

Podcast Episode 27: Generation

QUESTION: On September 22, 2016, you wrote that, “If they are penitent and willing to trust God, the last-days Zion will be achieved by a single generation.” What is a “generation,” how long is it, and are we that generation?

DENVER: We believe we are approaching a moment in which the Lord is about to return. Read that chapter-- Matthew 24. All of the signs that He speaks of will occur in one single generation. If you've not noticed, the signs have begun to appear. It means you're living within a generation in which a great deal is to occur. As it was in the days of Noah, so is it about to be. That means dreadful things are coming, on the one hand, and it means prophets are going to be among us again-- people with messages that come from the Lord.

There have probably been as many Bible commentaries written on the definition of “generation” as... One offered definition of generation is: “While the teaching/religion/movement remains in an unaltered state.” Almost invariably, however, the way a new revelation from heaven works is that God will reveal Himself in a generation, and then when the prophet/prophets of that time (the mortals living, the messengers) die, what survives cannot be kept intact. It simply cannot be kept intact. You need another Peter; you need another Paul; you need another Moses; you need another one with that standing, or it falls into immediate disrepair. So, while there are living oracles that are in communication with God, that's the best definition of a generation. But you don't add on to the work of a prophet. It goes downhill.

From the death of Moses until the coming of John the Baptist, the only interruptions you get were when these singular men-- Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel-- came upon the scene. And their work was confined to them in that spot. You don't improve upon what God gives. When God gives something, it is living, and it is breathing-- it is like a fire that has been lit, and it exists until the flame goes out. But when the visions of heaven are gone because the recipient is no longer on the stage-- it's what happened with the death of Joseph Smith.

I am certain we will see Zion because it's been promised, and it's been prophesied from the beginning of time. When Father Adam prophesied, being overcome by the Spirit in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and foretold what would happen to his posterity down unto the latest generations, Zion was pointed to, and therefore, from the days of Adam on, all of the holy prophets have looked forward to that as the essential moment in the history of the world.

Because Christ will come and will redeem the world, it will be the end of the wicked. It will be the beginning of something far better.

That's been the hope; that's been the promise; that's been what they've looked forward to. I wonder how many of us share that same longing, that same hope, that same desire that originated in the beginning? Because if we don't subdue our desires, appetites, and passions enough to try and deal peaceably one with another, choosing deliberately to not contend even when we know people are wrong-- when Christ was confronted, and He corrected the error, He corrected only that error. He didn't go on with a list of other weaknesses, failings, and challenges. He only addressed the one that was put to Him.

We have an opportunity. We have a bonafide, actual offer from God to allow us to be that generation in which the promises get fulfilled. But we have the freedom of choice that allows us to elect to be severed, to be contentious, to be agents of disruption, and to discourage and break the hearts of those who would willingly accept the challenge to repent and follow God.

Now it's also possible, in fact it's probable, that at some point what the Lord will do is gather out a remnant of the remnant-- gather out a few.

Generations now dead anxiously wait and hope for us to be faithful. They have part in this through you. If they have a righteous, living descendent they are blessed vicariously through that relationship. We are all part of one family, and your role in that family can bless the living and the dead.

What is going to happen is more affected by your repentance and your faith than anything else. And that's really where the hard work gets done-- in the hearts, in our own hearts, in our own lives, in how we treat one another.

When this whole process was set in motion by God on the first day of creation, He had in His heart, a plan that was going to unfold through every generation until the end. Three years previous to the death of Adam in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, Adam gathered his posterity together, essentially to tell them goodbye. And in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, Christ came and appeared to those that had gathered there, and Adam, despite the fact that he was bowed down with great age, rose up, animated by the Spirit that he was taking in from the presence of our Lord, and he prophesied whatsoever should befall his descendants to the last generation. So he was talking about, among others, you.

That same plan that was ordained in the heavens before the foundation of the world was revealed through Adam in prophecy in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. And we're on schedule to keep

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

Assuming there is some group, however small (as Gideon and his group were reduced from 32,000 to 10,000 to 300), whatever remained was sufficient for the triumph. Everyone is free to vote when we have reached the end of the line. And they're free to reject it. But if there is some small group who are willing to enter into that covenant, whatever that number is, that'll be sufficient. But the Lord has plans for a temple that go beyond what you might associate typically with the temple from some of your past experiences.

There is the Spirit of Elias, there is the Spirit of Elijah, and there is the Spirit of Messiah. These three great spirits unfolded in the work of God in the generations of man in a steady descent. And they will be likewise inverted, like a chiasm, and return in an ascent. So that at the end, it will be as it was in the beginning. "That same Priesthood which was in the beginning, shall at the end of the earth be also," was the prophecy that Father Adam gave (see Moses 6:7).

God's hand is moving again; this is going somewhere. It will eventually culminate in the fulfillment of the prophecies. The trouble is whether we do it or whether it is left for another generation depends upon what we do. And I don't think religious enthusiasm or religious fanaticism produces it-- it's kindness to one another. It's taking seriously the things that God asked us to do, and then in a meaningful way, being self-sacrificing and trying to help and lift other people.

We need to let God take the lead. And then we need to patiently await each step along the way. This is the stuff of which the prophecies speak, and it is the stuff that will be fulfilled. But the rights and the ordinances necessary to accomplish that-- people in this generation don't even have a clue how that necessarily has to roll forth. But rest assured, it will. It will.

Baptism has always been required from the days of Adam until the present. Baptism is always the sign of acceptance of what it is that God is doing-- a penitence, that is turning and facing God, and then walking in a new path. From the days of Adam it will continue through the end of the millenium. And whenever there has been a believing people upon the earth, they have always been invited to partake of the ordinance of baptism as a sign of their faith.

This is the day in which, at long last, it is possible for what God intended to happen, before His return, to actually begin. The gospel is not supposed to be merely a record of how God dealt with other people at another time. Joseph Smith talked about how we can't read the words of an old book and then apply those words in an old book (that were meant for someone else at some other time) to us and then restore ourselves back to God's grace. That is just as true of the revelations given in the days of Joseph Smith as it is true of the revelations given in the New Testament. It becomes really apparent when you read them out of the scriptures because all our footnotes and all our chapter headings and all our cross-referencing-- it sort of gives you an impression that this stuff is talking about us, right here, right now. When you read them as they were written in *The Joseph Smith Papers*, it really becomes clear that when God is talking about how the church is living and alive and approved, it's because He's talking to Joseph Smith, and the church is listening to what Joseph Smith had to say. And rolling forth is the voice of God in that day. And Joseph Smith commissioned people to go out and to take it. And they took it, and they went out and they preached it, and when they preached it others were converted. And the people that were converted actually had experiences and came to know God. But that's because God acted to set it in motion in the person of Joseph Smith.

Joseph had a covenant given to Him by God. Therefore, Joseph could testify to these words and they were true, and God owned them. And people who followed them received the wages of those who follow God. It worked. We can't mimic that and have the same effect. God has to say, "This is what I want to do."

And if no one else will say it to you, I'm saying it to you. Everything that has been said is, in fact, exactly what happened when God offered something through Joseph. He's offering something again, right now, in our day, to you-- to any that will hear, to any that will listen. The work is beginning again. I suppose it was necessary that what began in Joseph's time had to run down to the condition that it's in at present, that it had to become a leaky ruin of a farm that Joseph himself no longer even wanted before it was possible for the Lord to say at this moment we turn a new leaf. But my word, can't you see the signs of the times? Can't you look about and see that the whole world is waxing old like a garment? Can't you see that there is, right now, a balance of things that are kept at bay only to preserve the possibility that a remnant might be claimed? God promised He would do this.

These scriptures, these invitations, these prophecies, and this message is inviting you to do what was originally prophesied as this dispensation began, that we looked at at the beginning in Boise, Idaho. The game's afoot. The challenge is underway. The opportunity is here. There was a price that had to be paid. It involved several generations. You do not kill a man like Joseph by the conspiracy of his followers without forfeiting an opportunity. But that moment has come to an end and a new moment is upon us. And if you'll hear it, I can declare to you in the name of our

Lord, that the day of salvation has once again arrived. Have faith. Be believing. He's real. Come to Him. Seek for Him. Have faith in Him.

The day of salvation appears tenuously, almost as gossamer as a spider web, and if you don't lay hold of it, it is lost. And generations can come and go and sing hymns to the pride of their ancestry and the greatness of their religion, and go to hell. Because when the Lord sets His hand, He sets it exactly the same way every time. And it requires faith to come aboard. And it requires faith to believe.

It took a long time for me to be able to see the pattern, but the pattern in which the Lord reveals and discusses new truth is the same in every generation.

Verse 5: *"Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in the which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth. Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, that thine enemies may be subdued; for thine is the honor, power and glory, forever and ever. Amen"* (D&C 65:5-6).

If you read that, and you know that the Lord is going to come to that, you realize that He cannot come unless it exists. If it doesn't exist, He cannot come to it. If He cannot come to it, then He delays the day of His coming. And generation after generation may come and go, never having accomplished what the Lord invites us to do, what the Lord invites us to be.

"And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness and the earth shall tremble with joy. And the general assembly of the church of the first-born shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with my father Enoch" (JST Genesis 9:21-23)-- the covenant that God made again with Noah, the covenant that He made originally with Adam, the covenant which *some* generation will rise up to receive. Whether that's you or whether you go to the grave without realizing it or not, is entirely up to you.

Jehovah appeared in the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman. And you have seventh from Adam being Enoch-- you have a line of continuity from Adam directly down all the way until you arrive at Shem. But when you hit Shem, it interrupts. There is a complete falling away. There are no

righteous fathers for Abraham. His fathers had turned to idolatry. Abraham is the prototype of the saved man and the father of all who would be righteous thereafter, because Abraham represents coming to the truth in a generation of apostasy. Abraham represents coming back to the light despite the fact that his fathers taught him idolatry. Abraham represents the challenge that every man who would be saved, from that point forward, must find themselves within and then overcome: the idolatry of their fathers. Abraham is the prototype.

And so Abraham is acknowledged by that same Jehovah who visited with the fathers in Adam-ondi-Ahman and identified Himself again to Abraham who, after apostasy, becomes literally the first-- the first to return to the righteousness of the first fathers, the first to return to the religion that belonged in the beginning to mankind, the first to discover *“a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers”* (Abraham 1:31).

Abraham was the one who desired to be a follower of righteousness-- one who possessed great knowledge, to be a greater follower of righteousness and to possess greater knowledge still. It is this which made him a candidate the Lord could speak to. It's this that made him the prototype in his generation, of what it takes to turn away from idolatry, to turn away from the kind of corrupt and degrading religions that were then in play on the earth.

This is the Lord describing to Enoch what would happen by way of covenant, the Lord swearing, “As I live even so will...” and He tells him what's going to come to pass in the last days. This is among the promises that were made to one of the fathers, and this is one of the fathers. And these are the covenants whose time is now upon us. This is the day in which we need to be prepared, so that those who went before and ascended up the ladder can return and fall upon your neck and kiss you, and you fall upon their neck and kiss them-- a sacred embrace through the veil, evidencing fellowship between you here and them there, the Lord promising and covenanting these things are going to happen.

But notice, there has to be a tabernacle. He has to come and take up His abode. There has to be preparation made. These things require some effort to be made here, in order to prepare for His return. If there is no one here who is willing to engage in what's necessary to bring this to pass (because everyone looks around and expects someone else to do it), then you're neglecting the duty that's devolving upon you as one of those who was assigned to come down in this day, in order to honor the fathers and honor the Lord, by allowing the covenants that have been made to be fulfilled.

Take a look at Doctrine and Covenants 107, because in this we see that first Zion: *“Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth [his son], Enos [his grandson], Cainan [the son of*

Enos], *Mahalaleel* [son of Cainan], *Jared* [son of Mahalaleel], *Enoch* [son of Jared], and *Methuselah* [son of Enoch], *who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing.*” This is the original, first patriarchal blessing being given by Adam, he having summoned them there.

And as he’s giving his last blessing, three years previous to his death, the Lord appeared unto them. So the Lord comes to dwell with these seven high priests and Adam. *“The Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him [Mich-a-el] Michael, the prince, the archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam.”* Ask yourself what comfort is that the Lord administers?

He *“said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. These things were all written in the book of Enoch, and are to be testified of in due time”* (D&C 107:53-57).

This is the original covenant. This is the first father. This is what was set in motion before the death of Adam, under the binding influence and ratification of the Holy Ghost (or the mind of God), in which Adam, under the influence of that Spirit, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. This is the original covenant. This is the original father. Words spoken as a consequence of the influence of the Holy Spirit become the words of God. They will not fall to the ground unfulfilled.

The everlasting covenant in our day is “new” only as a consequence of it having been restored to our attention recently. It is not a new thing. It is a very old thing going back to the days of Adam. It was known to him. You were known to him. What was going to happen in your day was predicted and promised as a consequence of him.

Prophecies, as I’ve said before, revolve around two (and primarily two) events only-- one being the first coming of the Lord, the other one being the coming of the Lord in judgment at the end of the world. Now there are plenty of prophecies that reckon to other events that are intermediate. However, the primary focus is the first and the second coming of the Lord-- the vindication of the promise that the Father made in the beginning that He would redeem us all from the grave, and the vindication of the promise that at some point the world would come to an end as to its wickedness and there would be peace again on the earth. Everything revolves around those two prophetic events.

But the restoration of the gospel in the last days is not reaching back to the meridian of time. The restoration of the gospel in the last days is reaching back, at a minimum, to the time of Enoch. Because what you have to have is not the center. You have to have walking back, in a mirror image to the beginning, so that the symmetry of the history of mankind matches at the end as it was in the beginning. It's unfolding according to a pattern. It's unfolding according to a plan. It is vindicating the promises and the prophecies that were made, beginning with Adam in the first days. And what is wanted in the last days are those who will at last say, "I am not satisfied with my Sunday school lessons and the disappointment that I see all around me. I'm not prepared to wait on another before I rise up to know God, myself." If any of you lack wisdom, ask God. He gives to all men liberally. He does not upbraid-- that is, He doesn't send you away discouraged, telling you, "Don't do that; don't ask me that."

We saw in that first talk in Boise that we were commanded to pursue after the mysteries of God. What is more mysterious than what went on in the beginning generations? Because we have so little left from which to reconstruct that. And yet, we have enough to know the pattern that the Lord intended the last days to unfold in accordance with, and that pattern was to return us, in the end, to what was here in the beginning-- to return us to a state of knowledge about things that He has always had in His heart as the goal, as the ambition, as the desire to fulfill.

Joseph's doctrines, teachings, revelations, and counsel were supposed to be kept and hearkened to by the church. In the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 41 it says, "*Ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church through him who I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand...*"-- making it clear that when we get something from Joseph, we, as a church, were directed by the Lord to respect what it was that came through him. In section 32, verse 2 it says: "*I have entrusted unto you, my servant Joseph, for a wise purpose in me; and it shall be made known unto future generations, but this generation shall have my word through you.*" Don't read the word "generation" in that context narrowly, because the word "generation" sometimes has varying meanings, and the safe meaning in that context of that statement to Joseph includes all those who live after the day that Joseph came and Joseph bore testimony. Therefore, it would include you.

The purpose of the restoration of the gospel through the prophet Joseph Smith was to begin a process of walking backwards to that point when it was all unitary, as it was in the beginning. Because it's been fractured; it's been fragmented. And it's been spread apart through generations. And now we need to walk our way back to the beginning, back to the point in which it was unified as it was at the start.

Joseph Smith understood the correct doctrine, and he's trying to give you the character, the nature, the attributes of God, because until you get that correct, you're not going to have the

power to exercise faith in Him, which is why you're going to encounter some amount of resistance between what it is that you need to believe in and what it is that everyone else in your generation may believe in. It doesn't matter. The responsibility is placed upon you to understand what is truth and what is not, and you have to choose. And you have to sort it out, and you have to come to the correct conclusion. Because it is only by exercising faith in the correct conclusion that you manage to align yourself with that narrow window through which the heavens are open and up which Jacob's ladder is found to be scaled.

This restoration merely got it's toe in the door in the day of Joseph Smith, and hardly even that. The prophecies and the promises and the time and the opportunity are upon us. The question is, is this generation going to be just as careless, just as indifferent as the one when last a real prophet's voice was heard among us?

When Joseph Smith could tell you, "I know He lives because I've seen Him," when Joseph Smith could say, "God commanded me that I should bare record of Him because I have seen Him"-- it has been too long, *too long*, between that moment and today. And it's time now that we stop running away from the conflict. It's time for us to be valiant once again.

Do not be fearful. Cowardice and fear are the opposite of faith. I don't care what a tattered ruin it is that you see around you today; Zion can come. There is nothing more delightful, there is nothing more delicious, there is nothing more exciting than the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The foregoing are excerpts taken from 16 different talks, lectures, and comments given by Denver Snuffer over the last 5 years, including:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10, given during 2013 and 2014;
- A Q&A session entitled "A Visit with Denver Snuffer," held on May 13, 2015;
- A regional conference Q&A session held at Big Cottonwood Canyon, UT on September 20, 2015;
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Things to Keep Us Awake at Night," given in St. George, UT on March 19, 2017;
- His remarks at "A Day of Faith and Connection" Youth Conference in Utah on June 10, 2017;
- His Opening Remarks given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3, 2017;

- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #1, given in Cerritos, CA on September 21, 2017;
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #2, given in Dallas, TX on October 19, 2017; and
- A fireside talk entitled "That We Might Become One," given in Clinton, UT on January 14, 2018.