

### Christian Talk 3

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Thank you, and thank you everyone who has assisted in making the venue available, in organizing, recording, and ultimately broadcasting the talks. Everything that is done is done voluntarily. No one is passing the hat or soliciting donations. Part of what we do, we do as a sacrifice to demonstrate our commitment. Everyone who has and does participate in this sacrifices and provides their services as a matter of faith and commitment to what we believe in. I can't thank those who have helped enough.

Religion should not divide us as it does. It's tragic that anyone's search to find truth and to connect with God should divide them from their fellow man. Christ said the greatest commandment was to love God, but immediately added that the second greatest commandment was like unto it, and that commandment was to love our neighbor as ourself.<sup>1</sup>

Christ never taught us, love only those who love us in return. He taught: *"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."* (Matthew 5:43-48).

Let us make our search for truth one that brings us closer together rather than something to divide us apart. We share more than we disagree. I want you to consider the meaning for us all in the account of Adam and Eve. We all have one set of original parents in common. All of the genetic potential for the entire human race comes from these two original parents. No man or woman possesses any genetic feature that did not first come from them. They set the limits on their descendant's height, they set the limit on how high their descendants could jump, how fast we could run, how intelligent we could become, how strong we could become. Every facet of us, their diverse descendants in the world at this moment, was determined by the genetic makeup of Adam and Eve. When we despise the differences we see in one another we despise our first parents. Christ taught: *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* (John 13:34-35).

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<sup>1</sup> See Matthew 22:36-39

Menno Simons, who was one Reformation father after whom the Mennonites are named said, “True evangelical faith, cannot lie dormant, it clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry, it comforts the sorrowful, it shelters the destitute, it serves those that harm it, it binds up that which is wounded, it has become all things to all creatures.”

Everything Christ taught is tended to change our inner self. He did not want me judging and condemning you. If you decide to abuse me, Christ teaches I should forgive you. If you offend me seventy times seven, Christ taught me to forgive.<sup>2</sup> If we believed in Christ enough to live as He taught, our families would heal, our communities would heal, our nations would heal, and the world would heal. Christ was an idealist, but He showed by His life that it is possible to live the ideal. As a Christian I should commit to that ideal and at every missed step resolve to do better. Each of us controls only our own life, but your example is enough to change the lives of many others.

I hope to strengthen your belief in Jesus Christ by what is said here this evening and to encourage you to develop faith in Him. Belief does not require action. Faith, on the other hand, requires you to take action to live your belief. Far more people have belief in Christ than have faith in him. Christ really is the Savior who offered Himself a sacrifice for sin.

Tonight we will examine what Jesus Christ did to save you and I from death and hell. To begin tonight, because this is the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, we look back on Christian history.

The Protestant Reformation was two things. First, it was a protest against the corruption of Roman Catholicism, hence the term, “Protestant”, because the protestors rejected the corrupt Roman hierarchy then in charge of western European Christianity. Second, it was an attempt to reform corrupted Christianity into something better, hence the term, “Reformation”, because the protestors hoped to recover and establish something marginally better than the institution headquartered in Rome. They hoped to reform Christianity into something better representing the actual commandments and teachings of Jesus Christ. None of the Protestant fathers hoped to reestablish the original Christian church, or what is referred to as the primitive church, which once existed when Peter, James, John, Matthew, Luke, and other New Testament figures lived. When Emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire it did not improve Christianity, it compromised it. Christianity is best understood and practiced by the meek and the humble.

Christ came as a lowly servant, kneeling to wash the feet of others. He held no office, no rank, commanded no fortune, submitted to Jewish and Roman authorities. He was abused and rejected. His only tool was the truth. He was born in a stable and continually regarded by the leaders as unimportant. There was nothing about His position that commanded respect. When those who claim to follow Him acquired the rank of official Roman Empire state religion, Christianity could not have become more alienated from how Christ lived.

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<sup>2</sup> See Matthew 18:21-22

Silk robes and gold headpieces worn by church leaders replaced the rough clothing and crown of thorns worn by Christ. This was a tragedy, not a triumph. Christianity was utterly broken. It has not been fixed, even by the Reformation.

Protestant reformer John Wesley candidly admitted the fallen condition of Christianity. He concluded that Christianity did not have the gifts of the Spirit because they were no longer really Christian at all. In Wesley's sermon, "The More Excellent Way," he explained, "The cause of this [decline of spiritual gifts following Constantine] was not, (as has been vulgarly supposed,) 'because there was no more occasion for them,' because all the world was become Christians. This is a miserable mistake; not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Christian. The real cause was, 'the love of many,' almost of all Christians, so called, was 'waxed cold.' The Christians had no more of the Spirit of Christ than the other Heathens. The Son of Man, when he came to examine his Church, could hardly 'find faith upon earth.' This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were no longer to be found in the Christian Church; because the Christians were turned Heathens again, and had only a dead form left."

A New World Protestant leader, Roger Williams, admitted the same fallen state existed for Christianity but also envisioned the possibility for recovery of original Christianity. He conceived it would be possible for God to once again endow mankind with authority and knowledge that would allow us to have what had been lost. He wrote, "Christianity fell asleep in the bosom of Constantine, and the laps and bosoms of those Emperors who professed the name of Christ." This sober reflection led to his conviction that freedom of conscience was necessary to allow every soul to search for and accept all truth they could find. He declared, "There is no regularly constituted church of Christ on earth, nor any person qualified to administer any church ordinances; nor can there be until new apostles are sent by the Great Head of the Church for whose coming I am seeking."

I believe Christ has spent the last 500 years inspiring mankind to restore a more correct form of Christianity. He declared he would return again in glory to judge the world but before his return, many prophecies remain to be fulfilled. Almost the entire burden of prophecy focuses on two events: the First Coming of Christ and the Second Coming of Christ. A great deal about the Second Coming of Christ will require that there be things that occur prior to his return in glory, that will involve the Restoration and the presence of those who speak in his name with authority, testimonies to be born. The world cannot be judged without an adequate prior warning being given. Even if the world is ignoring the message, it doesn't matter. God assumes the obligation to making clear His plans. He assumes the obligation of having the warning voice sound, and whether the world gives any heed or not, it doesn't matter. They've been warned and they will be judged.

One of the prophecies came through Peter. He declared: "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*" (Acts 3:19-21).

The time of refreshing, or restoring, promised to come from the presence of the Lord has, in fact, begun. Jesus Christ has been sent again to prepare for His return. I believe that Joseph Smith was an authentic messenger called by Christ to help us become more Christian. One message sent by Christ in 1829 explains more of what He, Christ, accomplished as the sacrificial Lamb who atoned for our sins. We know from Isaiah that by his stripes we are healed. God laid on him the iniquity of us all. He bore our griefs, carried our sorrows, and the chastisement we earned was put upon Him.<sup>3</sup> Traditionally, Christians have understood that to have been accomplished in the Roman beating, scourging, and crucifixion of Christ. However, many men suffered similarly at the hands of Rome. Christ suffered to remove our sins and repair the fall of mankind. Isaiah's description suggests that this was cosmic and that Christ took the entire burden of mankind's sins upon Himself. Only Luke gives a glimpse into Christ's suffering in Gethsemane. Luke describes it in these words: *"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."* (Luke 22:44).

In an 1829 revelation, Christ explained the price he paid for our salvation. His reflection on that suffering mentions only what happened to Him in Gethsemane, the place where Luke recorded He sweat great drops of blood. Let me read you what Jesus Christ explained of that event in 1829.<sup>4</sup>

*"Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.*

*For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;*

*But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;*

*Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—*

*Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.*

*Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power; and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken."*

*(Doctrine and Covenants 19:15-20)*

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<sup>3</sup> See Isaiah 53:4-6

<sup>4</sup> Revelation given through Joseph Smith, at Manchester, New York, likely in the summer of 1829. In his history, the Prophet introduces it as "a commandment of God and not of man, to Martin Harris, given by him who is Eternal."

Christ pleads with us in this revelation to repent of our sins so we do not experience anything like the dreadful price He paid for us. We should let that message penetrate our hearts: God does not want us punished. God wants to relieve us from the bitterness of our sins. In His kindness and mercy, Christ revealed yet more of His suffering in His atoning sacrifice in February of 2005 and December of 2007. Again, He provided us with a description of what happened in Gethsemane. This is the account:

*I knew a man in Christ about four years ago who, being overshadowed by the Spirit on the 26th of February, 2005, had the Lord appear to him again. And the Lord spoke to him face to face in plain humility, as one man speaks to another, calling him by name. As they spoke the Lord put forth His hand and touched the eyes of the man and said, Look! The man had opened before him a view of the Lord kneeling in prayer. It was in a dark place. The air was heavy and overcast with sorrow. The man beheld the Lord praying in Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal and before His crucifixion.*

*All the Lord had previously done in His mortal ministry by healing the sick, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, restoring hearing to the deaf, curing the leper and ministering relief to others as He taught was but a prelude to what the Lord was now to do on this dark, oppressive night.*

*As the Lord knelt in prayer, His vicarious suffering began. He was overcome by pain and anguish. He felt within Him, not just the pains of sin, but also the illnesses men suffer as a result of the Fall and their foolish and evil choices. The suffering was long and the challenge difficult. The Lord suffered the afflictions. He was healed from the sickness. He overcame the pains, and patiently bore the infirmities until, finally, He returned to peace of mind and strength of body. It took an act of will and hope for Him to overcome the affliction which had been poured upon Him. He overcame the separation caused by these afflictions and reconciled with His Father. He was at peace with all mankind.*

*He thought His sufferings were over, but to His astonishment another wave overcame Him. This one was much greater than the first. The Lord, who had been kneeling, fell forward onto His hands at the impact of the pain that was part of a greater, second wave.*

*This second wave was so much greater than the first that it seemed to entirely overcome the Lord. The Lord was now stricken with physical injuries as well as spiritual affliction. As He suffered anew, His flesh was torn which He healed using the power of the charity within Him. The Lord had such life within Him, such power and virtue within Him, that although He suffered in His flesh, these injuries healed and His flesh restored. His suffering was both body and spirit, and there was anguish of thought, feeling and soul.*

*The Lord overcame this second wave of suffering, and again found peace of mind and strength of body; and His heart filled with love despite what He had suffered. Indeed, it was charity or love that allowed Him to overcome. He*

*was at peace with His Father, and with all mankind, but it required another, still greater act of will and charity than the first for Him to do so.*

*Again, the Lord thought His suffering was over. He stayed on His hands and knees for a moment to collect Himself when another wave of torment burst upon Him. This wave struck Him with such force He fell forward upon His face. He was afflicted by this greater wave. He was then healed only to then be afflicted again as the waves of torment overflowed. Wave after wave poured out upon Him, with only moments between them. The Lord's suffering progressed from a lesser to a greater portion of affliction; for as one would be overcome by Him, the next, greater affliction would then be poured out. Each wave of suffering was only preparation for the next, greater wave. The pains of mortality, disease, injury and infirmity, together with the sufferings of sin, transgressions, guilt of mind, and unease of soul, the horrors of recognition of the evils men had inflicted upon others, were all poured out upon Him, with confusion and perplexity multiplied upon Him.*

*He longed for it to be over, and thought it would end long before it finally ended. With each wave He thought it would be the last but then another came upon Him, and then yet another. The one beholding this scene was pained by what he saw, and begged for the vision of the Lord's suffering to end. He could not bear to see his Lord suffering in this manner. The petition was denied and the vision did not end, for the Lord required him to witness it.*

*The man saw that the Lord pleaded again with the Father that "this cup may pass" from Him. But the Lord was determined to suffer the Father's will and not His own. Therefore, a final wave came upon Him with such violence as to cut Him at every pore. It seemed for a moment that He was torn apart, and that blood came out of every pore. The Lord writhed in pain upon the ground as this great final torment was poured upon Him.*

*All virtue was taken from Him. All the great life force in Him was stricken and afflicted. All the light turned to darkness. He was humbled, drained and left with nothing. It is not possible for a man to bear such pains and live, but with nothing more than will, hope in His Father, and charity toward all men, He emerged from the final wave of torment, knowing He had suffered all this for His Father and His brethren. By His hope and great charity, trusting in the Father, the Lord returned from this dark abyss and found grace again, His heart being filled with love toward the Father and all men.*

*These great burdens were born by the Lord not only on behalf of mankind, but also as a necessary prelude to His death upon a Roman cross. Had He not been so physically weakened by these sufferings and drained of power from within, the scourging and crucifixion He suffered at the hands of men could not have taken His life.*

*It was many hours after this vision closed before the one who witnessed this suffering could compose himself again. He wept because of the vision shown him, and he wondered at the Lord's great suffering for mankind.*

*The witness reflected for many days upon this scene of the Lord's great suffering. He read many times the account of the Lord's agony given to Joseph*

*Smith, which reads, "Therefore I command you to repent - repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore - how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not. For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit - and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink - Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." [D&C 9].*

*He pondered and asked: Why were there waves of torment? Why did they increase in difficulty? How were they organized as they seemed to fit a pattern?*

*After long inquiring into the things which he had seen, the Lord, who is patient and merciful and willing to instruct those who call upon Him, again appeared to the man on the 20th of December, 2007. He made known unto him that the waves of torment suffered by the Lord came in pairs which mirrored each other. The first of each wave poured upon the Lord those feelings, regrets, recriminations and pains felt by those who injured their fellow man. Then followed a second wave, which mirrored the first, but imposed the pains suffered by the victims of the acts committed by those in the first wave. Instead of the pains of those who inflict hurt or harm, it was now the anger, bitterness and resentments felt by those who suffered these wrongs.*

*From each wave of suffering, whether as the one afflicting or as the victim of those wrongs, the Lord would overcome the evil feelings associated with these wrongs, and find His heart again filled with peace. This was why, in the vision of the suffering of the Lord, it was in the second waves that there appeared oftentimes to be injuries to His body.*

*The greater difficulty in these paired waves of torment was always overcoming the suffering of the victim. With these waves the Lord learned to overcome the victims' resentments, to forgive, and to heal both body and spirit. This was more difficult than overcoming the struggles arising from the one who committed the evil. This is because the one doing evil knows he has done wrong and feels a natural regret when he sees himself aright. The victim, however, always feels it is their right to hold resentment, to judge their persecutor, and to withhold peace and love for their fellow men. The Lord was required to overcome both so that He could succor both.*

*In the pairing of the waves, the first torment was of the mind and spirit, and the second was torment of mind, spirit and body.*

*The Lord experienced all the horror and regret wicked men feel for their crimes when they finally see the truth. He experienced the suffering of their victims whose righteous anger and natural resentment and disappointment must also be shed, and forgiveness given, in order for them to find peace. He overcame them all. He descended below them all. He comprehends it all.*

*And He knows how to bring peace to them all. He knows how to love others whether they are the one who has given offense or the one who is a victim of the offense.*

*In the final wave, the most brutal, most evil, most heinous sins men inflict upon one another were felt by Him as a victim of the worst men can do. He knew how it felt to wrongly suffer death. He knew what it was like to be a mother holding a child in her arms as they are both killed by those who delight in their suffering. He knew how it was for ambitious men to rid themselves of a rival by conspiracy and murder. He knew what it was to have virtue robbed from the innocent. He knew betrayal, treachery, and abuse in all its worst degrading horror. There was no cruelty, no offense, no evil that mankind has suffered or will suffer that was not put upon Him.*

*He knew what it is like for men to satisfy their ambition by clothing their hypocrisy in religious garb. He also felt what it was like to be the victim of religious oppression by those who pretend to practice virtue while oppressing others. He knew the hearts of those who would kill Him. Before confronting their condemnation of Him in the flesh, He suffered their torment of mind when they recognized He was the Lord, and then found peace for what they would do by rejecting Him. In this extremity there was madness itself as He mirrored the evil which would destroy Him, and learned how to come to peace with the Father after killing the Son of God, and to love all those involved without restraint and without pretense even before they did these terrible deeds. His suffering, therefore, encompassed all that has happened, all that did happen, and all that would happen in the future.*

*As a result of what the Lord suffered, there is no condition physical, spiritual or mental that He does not fully understand. He knows how to teach, comfort, succor and direct any who come to Him seeking forgiveness and peace. This is why the prophet wrote, "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." [Isa 53] And again, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." [Isa 53] He obtained this knowledge by the things he suffered. He suffered that we might avoid sin by being obedient to His commandments. None of us need harm another, if we will follow Him. He knows fully the consequences of sin. He teaches His followers how to avoid sin.*

*The prophet Alma taught and understood our Lord's sufferings as he wrote, "And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities." [Alma 4].*



*He can bring peace to any soul. He can help those who will come to Him love their fellow man. He alone is the Perfect Teacher because He alone has the knowledge each of us lack to return to being whole and at peace with the God and Father of us all after our transgression of His will. He is wise to what is required for each man's salvation.*

*As the Lord made these terrible things known to the man he cried out, Hosanna to the Lamb of God! He has trodden the winepress alone! Glory, honor and mercy be upon the Chosen One forever and ever! I will submit unto anything you see fit to require of me! I will bend my knee in obedience to you! Let thy will, not mine be done! For worthy is the Lamb!" Then, thinking upon how trifling his difficulties and disappointments had been in comparison with the suffering he saw imposed upon his Lord, the man added, Surely goodness and mercy have been mine all the days of my life!*

*And the Lord responded, And you shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

*Then the man wept.<sup>5</sup>*

From the forgoing accounts, Christ has finally made it clear to us that His death on the cross was not where He paid the price for our sins. Many have died in that same way and suffered that same dreadful agony. But Christ alone paid for mankind's sins because He alone was able to take on the terrible burden of our terrible failures. He conquered sin. And so what of the cross? He certainly needed to die, because without dying He could not rise from the dead and conquer death.

In Matthew we have an account of something Christ declared as He hung on the cross: *"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour [Christ] cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:45-46).* This is misunderstood. Christ was not forsaken by God. He predicted in John before His death that the Father would never leave His side. Christ was reciting the opening lines of a hymn about Himself. The psalms were hymns. If I were to, for example, say, "Silent night, holy night," in your mind you could go to that hymn. If I were to say, "A mighty fortress is our God," your mind would go to that hymn. On the cross Christ was taking the minds of those who were present to a hymn about Himself. Let me read some of that hymn.

*"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?"*

*O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

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<sup>5</sup> Snuffer, Denver. *Come, Let Us Adore Him*. Salt Lake City: Mill Creek Press, 2009, pp. 216-224

*Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*

*They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*

*But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.*

*All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,*

*He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

*But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.*

*I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.*

*Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*

*Many bulls have compassed me...*

*They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*

*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

*My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

*For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

*I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*

*They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

*But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me...*

*I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

*Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.*

*For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*

*My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation...*

*All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*

*For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations...*

*All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.*

*A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.*

*They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this."*

*(Psalm 22)*

That was the hymn to which Christ pointed while on the cross. He started "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was not a lamentation; this was a declaration that for this purpose He came into the world, and for this purpose He would die. Christ suffered for our sins in Gethsemane. Christ died on the cross while testifying He was the promised Messiah. Christ rose from the dead to break the bonds of death. Since He was entitled to live forever His death was an infinite price to pay. Therefore, the demands of justice have all been met, and that, infinitely. We can benefit from that by accepting the ransom He has paid, repenting and being baptized. Here is His doctrine:

*Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine.*

*And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me; and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me.*

*And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

*And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.*

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost.*

*And thus will the Father bear record of me, and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one.*

*And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things.*

*And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.*

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.*

*And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock; but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them.*

*(3 Nephi 11:31-40)*

If you've not been baptized, or if you would like to be re-baptized, there are people who have authority to do so who will do so without charge, without requesting or expecting a donation; indeed, they would refuse it if you offered it. There is a baptism that has been arranged for anyone who is interested tomorrow, and details of that you can find out from people here after this ends.

I got a number of questions sent in through the website that I'm going to take a few minutes to answer, and then we're going to invite anyone who is here that has a question to use the microphone. This is being recorded and the microphone can only pick it up if you use that in the recording, and we'll answer questions.

**Question:** "What drove Luther to create his own version of the Bible?"

**Answer:** At the time that Luther did a translation of the Bible the only version that was available was written in a language that most people did not commonly speak. He translated the Bible into the common tongue. The first time the Bible got translated into English, for example, was only about 470 years ago. Before, it was translated into the common tongue so that people could read the Bible in a language that they spoke and understood, again with the effort that Martin Luther did in translating the Bible into German. We take for granted that people can get access to a Bible that you can read and you can understand in your own language, but one of the most important things that Martin Luther did, and one of the things that made the Reformation itself assume a durable form that would last past the generation of the Reforming fathers, was translating the Bible into the common tongue so that people could read it in their own language, in language they would understand. That let the genie out of the bottle, so to speak, because then you were no longer dependent upon someone that could read a foreign tongue, to read a text that

was written in a language you didn't understand, to tell you that they were speaking for God. Now you could get access to the text yourself, and you could compare what you were seeing in the clergy with what was written in the biblical text. The gap between what you saw in the biblical text and what you were seeing in the clergy was so enormous that immediately you began to have the same reaction—once you had access to the Bible—that the Reformation fathers had to Catholicism. But as the Bible has been made available in more and more of the vernacular tongue, what's happened is that Christianity has divided and redivided and redivided again, because now anyone has access to the text.

As we stand here today there is no official registry that we can go to, to say how many different kinds of Christian churches there are but it is estimated that there are at least 40,000 different Christian denominations in existence today. The apostle Paul wrote in one of his letters about the hope he had for seeing us all come into the unity of faith.<sup>6</sup> It seems like the more access that we have gained to biblical understanding the more disagreements we've managed to have with one another, which is one of the reasons for the things I said at the very beginning of this talk. We should not let our individual search for truth become a breeding ground for resentments, disagreements and conflict between one another. If you have found some great truth that you can articulate and persuade me also to accept, then I should welcome you doing that. If I have some truth that I can present and persuade you to accept, then we are both benefited. If you and I read things about Christ, and study Him carefully, and have our own religious experience, and we accept Christ as a Redeemer, as a Savior, as the Son of God, as what He said He was, why can't we rejoice together in that fact? Because our agreement is greater than any of the petty disagreements that divide us. Christianity needs to take a very sober assessment of itself and decide there is no room for venom in the Christian heart. There is no room for conflict. Celebrate what unites us. As for the petty disagreements, well, if you're from Jersey you just "fuget 'bout it."

**Question:** Did the Catholic Church retract all 95 Theses?

**Answer:** No. The purpose of the 95 Theses was to demonstrate that the sale of indulgences, which was going on in order to finance St. Peter's Basilica in Rome with a financial deal that the papal signature on the indulgences were given to franchise holders. Then the franchise holders could go around and fill in the name on the indulgence with the papal seal on it and sell that to someone for money, and the guy who was selling it—the franchise holder who was selling that—he got to keep part of the money, and then part of the money went back to Rome. It's like owning a McDonald's franchise. You get to keep part of the money but you've still got to pay some for the franchise holder. They were financing the construction of St. Peter's Basilica by this process of selling.

There were a couple of the 95 Theses (if I can find those real quick) that I really like a lot—here is one: "Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church?" The former reason would be most just; the latter is most trivial."

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<sup>6</sup> See Ephesians 4:12-13

Martin Luther posed questions that anyone with common sense can think of reasons to doubt the practice of selling indulgences. The entire burden of the 95 Theses does not question the primacy of the pope, the position of the pope, but it says that that primacy and that position needs to be exercised under the constraint of what the scriptures say. If the pope violates the scriptures then the pope is wrong. He does not possess independent authority to do stuff. You don't get to be God. You have to submit to God, even if you're the pope. They didn't condemn them all but the burden of it was offensive.

In that first talk that I gave in Los Angeles, someone listening to that was concerned because I referred to Jesus Christ's most extensive prophecy in the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew. His disciples were asking Him about the future and, among other things, they want to know about the signs of the times when He's going come. Christ answered them, and that 24<sup>th</sup> chapter contains the Lord's description of last days events. There's a lot of really tragic, ugly things that will go on before His coming but it has a happy ending. He's coming, and when He comes He's going to fix everything that's wrong with the world, primarily by destroying the wicked by the brightness of His glory, but if you're not wicked that's still good news.

**Question:** "You addressed this in your lectures. Let's say for argument's sake I believed you. What can or should a university student do? I can't drop out because I would have to immediately have to pay back student loans. Do I just keep attending school and trust that everything works out? Or let's say I'm in high school. Would you recommend young people even go to college? Should young people who want to be lawyers just quash their dreams because everything is going to hell? That's my general problem with gloom and doom prophecy, it stagnates individual growth and development. People isolate themselves from the rest of the world, spend a bunch of money on guns and emergency supplies, and generally waste their lives living in fear. Is there a balanced approach to watching out for that dastardly thief in the night?"

**Answer:** I would say, finish high school. I would say, go to law school. One of the first things on the agenda that Christ will destroy—it's not the lawyers, it's the bankers and the insurance companies. They're all evil. [Audience laughter.] Your student loans won't need to be repaid because there will be nothing left of the institutions who hope to collect on them. You don't live your life in contemplation of the fearful return of the Lord. You live your life in a grateful celebration for everything God has done and given to us.

As I was flying here, we were taking off just as the first rays of the sun were creeping up in the east, and there was this brilliant scarlet ribbon on the horizon. My wife pointed it out to me. (I was sitting in an aisle and the only thing I got to see was the cart they bring with treats.) As I looked across at the sunrise, it was spectacular.

Where I live in Utah we have this Wasatch Front. These are jagged granite cliffs that go upward. The top of one of the ski resorts is 11,000 feet. We live at about 4,000 feet. When the sun sets as you are in the valley, you see the sun go down in the west but in the east, on

the mountains, you see the sunlight creep up, and creep up the mountain until finally just the very top peaks remain with light. What happens is that the light, as it goes up the mountain in its nightly retreat, because of the refraction of the atmosphere it tends to shift to the blue and to the purple. Every night those mountains—it's particularly spectacular when there's snow up there because the hues of the sunlight refraction become very colorful up there.

I happen to like impressionist art, and my favorite impressionist is Monet. We have a couple of Monet—well, they are forgeries. They were given to me as a fee, we didn't have to pay for them. They are actual Monet paintings right down to the brush strokes reproduced, and they're beautiful.

Every night as the sun sets, God does something on the mountains that is never the same, always beautiful, and greater in beauty and splendor than anything Monet ever put on canvas.

We ought to love life, and we ought to love one another, and we ought to pursue our education. We shouldn't bunker down with guns and ammo, fearfully waiting for a direful end to things. Of all people, Christians should have the most hope, the most optimism, the most vitality, and greatest amount of joy in life. We ought to celebrate every day.

**Question:** "Having studied evolutionary biology in college, I came to appreciate the vast amounts of evidence for this scientific theory." [I will pause there. Read *Darwin's Black Box*.] Recent anthropological data, Gobekli Tepe, is pushing the origins of civilization far beyond 4,000 B.C. It is an increasingly tenuous position to accept a strictly literal interpretation of Genesis in regards to creation and chronology, especially among the younger millennial generation that I am a part of. Having also had a few mystical experiences that lead me to accept Jesus as Lord, I feel somewhat torn. Whatever I do it seems like I'm rejecting truth. Whether I consider ignoring physical scientific evidence or effectively dismissing parts of the Bible, both are not satisfying solutions to me. Is there a way to make secular data fit into the Christians metaphysics?"

**Answer:** Yes, there is. I'm going to go ahead and answer this fellow, for what it's worth. The problem with biblical literalism is not necessarily that what is in the Bible is untrue but it may be that what is in the Bible is speaking using a vernacular that mankind is unacquainted with. For example, the work of the creation is referred to generally as "a day". There is no reason to believe that calling it a day in the language of scripture has reference to anything other than a discrete event. It would be more accurate to say that there were labors that were performed during the incremental progression of the creation which took however long, and when the labor was completed then that labor was called "a day". There is nothing to suggest that the labor of the first day was exactly the same amount of time as the labor of the second day, nor is there anything to suggest that the labor of the third day was equal in time to either the first or the second, and so on.

How many eons of time were required in order for God, through the process that we see in nature, to form the earth, was the first day. However long it took, through seismic, volcanic, and other activities to cause the dry land to appear was labor that took however long it took.

In the vernacular of scripture events above are reckoned by the movement of the earth. The earth is moving in two ways. It is circling the sun on a tilt. Twice a year that tilt aligns so that we have an equinox, which means that there's exactly twelve hours of sunlight and twelve hours of darkness on that one day, twice a year. Then there are solstices, when in the north the days are the longest because it's leaning towards the sun, and when it gets to the other side it's leaning away, and at that moment the nights are very long because in the north you're leaning away from the sun. As it makes this movement in one direction it's also wobbling at the poles.

The earth is not perfectly stable on its axis. It wobbles. It takes 25,900 years roughly for it to complete one circle at the pole. In the ancient vernacular, because of that wobble we have a changing pole star. It happens at this moment to be Polaris, but if you go back several thousand years we have a different pole star. That pole star changes.

We also have, around the ecliptic, a group of constellations that everyone on earth can see. It doesn't matter if you're in the southern hemisphere or if you're in the northern hemisphere. There are a group of constellations everyone on earth can continually see. There are twelve of them. All twelve of them had a story behind them in the beginning. All twelve of them have symbols that represent Christ. That's for another day.

When the pole star changes, which happens about seven times every 25,900 years, anciently that change was called "A New Heaven". Likewise there is a different constellation that appears at sunrise on the vernal equinox, and that constellation tells you what age you're in. Star fields overlap and sometimes there are gaps. Right now we are in an overlap between—Christ said, "I will make you fishers of men," and the constellation for that age was and still is Pisces: two fish. One fish caught in the net is endlessly circling the equator, but another fish, and it's much smaller, this other fish is headed to the north, where you will find God.

That constellation is going to be replaced by the One who is coming. We call him Aquarius. We also call him The Waterman. He is pouring out; a new age will come. If you go back far enough, what he is pouring out is two streams. One stream is water, which gives life, and one stream is fire. He who is coming in the great day of the Lord is coming for "the great (the water) and dreadful (the fire) day of the Lord",<sup>7</sup> to pour something out. Well, it just so happens that the star fields of these two overlap. If you date the return of the Lord by the star field of Aquarius at its earliest star, then the first sign of the times of refreshing would have been about in the 1840s, when Joseph Smith was saying that Christ appeared to him and gave him a message to preach. We have not yet fully exited the star field of Pisces.

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<sup>7</sup> See Joel 2:11



Now, all of that is to make this comment: When there's a new pole star that's called a New Heaven. When there's a new constellation on the horizon at the vernal equinox, that's called a New Earth. There will be a New Heaven and there will be a New Earth when Christ returns. All of these are given, as Christ said in Genesis 1:14, for signs and for seasons, and everything testifies of Him.

There's a lot of scientific proof to challenge traditional interpretations, but there's a lot of material in the Bible that is simply misunderstood in traditions. This earth is pretty old, and how long it existed before it was considered sufficiently complete for man to occupy is not to be measured in days, it's to be measured in epochs of time referred to generically as a day, meaning a period, meaning an agenda.

**Question:** "If Christ never had buildings then what is His church and how do you know if you're a part of it?"

Answer: Christ and the apostles and the earliest Christians met in homes. They talked on hillsides. They met in places that were convenient but they didn't build buildings. The prophecies predict that in the last days there are going to be only two buildings that matter to God. One of them will be a temple rebuilt in Jerusalem, and the other will be a temple built in the tops of the mountains in a place called Zion. These two places will be the center of activity.

Now this is an answer to a question but I'm not going to read the question because I didn't print it out. The Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Church split at approximately 1,000 A.D., it's about 1,054 A.D. Martin Luther was generally positive towards the Eastern Orthodox Church. He and they both rejected celibate clergy. Both rejected the pope's supremacy, both rejected purgatory, both rejected indulgences. Martin Luther claimed the Orthodox or Greek Church was proof of Catholic deviation. Luther did not personally attempt to build a bridge to orthodoxy but some of his followers did do so.

I wanted to finish my comments by reading you a few quotes from some of the Protestant leaders. A husband and wife team, William and Catherine Booth, founded the Salvation Army and I want to read you a comment of William Booth's. William Booth cautioned us about the trends he saw in both society and religion. Here's his quote: "I consider that the chief dangers which confront the coming century will be religion without the Holy Ghost; Christianity without Christ; forgiveness without repentance; salvation without regeneration; politics without God; and Heaven without Hell."

C.S. Lewis may be one of the most influential Christian apologists that have appeared on the scene. Let me read you a few things from C.S. Lewis. "Each day we are becoming a creature of splendid glory or one of unthinkable horror."<sup>8</sup> "There are only two kinds of people: those

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<sup>8</sup> Mere Christianity

who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your (own) way.'<sup>9</sup>

C.S. Lewis was the one that said, "No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good."<sup>10</sup> I really like this comment: "Of all the bad men, religious bad men are the worst."

<sup>11</sup> He also made this proposition: "Christianity, if false, is of no importance and, if true, is of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important."<sup>12</sup>

Dwight Moody (after whom the Moody Bible Institute was named), when he founded it, it had a different name. He said, "Christians should live in the world, but not be filled with it. A ship lives in the water; but if the water gets into the ship, she goes (down) to the bottom. So Christians may live in the world; but if the world gets into them, they sink." He made this observation: "Moses spent forty years thinking he was somebody; forty years learning he was nobody; and forty years discovering what God can do with a nobody."

He said, "Out of 100 men, one will read the Bible, the other 99 will read the Christian," hence your obligation. "The world does not understand theology or dogma, but it understands love and sympathy."

And then this, and I'll end with this. If any of you have something you would like me to comment on I'd be glad to.

There's a great difference between recognizing the signs of the times and knowing the detail of how prophecy will be fulfilled. An example of the difference is found in Matthew. Matthew 2:1-18 tells of wise men who studied the scriptures, watched the signs in the heavens, recognized a star that testified of the birth of the Messiah or newborn King of the Jews, traveled a great distance, perhaps as long as two years to worship him, facilitating fulfilling prophecy by their presence in Jerusalem, and were visited by God in a dream. You know the story. They came, and when they got to Jerusalem they asked Herod, "Where is he that is born the King of the Jews?" which caused Herod to say, "Get in here and tell me about this," and his advisors said, "Bethlehem." Not the least out of these should come a Governor. So he sends the wise men then to Bethlehem and says, "Hey, when you find him you return to me and you tell me so that I can go, wink wink, nod nod, worship him too." And of course, they were warned by God not to go back and tell Herod. When Herod found out that he was not going to be advised to make this job easy, he sent soldiers to kill all the kids two years old and younger. In the meantime, Joseph and Mary were departed into Egypt.

Despite all the wise men were able to know, they did not know where to find the newborn King. They mistakenly went to Herod's people to inquire about Christ's birth. They did not know, and God did not reveal to them, that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. It's unlikely

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<sup>9</sup> The Great Divorce  
<sup>10</sup> Mere Christianity  
<sup>11</sup> Reflections on the Psalms  
<sup>12</sup> God In The Dock

they would have willingly acted to fulfil the Jeremiah 31:15 prophecy of the slaughter of the children, yet Matthew credits their involvement with fulfilling this prophecy.

So ask yourself, can men unwittingly fulfil prophecy? Can anyone, even wise men who are well studied in scripture and prophecy, and acquainted with the heavens and the stars and the signs up there, ever fully understand prophecy?

One of the lessons from the scriptural account is that all wise men whose diligence and faithfulness lead them to understand God's hand is at work, may still not understand how or where God will act. There remain mysteries which God will accomplish but men cannot understand beforehand. If the wise men knew He had been born but could not identify where Christ's birth happened, despite all else they were able to do, then how can anyone know how God will accomplish his strange act in the last days? This is what the Lord has said: *"What I have said unto you must needs be, that all men may be left without excuse; That wise men and rulers may hear and know that which they have never considered; That I may proceed to bring to pass my act, my strange act, and perform my work, my strange work, that men may discern between the righteous and the wicked, saith your God."* (D&C 101:93-95).

Prophecies are not given to know details beforehand; they are given so that they, once fulfilled, prove that God knew the end from the beginning. I'm here as a witness to tell you: God is working. There are signs in the heavens above, there are signs on the earth below, that testify that He intends to come again. Don't interrupt your life because you want to buy guns and ammo and go live underground somewhere. There's a YouTube song, "You've been living underground, eating from a can, Talking about things you can't understand."<sup>13</sup> Don't be like Reba McEntire and her husband in *Tremors* when they slayed the beast with the elephant gun and said, "You broke into the wrong damn rec room."<sup>14</sup> Be like Christ, hopeful and helpful, and positive. He went about doing good. That's who we're supposed to follow, and that's what we're supposed to do. That's how we're supposed to live. Be hopeful, be helpful.

The story of Adam and Eve that I mentioned at the beginning makes every single one of us descendants of a common set of parents. I keep thinking, these *23andMe*, these genetic ads that say, figure out who you are and where you reckon from, they gathered genetic databases in order to try and segregate us into regions and into groups. At the end of the day they just don't go back far enough, because if they went back far enough everyone's genetic makeup would be half Adam and half Eve, and you wouldn't spend \$49 to learn that. If you want to spend \$49 to learn that truth then donate some money to the poor and homeless instead of sending it in elsewhere.

Let me end by bearing testimony to you that I didn't come here because I thought it was a good idea, I came here because the Lord asked me to. I've been in now, this is the third

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<sup>13</sup> U2. "Mysterious Ways." *Achtung Baby*. 1991

<sup>14</sup> *Tremors*. Dir. Ron Underwood. Perf. Kevin Bacon, Fred Ward, Finn Carter, Michael Gross, Reba McEntire. Universal Pictures, 1990.

location, to accomplish what He's asked me to do, after telling me the things that I ought to say and the subjects that ought to be covered.

I hope you realize that God is real, and that He is as concerned about you and your day, and in your life, as He was concerned about Peter, or Paul, or John, or Mary, or Elizabeth, or Abraham, or Sarah. Every one of you matter to Him. If He were to speak to you out of heaven today He would call you by name, just as He has done with everyone to whom He's ever spoken. And if the Lord calls you by name, it's not going to be by your full legal name, it's not going to be by what's on your birth certificate. He will call you by that name [which] your best friend knows you, because God is intimate with every one of us. He knows everything, including the desires of your heart. Even though we are all rough customers, the fact is the only reason you're here is because your heart is inclined to follow Him. You're aspirations, your desires and your hopes can be perfect and your conduct can be reprehensible. God takes into account the perfection of your hope and He evaluates you based upon your most noble aspirations. He's cheering you on to try and get you to move a little closer throughout your life to that ideal, that perfection that you would like to have. We get hungry, we get tired, we get ill, we get weak, and so we excuse ourselves. But through it all we can maintain the aspiration, the hope, the love of Christ. If you do that He will take that into account as He deals with you.

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

[Question and Answer section]

**Denver:** There's a microphone. Does anyone want... We do need to be out of here, and they've got to wrap up. We have one hour before they close and they've got some work to do. If there are questions I'd be happy to respond. If not, then we have people that have work to do. Anyone want the microphone? Okay then. I came a long distance, and I'm hungry. What? There is a question.

**Question #1:** The scriptures talk about a day where we're all filled with the spirit. Some call it a Day of Pentecost. Is there another day like that to come?

**Denver:** Yes, that was an easy question. You're talking about the generality of mankind. The gifts of the spirit are intended to flourish in the hearts of those who seek the Lord. There are ways of having that develop in individual lives. But to have a community in which that happens, consider for a moment all of the ills and illnesses, pathologies and defects of any community that you live in.

Within Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost there were a group of believers who had so fully dedicated themselves to the Lord that they had, at that point, all things in common. They were living as a society in a way in which they had consecrated themselves, not only to God but to one another, so that they were all equal with one another. There were two people, a husband and wife, who in that community had lied about what they had done. They had sold property and they had kept back part. In essence, they were trying to live a law that

one would live with Christ dwelling among them but this married couple conspired, lied, and then broke any number of the ten commandments, bore false witness, they coveted, they stole, and when confronted they were judged and the wages of what they did resulted in both of them dying.<sup>15</sup> In essence, they committed to live on a level in which sin of that sort, that base of misconduct, is not permitted.

The general outpouring into a community is going to happen with a community of people who are willing to abide by those kinds of terms. You can accomplish it in an individual life but we don't have a society that is sufficiently healed. We have the last days society identified generically by the name Babylon the Great Whore, which is the society in which you live. The Great Whore does not abide the conditions for that outpouring but you as a Christian soul can and should, and therefore, if you do that, you're entitled to that outpouring in your life. Make no mistake about it: If you sign up genuinely and sincerely to follow the Lord, what you're going to encounter is the hostility, the anger, even the rage of this world, because this world is not interested in surrendering to Christ's control. That's why when He comes He's going to judge the world. In the meantime sincere Christians, devout ones who will obey Him, are going to encounter a necessary opposition. The challenge is to not let it overwhelm you. I'd encourage every one of you in your faith to press on and to stay committed. Christ is real and He paid a terrible price, and He did that so that you would not have to pay a price. He suffered for you but He expects that we have not merely belief in Him, but faith in Him, and that we act consistent with our belief. Thank you.

**Question #2:** I also have a question for a friend. Do you believe Joseph Smith came reincarnated?

**Denver:** No, I don't believe that anyone comes back here to live a second mortal experience in this creation. I do think that when the scriptures use the phrase, "worlds without end", that the work of God is infinite in scope and reach, and that God's redemptive work is, in each individual case, adapted to the development of the individual until they grow and are fashioned and are developed to the appropriate godly stature; that we become like our Lord.

Christ went and He preached to the spirits in prison, meaning that when He died and He went into the place where the dead are, He continued His ministry. Peter writes about that. The continuation of a ministry among the dead suggests that when you die there's still work to be done, at least preaching to be done. If you read real carefully some of the content about the things that occurred before the world, and the things that will occur at the end of the thousand years of peace when Lucifer-Satan-is released, at the end of the thousand years of peace, the very, very beginning of what went on before the world was created, and the very, very end when, after a thousand years of peace Satan is loosed from the pit again, look an awful lot alike. But that's a subject beyond the challenges and the problems of this mortal life and what we today confront and are faced.

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<sup>15</sup> See Acts 5:1-11

There's a lot of stuff in the far distance that aren't relevant for the challenges we face now. In fact, we were just looking at that phrase, "worlds without end", which is how it's rendered. The original language, if you take it literally, meant as you look out at the horizon it's something past your ability to see. It's beyond the end of the world as you see it, meaning that what comes after we finish our sojourn here will be the concern for us on another day, because sufficient is the evil of this day for the purposes God has in mind for us, and our challenges here.

I know there are people who believe that you do come back, and I know there are people who think that they're Peter, or David, or Solomon, or Isaiah, but I've met too many Peter's to believe all of them, and there's a whole lot of Mary Magdalene's [and] Martha's. So I don't put any stock in that.

**Question #3:** What advice would you give to other intellectuals, or even an analytical person, that would struggle with seeking for those answers or those truths that they desire to know, and they're struggling with finding those truths and not allowing those things to drive a wedge in the faith that they put in Christ?

**Denver:** I believe that there is tension, if not outright hostility, between charity as a priority on one hand and knowledge as priority on the other hand, and that as between the two it is more important to acquire the capacity for charity or love of your fellow man than it is to gain understanding. It's like what Paul said, "If I have all gifts and know all mysteries but have not charity I'm nothing."<sup>16</sup> Charity, or the love of your fellow man is the greater challenge and the more relevant one, and when you've acquired that you can add to it knowledge. Knowledge has the ability to render the possessor arrogant and haughty, whereas charity renders the possessor humble. If you want the greatest challenge in life, try loving your fellow man unconditionally in viewing them as God would view them and then behaving according to that view. Out of that you will learn a great deal more about Christ than you can simply by studying. Walking in His path is a greater revelation of who He is than anything else that's provided.

Joseph Smith once remarked that, "If you could gaze into heaven for five minutes you would know more about it than if you read every book that has ever been written on the subject."<sup>17</sup> Likewise, if you live charitably for five minutes in the presence of what you would normally condemn, what you would normally find repugnant; if you can deal with that charitably you will understand Christ better than if you spend a lifetime reading books written about Him.

We need to let these fellows wrap up and close their stuff out. Thank you for coming. Thank you for the attention you've paid. Thank all of you who have helped, participated, and sacrificed in order to make this event and the others before this possible. Thank you all.

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<sup>16</sup> See 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

<sup>17</sup> *The Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 324; cf. *History of the Church*, 6:50-51

[Transcription: Kiyoko Ball, as edited by Denver Snuffer]