been almost four years. How much closer do you think we are?

DS: Umm... Closer still. Okay, look: There... That... Joseph Smith makes a passing reference to three different kinds of spirit. There's a spirit of Elias, there's a spirit of Elijah, and there's a spirit of Messiah. Now, there are those who say that Joseph was an ignorant farm boy (as he confessed that he was) and that he didn't understand that *Elias* was simply the Greek form of the name *Elijah*—and so Joseph didn't know what he was talking about. I rather favor the other view, which is that Joseph found the term useful to illustrate a point and that he wasn't giving you a language course. He was trying to inform you about the manner in which restoration of material rolls forth.

- The spirit of Elias, as he defined it, was a forerunner that would deliver a message that warns you of things to come.
- The spirit of Elijah is where you begin to have a restoration that includes fulsome enough material to seal people up unto salvation against the day of the harvest.
- And the spirit of Messiah is when the Lord Himself comes and returns.

And he commented about how David had failed to get the greater spirit. So the question needs to be answered and the question needs to be understood in the context of the talk and the vocabulary that Joseph was employing at the time. And the answer I would give is that everything that the Lord has intended to accomplish, He has set about achieving the steps necessary to move everything forward. And that if the Lord were to command that a temple be built, we have everything that would be needed in order to fulfill, at our end, what Heaven expects to take place here, from Heaven's end. And that, should we get the command, we won't have anything at our end that impedes getting that done.

Yeah, you've got a question, I can tell.

Question 5: I'm gonna give a quote and then try to formulate the question. It's ummm...

DS: K, that doesn't sound like my wife's definition of a question. But go ahead, you can make an attempt. Hey, you can throw a shoe...

Q5: I'm trying to "honor her circle."

DS: Okay.

Q5: So, I think it's in Isaiah: "Wo unto those who are big with child or give suck in those days." It almost suggests that, at some point, it's not a good idea to have kids. But I don't know if that's just a false conclusion of mine, or I mean, I feel like... I would like to ask you to... If you would be willing to kind of expound on that?

DS: Yeah. Okay, the first thing you need to understand is that you're a boy, and you can't get pregnant.

The statement that was made by the Lord quoting from the earlier text was made in the context of the distress that would befall Jerusalem in the generation that He was talking to at that time, which included the very Jews who rejected Him. It's really a big deal. You can reject a message and a messenger the Lord sends, and He'll send another in another generation. If you **kill** the prophets, then it's three and four generations. And if you **kill the son of God**, it's more than a millennium before work will begin again, okay? He was talking to a generation who would not only kill Him, but they would also kill Paul, and they would kill Peter, and they would kill Stephen. (Paul would hold the cloak of some of those throwing the stones at Stephen, which just goes to show you how willing the Lord was to forgive and **is** willing to forgive, because Paul looked back on his sins with just dismay).

But He was talking to a generation, He was saying that... And it literally unfolded exactly as He foretold. The people in Jerusalem, and pregnant women in Jerusalem, or nursing mothers and babies in Jerusalem, it was an awful, awful circumstance. He didn't say **that**

about **this** day. It was apt, and it fit then. But in particular, where the body is and the eagles are gathered, they don't... They will **hear** about famines; they will **hear** about wars; they will **hear** about this distress that goes on. But it doesn't sound like that gets right into the community in which the eagles have been gathered.

But then after all of the distress and after all of the wretchedness that happens globally in His return in glory, the angels still gather out “elect” that remain. And that remainder has been a remainder that's spread literally everywhere. And so, if you read the words of the Covenant, there's a promise of protection, and that promise extends from Heaven **and the Earth**, who's gonna watch out for righteousness that appears upon her face. The Earth itself... If you read the Enoch prophecy in Genesis or, if you're still holding on to your Pearl of Great Price, the Moses/Enoch text in Moses in the Pearl of Great Price is reporting the lamentation from the Earth itself. She is speaking—she is cognizant of wickedness, and she is cognizant of righteousness that appears upon her. And let me tell you, the Earth has extraordinary destructive capability. But if she targets it, a landslide can wipe out a community, and there can still be someone standing there unscathed; a tornado can come through and wreck an entire neighborhood and leave one home largely untouched. Hand grenades can be thrown into a crowd of soldiers and detonate when it hits, and some die, and some are grievously injured, and some are trying to figure out, “How did I survive that?”

My father arrived on Omaha Beach on the morning of June 6—D-Day. And when he was dying in a hospital in his 80s, many years later, the thought that puzzled him was, Why did so many of the friends that he had, so many of the people that he had served with, why did they die? And why was he spared? Because he was uninjured on D-Day. On the morning of June 7, his company was gone. He was a combat engineer when he landed on the beach. He was an infantryman on the morning of the next day because they didn't need a combat engineer; they needed an infantryman. And he walked from there to Paris and from Paris to Berlin. And except for frostbite during the Battle of the Bulge, apparently the Lord intended to spare him. And if the Lord can spare a combat engineer landing on Omaha Beach on D-Day, the Lord can spare **anyone—anywhere, in any circumstances**—that He intends to keep in His fold.

“I have graven you on the palms of my hands.” He's saying the mark on His hand is a reminder to Him of how intimately acquainted with “those He intends to preserve” He is. So I wouldn't worry about... You know, Thomas Wolfe didn't coin the phrase, but he used the phrase to good effect in *Breakfast of Champions* [*Bonfire of the Vanities*]. When you're in an inner city—any big city—and the pigeons take off, what the pigeons do when they take off is they begin to flap their wings, and they crap—and the term is a “shitstorm.” And he used that to good effect in *Breakfast of Champions* [*Bonfire of the Vanities*]. And in the coming shitstorm, don't worry; you'll have an umbrella... assuming you're penitent and your heart's right and you meet the conditions of the Covenant.

Yeah, you're clearly getting ready to ask a question, I can tell.

Question 6: Thank you. You talked about the indelible gift of the Holy Ghost, which is awesome, but we seem to not have access to that at this point. So, many of us are still

wondering about the kind of lesser gift of the Holy Ghost, which we have access to. In our LDS upbringing, it's very confusing. It's a... They really just kinda muddle it up. Many questions on that, I mean, is it a one-time event? It's the entrance into the straight and narrow path, but does this baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost happen many times, one time...? Just so many questions on that. And if you could give any clarification on that lower... If that's something you would like to speak on more. I mean, I'm still curious.

DS: They do a fairly reasonable job of talking about that, among the Latter-day Saints. Henry Eyring has talked about how, you know, you can grieve the spirit, and it withdraws from you, and then you have to be penitent in order to fetch it back. The admonition in the ordinance given in the LDS Church is to receive an admonishment to *receive the Holy Ghost*. And I... It's not as if the Latter-day Saints have any kind of a franchise that allows them to either be guaranteed of the presence of the Spirit OR of having some exclusivity that prevents other people from doing so. There are some brilliant, enlightened, meaningful material that gets produced by Buddhists who are reflective. There was a time when some of the greatest theological minds, some of the most well-informed people that understood things by the power of the Spirit were Muslim.

There was an effort—a translation of ancient text effort—made in Brigham Young University, and a deep theological thinker (a fellow by a Muslim scholar) that lived around—I think it was around 1100 AD—wrote some things that were remarkably, just remarkably praiseworthy and deep and contemplative. The problem is that Islam has lapsed into another Dark Age. But there was a time when it was contact by the Crusaders with the Enlightened Muslims who had preserved Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, that brought back material from the Crusades, that provided the stimulus for the Renaissance. We think of the Renaissance as some kind of a re-awakening in Europe. And, in fact, all that was is the Islamic traditions (that had been valued) getting spread into Europe and reawakening/reigniting that fire of knowledge and truth and love.

(And I'm getting the sign; I'm gonna get a sheep hook around my neck here in just a second.)

The Holy Ghost gets redefined in... It's like chapter 6, verse 61 (or [6]2 or [6]3) of the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price; you'd have to go into the book of Genesis (in which it's now paragraphs) in order to locate it. But it's redefined as the truth of all things, the keys of the kingdom, the fullness, and the comforter; it's a string of words. That's what we seek to have access to. You lived in Heaven before you came to Earth. And that is true of everyone everywhere, no matter where they hail from. They all came from Heaven. And they have a pre-existence that embedded within them knowledge of truths that you have to bring back to the surface here. The way in which you detect the truth of some things is by deep study and reflection and finding it here, and then recognizing it as being true—because something within your core is able to do that. There are some...

I heard a talk that was given by... Actually, I think it was Rob and Q both talking together about some native traditions that were remarkable in their application of truths and knowledge and symbols that convey eternal truths. There was a time and... God, who's that great anthropologist...? Campbell! Joseph Campbell wrote a book that said that there was a

time when there were navigators. (And these guys are not necessarily living only in Polynesia. We're talking about people who had sailed, you know, as part of the Portuguese fleet, as part of the Spanish fleet, as part of the English fleet.) There were times when sailors could **see** Venus in the daytime. **We** don't see Venus in the daytime! We've **lost** it. (Well, if you've got a program that gives you the stars that will tell you on your iPhone, you can see it—but that's not Venus; that's your graphic on your iPhone.) There were times when people could see things and perceive things that we have become *too coarse because they're irrelevant to us* to behold anymore. But within every one of you, there are powers and capacities, gifts and abilities that lie dormant that only need to be awakened within you. And you can talk about how miraculous something is or how enlightened you've become. Largely all you're doing is waking up something that was resonant there before. It **was** there. It **is** there. It **longs** to be reignited. And it **can** be reignited by careful attention to Native traditions, the gospel of Christ, the teachings of the Buddha.

Everywhere you find truth in this world, it is an echo of something that began with Father Adam and Mother Eve. They had possession of a body of information that has been disseminated throughout the world. And every culture that has some great truth that they prize ultimately reckons from that same original source of truth. We just have the obligation of discerning between the one and the other and holding fast to the things that are true indeed and leaving to the side the things that are corruptions or inappropriate emendations. One of the challenges that the body of Scripture that we've been given has been supplied to us in order to help us overcome.

So, last question, and then I will go see some grandbabies.

Question 7: So, the Scriptures say that the natural man is an enemy to God. My question is: Is that a result of the fall, or was that true at the time of creation as well?

DS: Okay. Yeah, the statement found in the Book of Mormon about how the natural man is an enemy of God and has been and, you know, will be—we are, in our present condition, unlike God, okay? We get tired, and He does not. We get hungry, and She does not. We feel pain and can be manipulated through the application of outside, deliberately-inflicted pain, and They do not, okay? Your vulnerability and weakness and susceptibility to hunger makes you something that is not merely “other” than God, it puts within you something that is or would be *detestable as a god*. It is “unlike,” and therefore it is a way in to compromise you. God cannot be compromised. He and She and They are above that—can't be manipulated, can't be compromised, can't be made vulnerable to weaknesses. We are *filled* with weaknesses. We...

There was a prayer that got read by Taylor, and I knelt down, and I was reminded (when I knelt down) that I bumped my left knee on furniture a couple of days ago, and there it was: It kind of hurt. And I endured as much as I could kneeling, and then I sat down, hoping all you people had your eyes closed, so you wouldn't see that I was given up on that kneeling thing. But I did that 'cuz my knee hurt. Well, it's another manifestation of how easy it is to get me to do something just by inflicting a little bit of pain.

Go on a hike and put a pebble on each heel in your shoe, and see how long you hike. It's... You'll hike as long as you can remain on your tiptoes—and then you'll either sit down and cry, or you'll take the rock out of your shoe 'cuz it's kind of stupid to do that.

We are an enemy to God because we can be easily compromised. We're an enemy to God because we have vulnerabilities, susceptibilities, weaknesses, and frailties that get used more or less consciously. We are vulnerable (in addition to all that) to lies; we are vulnerable to emotional manipulation. You take the language of virtue and you apply it to corruption, and you get people to say evil things and do evil things because they are paraded as if tolerance and kindness should openly embrace things that are repugnant to and in direct opposition to the will of God. And it doesn't matter that the language of virtue gets used in order to manipulate that, we're susceptible to that. God is not. You can't fool Him. You can't fool Them. You *can* fool us. A false Christ never got the angel Gabriel to say, "Ooh, wait a minute, I want to hear this guy out! He might have something good to say. I think he might be the real thing." Gabriel wasn't gonna do that because he exists in a plane that is shed from this. And as long as we occupy bodies of dust, these bodies are weak, and they're vulnerable. And therefore, **that**—all of that—makes us liable to error, failure, and sin, and **that** is an enemy to God's plan to exalt you, to raise you, to make you a holy being. Because in our current state, we are not **that**, and therefore, that weakness/that vulnerability is what makes us an enemy to God.

I've got little baby Harper and little baby Nora waiting for me with birthday cake in hand, I'm sure. Thank you, all.