

## Presentation of the Leather-bound Scriptures

Sandy, UT  
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I see people have figured out where the shade is and have seated themselves accordingly.

I figure everyone who's here knows enough about how these [the Scriptures] were put together, what the content is, how it has been voted upon—

(And someone hasn't muted their Zoom. If you'd check your Zoom and mute it.)

The purpose of getting together was two-fold. One was if anyone who doesn't know anything about the project came, we were gonna make a presentation to bring them up to speed about what these things are/what their content are, but apparently, everyone here is already acquainted with that. So, we needn't deal with that.

There are two things that have been supplied by the factory. One is a set of the Scriptures. I'm holding the complete set in my hands. Then, the Book of Mormon has been also turned into a Hebrew-friendly, English-language version that's called The Stick of Joseph. If you ordered a set of Scriptures, you will get these three volumes. You had to order separately The Stick of Joseph, and that's the other volume that isn't... It's duplicative of half of the New Covenants.

What I have as samples are two different kinds of leather—the buffalo in cognac, and the goatskin in British tan leather. I'm gonna hand them... You know, let's pass 'em around to whoever wants to look at 'em. I'm gonna hold onto this one.

When you look at them, at the top, they make the interior of the book as a separate block. It's all sewn together, it's put into a press, and then it's sanded on the edge. The corners are rounded, and then this is gilded—covered with gold leaf. Then that is put into the cover. Well, to hold the material, the block—the book block—together... Normally, at the top of a book, you get cloth that's stitched around. The top, if you look at the book block binding, it's held together by leather. There's a leather insert that's more durable than the fabric is. It's a suede product that's put on there.

And then the interior—the black paper—is a kind of durable polyurethane that will probably outlast most landfills. They'll be pulling this stuff up through the next cycle of creation because it's extremely durable. That product is what the exterior leather is bound with.

In your best Bible publications, very often the leather cover is then glued to a backing. This one is not only glued to the backing but if you look at it, it's stitched around so it's both sewn and glued. Sometimes if you have a set of Scriptures, the corner will pull up. These are

sewn and they are ~~stitched~~ [glued]; and therefore, they're not gonna come apart. You're gonna have to be really determined to get these to fall apart.

The paper that this is put on is actually 100% cotton. It's a fabric; it's like it's been printed on a shirt.

In the middle ages, when they started making books using the Gutenberg press and making book blocks, they learned that insects will destroy the book; they'll eat the interior. And so, gilding on the edge is actually an innovation that was developed in order to preserve the book against both moisture getting in ('cuz it's a metal barrier to the moisture) and insects. It preserves the thing.

The leather that is on these is dyed with vegetable dyes, which are both extremely durable but also very leather-friendly. There are some dyes that look great, but they have a propensity to degenerate the leather. And so, the book doesn't last as long with those kinds of dyes.

We had a fellow who helped with this whole project who knew about leathers and dyes and paper and all of the componentry that's involved. And when the decision was made to go with the printer who promised to match all of the specifications at the lowest price, then the issue became what kind of leather was he going to use? And our committee member said that he knew a group in London that supplied vegetable-dyed leather—it was durable; it was high-quality; it was some of the best—and in all the world, he thought this London supplier was the place to go to get leather. So, he contacted this supplier in London that supplied leather for books that he put together and found out that they sourced their book leather from India. As it turns out, the factory that produced these is located not very far from the leather supplier that got used to provide the leather that got used in the binding of these.

We ran into some issues as we were going along. A paper that we really wanted to have for the book was unavailable 'cuz you had to buy 'em in bulk. It came in a spool that was enough to print a million volumes or so. We were only gonna print about seven thousand books. The factory gave us a different kind, and it was not coated. This is coated. But while they were putting together their program for this, a fellow who wanted to buy some copies of the Quran looked at the project that they were doing for us, chose the paper we wanted, and ordered a half-million copies of the Quran to be printed, which resulted in the paper that we could **not** afford to use on our projects, suddenly becoming affordable and usable for our project. So, this is not only 100% cotton paper, it's also the coated paper, which means that if you're writing with ink on it, it will not spread. The coating will hold the line, and it also helps with bleed-through. Although, if you're absolutely determined to get something to bleed through the page, just hold that felt pen on there long enough, and it'll, sure enough, go through.

The thing that has surprised me in... Unless anyone... Does anyone have any questions about the manufacturing or the quality of these things or how they were put together?

The thing that has impressed me as I've begun going through them is that Joseph Smith was given the assignment of translating the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God. He translated the Book of Mormon, and the project was finished, and it got into print in early 1830. Shortly after it was in print—because of recommendations that were made to have legal protection—the decision was made to incorporate a church in April of 1830. When the enthusiasm for incorporating a church came along and inquiries were made, there were approvals given by heaven for the organization of the church. The initiative to do the Book of Mormon came from heaven. The initiative to organize a corporate church came from people, and heaven said, “Sure, this was what you can do and how you can do it.” But heaven had another initiative that it wanted taken. Before the end of the first year, after the Book of Mormon was done and in print, the Lord gave another command, which you'll find in—I think it's section 18; I don't have a copy of it with me.

(Does someone have the Teachings and Commandments? You've got Teachings and Commandments? Yeah, let me look at it... I like the idea of walking off-screen for these people on Skype.)

This is almost... Shortly after the first meeting between Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon (it's on the 7th of December of 1830), and this is toward the end of a revelation: *And a commandment I give unto you that you shall write for him, and the scriptures shall be given, even as they are in my own bosom, to the salvation of [mine] own elect, for they will hear my voice, and shall see me, and shall not be asleep...* (T&C 18:6) and so on. This is the command that started the production of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. They began with Genesis, and what is now in the Old Covenants book of Genesis, which used to be (in part) in the Pearl of Great Price book of Moses (that's now been moved into Genesis where it was located in the Joseph Smith Translation), that is what tumbled out right after the command was given to begin the translation process. In fact, I think in the Pearl of Great Price, they date almost all of that Genesis material we find in the book of Moses—they date that in the December 1830 timeframe as it began.

So, that project was undertaken beginning in December of 1830. As the translation goes forward, there's an alignment that happens sometime early in the next year—it was in, actually, September of 1831. A revelation and a revision to Exodus happened almost simultaneously. In the revision to Exodus, the text is corrected and changed at the point that the second stone tablets are to be produced. The first one got destroyed; so a second one is gonna come out, and it's not going to be the same as the first one had been. The second one is going to include things that were omitted from the first, and the material relating to a higher form of priesthood (contained in the first) is omitted from the second.

And in the command that's given, there's a conversation between Moses and the Lord, in which He talks about how Moses would be part of a holy order—something that we had learned about much earlier in Genesis. Moses would be part of a holy order, but that was gonna be withheld from the balance of Israel because of their disobedience.

At the same time as that, there is a revelation that comes out. In it, it talks about how when the Lord removed Moses from Israel, He removed the priesthood from Israel. That portion that allowed you to come face-to-face with God was removed from the people of Israel so that it was discontinued. The revelation in the Teachings and Commandments (or Doctrine and Covenants) relating to that and the text of Genesis agree with one another. And I had an exchange with a fellow who's been a real valuable research assistant to the committee working on all these things. He's got all of the documentation about all of the changes that were made to the Joseph Smith Translation—a project that he has worked on for many years **before** the Scripture project; he joined the Scripture project late, and we literally were done with the Joseph Smith Translation. When he joined, we found out that everything we'd done was inadequate, incomplete, and that his research exceeded (by far) what anyone on the committee had done. So, the Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament and the New Testament was thrown out, and the work started over again. And the Joseph Smith Translation spilled out.

We exchanged some emails as I was looking at the comparison between the end of Exodus and the September revelation in the Teachings and Commandments, and it appears that they are both absolutely interrelated—that the Exodus text and the Teachings and Commandments text are both September 1831. But you can't tell which happened first. They were more or less simultaneous with one another. Joseph had been through that text and had edited it and then (apparently because of the revelation) went back and re-did the text and apparently re-did it again before we got the final version that appears now in the Exodus text.

Then there is a commandment that's given... It's actually not a commandment; it's a permissive "Okay, you can do this now." They were tired of the Old Testament. They really wanted to get to the New Testament. Sidney Rigdon being a Campbellite evangelical minister (basing most of his ministry upon New Testament text), they really wanted to get there. So, another revelation (I've got it marked in another set—I didn't bring a marked-up set here to pass around, so handing me it won't help)...

In any event, they get permission to go ahead and start translating the New Testament. So, they begin in the New Testament. Shortly into the revision of the New Testament, they come across a description in the book of John about the resurrection of the just and the unjust. And it appeared to them that there had to be more than just a resurrection of the just and the unjust in the afterlife, and so it provokes an inquiry—and what we get is D&C section 76 (T&C section—I think 69... You gotta become ambidextrous with these Scriptures; eventually I will only be able to cite the T&C; right now I'm still a novice. I think it's 69), the Vision of the Three Degrees of Glory. That was simultaneous with working on the book of John in the Joseph Smith Translation.

Later, you can tell when they are in the book of Revelation because there's a series of questions and a series of answers about "What does it mean to have four beasts? What does it mean to have a sea of glass? What does it mean..." Now, the answers to the questions are not put into the Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament because he wasn't

required to change the text of the New Testament. But the answers to the inquiries about what these things meant that are in John's vision of Revelation are in the Teachings and Commandments, and the dates that you'll see on those are the dates in which they're working on that part of the New Testament translation. In short, when (in December of 1831) the command was given to start a revision or translation of the Bible—

And the revelations **all** call it “translation,” k? What Joseph was doing was not looking at a Greek text; he was not looking at a Hebrew text; he was not looking at some source material and then figuring out that there is a better way to convert that source material into English. It was purely revelation. It was... Nothing existed that allowed for the book of Moses material to spring out of the text of Genesis. He had the text of Genesis, and it was altered/it was augmented/it was supplemented/it was elaborated upon by revelation which the Lord and the revelations always referred to as “translation.” So, you're looking at a text; you're getting a revelation; you're expanding the text. **That's translation**, according to the way in which the language is used in these texts.

So, as he goes along and he does this project, he will acquire some papyri in...what? 1835? And then they'll begin the translation of Egyptian papyri, and out will tumble the book of Abraham—a **translation**. And now we've got a lot of scholars trying to figure out, “OK, if this symbol in Egyptian (as far as we know) means ‘that,’ and Joseph says that it rather, instead, means ‘this’—A-ha!! We've discovered that we can criticize the translator!” If you're looking at what's going on in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible and the revelations that are occurring that are recorded in the Teachings and Commandments, you are really headed into a dead-end street if you believe that you're going to be able to capture what Joseph Smith did by saying it's simply a word-for-word movement from one language into another—because it was nothing like a one-for-one movement of language from one to another in the translation of the Bible. There's nothing like that in what happened in D&C section 76 (T&C 69)... And I've said 69 like three times—can someone look? It's... Do you have a T&C?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's 69.

DENVER: Is it 69?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah.

DENVER: Dude! I rock! Just like that! I mean, look, I've only been looking at these since a week ago Thursday, so that's pretty good.

...which is one of the reasons why everyone who lacks a conviction that the Book of Mormon was generated by the gift and power of God and that Joseph Smith was actually accomplishing something in furtherance of what God intended to do in the last days... Everyone who lacks that conviction wants to be able to explain, in a way that is satisfactory to the skeptical mind, what it is that Joseph Smith was up to. Because if you can satisfactorily explain it to your own mind, then you're halfway to being able to dismiss it

because methodologies are not without basis to criticize/reasons to quibble over/reasons to say, “Hmmm...that’s not so good.” Look, criticizing the work of Joseph Smith by an intellectual approach to the Egyptian Book of Breathing material (that was in the Joseph Smith papyri that was accompanying Facsimiles 1, 2, & 3) is a dead-end. It will never get you there.

First of all, Egyptian understanding of the language begins with the rosetta stone; and the rosetta stone reckons from about... Well, it’s Ptolemaic; it’s what? Maybe 160 BC? Languages change so much over a period of 500 years that the very same language you are speaking right now is the language Beowulf was written in, it’s the language that Chaucer wrote in, it’s the language the King James Bible was written in, and it’s the language that is spoken today. Do you think if you went back to the King James folks and you simply spoke in today’s vernacular that “dude, like, they’d dig and understand what was happenin’, man.” Do you think they’d dig that? Do you think they’d be with ya? You’d connect? Is that gonna happen? Not.

Everything I said is comprehensible to you because you watch and listen to what’s going on in media today. Beowulf is so gibberish-filled that unless you get a translation into more modern English... There are people today that can’t even read the King James version of the Bible, and what’s that? 1611? The further back you go in the very same language, the more it disconnects from what’s happening. Every 500 years, the language is so revolutionized you can’t read it.

The text of the book of Abraham reckons from something that is about two millennia before the text that was produced in the Ptolemaic period that is the source from which Joseph derived the inspiration to produce the book of Abraham. Scholars get frustrated because scholars can’t capture... They can’t capture what it is that Joseph Smith did. They want to be able to do what Joseph did/to explain what Joseph did so that they might stand a chance of also doing **that**. But (to borrow from Mark Twain) the difference between what the scholar can do and what Joseph Smith did is the difference between a lightning bug and lightning. Joseph was doing something altogether different, on an order of magnitude that scholars will never be able to replicate.

And so, when you hear the scholarly criticisms of anything that Joseph did, you are hearing the words of fools that are holding in derision the very thing that the wise and the noble and the pure in heart will constantly seek to obtain as a blessing under the hand of Joseph. Eventually, I assume, they may become wise enough in their efforts to finally catch up with what Joseph Smith did.

But **you**, with these new Scriptures—having what has tumbled out of Joseph Smith—have access to the very thing that the Lord said was in His bosom. He wanted us to have the Scriptures *even as they are in my own bosom, to the salvation of my own elect* (T&C 18:6). That’s the purpose of Joseph undertaking the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. It was called by him the “fullness of the Scriptures.” Well, if you just reflect for a moment on the concept that the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible is what generated the fullness of the

Scriptures and without it, the Church would fail (Joseph prophesied), then what you get from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible are the most substantively-informative, doctrinally-rich, historically-surprising sections of the Doctrine and Covenants or the Teachings and Commandments.

**That** effort provoked another effort that was qualitatively different because of what Joseph undertook in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. And then, because of the failure, once the command was given to bestow for the first time the higher priesthood inside the organization of the Church and that happened, there was an absolute failure on the part of every one of those who had been ordained. The marvelous gifts, the wonderful spiritual experiences, the great power that was supposed to accompany that, turned into apostasy after apostasy, ex-communication after ex-communication, and if you've read *A Man Without Doubt*, you see the preliminaries for why Joseph produced, then, Lectures on Faith. That failure in the initial ordination to priesthood authority that turned out to be a complete debacle, if Joseph Smith were a fraud would've represented a serious set-back. It would've been discouraging. It would've said, "Maybe all of this stuff that I'm up to is just not going to amount to anything." But what Joseph Smith did was he responded and reacted exactly like a person who knew that this was the work of God and knew that God would ultimately not only stand behind it but vindicate it and bring it to its successful conclusion. And so, instead of getting discouraged, he set about to write T&C 110, which is Lectures on Faith.

Lectures on Faith was intended to be a remedial book to **fix** people whose doubts overwhelm their ability to move forward in faith, people who would like to believe but want the Lord to help their unbelief. *Lord, I believe! Help [thou mine] unbelief* (Mark 5:9 RE). And Joseph sets about to do **exactly** that. He doesn't do anything that suggests his **own** crisis of faith. Nor does he do anything that suggests that he doubts God's behind the work. He proceeded as a man without doubt in God and in the process of what was unfolding at that point. And so, we get Lectures on Faith, designed to be remedial—for all of us, as well as anyone that got them.

This T&C 110—at one point this was considered to be the curriculum of the School of the Prophets. It was in the Doctrine and Covenants as the doctrine; it was the very first section; and when it was originally type-set in the first publication of the Doctrine (Lectures on Faith) and Covenants (the Book of Commandments)... When it was originally published, the print size for the Lectures were larger than the print size in the rest of the book. You'll notice, oddly, that the print size varies in the Teachings and Commandments,—out of respect for exactly the same thing. There are bigger words because... well... they're bigger words. Okay? And so, **this** mirrors what Joseph had done when he put the Lectures originally into the text.

There's a section in the back of this that tells you what was excluded. It's called "Excluded Revelations." And it tells you what was left out of **this** that is included in the Doctrine and Covenants. And some of them are excluded because the people voted and said, "We see no

value in that.” There are a number of sections that are included in this that are dealing with administrative problems in an organized church that we haven’t felt the need to organize.

The Book of Mormon rolled out when there were already people, and the Lord had already defined what His Church was. He defined the church as those who repent and are baptized and come to Him. That church existed in three separate groups in three separate locations at the time the Church was incorporated on April 6th of 1830. But the incorporation on April 6th of 1830 distracts everyone from the fact that there was a larger body that existed that had not become part of the corporate Church. Over time, the corporate Church has its own interests, its own concerns, its own wealth, its own priorities, its own needs. And so, it has **redefined** what the Restoration is about to **emphasize** the Church organization and to **de-emphasize** a number of things that result in the suppression of the gifts of the spirit, the suppression of people receiving revelation—in fact, the fear that people will **receive** revelation is trying to be hedged-in, controlled, curtailed by saying, “You only get to get revelation for yourself in the **calling** we’ve given you in the Church.”

But as you look at the structure that they gave to the organized Church, literally every position within the organization is an elected office—“all in favor, indicate; all opposed, by the same sign.” You **elect** a bishop; you **elect** a Relief Society president; you **elect** a high councilman. Their position is elected office. And then they can be voted **out** of office by the same vote that put them in, and someone else can be voted in.

Priesthood existed separate from the organization, independent of it, and before the organization came around. As you read these new Scriptures and as you read the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, what you will find is that outside, independently, wholly-separate from the structure that was created at the time of Moses—as a means of governance and establishing temple worship and establishing a hierarchy within the temple of functionaries to perform various Aaronic priesthood functions—wholly separate from that, there are people that are given one-off assignments (from the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Judah), they’re given an assignment (from the tribe of Benjamin) by God, directly to them, and then they discharge the responsibility. And very often, they’re killed as a result of the ministry that they were asked to discharge.

So, the structure that you get in the Teachings and Commandments that reflect organizational concerns once the Church was incorporated represent, in one respect, the same kind of thing you see in the Old Testament. Joseph Smith said all—**all**—of the prophets of the Old Testament held that same priesthood as Moses, but they were ordained by God Himself—meaning that there was not this continuity of succession or laying on of hands from one to the next (to the next, to the next), down in a continuous line. The function that was being discharged by the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron operated automatically by reason of their descent from father and mother. Outside of that, there was another form of priesthood that did **not** descend by father or mother. It came by the will of God. (There’s an explanation of that given in the book of Genesis, dealing with Melchizedek and his ordination. It was conferred upon him in the same way as it was on the Fathers—by the voice of God.)



In the tracking of priesthood in the earliest lineages, there's a direct line that comes down from Adam through ordination, and every single one of them not only got an ordination, they also got the word of God conferring upon them that authority that had been ordained to them. In the case of Enoch, he was ordained under the hand of someone holding that authority when he was 25. But he was 65 when God then conferred that authority upon him. In the case of the Old Testament prophets, the authority came directly from heaven. It interrupted everything that was going on. And despite the fact that they were expected to give heed to the words of the prophet—because those words came from God; a message from God, delivered by a messenger means that that person is operating in the role of a prophet. And therefore, they're telling you something that comes from God, and you're expected to give heed to that.

On the other hand, if the message that is being delivered comes from vain ambition or from a false spirit, then what you are getting is the message of a false prophet. The false prophet delivers a message—doesn't matter how good it may be—it does not originate from God. A true prophet delivers a message that originates from God, and that's the difference between the two.

Throughout the Old Testament, we have examples continuously of a benighted people who are struggling along to give slavish observance to a hierarchical establishment in order that they may be regarded as righteous because they did what they were supposed to do. Their garments had the appropriate hem; they killed the right animal at the right place at the right time. If you're a woman on your period, you were unclean, and you respected that, and you stayed away. If you were a man and you touched something dead, then you were unclean, and you had to go and take care of that. Every bit of these details were part and parcel of becoming "righteous," and they did them. And standing apart from all of that, God sent messengers that said, "I have enough of your sacrifices. I am sick of the blood of animals. What I desire is in the heart. Bring to me that heart." And they kill these people because they're unorthodox, offensive, and they're preaching a false gospel—because everyone knows that if you're not adhering to the ordinances that had been established in the law of Moses, that you could not be good. You could not (certainly) be righteous.

The colloquy between Christ and the tension between those established authorities that come through in the Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament really are stunning.

I have to admit, the Joseph Smith Translation has been so difficult to access, and the online version of the Scriptures are so... I can read on a computer screen 50 times, and it doesn't sink in. But you give me a book and let me read it, I'll be able to tell you something. I can remember the place on the page where it's located. I knew where to look in 18 'cuz I've seen it. I know where to look in 20 because I've seen that too. I can't do that on a computer screen.

So, the only place that I was aware of in all of the Scriptures where it was clarified that a new dispensation mandates a new baptism, the only place where I knew that existed was in the Testimony of St. John in the exchange between Nicodemus, on the one hand, and

Christ—where he’s making inquiry, and Christ essentially says, “Your ordinance work...” (Because they were practicing baptism—no one went to John the Baptist and said, “Why are you baptizing?” They went to John the Baptist and said, “Why are you... What authority are you using to do your baptism?” Because baptism was a common thing.) When Nicodemus went to Christ in the Testimony of St. John, Christ clarifies that new dispensation mandates new baptism. That shows up in the Teachings and Commandments as a revelation, where it says your dead works under your old law won’t cut it; new baptism is required, even if you’ve been previously baptized a hundred times. It also shows up in the Joseph Smith Translation with a change that clarifies baptism, once His dispensation begins, mandates that there be a new baptism that take place. So, there are details that creep in (in the new Scriptures) that are completely missing from the existing canon of Scripture, other than these.

On Friday evening, I was talking about the Lord’s acceptance of the Scriptures in the Answer to the Prayer for Covenant, and in the Answer, He says that the Scriptures (as they’re presently being presented to Him for acceptance) are adequate for His purpose, meaning that it’s really not a glowing endorsement: “These are the best; these are the best of the best! I’m shocked that you guys are so good! You’ve really impressed the hell outta heaven!” Instead, what He says is, “This is adequate. We can work with this. We can get what needs to be done, done with the text that we now have.”

The text is revolutionary, and you may have to search it to find all of the threads to pull them together to have it all add up to the picture that the Lord wants to have emerge, but what He’s given us, He tells us is the Scriptures as they exist in the bosom of God. It may be that every single one of the texts omits some important stuff. But whatever is omitted from one has been picked up in another. And if it cannot be fixed through any other means—not through the Joseph Smith Translation, not through restoring the Lectures on Faith, not through going back and getting the original text of the Teachings and Commandments instead of the perverted text that has been put in the Doctrine and Covenants—if it can’t be fixed through any of those means, then the rest of it has been fixed by filling in with new information that exists nowhere else other than in the Teachings and Commandments. There are things in there... Two portions of the Doctrine and Covenants that are thrown out are replaced by two insertions into the Answer to the Prayer for Covenant. And so, all the things that are necessary to round out the basic understanding required of people—in order for the Lord to move forward to the conclusion of the Restoration and the establishment of His city of Zion—has been adequately put into the Scriptures and are acceptable for that purpose (to both God and to us). And they more fully reflect the bosom—what is in the bosom—of the Lord, His intent with these Scriptures than anything that we have had heretofore.

So, if anyone has any questions, I’d be happy to answer them. But I think I’ve managed to keep it under one hour, which was the objective. And we’ll get out of here before the sun gets any higher and any more of you are in the sun than are presently.

[Responding to a raised hand] Yeah, yeah...

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Your T&C, where is that?

DENVER: It's floating around somewhere... Oh, she's gonna be making covers. She's measuring them/came today to look at them and measure them. She's gonna make covers so you can carry them and look rather LDS-like. [Laughter]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have a question.

DENVER: Yeah, yeah...

AUDIENCE MEMBER: When you were talking about John the Baptist, Vern and I had a discussion (about Nicodemus and Christ and the conversation) on the way up here. John the Baptist is an Elias, correct? He's the messenger for Christ.

DENVER: Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So, wouldn't he have had the authority to do baptism? Obviously he had the authority to do baptism...

DENVER: Yeah, yeah. He was ordained by an angel when he was eight days old. John the Baptist had authority. Look, when you are dealing with dispensations... It's not abundantly clear in Scripture, but there's enough there to be able to understand what I'm about to say. When you're dealing with dispensations, you almost always have a beginning of a dispensation, and then a take-down of that dispensation at the end. Moses established the dispensation of Moses, and John the Baptist came under the right lineage to the right family to a priest who was ministering in the temple immediately before his conception, who was named by an angel and came into that lineage in order to close down the dispensation of Moses. And so, you have two people. You have the beginning (which is Moses), and you have the end (which is John the Baptist). And they both belong to the bookends of the dispensation.

The Mount of Transfiguration, when Christ began yet another dispensation immediately in the wake of that, had appear to Him the beginning and the end of the prior dispensation. The beginning with Moses; the end with John the Baptist, who appear on the Mount of Transfiguration—and at that point, Christ's then the sole authority—the sole governing authority—presiding appropriately over the kick-off of yet a new dispensation. He would then commission Peter, James, and John, and you can argue about how long it took for that dispensation to lapse into apostasy. But no matter when your argument is, there is no question that John was around. So, it began with Christ, and John was around at least to the end. And among those that came to minister to Joseph Smith were Christ (in the First Vision) and John is mentioned also (in the letter of September 1842, while Joseph's in exile—D&C 128—I have no idea what the number is in the T&C, but I will one day be able to say, "T&C so-and-so").

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So where'd the... I have a follow-up question. The people that were baptized by John the Baptist...

DENVER: Yeah.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: ...would have needed to be rebaptized under Christ's new dispensation.

DENVER: And they were.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: 'kay.

DENVER: They were. They were heeding the words of a Mosaic dispensation prophet by going to John and being baptized. And they were accepted and justified, and they pleased God because they submitted to the forerunner. But as soon as Christ's dispensation kicked off, people were baptized anew. And that's why it says that Christ's disciples and Christ Himself were busy doing baptisms—only the disciples did more than did Jesus, but they also baptized.

But there was a hand here first... Yeah?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So, I... what is the end of Joseph Smith's dispensation? Or is it on a hiatus?

DENVER: Well, it depends upon the view that you take. And so, one view that I think can be reasonably justified is that the death of Joseph and Hyrum ended it—just ended it. However, at the time, Hyrum Smith had a son who was five years old who had been blessed by Joseph, and that son would ultimately become a Church President, Joseph F. Smith. And he would've had, if not the priesthood, he would've certainly enjoyed the blessings of the priesthood that had been conferred upon him because those blessings persist even when the one from whom they came is gone; the blessings persist. You can argue that it persisted until then, or you can argue that—based upon the language of the January 1841 revelation (D&C 124; T&C "I have no idea")—based upon that, the dispensation in one anemic form or another persisted until either the release in '75 (I think... '78?), either the release or the death of Eldred G. Smith. But at that point, it's clearly been abandoned. And so... I mean...

My personal view is: didn't matter how much good faith and well intentions there were, the death of Joseph and Hyrum brought to an end something that was irretrievably compromised at that moment. There was no way to land on their feet. And it didn't matter that there were...

Heavens, by the time Joseph F. Smith gets access to the Church Archives, they've been altered deliberately by Willard Richards as Church Historian and the Kabal that were working in the Church Historian's Office. I mean, you see evidence of the manipulation of

the texts in the photocopies that they put online of the *Joseph Smith Papers*. You know, you remove Joseph and Hyrum, you literally...

If you take a more kindly view of Emma and her son—her **sons**—and the people that remained behind and rejected the leadership that the Quorum of the Twelve (at first) and Brigham Young (ultimately) offered, it's really apparent that, conceptually, Joseph's immediate family got something out of the Restoration very different than what Brigham Young, the Twelve, and the Kabal that followed him got out of the Restoration. And then, based upon what the most successful group (the LDS group in Salt Lake City) then did, they magnified, they amplified, and they successfully grew this different view of the Restoration into something that to this day has become one of the biggest enemies of understanding the truth that there is.

And the family of Joseph Smith did a good job of portraying the very big differences in the heart and in the mind of those that were most immediately connected with Joseph at the time of the Restoration. But as that group has gone along, they've gone adrift and become... Well, they became vulnerable in numbers, and then vulnerable financially, and then vulnerable in popularity, and they made accommodations all along the way in order to try and scramble and to become more popular in the world—something that the Book of Mormon absolutely advises everyone against—and the LDS Church seems to be tracking pretty much what the RLDS Church/Community of Christ did. They're only right now, oh, 60 years behind. Well, they're about in the 1960s, I think. But they'll get there. Based on where they're going, they'll get there.

Yeah, yeah, yeah... You had a hand up.

AUDIENCE COMMENT: Do you see a correspondence between in Third Nephi when Christ came to the Nephites and, of course, they were all baptized, you know, with that, at that point. And... But just previously, maybe a year, maybe even less, or at some point or that they'd all been baptized as well. Is that the same correspondence?

DENVER: I think it's exactly the same thing. All of those people that came to Bountiful were faithful, believing, and they practiced baptism openly in the Book of Mormon. So, they would've been baptized. Christ comes, and He gives authority to baptize, and they all get baptized again. And all of the baptized people are baptized again because it's the same phenomenon you see in the Testimony of St. John, Joseph Smith Translation, and in that revelation in the T&C about "your old baptisms don't matter; there's a new thing afoot." And once the new thing's afoot, then you have to be baptized.

So, one of the reasons why I think after September 2017 Covenant Conference—Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise—probably there's nothing wrong with being baptized again. Might be advisable. And if it's a hot day, and it's cold water, it's refreshing.

What? What? You don't have any questions! You got answers! What are you talking about?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So, my question is about the covenant that the Lord offered. There's individuals that have been rebaptized but aren't sure about taking the covenant. Do you have any thoughts on that?

DENVER: Good for them. Whatever they're willing to receive, welcome them, and love them for what they're willing to receive. And whatever they're not willing to receive, bear with them in patience. Because, literally, we aren't through the Restoration yet. You don't even know what you're gonna reject yet because as it continues to roll-out, everyone gets offended at some point about something! It just is the way things work. Tim—

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Ok, so I have a question about the new Scriptures...

DENVER: Yes...

AUDIENCE MEMBER: ...And my question's a little long, so please bear with me. So, my understanding of the new Scriptures is that we're supposed to, you know, we're supposed to read these Scriptures, we're supposed to internalize the lessons so we can develop into the kind of people that can have a temple and receive more.

DENVER: I think that's part of it. Yeah, I think that's part of it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, my understanding of the actual changes to the new Scriptures is it's mostly minor things, like changing verse—not order—but verse length and other things. So, my question is: how do the changes to the Scriptures bring us to where we need to be when compared to the Scriptures we've had forever?

DENVER: It's a good question. This is a handout about the Scriptures and where you can order them that someone brought. Here—do you want to start passing those around?

The differences are not minor. The differences are not just formatting. There are substantial changes that have been made. Just last night in reading the new Scriptures, I put up a post after reading the content of T&C section 59. Part of the content of T&C 59 got lifted out and put into something that is in the Doctrine and Covenants as section 107. Bruce R. McConkie called Doctrine and Covenants 107... I probably shouldn't do this; you know, apologies to Matt—to Sarah, really. [Mimicking Bruce R. McConkie's voice]: "The great revelation on the priesthood, Doctrine and Covenants section 107, beside which there is nothing greater that has ever been given by the voice of God to man to explain the function, office, duties, and privileges of the priesthood..." except Doctrine and Covenants 107 is a mess. It's not a revelation; it never tumbled out as a text. It's an amalgamation of a quilt work of stuff that got woven together and palmed off as if it were, in fact, a revelation, and it's not! But some of the material within it does exist in revelations, including what I was looking at last night in T&C 59, which is now a post on my website.

In T&C 59, it's clear; it's talking about people that are gonna have positions of authority within the Church, and it mentions the president. Then it says, the president... This is his

responsibility: to be a seer, a revelator, a prophet, a translator; and then immediately after that it says, “and anyone that’s in any of these positions better learn their duty and show themselves approved, or else they’re to be removed from office.” In Doctrine and Covenants 107, that same kind of language appears with something about the president who holds all the gifts and him being a prophet, seer, and revelator. And then it goes on to talk about Seventies and about a bunch of other people, and then there’s this stern warning that follows after all these other offices; it says, “And everyone that stands in any of that, they better show themselves approved and learn their duty; otherwise they’re gonna be removed.” Putting so much in between the president and the duty that he has to the point that it gives the warning, that you can altogether miss the fact that the warning is being given to the **president**.

The warning is: You better rise up, and you better become a seer; you better become a prophet; you better become a translator; you better become a revelator. And if you do not, you do not stand approved in your office. Get out of there. Now, can you imagine if that were the way that the Scriptures had been worded all the way back in the beginning. These are seismic changes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay, so you’re saying there’s these stumbling blocks in the old Scriptures, and this removes them. So...

DENVER: Innumerable.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: ...in 107, they took a Scripture of **responsibilities** that the prophet has to us, and they twisted it around to **privileges** that the prophet has...

DENVER: **Over** us.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: ...that we need to honor him.

DENVER: Yes, “privileges over” verses “duties required.”

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, so it’s a complete 180.

DENVER: There’s a lot of that in the Scriptures. There’s a lot of that. In fact, in reading... As I’ve been reading the new Scriptures, I’m actually reading all three volumes at once. Right now I’m in... I think I’m in Numbers; I’m in Luke; and I’m in T&C 59, which is where I got last night. Reading them all at the same time. It’s amazing how they fold over into one another, how they all move together, how they all express one central common idea.

Yeah, what’s wrong with you this morning?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: There seems to be a real parallel with Abraham and with Nephi in recovering the brass plates, Abraham having the records of the Fathers, and what’s happening today. The emphasis on “the word,” rather than some outward show with a

building or whatever, a pomp and circumstance. It's curious to me that in my conversations with believers over the years, there's one person that was an instigator for what's happening now, and that's Hugh Nibley, and at least in people's studies. And I'm wondering if maybe he was a forerunner. 'Cuz you've taught that he is almost solely responsible for the Book of Mormon being finally in our consciousness.

DENVER: Yeah. Yeah. When Hugh Nibley died, Tom Nibley spoke at the funeral in the Provo Tabernacle. The First Presidency sent a letter. Dallin Oaks was there. Bateman was there. Jeffrey Holland was there. I believe that Dallin Oaks read the letter from the First Presidency. And there was a lot of nice things that were said, but it was Tom Nibley's comments at the funeral of his father that sort of got a murmur in the crowd—about how his father had now completed his assignment on earth and could rejoin the council of the prophets in the heavens now that he'd moved along. And the reaction of Bateman to that was like someone had just poked him in the groin with a broom handle. Dallin Oaks and Jeffrey Holland suffered those comments graciously, but it was really problematic to have a mere professor who'd never been a general authority be held in such regard.

When David O. McKay asked Hugh Nibley to prepare the priesthood manual on the Book of Mormon and Hugh Nibley took the Book of Mormon seriously—as if it were right out of the 600 BC timeframe, that it fit absolutely hand-in-glove into that time period—up until then, people weren't even taking the Book of Mormon seriously. Whole Stake Presidencies, High Councils, Bishoprics had never even read the Book of Mormon. And then it turns out to be a manual on—a Melchizedek priesthood manual—on the Book of Mormon because of the work of Hugh Nibley.

Yeah, he was perhaps a lone voice crying in the wilderness about something that had been pretty much neglected. To his credit, of all things, Hugh Nibley took the mission, the ministry, and the life of Joseph Smith seriously and searched long and hard to find how to make everything that he learned and understood fit comfortably within the message, the ministry, and the life of Joseph Smith and the revelations that came through him. Hugh Nibley was singular in that respect and was a formidable—a formidable—force.

He used to come over to the law school when I was a law student at BYU. He hated lawyers; he thought it was just a vocational school and that we were wasting our time. But he'd come over to talk to the law students in the moot courtroom, and he'd walk in mumbling about something and get upfront and just start talking. And he said he was just over at the math building or the history department or—depended on which occasion it was—he was just over... And he said, I went there to talk to them about "this," and we never got time to talk about "this," and what I was gonna say to them was... And he goes on, and he gives the talk that he was supposed to give the preceding hour. We ran out of time, and he left, and I thought, well, someone at the law school oughta follow him to hear what in the hell he's gonna say to the lawyers, 'cuz that's coming out at the next talk he's gonna give!

"Oh Lord, forgive us for being assembled here in the robes of the apostate priesthood to bestow upon ourselves the honors of men, which are nothing in thy sight," was Hugh



Nibley's prayer at the commencement when they asked him to give the prayer. And then a few years later, he came back to give the commencement address (imagine inviting him back after that), and he explained why he prayed that way in the commencement prayer, and that talk ("Leadership to Management: the Fatal Shift") is in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, and it is a sobering, sobering assessment using government, education, and business to tell you what's happened to the Church.

Hugh Nibley never approached it directly; it was always with guile. And that's the best way to deal with egomaniacal leadership.

Well, okay, now we're well past an hour. K, so, dude, we're done. Except I need to take at least one Old Covenants (buffalo skin) and then a New Covenants and T&C (calfskin). This is two of them. No, no, they all got mixed together. All I need is a T&C in goatskin.

Thanks for coming. Good to see you all.

[End Recording]

NOTE: This meeting was held at the home of Bryce Bartel, and was simulcast worldwide by Zoom Video.

[Transcript by Lori Larsen, v1.0]