

**Announcing a general conference in the Spring of 2021
in southern Utah or Nevada:**

SEEKING THE FAITH AND RELIGION OF OUR FATHERS

A Passover Gathering and Feast—Past, Present, and Future

March 27 – April 4, 2021

(Exact location coming later)

Several covenant members from multiple fellowships have felt in their hearts to begin the process of creating and preparing a unique general conference during the week of Passover, March 27–April 4, 2021. We are introducing an unprecedented process for this conference that will culminate in a wilderness gathering held during Passover, one that will include ongoing, online participation for the coming six months. A true journey into the wilderness, hopefully someday ending in the promised land and a new temple, priesthood, and city of God.

In sacred records, God's people have experienced the trials and transcendence of times in the wilderness. The Fathers, including Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jesus, Nephi, the children of Israel, and many others had sojourns in the wilderness. We wonder and ponder upon what the faith and the religion was that inspired Abraham to leave his home and journey to a land promised by God. What were the blessings promised to the Fathers? How were they administered? What were their religious observances? What parts of this religion remained that sufficiently moved Lehi and Nephi to embark into the wilderness seeking a promised land?

During those times of struggle (fasting, loneliness, temptation, afflictions, etc.) in striving to connect with God while being so far away from the world they knew, they all became new creatures in Christ.

With this in mind we are planning a *wilderness* general conference. As we seek to return to the faith and religion of the Fathers, it can be rewarding, instructive, and exciting to taste of the experiential wilderness-learning opportunities along the way and to share with each other those things we are learning. We invite all to come along.

So, why the Passover weekend?

Great question. The feasts are part of the religion of the Fathers, and though we do not fully know what will be involved, we do know that the Passover is part of the return of this religion and faith that will be closely associated with the temple. Denver stated in Part 6 of the Temple series:

Feasts, and the returning of the feasts, belong in the house of God as part of that renewal. I know people are trying to practice feasts right now, including Passover, and I see no harm at all in doing that as kind of a preparation. **In fact, it might be good to develop a few skills by some kind of rudimentary practice beforehand. But the temple is the place where, hopefully, those skills will be put to use, and you won't make a mess of the first attempt to celebrate it in the temple, at God's house. But we are going to be told**—here's my understanding at present, subject always to God kicking me in the head and saying, “You know, you're wrong, and you're foolish, and here's the real circumstance...” My understanding is that **the feasts that were incorporated into the Law of Moses were a preservation, in a Mosaic law format, of feasts that pre-existed the Law of Moses.** The Fall Harvest, the Barley Festival—these things preceded, they antedated the Law of Moses. They were handed down as part of the original religion, or at least, some of them were, meaning that they go back to the era of the first Fathers. **Anything that reckons from the first Fathers—those to whom our hearts are to turn—that religious practice is to return and to be celebrated in the house of the Lord at the end.**

The only one that existed from the days of Adam to Noah to Abraham that got added, that will be observed, is the Passover—because the Passover was added as an additional testimony, given in the days of Moses, to point forward specifically to the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb (whose blood would save Israel) with a command that it got preserved. So, even though it got added and wasn't part of that original, **the addition at the time of the Passover itself was an event symbolizing liberation from the world**, coming out from under the bondage of Egypt (which is what its last-days people are supposed to ultimately achieve), coming out from under the influence of the head of gold and the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the modern-day kingdoms—being liberated from all of that; and at the same time, being liberated as a consequence of the blood of the Lamb. **So, the addition of the Paschal Lamb (and that feast) is going to stand at the renewal.**

The rest of the feasts of Moses, only insofar as they were part of what was from Adam to Noah and only in the form that was celebrated during that time period, will be preserved and observed, and observed in the format that the first Fathers observed it—which may differ, perhaps markedly, but perhaps not, you know, altogether, from the way that the Law of Moses had their festivals. And most of the festivals were cyclical, tied to the ebb and flow of nature (seed time and harvest time), and to the cycles of the signs in the heavens in order to integrate into one religion things that are above and things that are on and things that are beneath the earth, in one grand reminder that the architect of everything was God, and that He set the stars in the heavens above, and He set cycles, and He set repetitious motions, and He has alignments that bear testimony of specific events at specific times. **And all of these are part of these observances, and we've lost track of them. They're not part of our holy religion because our religion is so incomplete and so inadequate. But, yeah, there will be festivals** (emphasis added).

It's clear that the feast will be observed, including the Passover, as part of the temple and the last-days renewal of this lost faith. In the quote above, it was noted that we should practice some “rudimentary skills” in preparation for the temple. What those skills are will be determined over the next few months. Yet, like Adam building an altar but not knowing all things, we hope to wisely and prudently attempt to practice what seems wise as a people and individually this coming Spring of 2021. We hope this is part of turning the hearts of the children to the Fathers.

The journey to this feast and conference begins now!

Process matters more than results.

We were recently instructed by Denver regarding the importance of focusing on *process* instead of just looking at *results*. We felt that by engaging in dialogue and working on proposals and projects together, we could have opportunities to learn to live in peace with one another. We felt that a few days at a camp or conference was not enough to give us the time to work together, and this is why we have proposed a more *whole* process of online discussions, zoom meetings, and individual, family, and fellowship study. (Following is a post by Denver Snuffer, Sept. 2, 2020)

Results

The Lord foretold the challenges His followers would face. Challenges would come first from false Christs—meaning those who claimed they were anointed by God to lead others when God had not sent them. Next, He warned of violence and wars. Nature would also fight against mankind with earthquakes, famines, and pestilences. Religious persecutions would be inevitable. But through it all, the Lord advised patience: “*In your patience, possess your souls.*” (NC Luke 12:15) This advice to be patient in order to possess your souls was repeated in 1833. (See T&C 101:6)

Zion cannot be forced or demanded. The Lord explained that Zion will be gathered, but “***not in haste, lest there should be confusion, which brings pestilence.***” (T&C 50:6)

Recent revelations have given us a great advantage in the quest to see Zion. But right now it appears to me that we are all more focused on the results we hope to obtain while ignoring the process. **If I understand the Lord’s Answer to us** (T&C 157), **He is almost entirely focused on the process and wants us to forget about results. The results will only follow once we have figured out how to treat one another. Results are a by-product of getting the process right. Results are NOT something to be obtained using the wrong process.**

Following Christ’s visit the Nephites attained a remarkable era of joy and peace because of how they behaved: “[B]ecause of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people; and there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness. And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.” (4 Ne. 1:3)

When the idea of Zion was revealed in Joseph Smith’s day, the people wanted it, rushed to occupy it, but utterly failed to prepare to live in peace. Unlike the Nephites of 4th Nephi, those hasty saints failed and were violently chased from that land because “*there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore, by these things they polluted their inheritances.*” (T&C 101:3) They were the opposite of the Nephites who lived in peace.

The process matters more than the results. If the process is wrong, results are impossible. But if the process is right, the results are inevitable.

What is the next step we, as a people, can take?

Previous general conferences have reached beyond their local fellowships to involve others in distant areas to be part of the conference in various capacities. After the retreat in Challis, Idaho, where all who attended felt such love and connection (thanks again, Boise Fellowship!), it was felt by a few that we need to reach out as broadly as possible and include more ways to join with those in lands far away, those with physical challenges, and those who, due to family situations or financial challenges, cannot attend events like the recent retreat conference, for example.

Also, we wondered how we could create more opportunities to raise the level of knowledge and understanding prior to attending an event, thus allowing the Lord to increasingly bless us and open the heavens further for those involved. We also hope to bring fellowships and individuals together and offer opportunities for everyone to learn and/or facilitate with one another.

In order to do this, we are planning to create a website (possibly as part of restorationarchives.com) where Zoom meetings on the subject of the faith and religion of our Fathers will be posted. We also anticipate having a section on the website that will have material from Joseph Smith, Denver Snuffer, and the scriptures, including the Stick of Joseph. We hope all can do what they feel is right in order to be a part of this effort. We also hope to involve others from outside of our group.

Business: What ought we to have learned? What wisdom do we lack as a people?

We acknowledge before God and this people that as a conference taskforce and as a people collectively, we do not know all that we ought to know regarding what is called *business matters* or, yet still, how to treat one another. We pause even to bring these matters up, as it has caused contention and sorrow among us. We realize this is a serious and sensitive matter to undertake. We tremble and pray that we ourselves will not trifle with the souls of man (as that seems to be so easy to do). Yet, where do we go from here if we cannot speak with one another about important matters? We feel we need to attempt to gain the wisdom and understanding we lack as a people. How should we proceed (in a godly manner) when asked to consider a matter of business in this conference?

Regarding business, we ask, "What is meant by *business*? Does it include the addition of scripture? What have we learned already about these matters? What ought we to have learned?" We first turn to what we have previously received in scripture (as a kindly brother suggested). In the Glossary of terms under *Common Consent*, it states:

A principle of decision-making where all participants in a particular group (e.g., a fellowship or conference) are eligible to either affirm or reject an action or proposal; such action can be sought after with either a majority or a unanimous vote. The word consent is used "in cases where power, rights, and claims are concerned. We give consent when we yield that which we have a right to withhold; but we do not give consent to a mere opinion, or abstract proposition." The early church (established in 1830) governed themselves by common consent, with no man dictating to them. Equality prevailed, and authority was disbursed into equal and independent groups that prevented autocratic rule and guarded against apostasy of the whole body. They conducted all of their business in conferences. Someone would be elected (by common consent) to preside at the conference and to conduct the business. If Joseph Smith was present, it was common for the saints to elect

him, but they could have elected anyone. Business could be introduced by anyone, which could include complaints, suggestions, and discipline. The purpose of conferences was to take care of the business and to make sure that the community was cohesive and that issues were dealt with. Although both Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had the priesthood conferred on them by the voice of God, they only obtained an office in the church by common consent from the body of the church. Even when the founding prophet was in direct communication with the Lord, the church body still retained the final control through common consent: **And all things shall be done by common consent in the church**, by much prayer and faith, for all things you shall receive by faith (T&C 6:1; emphasis added).

What do we learn from this scripture? It tells us that each one of us can either affirm or reject an action or proposal. We can choose to use either majority or unanimous vote. (Common consent stipulates that *no man* is to dictate.) All business was conducted in *conferences*. Business (complaints, suggestions, and discipline) could be introduced by anyone. The purpose of conferences included taking care of business, being certain that the community (covenant people) was cohesive and that issues were properly dealt with. We see this principle of equality in the example of Joseph the prophet. Whatever direct communication he received from God, all things were done by common consent in faith, prayer, and fasting. We can ask ourselves as a covenant people, Have we dealt with business matters according to the principle of common consent in conferences? Are we governing ourselves by the scriptures? Have we the *willingness* and *intent* to conduct ourselves as stated?

Looking again to the scriptures: Answer to the Covenant, Section 157:49-54, it states:

49. *But remember that without the fruit of repentance, and a broken heart and a contrite spirit, you cannot keep my covenant; for I, your Lord, am meek and lowly of heart. Be like me. You have all been wounded, your hearts pierced through with sorrows because of how the world has treated you. But you have also scarred one another by your unkind treatment of each other, and you do not notice your misconduct toward others because you think yourself justified in this.* You bear the scars on your countenances, from the soles of your feet to the head, and every heart is faint. Your visages have been so marred that your hardness, mistrust, suspicions, resentments, fear, jealousies, and anger toward your fellow man bear outward witness of your inner self; you cannot hide it. When I appear to you, instead of confidence, you feel shame. You fear and withdraw from me because you bear the blood and sins of your treatment of brothers and sisters. **Come to me and I will make sins as scarlet become white as snow, and I will make you stand boldly before me, confident of my love.**

50. **I descended below it all, and know the sorrows of you all, and have borne the grief of it all, and I say to you, Forgive one another. Be tender with one another, pursue judgment, bless the oppressed, care for the orphan, and uplift the widow in her need, for I have redeemed you from being orphaned and taken you that you are no longer a widowed people. Rejoice in me, and rejoice with your brethren and sisters who are mine also. Be one.**

51. **You pray each time you partake of the sacrament to always have my spirit to be with you. And what is my spirit? It is to love one another as I have loved you. Do my works and you will know my doctrine, for you will uncover hidden mysteries by obedience to these things that can be uncovered in no other way. This is the way I will restore knowledge to my people. If you return good for evil, you will cleanse yourself and know the joy of your**

Master. You call me Lord, and do well to regard me so, but to know your Lord is to love one another. Flee from the cares and longings that belong to Babylon, obtain a new heart, for you have all been wounded. In me you will find peace, and through me will come Zion, a place of peace and safety.

52. There are only two ways: the way I lead, that goes upward in light and truth unto Eternal lives — and if you turn from it, you follow the way of darkness and the deaths.... **Let not your hearts remain divided from one another and divided from me.**

53. **Be of one heart, and regard one another with charity. Measure your words before giving voice to them, and consider the hearts of others.** Although a man may err in understanding concerning many things, yet he can view his brother with **charity** and come unto me, and through me he can with patience overcome the world. I can bring him to understanding and knowledge. Therefore, if you regard one another with **charity**, then your brother's error in understanding will not divide you. I lead to all truth. I will lead all who come to me to the truth of all things. The fullness is to receive the truth of all things, and this too from me, in power, by my word, and in very deed. For I will come unto you if you will come unto me.

54. **Study to learn how to respect your brothers and sisters and to come together by precept, reason, and persuasion, rather than sharply disputing and wrongly condemning each other, causing anger.** Take care how you invoke my name. Mankind has been controlled by the adversary through anger and jealousy, which has led to bloodshed and the misery of many souls. Even strong disagreements should not provoke anger, nor to invoke my name in vain as if I had part in your every dispute. **Pray together in humility and together weekly present your dispute to me, and if you are contrite before me, I will tell you my part** (emphasis added).

Let's note just a few things from this scripture, as we intend to address this together. In verse 49, the Lord kindly asks us to be like Him. It states that we have **ALL** been wounded. And we have **ALL** scarred one another by our unkind treatment of each other—**ALL** of us. Although difficult to see or accept at times, we can assume that this appears to be true still.

In the remaining verses, we see that our Lord (as He does claim us as His) says He has descended below us all and knows our sorrow and our griefs. He asks us to rejoice in Him with our brothers and sisters who believe in Him, and to be *one*. He asks us to forgive each other and to let our hearts not be divided any longer. He mentions charity several times and instructs us that if we love Him, we *must* love one another. He asks us to *measure* our words and consider each others' *hearts*. He reminds us of how we pray for His spirit to *always* be with us when we take the sacrament and defines what that means. He tells us we must do His works. He reminds us of how He will restore us as His people. Finally, He clearly tells us *how* to receive answers to disputes we face.

Therefore, in accordance with verse 54, we propose that during the next six months, we study to learn how to respect our brothers and sisters and that we come together by the precepts stated, by reasoning, and by persuading each other in gentleness and kindness. Let us join together in study, fasting, and the prayer of faith in order to weekly present our disputes before Him, knowing we will receive His part and achieve the unity He requires.

Precedence? Tradition? Does everyone need to copy or undertake the same projects and proposals during conferences or feasts moving forward?

More good questions. The answer is no. We believe, as Joseph Smith stated, that anyone can call a conference and that how or what they do is up to them. We are undertaking this journey and experience as we feel that these projects (mentioned above) and the following projects and proposals (below) are needed in order to facilitate discussions and changes with us as a people. We do not know the outcome yet, but we believe and have faith that these measures can help. It is an experiment upon the word, as said in the book of Alma. We believe what is being done currently is not binding on anyone in the future. It's simply that we are being *called to action* during this time in the Restoration.

Promises to the Fathers will be fulfilled.

In a recent video released in the series *The Heavens are Open* by Denver Snuffer, it stated that there is work left to be done as a people: 1) a proper temple established where the Lord can come to dwell therein; 2) the fullness of the priesthood restored; and 3) a holy city, the New Jerusalem, to be built.

Denver further stated, "The Restoration remains unfinished. However, these three events were promised by God to the ancient covenant fathers, and they are certain to happen." The work will be done. Let's finish the journey and, as the saying goes, "...not stop before the miracle happens."

What we have planned so far, and what we are proposing and inviting everyone to take part in:

- Location: We are looking for a place that would accommodate a "Camp of Israel" in the wilderness of the desert, likely a place between Las Vegas, Nevada, and St. George, Utah.
- We are planning events during the week of Passover. These dates are set: March 27 – April 4, 2021.
- We are planning on multiple Zoom meetings involving study of the faith and religion of the Fathers. (We hope to begin meetings in October. Facilitators are needed from all areas. Start your engines now.)
- As stated above regarding business matters, we invite everyone to begin studying and praying together. We also invite you to an upcoming meeting(s) on Zoom to reason and share one with another precepts and understandings that we have.
- We are planning to address business matters, beginning on Zoom meeting formats and written proposals posted on that website and other websites as needed. How to do it will be determined by cooperation among us.
- Denver Snuffer has accepted an invitation to speak on the religion of the Fathers.
- We plan to study topics related to the Fathers: What are the promises made to the Fathers? What is the great and last hope? What does *turning our hearts to the Fathers* mean? What do we need to repent of? And more.
- Studying *rudimentary skills* in relation to the temple (to be determined).
- Identifying and sharing with each other *lost skills*. (Seth Larsen has already volunteered; other volunteers are sought.)
- We anticipate lodging to include tents, RV's, and hotels close to the campsite.

- It's proposed that we have get-to-know-you conversion stories and meetings at the camp. Also, we plan to have some conversion stories posted on the conference website prior to the conference.
- It's been proposed that there be a section for suggested topics and speakers, a "Whose testimonies would you like to hear?" section on the website.
- It's been proposed that we have smaller sacrament meetings with the above-mentioned conversion stories or simply, testimonies from those who want to share.
- A project has been proposed, using a section or tab on covenantchat.com, dedicated to "what we have learned, what we ought to have learned, and how we ought to move forward now."
- A project has been proposed to unify as a people using the Constitution of the United States and this website and its tools: <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/full-text>
- We are planning on having Zoom meetings for small groups who would like to discuss specific topics.

Again, the journey begins now, and we invite all who seek the faith and religion of our Fathers to participate during the next six months by taking part in studying, learning, seeking, facilitating, and organizing as you are able. As stated, we hope this is a covenant-wide effort. Ultimately, if this turns a few hearts to the promises made to the Fathers, that would be great.

Kyle Walter, Louis Naegle, and Brian Bowler (otherwise known as the three stooges) are facilitating this effort along with many others from multiple fellowships and areas. If you feel to participate and volunteer or have questions, please contact:

Kyle Walter at: ckylewalter@gmail.com
 Brian Bowler at: utahbowler@hotmail.com