

## Denver Snuffer's Temple Talk

(Starting at minute 1:10 of the recording)

Unlike Latter Day Saints, in the Christian world at large, the subject of the temple is simply a matter of theoretical and historical discussion. Margaret Barker has elevated that discussion to a new level and she has done so, as something more than merely an honest scholar, because her views are not merely controversial. Her views are opposed by many Christian academics. The reason why she is so compelling to Latter Day Saints, is because she reconstructs the first temple period, which is the period during which Lehi's family departed from Israel. They departed at the very end of the first temple period. She reconstructs the first temple period in a way that has a look and feel very much like what you find in the Book of Mormon and she did this without any knowledge of Joseph Smith, The Book of Mormon, or our faith. It takes integrity and it takes courage for her to put together what she has put together. Among Latter Day Saints, when WE have scholars who speak about the temple, we can be vulnerable to pride and to self satisfaction and to try and collect recognition and acclaim for our scholarship. Pride is invidious. It creeps in everywhere, inadvertently; and sometimes the Latter Day Saint scholar suffers from the ill effects of pride. But Margaret Barker, to the contrary, required a great deal of meekness and honesty and humility to do what she has done. That's not to say that I am condemning anyone or judging anyone who is going to speak tomorrow, in fact I have reviewed some of what is going to be said tomorrow and there are some great things; well worth your time to go and hear.

We have a tendency, all of us, to take concepts or pictures or ideas and to put them in our heads and then to rely upon those pictures as we go forward learning new things. The object being to fit what we learned that is new into the frame work of what we already know or we're already familiar with. That can be handicapping. In 2 Nephi 28, Nephi cautioned us about permitting, what he called, the traditions of men to override, what he calls, whisperings of the spirit. And he suggest that you run into mistakes, you run into errors, some of them terrible errors, when you permit those traditions, or those pictures you already have inside your head, to be the framework from which you reconstruct new information that you learn. It is hard to do so, but when it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ, you would be best advised to start with a blank slate and to allow it to inform you as if you are hearing it for the first time because those words in scripture don't necessarily mean what the picture in your head suggests that they mean.

Let me pull an example. If you got your scriptures, you're welcome to pull them out, and turn the pages and make all the noise you want finding the Joseph Smith History. You are NOT in a Sacrament meeting and therefore your scriptures are welcome to be used. In the Joseph Smith history, it's the 8<sup>th</sup> verse. It's about halfway through that 8<sup>th</sup> verse. "In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them" Once again, this is high praise for Margaret Barker, a Methodist scholar. But laying that aside; during the time of this period, there was a, particularly in the revivalist part of Methodism, there was a group called The Shouting Methodists; and The Shouting Methodists had a tradition. That tradition was to go into the woods alone to pray, and when they prayed alone in the woods, they were looking for some experience that would bind them up and when they got bound up, they knew that they had had an experience with God and The Holy Ghost and they came back

converted. The miracle of The First Vision of Joseph Smith does not consist in the fact that he went in the woods alone to pray, nor does it consist in the fact that when he's alone and praying that he got bound up by some darkness which entirely overcame him. The miracle of Joseph Smith is that when that happened, he rejected it as the source of conversion. He did not allow his fears to control him. He did not allow the tradition to control him but calling upon God, he then pressed through to receive what lays on the other side of the fears and of the darkness and of the things that put you off the trail to God. And he tells us about the vision of the Father and the Son telling him that he was to join none of them. He goes on for some space of years, and during that space of years, he talks about how he frequently fell into many foolish errors displayed by the weakness of youth and the foibles of human nature and then he talks about he was guilty of levity and sometimes associating with jovial company. One of the pictures you have in your head about me, if you've read what I've written and you've read my blog, is that you may entirely misapprehend, #1. How difficult it is for me to get up here and do THIS. #2. How incredibly irreverent I am by my native nature. I am not a stoic religious person. I undertake to do what the Lord asks, what I think pleases Him; at the cost of person inconvenience. I don't like being up here and it's being recorded by my voice and not by a camera because I don't want people recognizing me. I don't want to be a celebrity. I want my privacy. And when it comes to a native, cheery temperament, I have, I suppose, a wicked sense of humor.

Well, he called upon and he had confidence because he had previously received an answer, in verse 29, he had confidence that he would have an answer and a divine manifestation as he had previously had one. Then, he gives the account, in some detail, of the appearance of the angel Moroni, how it occupied the night and he passes through the events of his life until we get to the time in which, during the translation of The Book of Mormon, beginning in verse 68, they come upon the ordinance of baptism. They went into the woods, they prayed in May of 1829, and John the Baptist appears and confers authority upon them, and immediately after conferring the authority upon Joseph Smith, the angel says to him:

70. "He said this Aaronic Priesthood had not the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter."

And then we get to verse 73, which is a description of what happened after being baptized:

73. Immediately on our coming up out of the water after we had been baptized, we experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation.

74 Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of."

Now, here are the questions: He saw God the Father and he saw Jesus Christ in a vision. And if you read all of the accounts, you find out that it was a vision that included a view into heaven for he saw the heavenly hosts because The Father does not appear without a heavenly host. The Son can appear alone, but The Father never does. If you see The Father, you are going to see a Host.

And thereafter he is visited by the angel Moroni and he is tutored; not merely through the 1 night but in successive annual nights for 4 years; AND YET the first time his testimony mentions the Holy Ghost is after baptism, and after baptism, using authority which the angel told him HAD NOT the right to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost. That would happen at some subsequent occasion. Why then, without the laying on of hands by one having authority, did Joseph Smith receive the Holy Ghost? Not merely as a visitation, mind you; read the words. It lingered, it persisted. Because after they were baptized, “we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us.”

That required scripture study over the ensuing weeks, months, years. There we encounter a word: Mysterious passages. You know that

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:20–21)

The scriptures were given by the power of the Holy Ghost, and now Joseph Smith is explaining that he could unravel their mysteries by the power of the Holy Ghost and things that did not make sense before, began to make sense. If you’ve read *The Second Comforter*, in the chapter “In Becoming As A Little Child”, there is an excerpt taken from a book, Godel, Escher, Bach, a brilliant mathematical book about Bongard problems. Bongard problems are designed to test a certain kind of reasoning using symbols in order to test the person evaluating them. And invariably, Bongard problems are solved by children and they confuse adults; because the children’s minds have not become cluttered by the kind of mathematical complexity that we have bouncing around in our heads. As a consequence of such, they look at it simply. They see things simply and they can solve the Bongard problems in a way in which adults fail to grasp. The gospel is adapted to the simple mind. The statements that are contained in scripture are giving in simplicity and in plainness. So when we encounter Joseph Smith, speaking to us now about having the mysteries of the gospel laid open to his mind as a consequence of having the Holy Ghost, I am reminded of a statement that he made that you find in *The Teachings of The Prophet Joseph Smith* about the Holy Ghost on pages 149 and 150, which I am going to read an excerpt from:

“There are 2 comforters spoken of, one is the Holy Ghost, the same is given on the Day of Pentecost and that all saints receive after **faith, repentance, and baptism.**”

And by the way, Joseph Smith is saying this at a time when the authority for the laying on of hands had been restored, but his list is: faith and repentance and baptism, and that produces the same effect as on the Day of Pentecost. If you listen to the words of the ordinance that is performed in the church, the words of the ordinance are an admonition to you to receive the Holy Ghost. It’s telling you to do something.

“This first comforter, or Holy Ghost, has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful and expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge.” Did you get that list of things? The effect of the Holy Ghost is pure intelligence. I can watch Lawrence of Arabia, and when they’ve successfully knocked the train off the track, and the group he is leading has charged and overcome the enemy, and Lawrence is

walking on the tops of the trains with the flowing robes, I can get goose bumps. It is moving; it is stirring. That's not the Holy Ghost. I can have that same effect with Les Misérables. I can have that same effect with some of the scenes with Joseph's Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat. Moving and stirring things can delight your senses. That's not the Holy Ghost. It has no other effect than pure intelligence; expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, storing the intellect with present knowledge. I'm not here to entertain you. I am trying to inform you of doctrine that will save you. I don't care if any of you are stirred, or like one of our MSNBC folks, had a tremor run up his leg at the president's speaking. I don't care about that. I care about your salvation. I care about your souls and I care about you understanding the things that will save you. Joseph Smith gave the list: **pure intelligence, expanding the mind, enlightening the mind, storing the intellect with present knowledge.**

In the translation of the Book of Moses, which was Joseph correcting the Book of Genesis, he gives a list there of the Holy Ghost as well.

Moses 6:61: ...the comforter, the **peaceable things** of immortal glory, the **truth** of all things, that which that which **quickeneth** all things, which **maketh alive** all things; that which **knoweth all things**, and hath all power according to **wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment.**"

This is the Holy Ghost. Joseph Smith returned from the first vision and didn't talk about the Holy Ghost because that incident, quite frankly, was not understood by Joseph Smith at the time it occurred. When he explained to his mother, "Never mind, I'm well enough off. I've learned for myself that Presbyterianism isn't true." And I think that is a candid description of what Joseph got out of it that day at that time. He had been converted and he knew now not to join the Presbyterians. What Joseph Smith learned from the angel Moroni, also did not confer upon him the Holy Ghost. Faith, repentance, baptism, and **then** he notes the Holy Ghost. And what are the effects that he reports, immediately? #1. Prophecy; one of the hallmark signs. Paul lists it in Corinthians. Mormon and Moroni list it in Moroni's book. The list of what the gifts are, you can find it in D&C section 46.

11 For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

12 To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby.

13 To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world.

14 To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.

15 And again, to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know the differences of administration, as it will be pleasing unto the same Lord, according as the Lord will, suiting his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men.

16 And again, it is given by the Holy Ghost to some to know the diversities of operations, whether they be of God, that the manifestations of the Spirit may be given to every man to profit withal.

17 And again, verily I say unto you, to some is given, by the Spirit of God, the word of wisdom.

18 To another is given the word of knowledge, that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge.

19 And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed;

- 20 And to others it is given to have faith to heal.
- 21 And again, to some is given the working of miracles;
- 22 And to others it is given to prophesy;
- 23 And to others the discerning of spirits.
- 24 And again, it is given to some to speak with tongues;
- 25 And to another is given the interpretation of tongues.
- 26 And all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God.

(Doctrine and Covenants 46:11–26)

The list of the gifts; prophecy is always included as one of the hallmark signs of what it is that the Holy Ghost does. And then secondly, allowing Joseph to understand the real intent of what is in the scriptures. How much of a blank slate was Joseph at the time that the Holy Ghost allowed him the pure spirit of intelligence.

I would suggest that if Joseph Smith can pass through the first vision and can pass through the incident of the visits of the angel Moroni and if he can even translate The Book of Mormon, which was then underway at the time this occurred, by the gift and power of God, but not attribute anything to the Holy Ghost until after he is baptized, that it is equally possible for you, good people, to go through everything you have gone through in your life, and yet not have experienced the thing that Joseph is talking about, which comes as a consequence of FAITH, REPENTENCE, and BAPTISM.

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The subject of the temple, which is the only thing I'm talking about tonight. Everything I have said so far bears only upon the temple, and that's the purpose of getting here; is to discuss about what the temple's purpose is, what it means, and what it is trying to convey to us. Is the temple an end or the temple a means? If the temple is an end, then everyone who goes through the temple obtains everything the temple has to offer by virtue of going in and participating in the ceremony. Even more so, those who have conspired to break their temple covenants and gone in and recorded the temple ceremonies, and then transcribed those ceremonies and put them on the internet, have made it possible for everyone who goes to the trouble of finding and reading the temple ceremony that is now available on the internet. If the temple ceremony is an end, then all of those people are the beneficiaries of it as well. But if the temple ceremony is instead a means, a means of trying to take you somewhere, then it doesn't matter who sees the ordinance, you can't steal the ends. You can't come in by some unauthorized way and attain the end, because that is a matter that exists between you and God. If it is a means, then what is it a means to? Because one possible meaning that you should come away with, is that it is a means to inform you that there is a veil and not a wall to permit you to talk through and to touch through and to feel your way through to the symbolic presence of God and then, that veil is not a wall, but something that can be, with merely the brush of the hand of our Lord, drawn aside so that you may enter into his presence. And the way you get there is by being prepared in all things, having been true and faithful in all things, coming to learn something from Him; not coming to tell Him something, not coming to impose upon Him, but coming to learn from Him. Our Savior was, and is, first and foremost, a teacher. By HIS **knowledge**, Isaiah and Nephi wrote, he shall justify many. By His Knowledge. He possesses things, which we do not yet comprehend. He possesses things which He would like us **to** comprehend. How then are we to comprehend the things which only He can teach? By permitting Him to do so; by coming to Him.

In the ceremony, there is an account given of the man Adam, and I have a question for you... WHO, in the ceremony, is Adam? Is this a history lesson about the first man who lived on the Earth or is this, instead, a symbolic rendering of the lives of every man, or is it instead YOUR life. Are you being told that in the beginning, you came here in an innocent, even a paradisiacal state. And in that state, everything was possible to the innocent mind. I mean, we impose, as adults, upon the credulity of our children by teaching them about the Easter bunny, and then to pull off the fraud, we have to go the trouble every Easter of acting the role of the Easter bunny, always out of sight; and we impose upon them Santa Clause, and they believe in these things. That faith and that trust that those children have, comes as a consequence of where every one of you began; in a state of innocence, in a state of purity, in a state in which it is possible for that mind to comprehend and to accept the things of God. But there comes a point when you become accountable. There comes a point when you grow out of that and you are expelled from that innocence and then in order to return there, you have to make certain sacrifices and you have to be willing to obey, and you have to be willing to pursue the gospel. Because there is a difference between the age of 8 when you begin to become accountable and puberty; at length, the range of temptation that will confront you will require you then to engage and obey the law of chastity. And then as you grow into adulthood, when you realize that this world really has very little to offer, you learn that the way to happiness does not consist in popularity or wealth or acclaim, it lies exclusively in consecrating yourself to the things of God. And when you have developed through that course and you have come to the recognition that consecrating yourself is the only thing of value.

In the ceremony, it only takes some 2 hours before you are called true and faithful in all things. Well, if that's an end and not a means, then in 2-1/2 hours in sitting and occasionally standing and agreeing to some things, you have become true and faithful in all things. I would suggest that the temple rite is an end, makes that notion preposterous because you are the same person walking out of the temple as you were walking into it 2 hours earlier. You are no more faithful in the temptations that you face on the street, you are no more lovely in the way that you deal with your family, you are no more honest in your business dealings with your fellow man then you were 2 hours earlier when you walked in, but the ceremony is saying you have been true and faithful in all things. I would suggest that's a means and it's an admonition. And it's an invitation, even begging you to recognize that the challenge you face in your life requires you, invariably, to lay aside those things that pull you away and that you always turn and face the Lord. THAT'S WHAT REPENTENCE MEANS. It means **to turn and face the Lord**. And you know when you face him the first time, you're just not going to be that good or that different than you were the moment before, but if you'll face him, he'll work with you. It does not matter how badly damaged you are. That's irrelevant. He fixed the apostle Paul. If you don't think the apostle Paul suffered from pride, than you don't understand the malignancy of pride. He fixed Alma the younger and the sons of Mosiah, whose deliberate purpose was to overthrow the things of God. I don't care what you've done, the malignancies of those men are highlighted in scripture in order to assure that you can all be reclaimed.

Turn and face Him and then walk with Him. He does all the guiding and most of the heavy lifting.

When it comes to the idea of being **True and Faithful**....

By the way, I don't care if you buy a quad, your scriptures are not complete until you get the Lectures on Faith. They were voted in and sustained as scripture and then they were removed without a vote.

In the Lectures on Faith, 7<sup>th</sup> lecture, 16<sup>th</sup> verse, talking about the Savior:

“These teachings of the Savior most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation; and what he proposed unto the human family when he proposed to save them -- That he proposed to make them **like unto himself**; and he was like the Father, the **great prototype** of all saved beings: And for any portion of the human family to be assimilation into their likeness is to be saved; and to be unlike them is to be destroyed: and on this hinge turns the door of salvation.”

Jesus Christ IS the prototype of all saved beings.

SO WHAT was our Savior if he's the prototype? He was a blasphemer. He was a sinner. He worked on the Sabbath and he encouraged his disciples to do so. He associated with the tax collectors and with the publicans and sinners and the harlots, and he let harlots tooooooo much him. This is the prototype of the saved man. This is the One who was rejected by His people. This is the One who was called Unclean. This is the One who was rejected, persecuted, and ultimately killed by those who held religious rank and authority in His day. This is the prototype of the saved man. This is the example of Joseph Smith. This is Isaiah and Jeremiah. WAS Christ true and faithful in all things? If so, to what, to whom was He true and faithful? Was it the law? I mean, he never spoke ill against the law. The Sermon on the mount is simply taking the law and showing what it really meant. He took it to another level. If he took it to the level in which he took it, Caiaphas would not have been sitting there in the robes of the priesthood, which by that time, had been elevated to the status of wealth itself. If you had merely the attire that Caiaphas had on during the trial of Christ, just his attire, you would have been a wealthy man.

The Lectures on Faith 6:7 “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things, never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of **all** earthly things.” It's through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing things that are well pleasing in the sight of God.

And then we get to this verse 8: “It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their **all in sacrifice**, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they, in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him.

What did the Prototype of the saved man offer in sacrifice? I mean, we jump to the end of the story and we point to Gethsemane and we point to the cross and we say, there it is, His life. But He was a living sacrifice for many more years than the week that was spent coming in, confronting them in the temple, celebrating and implementing the sacrament, going into Gethsemane and suffering, being tried and crucified, being laid in a grave, and 3 days and 3 nights later arising from the grave. He spent some 30+ years prior to that as the prototype of the saved man.

In the ceremony, you come asking for further light and knowledge from the Lord, and when you enter into the Lord's presence in the ceremony, it hints at something which the scriptures themselves make plain.

In John 14:18 ~ The Savior said, I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.

John 14:23~ If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and WE will come unto him and make our **abode** with him.

Well, that promise in the 23<sup>rd</sup> verse suggests something beyond the Lord simply coming and visiting someone. The notion that the Father and The Son will take up their abode.... I mean, we have that hymn, and that hymn creates a picture; Abide with me Tis Eventide, so abiding means you come and you spend the evening and there we have taken care of the abode. But the suggestion here is that there is a greater kind of familiarity that attaches to the relationship that is more enduring.

In Revelation 3:20 and 21~ There is a promise that John records,

Behold, I stand at the door and knock... In this description, it's almost a flip. It's not you knocking to get in, it's the Lord knocking to come to you. It's the Lord who is the eager One. The One who would like to have this relationship take up. He is the One knocking. He is the One trying to get into your life.

And so in this account, the Lord is speaking: "I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice" See, His sheep hear his voice. Do you hear His voice?

"If any man hear my voice and open the door".... because you're the one who shut it. You're the one who is saying, "eh, no thanks, I'll pass. I mean, I've got a skeptical mind now. I've been to college and have received training to practice law. I'm an engineer and I understand formulas and equations. I'm a mathematician and I know some things add up and some things don't, and I also know that I've been leading a reasonably decent life and I have never had Jesus in MY car."

Our minds are skeptical. WE have to open the door, because almost invariably the door that we configure to keep him out from our construct is something that has come about as a consequence of what has happened in your life. From the time you left that state of innocence as a child in the Garden until today. Every painful experience you have been through, every humiliation you've suffered, everything that has gone on in your life that has lead to where you now construct a door.... Some of oak, some of iron. Whatever it is that has happened to you, you use THAT to keep Him out. "Well if he really cared, he would..."

You know, the notion that He doesn't care is the greatest lie of all. If you knew what he suffered, you would NEVER say, "If He cared..." But if you will open the door, He says I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with me.

The reason why in 10 Parables that I drew upon the tree and the fruit and the neighbors who were fighting with one another, sharing the food as one of the traditions in that community of sharing in one another's lives, is drawn from this very example the Savior used; because to share a meal with Him is to become one with Him.

Exodus 24:9~ This is a group going up onto the mount where they meet with the Lord: 9 Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:

10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

So on the mount, in Exodus, chapter 24, you have the Lord supping with them. And in the account of Genesis of the visit with Abraham, there's a sacral meal.

In D&C 27:5 where the Lord talks about when He returns:

This is not without its controversy. You probably don't know the full history of this:

D&C 27:5 ~ Behold, this is wisdom in me; wherefore, marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth, and with Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fulness [of my everlasting gospel, to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim;]

He gives a list of all of those that he's going to have this meal with and verse 5, he's going to sit down and he's going to drink of the fruit of the vine and He's going to have fellowship with. And here we have in Revelation 3:20, the notion that He wants to come in and He wants to sup with you. Well, you think about how long it takes and what goes on at a meal? I mean if you're not confining that meal to the ceremony that we have in the sacrament, but you say this is actually sitting down to sup with someone, that is a setting in which it is convivial. In which there's an exchange of friendship and discussion and ideas and you have prophets in The Book of Mormon talking about how approachable the Lord is and about how He visits and speaks in plain humility as one man speaks to another.

We have this absolutely schizophrenic set of pictures in our head about the Lord. On the one hand, He is this limp-wristed, happy-go-lucky, permissive chap who sashays about blessing everyone with fairy dust. And on the other hand, we have this stern, unapproachable, distant, galactic ruler who just can't be troubled by any of us and He says, This is His work and His glory, to save you. Not merely to save and preserve you, but to bring about your eternal life and your exaltation. **THAT'S WHAT HE'S ABOUT**. Get rid of the junk in your heads and let the scriptures speak to you. As Joseph said, Look, everything in them can be a mystery if what you have done is barred the information from getting through to you by the door that you have erected from the traditions that you have been handed. Many of you have been handed traditions from very good and very well meaning and very honorable Latter Day Saint parents who ought to be commended and praised for the effort that they made with you.

However, I don't care if your parents were nigh unto God or the devil himself, the fact of the matter remains that we all have the freedom to choose to leave behind whatever it is that becomes the door against which the Savior has to knock, hoping that you'll hear his voice. We have to become as a little child, because it is only the little children who are willing to open themselves up and become vulnerable enough to believe and then hopeful enough to act on that belief so that they develop faith and then persistent enough to ask again, and again, and again... are we there yet, are we there yet?

In the parable that Joseph was given in the D&C about the unjust judge and the aggrieved woman, it was a CONSTANT petitioning. Little children not only don't know a lot of things, they know that they don't know and they ask persistently, incessantly, because they desire to know what they don't know. They're like sponges and we're like rocks. You can throw a rock into the water and pull it out again and it's still a rock. But you throw a sponge in and you pull it out and it is GREATLY increased. Children are like the sponge, they're porous, and we are not.

D&C 93:1~ [Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who **forsaketh his sins** and **cometh unto me**, and **calleth on my name**, and **obeyeth my voice**, and **keepeth my commandments**, shall see my face and know that I am;]

Moses 6:57~ Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence; for, in the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time.

So, in order to come into the presence of the Lord, we have to be clean. Well, in the ceremony of the temple, the way in which you become ceremonially clean is by borrowing things from the Lord through the ceremony. You are washed, though not quite as vigorously as you may have been in Nauvoo. You are anointed, though not perhaps as thoroughly as you might have been in Nauvoo. The next time you have a Word of Wisdom lesson about strong drinks and they're talking about strong drinks and the washing of the body: they used cinnamon flavored or included mixed whiskey to wash in the Kirtland and then again in Nauvoo. And, as it turns out, for washing the body, it's really a pretty good antiseptic. One of the things that Joseph talked about in Nauvoo era, was about how angels sometimes have a hard time visiting with men because they stink, and that we really ought to clean ourselves up because we'll offend the sensibilities of the angels. There's a notion for you. One of the doors to barring entry...

In the temple you borrow cleanliness thorough the ceremony itself, which washes you, which anoints, which dresses you in new and clean clothes, and then progressively confers upon you symbols that suggest all of creation. Symbolically the entirety of creation comes through, and is redeemed as a consequence of your own redemption. Because if you are redeemed, you are infinite and eternal and creation itself goes on. But here, no unclean thing can dwell there or dwell in His presence, which leads to the reason for the temple.

The purpose of the temple is not merely to inspire you with the conviction that it is possible to rend the veil, to pass through the veil, to see and meet with our Lord, who has promised us repeatedly that the stories in The Book of Mormon are stories designed to tell you over and over and over again about coming back into the presence of the Lord. Even wicked Lamanite converts many of them have what we, in our scholarly language would call, a throne theophany, and they did so upon conversion because their conversion was with real intent.

1:00

Therefore, The Book of Mormon is a text about The Second Comforter. But what is being talked about in this verse, Moses 6, is about dwelling in His presence.

Moses 6:57, It says when it comes to dwelling there, no unclean thing **can** dwell there because He is the man of holiness. This presents the real message or the real meaning of what the temple is trying to convey to us in our day. And we're just about running out of time to accomplish that in our day.

And if we don't then, you know, He passes on and maybe starts this up with another people in another day, as he has so often done before.

To come to the veil and to meet with the Savior: **He** can clean you up. **He**, through His grace, can give you all that you lack. To dwell in the presence of God requires something more, something different. It requires that you grow from where you are now, to the place where the Lord intends to lead you. He intends to have you BE true and faithful in all things. Because in the ceremony in the temple, once go through the veil, you don't come back. You stay there and the purpose of going there in this day, in this setting, is to enable the return of Zion. We don't need a profoundly new and far reaching economic system to make us have all things in common in order to bring again Zion, and we don't need possession of the real estate in Jackson County, Missouri to bring again Zion. We don't need any of the implements or locations or infrastructure to have Zion return. We need 1 thing and that's **YOU**. **You** to be clean. **You** to be holy. To leave behind you, not only the door, but the house in which you dwell that you established that door to bar Him through. You need to come and live with Him. It is possible. These are not cunningly devised fables, as the apostle Paul put it. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Look at the definition that Lord gives of salvation in Ether 3:13. This is the definition that the Lord gives.

Ether 3:13 ...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.

This is the meaning of salvation. This is the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is contained in The Book of Mormon, which has the fullness of Jesus Christ in it. 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.

Look at D&C 76, in which a description is given of those who inherit the celestial kingdom or those who have celestial glory. I'm not going to go through all of it and parse it, it's really interesting, it's worth doing; but included among the definitions of those who are celestial, are descriptions of the present tense; Now, Here. I mean there's past tense in here and there's future tense in here, but this is the present tense. And I believe that this was wittingly done because this is the transcript from heaven. Joseph Smith would recite the words of the vision. Sidney Rigdon, when it was read back, would say, "that is correct." Therefore, the tenses of this language were given by heaven and not by the person dictating.

D&C 76:54 ~They are they who are the church of the Firstborn.

55 They are they into whose hands the Father **has** given all things—

56 They are they who **are** priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory;

57 And **are** priests of the Most High, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was after the order of the Only Begotten Son.

58 Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God—

59 Wherefore, all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Now if that sounds a lot like the language that is contained in the oath in the covenant of the priesthood, it's because it mirrors the language that you find in the oath in the covenant of the priesthood; where once again, it talks about the priesthood being connected to God Himself; the powers of heaven, if you will.

If the temple is designed to lead you to the presence of the Lord, the presence of the Lord is intended to bring you to the presence of The Father, and the purpose of bringing you to the presence of The Father, is to have you clean every whit. Because when there is a group of people with whom it is possible for the angels to dwell, there will no longer be any reason for angels to stay aloof. There will be no reason for the Lord to delay the bringing of Zion because the Lord is going to dwell there. One of the definitions of Zion, when you get past having all things in common, is the fact that the Lord will dwell there and we all know that to dwell in the presence in the Lord, if you are not prepared to do so, you would be more miserable to dwell with the holy and just God under a conciseness of your filthiness than you would to dwell with the damned souls in hell; that's Mormon 9:4. Really, you ought to read 2 through 5; see 5 talks about your nakedness before God.

You know, the Lord suffered the things that He suffered so that He could redeem us by leading us back but there isn't any magic fairy dust to that process. It is by the things that He knows that He fixes us. There is no defect in any of you that the Lord did not experience and heal from. He knows that way back to the Father because He found His way back to the Father by the things that He suffered in the agony of Gethsemane. He learned what it was to XXX 1:10:05. There is nothing you have, however malignant or deeply hidden, that He hasn't experienced and then healed from and found His way back to peace and justification and holiness before His father. The way in which He works the atonement is to teach you if you will receive it, what you need in order to overcome what your flaws are.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2003, after a long search for the Lord, which I had almost forgotten about because I was so busy with other things in my life, the Lord made himself known to me. And I thought I had received everything the Lord had to offer by the time we got to the Christmas season of 2008, but just before Christmas of 2008, I had some serious medical issues compounded by the fact that I had had a hernia fixed some 18 years before and I had a problem

that had grown into an infection of that site and it required surgery, which they were going to do laparoscopically, which meant nothing to me then and probably means nothing to you now, but that involves puncturing and sending in robotic arms to fix things but it didn't work out that way, and after they'd had a lot of fun exploring with robotic arms, they pulled all that out and they simply opened me up from the navel to the pelvic bone.

Boy, I probably shouldn't say this..... Ok, I was on the high council at the time. This goes back to what I was telling you at the beginning about a wicked, even despicable, sense of humor. They removed, like 8 inches. It's a circulatory loop, they have to take the entire loop and then pull it together. They removed the loop, they took approximately 8 inches of the colon out, and when I got back, I was on the high council, I sent an email to the other members of the high council in the stake presidency saying, I'd been through surgery, they removed 8 inches of my colon, I'm recovering, but on the bright side, I'm less of an asshole than I've ever been before. In any event, when they do surgery that radical, and when they remove and flush; because there was infection, they had to tease apart a lot of internal stuff. The repair doesn't get stitched up, they just put staples in you and I had staples, which required time to heal and it required me to take off and replace bandages and change the dressing 2 or 3 times a day. During that time period, I was still speaking in sacrament meetings on going into the office on occasion and I would wear a suit coat, but I had pajama bottoms on so I was sort of a curious looking fellow. But you really couldn't put on a belt. Well, I bled and I kept track of it, but it was months later when I went back and looked at it. I bled for 40 days, and after the 40 days, I learned yet more from the Lord. And I can tell you that covenants traditionally involve cutting and covenants in the Old Testament involve the shedding of blood and covenants with our Lord, at some point in some context with some reaches, require that we suffer. Now I tell that as background because I recently had another experience in which I spent, as it turned out, once again, 40 days in pain. And while in a great agony, I could not take pity on myself. I couldn't. What I thought about was the suffering of our Lord in Gethsemane. And I found myself measuring my own physical misery against what I know our Lord went through there. And I lay in bed praying and thanking the Lord for what He had done on our behalf. Thanking the Father for sending His son and standing down to permit it to go forward.

*And while in prayer, I saw a great mountain and upon the top thereof was the glory of the fathers. To reach the top, all were required to enter through a narrow pass. In the pass was a great beast, cruel and pitiless.*

*The Lord brought people whom he had chosen to the mouth of the pass, and there He told them to wait for him, and He went away. The people did not wait for Him, but began to move forward into the narrow pass. The beast killed some and injured others, and none were able to pass through.*

*After great losses, many deaths and terrible suffering, the people chosen by the Lord withdrew and departed from the mountain. After four and five generations, the Lord again brought some few back to the pass and again told them to stay at the mouth of the pass and wait on Him. But again there were those who tired of waiting, for they could see in the distance the glory of the*

*fathers, and they desired to be there. These, being overtaken by their zeal, did not wait, but moved into the pass where again the beast killed or hurt them.*

*Among those who waited, however, was a man who knelt and prayed, and waited patiently for his Lord. After a great time, the Lord came to this man and took him by the hand, and led him into the pass where the great beast guarded the way. As the Lord led, however, the beast was ever occupied with attacking others, and therefore its back was turned to the Lord and the man. And so they passed by unnoticed, safely to the top. The Lord sent the man to the fathers, who when they saw the man inquired of him, "How came you to be here and yet mortal; for the last who came here were brothers who had been slain, and you are yet alive?" And the man answered: "I waited on the Lord and He brought me here safely."*

Well, for some reason, that was given in time to be read here for some reason. I can't say who the man is, maybe it's President Monson, maybe it's President Packer, maybe it's one of you, I just can't say. But the fact of matter is, that it is the glory of the Fathers which Joseph was trying to explain in the last 2 talks he gave in Nauvoo. The promise made by Elijah is about reconnecting us to the Fathers. Joseph called them the Fathers in heaven. These are not our kindred dead because our kindred dead are required to be redeemed by us. These are the Fathers in heaven. Among them would be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and because of this dispensation being what it is, Peter, James, and John. The purpose of the Holy Ghost is to allow you to see things in their true light with the underlying intent behind them and to allow you to do that without distortion and without confusion. The temple is a ceremony designed to teach you about the path back to God; the very same thing that The Book of Mormon teaches repeatedly. The path back to God is so that you can meet with and be instructed by our Savior. The purpose of our Savior is to prepare us in all things so that we can, at last, become Zion. Because if your heart is right and my heart is right and if I'm looking to God and God only, and you're looking to God and God only, then the trivial things of having things in common are of so little import that they matter not.

If you're faithful to the Lord, you have no reason to pick a fight with anyone else. Our Lord was a peacemaker. We ought to be peacemakers as well. I have nothing but appreciation for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They publish the scriptures that make me wise to salvation. They build the temples in which we can go and learn about the mysteries of God. They deliver to me through the voice of some Utah boys; I mean they were about the same age as I was, but they were so young and naïve in my universe, that I considered them boys. A testimony about the restoration of the gospel through the prophet Joseph Smith and I have a stronger testimony of the restoration today than I did the day I was baptized. I believe it more fervently and I know a great deal more about the mysteries of God than I ever thought possible. I don't think I'm special. If you really knew enough about me to realize that this preaching is not the full definition of who I am. You would probably agree that you're better people than I am. But I wanted to know Him. And I was willing to give away anything and everything and I am

still willing to give away anything and everything. There is nothing that I value above the Lord. And I hope that everyone here understands that statement.