Mormon Book Reviews Interview (No. 3)
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Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

Steven Pynakker: Welcome to Mormon Book Reviews, "Where an Evangelical encounters the Restoration." I'm your host, Stephen Pynakker. And folks, we're getting moved in. We're almost there. This is the temporary studio setup, but we will have this studio ready to go, new microphones and everything, but we're still getting… We're still working through the glitches as we were this morning.

So I just want to thank everybody for their prayers, their thoughts, as we've been through this kind of stressful time with the move to our new home. It is a wonderful story that I, one day, would like to tell, that there's actually—literally—a Mormon connection to how we were able to… to this studio even existing. So it's really kind of a cool story that I'd like to tell one day.

But yeah, we're taping today on August 20th, 2026, and I am so privileged to have two very good friends of mine that I have made since starting this channel.

My special co-host today is Dr. Kyle Beshears. Of course, he's recently written the book, *Forty Questions About Mormonism*, ~~written by~~ published by Kregel Academic. You have some other books coming down the pike as well that you're working on that are going to be published by major evangelical publishers regarding Mormonism and the Restoration as a whole. And of course, Kyle, as we all know, his main emphasis often has been James Strang and that whole movement. And of course, I just, I think that's a fascinating movement in and of itself.

And another really interesting expression within the Restoration that I've been keeping an eye on for probably a dozen years now has been the "movement" (some would call it), but more importantly, the individual Denver Snuffer, who I think has had a major impact on Mormonism over the course of the last decade and certainly has caused people to maybe re-evaluate certain things that they were told and taught by the main Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And he's trying to kind of restore the Restoration in one sense, in his own way, and the people surrounding him. It's not really a one-person movement. It's kind of a movement of individuals that are coming together. They kind of emulate what I would call the "house-church" movement, as we are familiar with in the evangelical world.

I think, actually, as a church movement, they get a lot of things right that I wish a lot more churches would integrate as well. And I think this is a person of substance and a person I've gotten to know who's really brought a lot of interesting things to the table, including these lovely Scriptures that have been sent to me, revolutionary in many ways, and quite, I would say, argue the greatest Scriptures I've ever encountered within the Restoration, objectively from the physicalness, but also just so many interesting things within the text as well, more importantly.

Denver Snuffer, welcome back to the program.

Denver Snuffer: Good morning. It's still morning where you are also, but it's more here.

SP: Absolutely**.** And thank you, by the way. I know you're a very busy guy. You still have your law practice going.

So it's a real honor and privilege to have both of you on. Of course, Kyle, I know you're also a busy person doing the ministry as being a pastor, which is your… And other things that are involved with your ministry as well.

So before we get started, I guess I want to just say that, you know, Kyle and I are both from Northwest Indiana. We probably were under the same roof at many times, probably at Borders Bookstore, perhaps even making an inquiry about a particular book (maybe something written by R.C. Sproul or something, I don't know) back in the day, Kyle. But we never met until we were at John Whitmer Historical Association in Independence, Missouri back in the day. And here you have two region rats—right?—as we like to be called, who have become really interested in the Restoration as a whole.

And then you, of course, Kyle, you know, one of the things I wanted you to talk about a little bit was the fact that you wrote for your Ph.D.—what was your dissertation on?

Dr. Kyle Beshears: Yeah, so I took a really strong interest in James Strang's church. So if listeners are unfamiliar with James Strang, he was a claimant to succeed Joseph Smith that converted to the church very near to Joseph Smith's death. James Strang converts in February of 1844 and has correspondence with Joseph Smith about the potential of, you know, having a stake of Zion in Wisconsin territory where James was located.

But as we know, in June, Joseph Smith and Hyrum are assassinated in Carthage. And nearly immediately, James starts to make claims about angelic ordination, that one of the corresponding letters that he had appointed him the successor of the church. A year later, in September 1845, he says he discovers plates that belong to a fallen prophet warrior named the Rajah Manchou of Vorito, translates them by the power of God.

And if all these things sound familiar to a Latter-day Saint, they should. It's an emulating process to make a claim to succeed Joseph Smith. My dissertation kind of looks at that story briefly, but then follows the rest of the story of his church after Strang's death in 1856 to approximately the 1920s through the lens of a man named Wingfield Watson, who was Strang's most ardent apologist after his death.

And that was kind of the doorway for me into Latter-day Saint history. And it's a room that I don't think I'm ever going to leave because I find it to be a really fascinating topic.

SP: You know, I've often (and I'd actually like to get your thoughts on this, Denver) is that I tell people, I say, in many ways, and just as an outsider (and I'd really like to get your insights on this, Denver) is I kind of look at James Strang, and I tell people, if you want to see where Joseph was going, and you almost feel like James was literally kind of picking up where Joseph left off and was kind of pushing things further.

And what's interesting to me is like, I tell people, I said, if Joseph Smith had lived the full life, I sometimes wonder if what happened with James Strang was he/they became Sabbatarians. They practiced the Sabbath on Saturday. And I've often said, I think that's where Joseph was going, that the restoration of all things would have eventually led to something like that.

Denver, what are your thoughts on just James Strang and some of the stuff that he did? How do you process that as somebody coming out of the Brighamite tradition? But then you see, like, there's this other person that's making these claims. How do you integrate that into your worldview from a broader perspective of the Restoration?

DS: I would put the context a lot bigger than just the Restoration, just Strang, or just Joseph. I think whenever you are dealing with anything that has now assumed an orthodoxy, what every religious faith that is currently orthodox begins with is something charismatic and claiming that there is some otherworldly connection that justifies whatever this foundation is that is going to be formed. And what happens is the charismatic moment in any movement is vulnerable to chaos and vulnerable to competing claims and vulnerable to the enthusiasm of competing people trying to attract attention or control the narrative or establish themselves in a relevant role inside something that is essentially non-hierarchical.

And what happens over time is it transitions from the primacy of the charisma into the establishment of office, the establishment of authority. And over time, the religion drifts from a position of innovation and revelation and newness and discoveries and expansion; it drifts into control and authority and office. And as office and authority become progressively more important, what that does is stabilize the religious movement. The impulse gets controlled by the establishment of this hierarchy, this office, this authority. And as a consequence, anything that appears to be new or innovative over time becomes progressively more presumptively heretical.

It just… If it doesn't come from the "powers that be," the presumption is that it's heresy. And as a consequence, over time, what always begins with charisma and spontaneity and revelation/otherworldly forces winds up with absolute fear and opposition to the idea of innovation. And I think Strang, like a number of things that happened during and after the beginning of the Restoration, Strang offered a competing view.

Some people liked what they heard from his competing view. Rigdon grounded some of his claims upon the Vision of the Three Degrees of Glory, but he also used the position of office. I think that when you get down to what we've got going on in Mormonism, generally, in the Restoration today is that almost every branch of institutionalized Mormon movements, almost every one of them is focused primarily upon office, authority, and trying to gain a way to govern, a way to control, and not have the outlandish, unpredictable, ungovernable conduct that charisma tends to inspire.

Because one of the things that I think happens early in any religious movement is that even if it begins with an authentic revelation, the more you talk about the otherworldly, the charismatic, the angelic, the divine, the more you talk about that, the more it seems to attract people who are not necessarily emotionally stable, not necessarily mentally stable,

but who would like to join in on the enthusiasm and then have themselves become relevant or important. I think that the dread of chaos is associated with the foundation of a religion, and I think the dread of monotony and dictatorial abuses is where religions wind up. But at either end of the spectrum, you've got your problems, you've got your challenges, and you've got your aspiring men who see charisma as a chance for them to gain a foothold and gain control or gain financial support or gain social capital—aren't much different from those that look at office and who see the opportunity to gain status, relevance, income, what have you.

One of the things that… I don't know if/how much you've looked into it, but one of the things that I've tried to do among people that are listening and trying to breathe some life back into the original Restoration is to deprive it of a financial incentive. Tithes are still a relevant thing, but tithes are collected by the members in local fellowships, and then they are immediately distributed to the needs of those people within the local fellowship so that there's no aggregating capital fund, and there's no one, you know, making a living. We're helping people with rent, with medical bills, with transportation, in some cases with education. But robbing the financial incentive is a way of detouring the hardening of the institutional office/hierarchy/authority because the drift at one end is no less perilous than the drift at the other end, and preserving the moment—the authentic charismatic moment—and allowing that to have some manner of control/some manner of order is really the challenge, because you don't want to kill the religious impulse/the charismatic impulse, but you also don't want it to turn into licentiousness and chaos and disorder.

So when I look at Strang, I think everyone should study the birth and the development of Mormonism over the last 200 years, because I think it would help people understand the founding of Christianity. I think it would help people understand the Protestant history. I think it's even broader than that:

If you could understand what has gone on, what the dynamics and the conflicts and the issues have been in Mormonism over the last couple of hundred years, you'd understand Buddhism, you'd understand Hinduism, you'd understand Judaism, you'd understand the way in which religions universally face a group of thematic challenges that are no different from religion to religion, society to society, because people are people, and religion is intending to take what is the ineffable and make it our common possession. We connect back to the universe through the religious impulse. But Mormonism's history is colorful…

SP: Yes!

DS: …and complex, at times amusing, and often disappointing.

SP: Okay, that's very interesting, Denver, to take it from that perspective. And then one of the things I was talking about, like some of the things you guys get right is I love the fact that the tithes basically stay within the community. It seems to me, like, what you're trying to emulate is early primitive Christianity.

DS: Yeah, I think that's a good analogy.

SP: And also this sense of a remnant of a persecuted-people group that need to establish a small community that everybody can watch their back. So that's what you're kind of emulating, and I imagine this is also within the context of the belief that we're living in the latter days. In addition to having your house-church movement and cell groups (as we would refer to these different things using our terminology), you also are looking at building a temple within your movement. And I'm just kind of curious about this whole temple building—and we're going to get Kyle into this conversation as well.

What do you suppose/what's the intent of your movement building a temple in light of the fact that Christ was in His ministry was talking about the destruction of the temple and that we'd no longer need temples? Why is it that you feel it's important that your movement and the movement that's associated with you build a temple?

DS: Well, the temple in Christ's day formed a center of gravity around which observances took place that Christ both respected, participated in, acknowledged—and when He went to, ultimately, provoke the final conflict that would result in the crucifixion, He went to the temple, and He claimed it to be His Father's House, and He cleansed it with a rope He'd made into a scourge to kick over the money tables and to denounce the Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites because they had perverted His Father's House.

Then after the crucifixion and the resurrection, when Peter heals the lame man, *[gold and silver] have I none, but such as I have give I [unto you]* (Acts 3:6 KJV), and then, in the name of Christ, He tells the man to arise, take up his bed, and walk. That incident occurred as Peter was entering into the temple.

The temple retained its central relevance even after the crucifixion and the resurrection. The destruction of the temple… I mean, there was the earthquake, and then there was the tearing of the veil. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies through the veil that they had hung it so that you could walk through the veil to go in and to present the blood on the Day of Atonement into the Holy of Holies.

And in my view, when the earthquake and the ripping of the veil occurred, that was to allow—since the crucifixion was taking place outside of the Holy of Holies—it was to allow the blood that was being shed that was the true Atonement to be acknowledged by the Holy of Holies by opening up the view to the blood that was being shed. It wasn't that the ceremonial practices didn't matter. It was that now that we have arrived at the moment when the ceremony that occurs on the Day of Atonement was actually being enacted, the thing to which the ceremony pointed forward to was actually taking place: Christ's blood was being shed; the lamb slain from the foundation of the world was now actually in the act of shedding the blood. And so the acknowledgement of that was the parting of the veil in the Holy of Holies to allow the view, the presence, the spilled blood to be acknowledged as an actual event, as a factual occurrence—because Christ had now achieved that.

But I think the purpose… I don't know how much to get into, but there was a… This fellow was actually a jeweler; he was Jewish, and he was a researcher, and he was hired to build a replica of the ancient Jewish temple. He built—based upon years and years of research—he built (as a jeweler, cutting the stones) a model that he put on display—for the first time,

before it was delivered to the person that commissioned it—it was put on display in, actually, at the Rose Theater in Salt Lake City, joking about how he was bringing a temple to the people that build temples. And it was put on display. I went to his presentation. He was taking it to Los Angeles, and then I think it was going to go to New York; but ultimately it was going back to Jerusalem to be delivered to the person who had commissioned it.

When he put it on display, there were a series of rooms that were around the central edifice; and in the back, behind the Holy of Holies, there was a room in which it was understood that there were mirrors on the walls—on the east and the west walls—and that when you would walk in between the mirrors in that particular room behind the Holy of Holies, the mirror reflection would go off into eternity.

The LDS temples in their sealing room have an altar you kneel at between two mirrors, and you see the reflection go on as a representation of infinity. And the tradition was that in that spot where the mirrors were located, that that was a holy place into which the devil and his minions could not enter.

As I listened to the presentation and thought about it, I was amused. I think I actually chuckled out loud because that "devil can't pass between the mirrors" suggested to me the idea that a vampire's reflection can't be seen in a mirror, and if you can get a mirror, you can find out who the vampire is because you won't see them in there. In any event, he knew about the existence of these rooms, and he had built them into the model, and he described the one in the back with the mirrors, but the purposes for which they were constructed were not known.

The Jewish temple had the menorah shaped like a tree with light on it, representing a tree, but a tree that shone light or gave you some illumination. And then there was the altar of incense that was placed in the Holy Place (before the veil to the Holy of Holies) that they would bring incense, and they would put it onto the altar, and then a column of smoke would rise up from the altar until it hit the ceiling, and then it would spread out on the ceiling, representing a (symbolically) it was a tree trunk going up, and then the tree branches spreading out. It was a tree reaching up into Heaven; it was living because the smoke was billowing. It was a symbol of ascension; it was a symbol of the tree of life.

So you have a menorah (which is hammered gold and pomegranates and lanterns, representing light or knowledge—a tree of knowledge of, hopefully, good and evil) and then you have this tree that ascends up into Heaven—the tree of life. And so you have two trees in the Holy Place that are symbolic of something that is significantly more transcendent than what you've got merely in the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses was pointing *forward* to a sacrifice of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." What these symbols inside the physical structure represented was something bigger, something original, something that went all the way back to Eden, something that is in our primal stories about creation and about man's relation to God.

And so the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem was—as is stated in the Third Nephi text with Christ speaking; it's also stated by Abinadi—the Law of Moses was always intended to have a complete fulfillment and then end. But the thing that the "Lamb slain from the

foundation of the world" came to deliver was a reconciliation which, if it reaches its culmination, would restore us all the way back to the point prior to the fall when we were alienated from God and to return us back to that paradisiacal condition in which you encounter God walking in the cool of the day in the Garden of Eden—which is the sacred space that is intended to unite Earth and Heaven, the living and the dead, the resurrected angels and man, mortality and immortality.

And so the purpose of a temple is to achieve a physical construction of a reconciliation that will permit a—I've called it a "beachhead"—in which God's presence returns physically to the Earth, preliminary to the King of kings (the One to whom the Earth belongs) coming to assert jurisdiction, generally, over the entirety of the Earth. But He needs a place in which it is possible for the return of the governance of this Earth to go back to God.

In the beginning, Adam was given dominion over the Earth; and so it was Christ's (Christ created it), and He gave it to the man Adam. The man Adam then had jurisdiction over the Earth. At some point, the jurisdictional authority to govern the dominion over this Earth will need to be returned to Christ.

And the temple, in my understanding of how God has ordained everything to unfold, the temple is the place in which the governance and the right of governance gets returned back to the Savior, preliminary to a general appearance in glory to assert His control over the Earth. So in a sense, a temple is apocalyptic because it's designed to achieve a step—a jurisdictional step—that follows the order at the end that mirrors the order at the beginning in order for God to act consistent throughout all generations to the end of time.

And, you know, there's more to this stuff, but probably beyond the scope of what we're trying to talk about today.

SP: Well, I want to thank you for just kind of explaining this to us. And I want to bring Kyle into this conversation as well, because one of the things that part of your—I'll say your "ministry," Denver, if you don't mind me using that term—part of your ministry has been not only to the Restoration, broadly speaking, but you did a series of talks where you wanted to talk to the greater Christian community as well, that you feel is really important that that be part of what you're doing. And so I want to bring Kyle into this conversation right now too, because Kyle, as a Protestant minister, you know, it's fascinating to hear what Denver has to say. And I would just like to kind of get your, you know, maybe just kind of interject here about, like, you know, we've talked on the phone and about some of these issues, and I'd like to get your perspective and maybe ask some questions to Denver about this as well.

KB: Yeah. Well, there's a lot there. And we can go all the way back to what drew people to James Strang or stick with temples.

I'm not an expert in temple theology, but I… Some of the things that you said, Denver, are really fascinating and interesting to me. And one of the things that really I'm drawn to about the tabernacle design and then the temple as it was constructed in Jerusalem is the typology and what it represents in its space. So you mentioned some of the things, like the menorah, is drawing our attention back to the garden.

If you look at the way that the tabernacle in the temple was structured, you have an outer and an inner court and a Holy of Holies. You have three spaces, and that's meant to evoke the garden as well, where you have the garden, the Earth, and the Heavens. The temple veil itself had embroidered on it images of angels, and so that's eliciting a memory of Jewish tradition of the post-fall ("East of Eden," as we like to say). And I found something really interesting, years back, that even the language of "dressing and keeping the garden"… So the commission of the first Adam was to work—or to dress and to keep the garden—is precisely the same Hebrew words that were used to commission the Levitical priesthood: like, you are basically to dress and to keep the tabernacle.

And so you have all these really interesting—and I think, personally, lovely—allusions back to, "What is it about the tabernacle that God wants us to remember the garden by?" And obviously, I think the first two things that come into mind are the state of sinlessness, which speaks to the function of the tabernacle, and the proximity of God's presence to His image bearers. So just as God walked in the cool of the day with Adam (I can't remember the word off the top of my head because I'm not a Hebrew expert), but that was the same kind of language that when the tabernacle was finished and ~~Abraham~~ Moses blessed it (which by the way, the tabernacle is given/the instructions are given in seven chunks, and on the last one, Moses blesses it just like the days of Creation are given, and in the last day, God blesses), the presence of God is using the similar language of Him walking with His people before.

So yeah, the function of the tabernacle is to get people into a state of sinlessness before God so that He can dwell and be in their presence again. So all of that, as you were talking, Denver, all of these things were coming rushing back to my mind. And it reminded me, I need to go back and read some of those things.

One of the better books I've read on this is by an evangelical scholar named G.K. Beal, who wrote a book called ~~*The Temple and the Theology of God*~~. No, *The Temple and the [Christian's] Mission*.[1] You might be interested in that because he goes into a lot of these things too.

But obviously, I think the… So where there's a lot of similarities is that these similarities come into play when we think about it from a Protestant perspective, the need for the physical structure to be present anymore. And so obviously, we're not a temple-building people and the vast majority of, we call them traditional or creedal Christians, are not. And it's because of the way we read texts like Hebrews is teaching that the temple and the temple sacrificial system were a shadow of the substance of the real thing, which is the Atonement of Christ.

And I heard something in your statements, Denver, that sounded really close to that, that there was a function to it, but ultimately, it's Christ who fulfills it. And so I was reminded of Hebrews for that. I'm preaching through the book of First Corinthians, and just a couple of weeks ago, we were reminded by the apostle Paul that we, are as the people of God, His temple, and we're the ones that the spirit resides in.

[1] *The Temple and the Church's Mission* by G.K. Beal

And I think most of the New Testament was written prior to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. I know that's a very conservative and an unpopular opinion among biblical scholars. But one of the reasons why is because the New Testament authors don't seem particularly bothered with the presence of the temple. So we see them in Acts, they're still participating in it, and they're still belonging in that liturgy. But it comes across to me as though, especially with Paul, he's saying, Look, because Christ has come, in the aftermath of Christ's resurrection, the function of the temple has now become irrelevant to us. And in fact, the goal of the temple the whole time was to replicate itself out through *people* rather than *continued physical spaces*.

So yeah, it's a big difference, I know. But I think the similarities that I'm hearing are really interesting and important. But yeah, a lot of that too, Denver, what you were explaining to me was the first time I'd heard it.

I had never heard the idea that the temple is rent from top to bottom for the reception of the Atonement of Christ, His blood. I've always read that as it's being torn from top to bottom because the distance between God and man has collapsed, because the Atonement is secured and realized and actualized so there is no more need to separate God from man, there's no need to separate people from the Holy of Holies, there's no need for a priest class anymore to mediate or intercede for us. We have our Mediator, the one man, Jesus Christ, as Paul says in Timothy.

So there is a lot of similarities and things that were coming to mind that I've always appreciated, and new things that made me think how would we/how do we approach that differently?

SP: It's interesting, Kyle, too, because you just gave a presentation on the Mormon view of the Atonement at Evangelical Theological Society in Boston this past… This is fascinating to me to kind of, and I think I want to key into, Denver, is that you made a point to say that the Atonement was happening at the shed blood at the cross, which would differentiate you from "mainstream Mormonism," because they put the emphasis on the Garden of Gethsemane. Was that very deliberate in making that statement?

DS: Well, it is pretty clear that the death on the cross was the culminating event, had to happen in order for Him to break the bonds of death. And so whatever respect you give or acknowledgement that you have for the suffering that took place in Gethsemane, which is, in the LDS Scriptures it is Doctrine and Covenants section 19, where the revelation describes suffering that is pretty clearly related to Gethsemane. But whatever it was that got paid as a price there, He had to die. He had to depart from the living, and He had to shatter the grasp of death that was the sentence passed when Adam was cast out of the Garden after having disobeyed the prohibition on partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And so, yeah, I think you have to acknowledge the, if not the primacy, you have to acknowledge the importance, the relevance, and the absolute necessity of the death on the cross as the moment that completed the journey. I mean, His shout from the cross, "It is finished," is an acknowledgement, I think, by the Lord Himself that the path that He was

called upon to walk and the achievement that He was sent here to accomplish did not get finished until that moment, which is, I mean… Latter-day Saints generally have a problem with the cross as a religious symbol. I don't. I see the importance and the relevance of that as an acknowledgement of the Lord finishing His work.

Oh, yeah, yeah—look at that.

SP: So even on your Scriptures, you make sure that you do have a cross on there. So yeah.

DS: Yeah. Going back to the… If I were to… Actually, I just talked about this in a talk called "The Holy Order, Part Three." I believe that Joseph Smith was in the process of, but had not yet completed, the temple ceremony, the temple ritual, the temple rites. I believe that what Joseph was trying to do was to establish, in symbolic form, the ascension back to the presence of God, ascending back through the heavens into the presence of God—much like what you get in some of the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, with ascending through heavens, Enoch's ascent, Abraham's ascent, Isaiah's ascent—where, you know…

The New Testament text (the actual text), the narrative begins in the holy place with Zachariah having his course ministering in the temple, and the lot falling upon him, and him entering into the Holy Place to burn the incense and to offer a standard prayer that was to be offered in the Holy Place by the ministering priest as the incense was being burned. Alfred Adersheim gives us an account of that prayer, which included the request that the light of God's presence would return to Israel.

And so, Zachariah was in the process, in the Holy Place, of petitioning God for the light of His presence to enter; and then, emerging on the right side of the altar (which is where you would enter from the Holy of Holies to the Holy Place) comes the angel Gabriel that says, "Your prayer has been answered," meaning the petition on behalf of God's light to return to Israel is being answered, and Gabriel's there to say, "That's going to happen." And then he proceeds to tell him about a son that's going to be born, and "You should name him John." And so, the light of God's presence and this son are somehow connected because he's to go before His face. That's where the New Testament narrative begins.

And when you get textually to the end of the New Testament in the book of Revelation, you have a description of an encounter with angels and the Lord. I mean, the angel tells him not to worship him because he's his fellow servant, but then he proceeds to speak in the first person as Jesus Christ: "I am the first and the last. I'm the alpha and the omega. I am He who was slain." So, it is the voice/the message of Jesus Christ being delivered next to the altar and beside the seven candlesticks, which is the Holy Place. It is the same room in which the narrative of the New Testament begins.

It begins inside the temple in the Holy Place. It ends in the book of Revelation inside the same set of accoutrements as you find in the Holy Place, with the altar and the burning incense and the candlesticks and the angelic presence of a message being delivered, in this case, to John. In the beginning, it was to Zachariah.

And so, I don't think the presence of the temple as an essential accoutrement of Christianity should be lost on anyone who looks at the narrative of the Bible beginning and ending

inside the Temple Holy Place. And to me, that renders unavoidably relevant and unavoidably important, the idea that communion and contact within the temple between Heaven and Earth is powerfully demonstrated by the New Testament narrative; and that, I think, temple-building in Joseph Smith's time was an essential part of the Restoration. But I believe that the theology that ultimately will be embedded within the temple (when it finally gets completed) will be about the return, the ascension, the connection, the uniting of the worlds, both here and in the heavens; and that that is still the culminating desire of Christianity: to reunite God and man, and to find common ground on which we can meet.

SP: Fascinating. Interesting. A lot to unpack there.

Kyle, you wanted to weigh in?

KB: Yeah, I have a question, because it's fresh on my mind in writing. I just finished (literally this morning, thank goodness) the chapter on Missouri foretelling the Latter-day Saints story. And I say, "Thank goodness," because that's a slog, there's a lot going on, and it's a really hard story to write, especially when you get to firsthand accounts of the war and the imprisonment.

But one of the things that I've been kind of trying to understand and toy with since the Kirtland-era and the Missouri-era is really trying to understand not merely the desire for temples as a space for liturgy, but also the eschatological rationale, because it's kind of what we're talking about here. And naming the desire through Revelation to build the New Jerusalem, where Revelation describes the New Jerusalem as not having a temple at all. And so this is…

And maybe you can help, Denver; that's why I want to bring it up. And I was… I didn't want to bring it up in a way that sounds catty or antagonistic or like I'm being contentious. But when I read a text like Revelation 21—I have it here in a modern English version—in this vision, as the book is wrapping up here (we only have a chapter left), John is given a vision of the New Jerusalem, and he sees, you know, incredibly beautiful things: you know, the twelve gates, the twelve angels, twelve suns (a lot of symbolism going on); beautiful material: jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald.

But in verse 22, he makes this observation that seems almost like it's puzzling to him, like he doesn't understand what he's seeing. He said, "I saw no temple in this city."

And then he gives the rationale for "because I didn't see a temple," because its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. And then he goes on to make another puzzling observation: "You know what else I noticed? This is strange. I didn't even see a sun. Isn't that peculiar? And why is that? Because God's light is radiating so much that there doesn't need to be any other source of light but God Himself."

So, do you see that as being… Because he's pairing those two together, they feel a bit allegorical; do you see that as being an *actual* description of the New Jerusalem without a temple? Or do you think he's trying to make a point, but there would be a physical temple there? Or does there need to be a temple for some millenarian activity, but then the temple goes away at some point in our future?

DS: I think the purpose of the… I used the word "beachhead" a while ago to describe what I think the function of a temple (pre-Second Coming) serves. The purpose is to create—on a beachhead—the condition that will ultimately prevail universally throughout the Earth. It's like planting a seed that was intended to grow, to consume and subsume the entirety of the world—but it begins diminutively.

It begins with a single spot that fixes all that separates God and man. But I don't think the purpose of the temple… I've used the words *exoteric* and *esoteric* to describe the inward and the outward conditions of what…

I mean, Paul talks about how some things are not lawful for man to talk about. And of course, in the Book of Mormon (repeatedly) you run up against things that Nephi is forbidden from writing, or Moroni is told not to put into the Book of Ether, or Christ, in praying, says things that they are forbidden from including within the text. There's *esoteric* material that is tightly confined that requires a great deal of context before you would put it out publicly, because decoupled from contextualization, it becomes the subject of profane, inappropriate "pearls before swine," and therefore, it has to be confined.

I view the purpose of a temple to be to create a tiny opportunity for the commencement of something that will ultimately encompass the entire Creation, and redeem and reconnect everything. Once you get post-millennial and the description that John gives there, there's no reason for things to remain unlawful because everything's going to be shouted from the rooftops. And if it's all going to be shouted from the rooftops, then there is no inner sanctum. There is no divided Holy of Holies separating the profane from the sacred. There is <u>only</u> the sacred. There is <u>only</u> the presence and light of God.

And yeah, the description that… I mean, there's no sun. I really suspect the universe is composed largely of dark matter—or as I would call it "veils." When the heavens are rolled to like a scroll at the disclosure of everything that's really out there, I'm not sure that light doesn't overwhelm the darkness.

If you read carefully the account in Genesis, one of the things that was created during the organization of the Earth was darkness. It's possible that the native state (before the veils get thrown up) is that there's so much light that's generated generally in the universe, that if you didn't have veils thrown up, there would be no night; you wouldn't have a creation in which you divide the darkness from the light. It would just be light.

I suspect that there are a lot of surprises that are in store for all of us after the Lord's return that will teach us something not just about God and man and our relationship with and to one another, but also the natural world and what this universe really includes and has been organized specifically to exclude us from that we'll then be allowed to be included with.

And so I, yeah, I think the description that he is giving is actual and concrete and real <u>but</u> at a time when we—humanity—has graduated from our current fallen state back into a fully reconciled state where God is open and visible and no one need say to someone else, "Know ye the Lord?" for they shall all know Him from the least to the greatest, and God will be our common inheritance at that point.

KB: Yeah, that was a very helpful explanation. I tracked the whole time. I think for clarity's sake, I described it as "there is no sun," but John said, "The city has no need of a sun."

But, you know, that's almost moot and decides the point, because what you were saying, Denver, is precisely where John goes next: The cosmos is lit up by its Creator and is, therefore, not the kind… It's a *new* creation; it's not the old creation that you're familiar with in Genesis 1 where there is a separation of dark, and there's a chaotic void that God has to bring order out of. Everything is set in order, and it will be so for eternity.

So, I just wanted to clarify that. I like to be precise with these sorts of things because talking about eschatology can get a little wild, can't it?

DS: Yeah, it can.

SP: Um, you know, Denver, I think it's interesting because, of course, Kyle being a pastor, and me just being an Evangelical layperson kind of just doing his own thing, engaging the Restoration and also just looking at the claims that the Restoration makes that's kind of different than traditional creedal and even Protestant Christianity… And it's this idea that the canon is still open; new Scripture/new revelation can come forth in this very day. And as outsiders who are looking and engaging the Restoration (and very respectful of the Restoration and what it brings to the table), how do we as outsiders differentiate or distinguish all the different claims that different groups are making within the Restoration?

For instance, I'm good friends with Matthew Gill; he had plates, he had a Urim and Thummim, he translated them about Children of Araneck (the "Chronicles of The Children of Araneck"). We have other people that make claims about their Scriptures, including the Covenant Christians. So as we're trying to assess the Restoration and its claims, how…? Can you guide us through this? Because it gets very confusing for us. It almost feels very Protestant…

DS: Yeah.

SP: …with the divisions and the sectarianism.

DS: Yeah, it really does. And that's the problem with the charismatic origin of every religion. And so what you wind up with are a number of competing claims that will always insist on their primacy and insist on the inferiority of every other… We've got… In one talk, I said, "Button, button, we've got the button." It's a game that you played as kids way back when we didn't have TVs.

So look, the hierarchy (I believe) of ways to discern, which, you know, this gives me the amusing memory of Dr. Walter Martin, the Bible Answer Man. I don't know if… I used to listen to Dr. Walter Martin after I was a baptized Mormon. And of course, he had nothing good to say about Mormonism. And I think he wrote *The Kingdom of the Cults*. But he had this… It's the first principle of biblical hermeneutics that "you interpret the old in light of the new," which was a pastoral way of saying that the text of Isaiah foretelling the coming of Christ, in which the argument in, you know, Matthew is that the prophecy of Isaiah that a

virgin will conceive and have a son and name him Emmanuel, God is with us, means Jesus Christ because the New Testament tells us that's what the Old Testament meant.

Now, if you were to take those passages, and you were to read them only in isolation without giving primacy to the new revelation [New Testament], what you would do is say, No, it's talking about a time frame within which a military threat against the kingdom (of the Southern Kingdom) would resolve on its own. It will take place within the time period that it takes for a virgin to conceive, to bear a child—which in normal course is about nine months—within that time frame, the threat that Isaiah is telling the king about will resolve itself and go away, and so just be patient. But instead, the New Testament says, No, that is talking about the birth of Jesus Christ to a virgin, and therefore, it means what it means because that's what the latter says the earlier means.

Well, if it's the first principle of biblical hermeneutics that you interpret the old in light of the new, it presents a problem, because then you have to look at every claimed new revelation to determine whether what it is saying about the meaning of earlier Scripture is even conceivable, is even plausible—or at least as equally plausible as the Matthean rendering of the Isaiah prophecy in foretelling of Jesus Christ.

And so one of the few anchors that I think you have to rely on is that no matter what, no matter how you look at things, all of the Scripture that exists prior to the moment in which a new revelation unfolds, all of it matters. And if the new revelation is going to tell you something surprising about the meaning of earlier Scripture, it needs to be plausible. It needs to be conceivable. It needs to make you take a step back and say, Okay, I can see that. That makes some sense to me.

One of the problems with the many claimants is that we don't have in the Restoration—at the beginning through Joseph Smith—any indication that there's going to be multiple Urim and Thummims. There's going to be multiple plates, and the plates are going to be wholly disconnected from the record that we had given us in the Book of Mormon. Now, we do have, number one, the promise that we are going to get the remainder of the plates that Joseph Smith did not translate.

And right now, I believe, the claimant for that is… I think his name is ~~Marcurio~~ [Mauricio] down in Brazil (Berger is his last name). And he's published—I've got a copy of the first volume, and he's recently published a second volume—all of which are intended or based on his claim to be the very plates that Joseph had, which were now delivered to him by Raphael. And that is an unusual role for the angel Raphael to have occupied instead of… I mean, I find it difficult for an assignment to be given to Raphael to intervene with plates of the Book of Mormon when the custodianship was given to the very prophets that were involved in the writing, and he wasn't involved in any way in the writing. And then the content of it is contrary…

Joseph Smith had a revelation in which mention was made about what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter, James, and John were with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. And according to the revelation, we don't have the full account, but they were shown what would befall the Earth after their day. And so they got a fulsome

revelation of what would happen over the millennia following the Lord's ascension. And in response to that, the three who were there with Him on the mount react to that by—and the revelation states that—they viewed the long separation of their spirit from their body to be a form of prison, meaning that they knew they were going to die and that it was going to be a long centuries/millennia before the Lord's return and their resurrection. And so taking into account that they were looking at this long period of time, I believe that that account rules out any possibility that you're going to be born, die, and then born again into a mortal body, die again, and then be born again, having multiple opportunities to live—because they viewed the long separation as a form of prison.

And so I believe that in Joseph Smith's denunciation of the fellow who claimed to be "Matthias reincarnated" and his comments there about this whole reincarnation thing, to exclude any idea that someone will come back… Although I've met Solomon reborn, and I've met Heber C. Kimball reborn—at least people who claim to have been these fellows before.

It's interesting: No one ever comes back as an obscure Tevye living in Russia and dying in poverty. Everyone's got some historical role.

But I believe that that precludes multiple mortalities of people coming and going.

SP: Okay, so multiple mortal probations, that's not something you believe that Joseph Smith taught, and you do not embrace that doctrine, correct?

DS: Exactly. But in this new rendering of the expanded plates by ~~Marcurio~~ [Mauricio] Berger down in Brazil, multiple mortalities is embedded right into the text, and he has now gone to the point of claiming that he (Berger) is, in fact, Joseph Smith, and he is, in fact, Joseph returned again. I think it's important to know enough to have read the Scriptures, to have studied the history, to have some command of what the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, the revelations that were given to Joseph, the sermons that he delivered, to have a command of enough material so that when a claimant comes along and says, "I got the button—button, button, I got the button—you got to come to me because I got this button," I think you have to evaluate it carefully, cautiously, prayerfully, and you have to look in long enough to find whether or not it is a wholesale contradiction.

I mean, everything about the life of Christ, in one way or another, was identified and foreshadowed by the Law of Moses. All of the Levitical rites, all of the prophecies that we've got in the Old Testament, they point to either the mortal birth, life, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, or they point to His return in glory. That's the burden of, essentially, the prophecy. Now, there are other things that deal with incidents along the way, but the primary burden of prophecy is the coming of Christ into the flesh and the return of Christ in glory.

And I also think that when you look at Moses, and you see… Just isolate Moses' dialogue in the Book of Exodus, and you look at him, you see why Moses was described as meek—the meekest of all men. When you read Isaiah saying, "Wo is me, I'm a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among people of unclean lips"; when you read in the Joseph Smith-Genesis text, Enoch saying, "I'm but a lad and slow of speech"; when you look at Peter, and you look at the people who actually have been employed by the Lord as servants to accomplish something

that is important for the fulfillment or vindication of His covenants, His promises, or His prophecies, the people are not… They're not trying to call attention to themselves. They're not braggadocious. They're not self-important.

Almost invariably, they find themselves on the spot and feeling unworthy, incapable, awkward, and for the most part, disliking the predicament that has been imposed upon them. And as a consequence, I also think that the character of the person that's involved…

I mean, I believe Joseph Smith had massive insecurities. I believe he was devoted to Emma Smith, loyal to her, and I think when it came to a contest of opinions, I think he respected…

I mean, there's that incident where he's translating the plates, and part of the translation is about the wall around Jerusalem, and he goes to Emma, and he says, "Was there a wall around Jerusalem?" And Emma tells him that, Yes, there was. He says, "Oh good, I thought I was deceived," because he was relatively "unacquainted with men and things" is how he put it when he rewrote the history in 1838: *…young as I was and…unacquainted with men and things* (JSH 2:2 RE).

I think Joseph had a lot of personal insecurities, and while we have turned him into a caricature, I don't think the caricature that we've turned him into is an accurate read of what the man was like. Generally, the people who are making these grandiose claims and calling attention to themselves—*lo here, lo there*—are not humbly proceeding with some meekness toward God and a desire to benefit their fellow man.

I don't defend myself, and I take a lot of incoming criticism. Ridiculous things are written about me…

SP: Yes.

DS: …on the Internet. You know, and I… My kids read it and laugh because they know me, but I don't defend myself. And I… Frankly, if someone is put off and not at all interested, it just relieves me of having to deal with another person.

SP: You know, Denver…

DS: People are hard. People are hard to deal with.

SP: Yes, agreed. You know, and I always tell people, too, is that if you actually do have a prophetic calling, the first thing you're going to do is you're going to run from it because what that comes with is… The totality of the prophetic calling is something that's very difficult, hard calling, and you would not readily embrace it if you were genuinely had it.

I also wanted to say one thing, too, Denver, about those plates. I always just tell people, if you ever come across plates, first thing you need to do is make sure there's no Mark Hoffman forgeries in them. I think, to me, that was game over; game, set, match; that's over, we don't have to even consider that as well.

And also, too, you know, that's the thing is this idea of, like, the idea of charisma. I think one of the key insights that Dan Vogel's book was talking about how the charisma is not so

much about the charisma that the leader exudes or the prophet, it's actually the charisma that is projected onto the leader by the followers. And I just want to get your thoughts on that: this idea, Denver, of charisma being something projected upon somebody, as opposed to something that exudes.

DS: Yeah, I think that's a point worth some reflection on because that resonates as a truth. The primary prophetic ministering that Joseph Smith did, after he finishes the translation, there were probably three to four more actual open visions and angelic visitations, but he operated primarily through what we would call the Holy Ghost—the gift of the Holy Ghost; inspiration.

There was an example: Joseph Smith sent someone on horseback to go deliver a message and then to return during hostilities when people were out in mobs, looking and hunting. And he told/he gave the person the message to deliver; the guy got on horseback, and he told him which route to take. And then he stood there quietly for a moment, and he said, "When you return, don't use that route; take this other route, and go down by the river to return." That moment which the rider was able to successfully deliver and successfully return and to avoid the mobs, that rider believed that that moment Joseph Smith was receiving a revelation and that he followed the instruction—because he got quiet and…

I believe that a great deal of what the charisma involves is developing a sensitivity to receiving truth, light, illumination that is as available to you as it is to me, as it is to any minister, any sincere, humble person anywhere in the world, regardless of their faith or their belief, regardless even of their acceptance of Jesus Christ. I believe if you can—with an honest heart and with a sincere belief and with quiet reflection—open yourself up to receiving light and truth, ultimately the light and truth is going to lead you to God and lead you to acceptance of Jesus Christ. But there are many people who are kept from the truth only because they don't know where to find it, not because they are unwilling to accept it.

If they're willing to accept it, I think His sheep can hear His voice—even when the voice comes from Him, but they don't attribute it to Him. I believe that Jesus is responsible for the salvation, the development, the improvement of every soul that has ever lived on this world. And that, as a consequence, I think His spirit influences (for the good) people all over the world. And that ultimately, I think at some point they will come to know—whether in this life or in the afterlife—they will come to know that that source of light and truth was, in fact, Jesus Christ.

SP: Okay, so I know we're… I want to be respectful of both your times; I know you're both busy gentlemen. Kyle, I'd like for you to—as a minister, as somebody who's studying the Restoration and is fascinated by different movements and different expressions within Mormonism, as am I—I just thought maybe you have a few more questions or comments for Denver before we wrap this up.

KB: Yeah, just like before, there's so much there, I don't quite know what to focus in on. I think one thing that I resonated with, though, Denver, was the discernment of the veracity of a spiritual or theological truth-claim from a person who puts themselves on a pedestal. And I think that that's right.

And funny enough, like I said earlier, I'm preaching through First Corinthians, and this upcoming chapter is on chapter four, when Paul is not just running away from, you know, the celebrity culture of the city of Corinth, where those early Christians were so used to just kind of following in what we would call an "influencer" today, and kind of building around them: "I follow Paul, I follow Apollos, I follow Caiaphas," right?

[crosstalk]

KB: So not only is Paul ~~saying~~ not doing that, he's actively discouraging it, and he says like, Look, I'm a servant, I'm a doulos, I'm the guy that gets your food for you in the master's house. We don't own anything. So he's, like, he's pushing that over a cliff and saying, We're done with that; we're all servants of Christ here.

So that was the thing, probably because it's fresh on my mind and sermon preparation, but that was the thing that came up in mind. And maybe I'm a bit like you then, Denver, if I see that kind of self-centered charisma, it's a major red flag for me. And I'm just not interested in what that sort of a person has to say. I don't care if they're in the Latter-day Saint movement or the Evangelical Church movement. We've had men who have abused positions of authority in our own tribe, and it's ended up wounding people. So yeah, maybe that would be my last statement, Steve.

DS: Kyle, before we end this, you brought out a couple of sets of Scripture.

KB: Oh yeah!

SP: Oh yeah!

DS: I was wondering if you would get back on camera and talk about them for a minute.

KB: Sure, yeah. Well, really briefly, I inherited… This is just fun and personal to me, but I inherited my great-great-great-grandfather's Bible. So that's always fun to keep that kind of thing in your family. I know Latter-day Saints are big on ancestry; we're not so big on ancestry. So when we do get one of these kind of faith connections to our heritage, it's always sweet.

But my favorite item in my collection is a 1610 Geneva Bible, which I purchased in Cambridge, England years ago and was told that this is… So this predates the King James Version by one year. And these were popular among English colonists because they were small and compact. They have a Calvinist bent to them because they've got commentary that was, I believe, produced in Geneva. But this one is very old. They used to have these little clasps on them. You can see these tiny holes if you're watching and you're not just listening.

But it's… I love this because it's just a… It reminds me of a faithful preservation of God's Word and how we today, in 2026, owe so much to people throughout, you know, the centuries for treating Scripture with respect as they did so that we could have it today. So…

SP: I love it. Yeah, I think that's so great. And honestly, too, Denver, when you stop and think about it, you know, I think we—as Protestants, I think—need to have open hearts and open

minds to kind of have a conversation with the Restoration. And I feel that if we have a two-way conversation, we can learn a lot from each other. And we can even just have a better understanding of the early days of our faith tradition, whether it's, you know, first century Christianity… I always tell people, imagine a scenario in which, while Jesus's ministry is going on and He has the twelve disciples, there's a counter-narrative called "Christianity Unveiled" written at the same time, how that would inform our view of Christ and the apostles, like interviewing them, the people they hung out with. It would… That's what… That's the audacity of, you know, like, Tom Brody talking about founding a religion in the age of the printing press, right?

But I wanted to ask you is just as somebody who's a part of the Restoration—a Baptist; you were raised Baptist, you converted into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; now you're part of this Covenant Christian movement—I'm curious, what do you feel Protestantism brings to the table in this conversation that maybe people in the Restoration could maybe get something out of that maybe they've neglected?

DS: Well, one of the… In my view, one of the more important current Christian writers is Margaret Barker, who is an ordained minister, Anglican minister. *The Great High Priest* by Barker is on my shelf; *The Temple Theology*; I have multiple Margaret Barker books on my shelf. You know, C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* is brilliant; the Wesley brothers… Look, there are so many insightful… Just because you think that a Protestant lacks respect for the Book of Mormon doesn't mean that they can't improve your respect for the New Testament and the mission and ministry of Christ. And likewise, I mean, Edersheim was a Jew, but he converted to Christianity—and the insights that Edersheim brought…

Look, I don't think you can ignore Christian thought, Christian exposition, Christian theology without damaging yourself. You have to pay attention to… There are brilliant, illuminating, insightful Protestant and Catholic writers. I've even respected some of what—he's an old, you know, (what? ninth-century?) Islamic writer—Thalabi, some of his material has been translated through the Brigham Young University comparative studies stuff. And you can find illumination just about anywhere. And if a Mormon has not read much of C.S. Lewis, they've robbed themselves of some brilliant Christian apologetics.

What I find disappointing are, no matter where it comes from, the polemics. That just disappoints me. Why don't you state affirmatively something of value instead of saying, "I want to attack and tear down something that I believe lacks value"? Okay, fine. We all have disagreements over something somewhere. Do the apologetics to defend your faith and leave the polemics on the side, which is one of the reasons why I like so much what you do.

SP: Thank you, Denver. I really appreciate those kind words. And yeah, that's what we want to do is we want to have conversations like this where we're building bridges.

You know, Kyle actually has a restoration background himself. He attended Southside Christian Church in Munster, Indiana. We're a mile away from my house, which was part of the Stone Campbell movement. Kyle went through a faith crisis and atheism period, just like I did. And I feel like our engagement with Mormonism, I don't know… Kyle, what do you think? I think my engagement with Mormonism has made me a better Christian.

What would you say to that?

KB: Yeah, I'll say that engaging the Latter-day Saint tradition has forced me to ask questions I never would have asked of myself personally or in beliefs or practices. And it's… There's just, for me, a lot of theological assumptions that I just took as presuppositions until engaging the Restoration, and then it made me have to do a double-take or really dig into what is it that I believe in? And why is it? So in that sense, it's definitely sharpened me. But I've also gained genuine friendships with people that I value and respect. And if I hadn't have entered the space, that wouldn't have happened. So I'm very grateful for the friends that I've made along the way too.

SP: Amen. I love it. And that's what it's all about.

Now, I've been told, Denver—I don't know this for a fact, so I'm going to say this for the first time—but I've been told you're a big baseball fan, and you'd rather talk about baseball than just about anything, right? Is that true?

DS: I was looking at the Cubs stuff on the back…

SP: Right!!

DS: …and I thought it was wonderful that the Cubs finally—finally—got rid of the curse.

SP: Yes, absolutely. You know, and it's funny because I would love, it'd be great…

Like Kyle and I were both big Cubs fans, and here we are seeing the emergence of Pete Crow Armstrong possibly having one of the most historic, greatest seasons in the history of baseball. Denver, what a joy to see this guy just come out of nowhere and just having an amazing season. What are your thoughts on that?

DS: Well, look, I want to go back to the end of (what was it?) a hundred-and-some-year drought…

SP: Yes, yes!

DS: …when they were playing the World Series; I was on the edge of my seat, just… The Cubs needed to take it that year. And it was wonderful that they did. So, now I'm expecting a repeat.

SP: Yes.

DS: Do you think we can do that?

SP: I think with PCA leading the way, I feel like we have this team that's as good as any team out there. We swept the Dodgers to start the All-Star Break. So I really feel like we have the momentum to be a very special team for quite a period of time. I think that all the tools are there.

I think one of the biggest disappointments about the 2016 Cubs was that I really thought it was a dynasty in the making. It turned out to be a one-off. And so I feel like I want to… The

Cubs really deserve to be at the level of the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees. They'll be, consistently, be champion-contenders year in and year out. What do you say to that, Kyle?

KB: Oh, well, obviously I say yes. So I'll confess here on record that in 2016, when… Who was the outfielder that caught the ball and just won the Series? I can't remember, but I… I literally, I cried. I'll say it: I did. My wife's a witness.

And yeah, I've loved the Cubs. I have fond memories of going to Wrigley as a kid. We're five games behind the Brewers, I think. So we need to make that up, but I think we can get to the post-season. We got tricked into thinking we were going to have a dynasty, I think, because we got used to having a dynasty with the Blackhawks under Quinn, but that's neither here nor there.

SP: The Blackhawks and the Bulls. We got used to both those dynasties.

KB: Yeah. We got used to like, once you get a good team, you got them for a few years. And that hasn't worked out for the Bears or the Cubs yet. So hopefully it's the Cubs time.

DS: I think that the Cubs at Wrigley and the Red Sox at Fenway are the historical Ritz because of their ballparks.

SP: Yes. The ballparks, the shared history, the shared curses that we had. I… My dream is to one day see a Red Sox/Cubs World Series. That would just be…

DS: That would be nice!

SP: That would be so cool. So… But Denver, have you ever been to Wrigley Field?

DS: Yes.

SP: Oh, wonderful. Wonderful. That's great.

Well, hey, folks! We diverged a little bit here, but that's what we're going to do here at MBR. We're going to talk about the topics we want to talk about—and Go, Cubs, Go! I've been… David Boice and I have been sending text messages to each other because David Boice being—of "52 Churches"—being a Brewers fan, we've been having some fun with that too.

So that's the key thing too. You know, I tell people so often in this space, everything is so serious. Where's the whimsy? Where's the fun? Where's the humor? That needs to be brought into the space as well, because everything is just super serious, and folks, don't take yourself too seriously. Just have a good time and talk about things that are unrelated to all this stuff too. It's important that we do that as humans. It's healthy for us. And I think it's important to do that too.

So Denver, thank you so much for blessing us today.

DS: It was good to visit with you, and it was good to meet you, Kyle. Now that I have heard about it, I intend to find what you've written and take a look at it.

KB: Okay! Yes.

SP: Absolutely. Folks, we're going to have links to the Covenant Christians website; we're going to have links to Denver Snuffer's website; also to Kyle Beshears and his substack, as well.

Really important work that you gentlemen are doing. And so I have links to that and also links in the description for those of you who'd like to financially support us. But the most important thing is this: All the voices of the Restoration will be heard here on Mormon Book Reviews.