

## EPISODE 32 • PART II



Dr. Kenneth L. Alford

*D&C 85-87*



- John Bytheway: [00:00:03](#) Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
- Hank Smith: [00:00:07](#) Ken, one of the reasons I thought of you for this episode is because you have such an extensive history in the military and this section talks about a revelation and prophecy on war. So I thought you might have a really interesting perspective on this one. So I'll let you take it from here, Section 87.
- Ken Alford: [00:00:29](#) Yeah, this is interesting. It's interesting that it comes on Christmas Day. So I think it's first important to understand that Christmas Day in the 21st century and Christmas Day in the 19th century are two very different kinds of things. We have really commercialized Christmas and it's a really huge deal and it's the biggest shopping time of the year and that's not the case in the 19th century.
- Ken Alford: [00:00:59](#) In the 19th century, they would acknowledge Christmas, they would recognize it, they would do family things, but it's not uncommon for maybe children get a piece of dried fruit or something for Christmas. It is not the commercial event it is today. So it's not that unusual that ... It's not like Joseph is shunning his family and going into a room seeking revelation away from his family on Christmas.
- Hank Smith: [00:01:24](#) We're going to have a Joseph Smith Christmas this year. Everybody's going to get a piece of dried fruit because I want you to experience Christmas in the 1830s. Kids, I want you to know ... I'm sure that they will be so excited.
- Ken Alford: [00:01:40](#) I'm sure you will be the father of the year in their eyes. This is coming at an interesting time, though. It's 1832 and, again, communication is just so different, but nearby Kirtland, which is where Joseph is living is a little town called Painesville and Painesville has a newspaper called the Telegraph. The Painesville Telegraph publishes just a few days before Christmas. So odds are Joseph tries to stay current on current events. So odds are that that ... I believe it's 21 December, that issue has probably reached Joseph right about Christmas time.

- Ken Alford: [00:02:27](#) In there, because there are copies that are extant today of that newspaper, in there it talks about cholera in the United States and plague in India and there's a big article in that newspaper about the Nullification Crisis. Because at this time, the Nullification Crisis is occurring in South Carolina and just very briefly, South Carolina is unhappy because of federal tariffs.
- Ken Alford: [00:02:51](#) So they have said, "We are going to leave the Union if you keep the tariff in place, and we will establish our own government." It's the first real serious claim of cessation. There had been other things like the Whiskey Rebellion and other things in American history, but they're not of the same caste or scope and this is an entire state that's threatening to leave the Union.
- Ken Alford: [00:03:14](#) So that Nullification Crisis, it's full blown. Now Andrew Jackson steps in and issues a proclamation against it and squashes the Nullification Crisis but on Christmas Day, 1832 these things are on Joseph's mind and in Joseph's history, he makes this statement. He says, "The ravages of cholera were frightful in almost all large cities on the globe, and the plague broke out in India, while the United States, amid all her pomp and greatness, was threatened with immediate disillusion.
- Ken Alford: [00:03:44](#) The people of South Carolina, in convention, assembled in November," so just the previous month, "Passed ordinances declaring their state a free and independent nation." So it really sounds like Joseph has seen that issue of The Painesville Telegraph. So it's Christmas Day, and this is one of the instances, this revelation on war. I would just tell you, we're not going to talk about it in this episode, but you'll talk about it, John, and Hank, in the next episode. You need to pair Section 87 with 88. Make them a set.
- Ken Alford: [00:04:20](#) Don't treat them as just individual revelations. Treat them as bookends, if you like, because what Joseph gets on Christmas Day is the revelation on war, but then the Lord takes Joseph because Joseph is very concerned after receiving this revelation. Then the Lord takes him by the hand just a few days later, just a couple of days later and gives him Section 88, which is just a wonderful, wonderful revelation that that speaks Peace to his soul. So I would look at those two revelations together, but Section 87-
- John Bytheway: [00:04:53](#) You've got one revelation on war, and one revelation on peace. You've got war and peace right next to each other.
- Ken Alford: [00:05:00](#) Right next to each other, and I think that the Lord gives 88 as a tender mercy to Joseph, because 87 is disturbing. 87 doesn't

paint a very pretty picture of what's coming, but section 87 is one of the really rare instances in which one revelation of the Doctrine and Covenants provides insights into another revelation of the Doctrine and Covenants. That doesn't happen very often.

- Ken Alford: [00:05:28](#) Most of the revelations stand alone, but if you turn to Section 130, in verses 12 and 13, and by the way, section 130, just a quick note. Section 130 is kind of the potpourri. If it was a Jeopardy game, Section 130 would be the potpourri category, because it changes topics about 18 times. It's notes from his scribe, William Clayton, and they just basically take William Clayton's notes and put them right in the Doctrine and Covenants.
- Ken Alford: [00:06:02](#) You can find those also on The Joseph Smith Papers website, but the reason I send you to Section 130 for just a minute is in verses 12 and 13, Joseph adds an interesting statement because he's summarizing Section 87. He says, "I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God, that the commencement of difficulties which will cause much bloodshed previous to the coming of the Son of Man will begin in South Carolina. It will probably arise through the slave question," and then he adds this really helpful insight.
- Ken Alford: [00:06:33](#) "This, a voice declared to me." So Joseph receives Section 87. It's a really helpful insight, I think, that we don't have in Section 87 and Joseph says, "A voice declared to me while I was praying earnestly on the subject." So Joseph sees the world, in what in 1832 terms seems like the world in commotion. In 2021, we'd call that Thursday, but it's a lot of commotion for 1832. Joseph sees that and knows these prophecies of the last day but I find it interesting that it's declared to him by a voice.
- Ken Alford: [00:07:20](#) Now he doesn't say it's the voice of the Lord. That's possibly a presumption we might make, but it says that a voice declares this. So as you read Section 87, recognize that Joseph is having this basically given to him by dictation, if you like. So this comes in a very dramatic manner. This is not one of the sections where Joseph receives the basic idea from the Lord, and then he's left to fill in the words as he talks about in other places. This one comes full blown, and he receives this kind of verbatim.
- John Bytheway: [00:07:53](#) He also says he was praying earnestly on the subject, which we don't find in Section 87, either, I don't think.
- Ken Alford: [00:08:01](#) So I think Section 130 is just really helpful. It's just a little tiny tidbit. It's just found there in those two little verses, but I think it's helpful for us to understand, and also, I think it helps us

understand why this has such an impression on Joseph that he is hearing this. This is being dictated to him. Now, interestingly, this section does not get added to the Doctrine and Covenants until 1876, just right before Brigham passes for mortality.

Ken Alford: [00:08:33](#) It's one of the sections that's added late, but what happens is, it's a well known section and missionaries actually carry handwritten copies of what we call Section 87 as they go proselyting, especially as they proselyte in the southern states. When the Civil War breaks out, Fort Sumter is fired upon April 12, 1861 and lasts for a couple days before the surrender reform. Major Robert Anderson surrenders to General Beauregard. Just the 5th of May, so the 5th of May 1861.

Ken Alford: [00:09:10](#) So just three weeks after Fort Sumter is attacked by South Carolina forces., the Philadelphia Sunday Mercury newspaper publishes a copy of Section 87. Apparently, a missionary in the Philadelphia area must have grabbed a reporter or went to the editor or did something. I don't know if we know the genesis behind how they got the copy, but The Philadelphia Sunday Mercury publishes the revelation in its entirety. Then I love this, I love this. It has a sub heading when you find a copy of that article, and it says, Have We Not Had A Prophet Among Us?

Ken Alford: [00:09:52](#) I just love that. This is a non Latter-day Saint newspaper but publishing this because now in 1861, this 1832 revelation has taken on a whole new look.

John Bytheway: [00:10:07](#) I think I read that that was reprinted in England too.

Ken Alford: [00:10:11](#) The revelation is actually reprinted several times. The way 19th century newspapers work is once somebody is brave enough to publish it, they would send copies of their papers to other newspapers, and it's very common that an article will be republished and it would normally say, as appeared in The Philadelphia Sunday Mercury, and then they would just reprint the whole article, because it's hard to get news in the 19th century, especially the first half of the 19th century. So it is republished and I believe it is actually even republished in Britain. So the revelation is known.

Ken Alford: [00:10:45](#) Missionaries are using it but again, recognize it doesn't actually appear in the Doctrine and Covenants itself until 1876, along with many other revelations that are added by Orson Pratt at that time. I think this is just interesting. We tend to tie this revelation to the Civil War, and it absolutely has a Civil War connection. It's very clear because it talks about, wars will

shortly come to pass in verse one, beginning in South Carolina with their rebellion.

- Ken Alford: [00:11:22](#) They'll terminate in the death and misery of many souls. We still don't know how many people were killed in the American Civil War, but the number is north of 600,000.
- Hank Smith: [00:11:33](#) Compare that to the population of 1860.
- Ken Alford: [00:11:36](#) Compared to the population, that's about like 30 to 35 million people today.
- John Bytheway: [00:11:41](#) Wow.
- Ken Alford: [00:11:42](#) It's a huge number of people.
- John Bytheway: [00:11:45](#) I want to mention this book, Civil War Saints that Ken is the editor of and it lists every known Latter-day Saint who may have been involved in the Civil War, or a little bio in the back. The thing that struck me was somewhere on the side, it looks like from my browsing, and most are on the side of the Union and some were even on the side of the Confederacy, which I thought was interesting.
- Ken Alford: [00:12:13](#) There was great success prior to the Civil War in the south. Jedediah M. Grant was a missionary there in Tazewell County, Virginia, especially, and had great success and there were actually several branches of the church in the south, especially in Virginia, when the war broke out and they were loyal to their state. So there are many Confederates. When we did Civil War Saints, we were able to find 384 Latter-day Saints.
- Ken Alford: [00:12:44](#) That number, we've kept growing it as we found additional sources. It's up to, I think it's 412 or 413 now, and most fought for the Union. Some Latter-day Saints fought for the South, and then some we have three or four, who fought for both. They're called Galvanized Yankees and they were Confederates to begin with and then they were captured, and put in a prison camp and the Union Army did a really smart thing.
- Ken Alford: [00:13:14](#) They said, "If we keep them in prison, we have to feed them and it costs us money, but if we let them take an oath of allegiance, we can let them out and they'll put on the Union blue." So what these guys would do is they thought, boy, as soon as I get out, I'm going to see my Confederate buddies and first battle, I'm going to take my Union blue off and run over to Johnny Reb side and be a Confederate again."

Ken Alford: [00:13:36](#) So what the Union Army did was assign them to duty in the West and there was actually a unit of galvanized soldiers at Camp Douglas in Salt Lake.

Hank Smith: [00:13:47](#) No fighting for them.

Ken Alford: [00:13:48](#) No Civil War fighting for them. They got in some Indian skirmishes, but no Civil War fighting. There's one fun story that we found while I was doing Civil War Saints of a guy who was born, William H. Norman. He got captured outside of Nashville, at the Battle of Nashville, and was taken up to Camp Douglas, which was a prisoner of war camp outside Chicago. He signed an oath of allegiance and join the Union Army.

Ken Alford: [00:14:14](#) He was planning to the fact but they sent him out west and on his way out west the war ended. When the war ended, "He said this is stupid. I don't want to be a Yankee. I certainly don't want to be a Yankee out west." So he defected, he went AWOL, and changed his name to John E. Davis. Well, John E. Davis, to make a long story short, dates a Latter-day Saint girl in Pioche, Nevada, and joins the church and is baptized under his fake name, John E. Davis.

Ken Alford: [00:14:48](#) He goes on a mission and receives a mission call under his pseudonym, John E. Davis, and he is endowed in the temple, under the name John E. Davis. It's not his real name. He never tells his wife and he's married to her like 60 years and he never tells her that he was a-

Hank Smith: [00:15:07](#) Defector.

Ken Alford: [00:15:07](#) Yeah, that he went AWOL. His family didn't know and the way they piece it together, they finally pieced it together that William H. Norman and John E. Davis were the same guy. As John E. Davis, he told people he fought for the South. He never told him he served as a Yankee. He was just I guess, so embarrassed about it, but the way they found it out, very briefly was, he was the ward clerk in a place called Annabella, Utah.

Ken Alford: [00:15:35](#) What he did, it was common at the time on your reports to Salt Lake for membership attendants, is to request people to do temple work for deceased people from that area, because it was a long way to go to the temple. So he wrote a note and said, "Would you please do work for," and he gave the names of his parents.

Ken Alford: [00:15:59](#) Because one of his descendants went into Macon, Georgia, and tried to find the Davis's, because he talked about growing up there and there wasn't a single Davis in the entire county when the Civil War began. So they said something's wrong with this record, but anyway, it's kind of a fun story that I just find it interesting that somebody is willing to be baptized, go on a mission and endowed under a name that is not theirs. Then never tells their wife that-

Hank Smith: [00:16:26](#) But that is. That's a fascinating story.

Ken Alford: [00:16:30](#) Maybe our listeners might like to know. Some of them may be familiar with the Saints at War Project that Robert Freeman did down at BYU with the World War II, and also the Korean War, and brother alpha, tell them you've been involved with a new one, relatively new, isn't it? The Saints at War in Iraq and Afghanistan?

John Bytheway: [00:16:51](#) Yeah, Saints at War began in about 2000. It's a BYU project. It was actually the two directors when it began were Dennis Wright-

Ken Alford: [00:17:00](#) Dennis Wright and Robert Freeman-

John Bytheway: [00:17:02](#) Robert Freeman and then they let me come on when I joined the faculty in 2008. Actually, in 2005, I started helping them collecting stories when I was still on active duty. So they've done 19th century Saints at War and we had a conference here a couple years ago about World War I Saints at War. Then they've done a volume and videos on World War II, and Korea, and Vietnam. Then in January, of 2020, I released the latest volume in that series which is about the Gulf War, and the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, sharing stories of Latter-day Saints that have participated.

John Bytheway: [00:17:49](#) So if any listeners have stories of conflict, where they've served in a war zone as a Latter-day Saint, the BYU Saints at War project is still happy to receive your stories. Bob Freeman handles Vietnam and before and I handle post-Vietnam. So we just make that an open invitation because we're archiving those stories in the BYU special collections, so that they'll be there

Ken Alford: [00:18:19](#) That somebody will have those, and it's a wonderful thing that you've done. I talked to Robert Freeman about, "Well, let me send you my dad's story. He was introduced to the church during the war. Is that okay?" And he said, "Sure, we'll take it."

John Bytheway: [00:18:34](#) Absolutely.

Ken Alford: [00:18:36](#) So Section 87 is just interesting. It prophesied the Civil War in verse one.

Hank Smith: [00:18:47](#) Hey, Ken, can I ask you a question before we move on from verse one? I don't know if I was taught this when I was a youngster, but can you describe the death and misery of the Civil War?

Ken Alford: [00:18:59](#) The Lord says in verse one, that this war, this American Civil War that is prophesied there in verse one, and by the way, in the Book of Commandments and Revelations, in the second volume when this is recorded, it's recorded as a prophecy. Most of them are recorded as revelations. This is recorded as a prophecy, but it says it will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls.

Ken Alford: [00:19:25](#) I think it's important to note that as it says in verse two, "And the time will come when war will be poured out upon all nations beginning at this place." If you look at it, some people, many historians have actually called the American Civil War, the first modern war and war kind of takes a turn at the Civil War.

Ken Alford: [00:19:46](#) The Civil War has many elements of what we would consider as modern war. The populations become involved. Prior to the Civil War, populations that were not military were pretty much left out of the wars. The armies would clash, but the populations didn't bear the brunt. That changes in the Civil War. We have cities being attacked and burned, we have Sherman's March to the Sea, we have cities lays under siege, we have entire cities destroyed and that trend has continued up to the present.

Ken Alford: [00:20:21](#) Really, you can kind of see that beginning with the Civil War. The Lord always knows exactly what He's talking about. He defines it here very clearly. "And that death and misery of many souls." What's happened is the Civil War, it's called the first modern war, but it's such that the tactics of the armies involved are still basically Napoleonic and yet the weapons of the war are post-Napoleonic.

Ken Alford: [00:20:54](#) We have repeating rifles, we have Gatling guns that are just basically mid 19th century machine guns and yet we have tactics that are still based on when you carried muskets. The rifles in the Civil War are just. Their rifles. The difference between a rifle and a musket is a musket is a smooth bore, a smooth barrel. When you shoot a ball down, it literally bounces down the



barrel and goes flying out and it goes out at any number of angles.

- Ken Alford: [00:21:23](#) So the reason they would stand the soldiers close together is so that when you fire lots of bullets, maybe some of them will bounce in the right direction, but fire is not very lethal from muskets. Many shots go into the ground or over their head, but there was a development prior to the Civil War called rifling, in which they put a series of grooves in the barrel so that as the bullet is fired, it spins and it expands very quickly and fills up the barrel and spins at a high velocity and comes out spinning and it's like throwing a football as a spiral.
- Ken Alford: [00:21:59](#) If you put that spin on it, you can throw it very accurately and the bullets became very accurate. They were called minié balls, yet they were using tactics from Napoleon and still bunching together closely so you have very accurate fire and bunched together soldiers and the result is devastating. There are accounts where the majority of a unit will be wiped out, sometimes in almost a single day and these are large caliber bullets.
- Ken Alford: [00:22:29](#) When they hit you, they don't just break bone and go through. They hit bone and then slide and the wounds are horrendous. Death and misery of many cells is just an accurate phrase, but then the Lord says that it's going to be poured out on all nations. If you look, again, you can almost use the Civil War as a dividing line in the world's history. Just looking at what's happened in the 20th century, there have been some accounts that said in the entire 20th century, there may have only been a few days without war somewhere in the world.
- Ken Alford: [00:23:11](#) The 19th century, most of the century it's predominantly peaceful across the world. Now there are wars and various things but there's a good deal of peace in the 19th century and certainly centuries before. Never entirely peaceful, but that changes in the 20th century and there's just not peace. World War I, you have maybe up to 25 million people killed. World War II, you have up to maybe 72 million people killed.
- Ken Alford: [00:23:39](#) At about the same time as the Civil War, you have the Taipei rebellion in China. It may have killed 30 million people. You've got other rebellions in China, the Dungan Rebellion that killed up to 12 million people. There's wars in the Republic of the Congo, almost at the turn of the century to the 21st century that kills 5 million people. The Korean War kills millions of people. Vietnam kills millions of people Afghanistan, there have been

millions of people die in the conflicts between the Soviet Union and the United States experience there, that millions have died.

Ken Alford: [00:24:15](#) When the Lord says that it will be poured out on all nations, it is very, very literal. We won't see peace. If there were just a few days of peace in the 20th century, there have been zero in the 21st century and probably, quite frankly, there will be zero in the 21st century until the Lord returns. That war has just been poured out. This is a sign, the Savior was very clear, war and rumors of war is one of the most distinct signs of the last days.

Ken Alford: [00:24:47](#) Why does a third of the Book of Mormon address war? Well, that book, as President Benson said, is prepared for us and those prophets were inspired of the Lord to know that we live in a period of war. How wonderful it'll be when that all ends, but that is not yet. Only the dead have seen the end of war in our current state and mortality. So as you look at Section 87, in verse three, there's another interesting thing here and it says that the southern states will be divided against the northern states.

Ken Alford: [00:25:21](#) So it gets the breakdown of the war, and then it says that the southern states will call upon Great Britain, and they do. The South actually sends two formal emissaries over to the court of St. James and appeals for support for financial support. Great Britain, depending on which accounts you read, comes very close to providing formal recognition to the South, because why, they are the industrial heartland of the world at that time, because of the British Empire, and they are fed by American cotton.

Ken Alford: [00:25:56](#) So cotton is king and they don't do it, because the North has some spectacular victories that are timed perfectly, that stopped the Brits from doing that, but the Lord gets it right. He knows they're going to make that appeal. Then it says something really interesting in verse three. It says, "And they shall call upon other nations in order to defend themselves against other nations."

Ken Alford: [00:26:23](#) So the question is, who is they in verse three, and the way English works is the antecedent of a pronoun is normally the closest noun, and that happens to be Great Britain. So it's saying that Great Britain, the time will come when they will call upon other nations. Well, when does that occur? I would turn to World War I and that's when we have the first Allies and Axis and note what it says, and again, the Lord always gets it right, doesn't He?

Ken Alford: [00:26:54](#) It says there at the end of verse three, "And then," so what's that, and then? Meaning after Great Britain has appealed for

help, "And then war shall be poured out upon all nations." If war is poured out upon all nations, it will be a war of what kind? It will be a world war. In World War I, that's exactly what happens. The Lord is not a good guesser. He has seen the end from the beginning and He's just telling Joseph what He knows is going to happen.

- Ken Alford:            [00:27:28](#)            There's no guessing involved here. The Lord has seen it all. He knows how this dispensation ends. He knows how this dispensation is going to play out, and again, He's pulling the curtain back for Joseph and He's saying, "I'm going to give you some insight here on the last days. This is what's going to happen." Then He identifies in verse four, He says, "And it shall come to pass after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters."
- Ken Alford:            [00:27:52](#)            Now, Joseph L. Wirthlin, who was an apostle. He's the father of Joseph B. Wirthlin, who we know from recent years, but Joseph L. Wirthlin said in 1958, in General Conference. He said, "In many cases, I'm quite sure, we all think this has to do with the slaves of the southern states," but then he said, "But I believe brothers and sisters, that it was intended that this referred to slaves all over the world."
- Ken Alford:            [00:28:23](#)            So think of what happened since the Civil War. Slaves in the United States, slavery was made illegal. We added amendments to the Constitution, giving rights and slaves in the Northern Hemisphere in the United States were freed. Beginning at about that time, serfs in Russia, and folks that are in slavery conditions in China and across the world, begin fighting for their freedom and it begins kind of this march of history.
- Ken Alford:            [00:28:58](#)            At Joseph's time when he receives this revelation, a good proportion of the world's entire population lived in what we would consider today slavery, and yet the Lord tells Joseph, "It's going to end. It's going to start here, but it's going to end." Then in verse six, it says, "And thus with sword of bloodshed, the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn," and then, note this, the Lord draws on a wider set, if you like, of Latter Day Signs of the Times.
- Ken Alford:            [00:29:33](#)            The Lord says, "The earth shall mourn and with earthquakes and plague and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath and indignation and chastening hand of an almighty God until the consumption degree hath made a full end of all nations."

- Ken Alford: [00:29:58](#) So in the last days, we know that there's going to be all kinds of things. Nature itself will be in commotion and I find that one with earthquakes interesting. I always take my students ... There's a website that tracks worldwide all of the earthquakes and there was a General Authority talk. I have to look it up. I believe it was Elder Haight, who in the 90s, talked about earthquakes and how there had been two major earthquakes in the 1920s, and four and then 15 as the various decades, but they never got very high.
- Ken Alford: [00:30:31](#) Well, now we are several decades beyond even his talk. So there's this website, records earthquakes around the world in the last 30 days, and I checked it before we started this recording today and in the last 30 days, just the last 30 days ... Now remember, Elder Haight said that there were two major earthquakes in an entire decade. So that's 120 months, two major earthquakes and I think they counted it as like 6.0., and above.
- Ken Alford: [00:31:02](#) In just the last 30 days, from the recording of this broadcast, there have been 15 major earthquakes, 6.0., and above. There was a 7.3 earthquake just yesterday in China. So when it says, earthquakes is a sign of the times, you can chart that one on a graph. That's one of the signs of the times that you can literally chart and it's always like that.
- Ken Alford: [00:31:28](#) I've seen it as high when I do this with my students in class. One time I did it, and we counted 63 earthquakes in 30 days. That class happened to be right after the earthquake that caused the tsunami in Japan with the Fukushima problem, and there had been 63 major earthquakes and aftershocks that counted themselves as major earthquakes.
- Ken Alford: [00:31:51](#) So we've gone from two in a decade to 15 in the last 30 days. So in one 120th of the time, we have seven times more earthquakes. So yeah, again, the Lord gets it right. Then in verse seven, it says, "That the cry of the saints and the blood of the saints shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of the Saboath."
- Ken Alford: [00:32:14](#) A lot of times when we read this in Sunday school or church lessons, I've heard people read this and they say, the Lord of the Sabbath, thinking of Christ being ... That He is the Lord of the Sabbath. That's not what this word is. This comes from a Hebrew word that means hosts, or armies. This is a very militaristic title of the Savior, that He is the host of the armies of Israel. He is the general. He's the five star and He is the host of the armies of Israel and that's what this is referring to and I find

it just interesting that that's the phrase He uses in this discussion of war.

Ken Alford: [00:32:56](#) He identifies himself as the Supreme General of all the armies. I just find this just an interesting, interesting section. President Gordon B. Hinckley, I remember very distinctly in the October conference of 2001. It was just a few weeks after 9/11, when the World Trade Towers came down, and the Pentagon was attacked. By the way, several friends of mine were burned and I had worked in the Pentagon and in the wing that was destroyed.

Ken Alford: [00:33:32](#) I was then serving at West Point at the Military Academy, and interestingly, just an aside, the wing that got hit by the terrorist plane was the one ... The Pentagon has five wedge shapes, because it's a Pentagon. So it goes into the center, it makes a wedge. They call them wedges. The one wedge that had been remodeled and strengthened was the one that got hit by the plane. So the terrorists hit the one that did actually the least damage. If they'd hit any of the others, it would have been much more catastrophic, but that that's an aside.

Ken Alford: [00:34:05](#) As we were watching General Conference, and we watched it from West Point, President Hinckley, during the conference, he stood up to speak, and he was literally interrupted at the podium. That's the only time I can think of that happening. He's handed a piece of paper and he paused for just a second and he read the piece of paper and then he told Latter-day Saints that were there, viewing it live and also those watching it, that he had just been notified that an attack had begun by the United States against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Ken Alford: [00:34:48](#) Then he gave a talk called The Times in Which We Live and it's a talk that is well worth reading. It addresses these things. He talks about the fact that we, as much or more than any people hate war, but that there are those who are bent on bringing it to us. He made a similar comment in a 1970 speech at BYU to a devotional that he gave there.

Ken Alford: [00:35:30](#) Let me just quote a little bit about from that. He said, this is President Hinckley. He said, "War is a grim and living testimony that Satan lives. War is our greatest cause of human misery. It is a destroyer of life. It is the promoter of hate. It is the waster of treasure," but then he said, "But until the Prince of Peace comes to reign," until the millennium begins, "There will always be tyrants, and bullies. Empire builders, slave seekers and despots, who would destroy every shred of human liberty if they are not opposed by the force of arms."

- Ken Alford: [00:36:15](#) That Satan has sway right now on the hearts and minds of many men and women, and there is evil in the world. The Lord I think, in Section 87 was just warning us of that, and letting us know that, the last days, this has got to be the coolest time ever to live. We just see things in just stark outline. Evil is evil and good is good. It's becoming just so black and white, but there is evil in the world.
- Ken Alford: [00:36:57](#) So Dave was a colonel in the Gulf War, and he was sending his A-10S up. The A-10s is the most beloved plane by the army because it does close ground support, but Dave was flying his A-10, which is basically a cannon with wings on it. They call them warthogs, and they're not quite as pretty as a warthog but they do the job.
- Ken Alford: [00:37:19](#) So they were flying over Iraqi airspace and Dave said that the Iraqis were firing missiles at them and one of the missiles actually exploded right by Dave's plane. It actually put ... They counted later. It put almost 300 shrapnel holes in his plane. It blew the rudder off the back and it took out his tail fin and it just peppered his plane with these shrapnel chunks.
- Ken Alford: [00:37:49](#) But Dave said, "I pushed on the stick," and he said, "I still had control. They checked and found out later, some of those shrapnel pieces had missed the hydraulic lines by a millimeter, but none of his hydraulic lines were hit. So he said, "I checked the stick," and he said it was rough and well the reason it was rough is because his tail had basically been blown off.
- Ken Alford: [00:38:11](#) He said, "I had my wingman fly up beside me, and I asked my wingman, 'Hey, how does it look?' And he said, quite frankly, 'Sir, it looks really bad.' He said, 'I think you're going down.'" But Dave said, "No, I've still got stick here." So he turned the plane around and started flying back towards Saudi Arabia and actually landed the plane in Saudi Arabia. It was so damaged. He told me that they actually had to throw the plane away, that they weren't even able to save it. It was so damaged.
- Ken Alford: [00:38:39](#) I've got pictures in the book of the plane, and there's a warthog but Dave said that before he left England because he had been stationed in Great Britain before the conflict and they flew his unit over from there. He said, 'Before we left England, our State President, President Baker gave us all a priesthood blessing.' He said, "In the priesthood blessing I was promised that I would return to my family."
- Ken Alford: [00:39:08](#) He said, "I had just been hit by a missile over Iraqi airspace," and he said, "It looked pretty bad," but he said, "The first thing I

thought of basically is President Baker, through the power of the priesthood, promised me I'm coming home. So I'm coming home. I'm flying this blown-up plane all the way back," and he did. That's the first story.

Ken Alford: [00:39:29](#) Another story I tell you. This was funny because there are funny incidents. It's not always serious in a war zone. This one happened to my good friend, Chaplain Vance Theodore. Vance was a young chaplain in the Gulf War and he was serving with the combat unit. Before he left, before they actually deployed to the Gulf, they gave him a list. Take so many pairs of uniforms, so many socks, so many pairs of boots, those kinds of things.

Ken Alford: [00:39:59](#) Well, he went to the PX, the post exchange to buy black socks that were inside his boots and everybody else who was deploying had beat him to it and all the socks were gone. He said, "I need socks." So he told his wife, he said, "Man, I need socks." She said, "Well, I'll fix you up. I'll fix you up." So, she gave him several pairs of black looking socks, and he went to the Gulf War.

Ken Alford: [00:40:26](#) So in the Gulf War, they would do their laundry just in just buckets of water, sitting on a tank or a Humvee or something. So Vance said he'd put his uniforms in this bucket of water and put some soap in and wash it around with his hands and he said, "All of a sudden, it just went bad." He said, "The water just turned just a really bad color." He said, "Uh-oh, something's wrong." So he pulled his uniforms out, and his socks that had gone in as black came out almost white.

Ken Alford: [00:40:58](#) So he got ahold of his wife real fast and found out what had happened and what she had done, creatively and rightfully so she had dyed some white socks for him, but she wasn't able to find black dye and she used purple dye. Now purple dye is made of red and blue, and apparently when it's separated in the water, the red part came out and it died his uniforms pink. So here's this Latter-day Saint chaplain in this hardcore combat unit, wearing pink uniforms and in a combat setting, it's not like you can go around to the corner store and buy a new set of uniform.

Ken Alford: [00:41:40](#) So Vance said, "I had to wear pink uniforms for several weeks until eventually it washed out," and I'm sure that those combat soldiers that he worked with were just understanding and never said anything about their chaplain wearing pink uniforms. For example, in Afghanistan known as OEF, the Operation Enduring Freedom was its formal name.

- Ken Alford: [00:42:08](#) We have William Black, was driving a vehicle up a hill. They were trying to set up a lookout post, and all of a sudden, he said, "The Spirit just told me, 'Stop. Just stop immediately where you are. Just stop and get out.'" So they stopped and got out. He actually backed up his vehicle a little bit. They sent a bomb disposal team in and 10 feet directly in front of him was a huge IED, an improvised explosive device that would have just completely torn the vehicle up and killed everybody in the vehicle.
- Ken Alford: [00:42:44](#) He said, "The Holy Ghost knew it was there and just told us to stop." So as a result, they were able to disarm it and nothing bad happened. The church being organized in Afghanistan, this is unique war time experiences. While the war was going on, I believe for the first time in history, a district of the church was organized in Afghanistan, a Muslim country, and it had very strict restrictions on they couldn't proselyte to non-military people.
- Ken Alford: [00:43:15](#) They could proselyte to military people and there were several baptisms that occurred in the theater during the war, but the district was actually organized. When they organized it, the district president reported through the area presidency, but also when he would come home at conference time, report directly to the first presidency and the district president, a good friend of mine, Jean Wykle said that one of the most touching moments of his life was when he walked into the room and President Monson stood and saluted him.
- Ken Alford: [00:43:46](#) He said, "That was a pretty neat experience," and President Monson said, "I'm just an old enlisted Navy guy, but I'm pleased to salute you." Jean at the time was a retired air force officer there as a civilian advisor, the church met on Fridays. They couldn't ever meet together. The church never, the district never met together and they did something really unique is that with the support of Elder Holland and Elder Porter and Elder Neunschwander and other general authorities, but under the direction of Elder Holland, they put together a district conference on DVD and they had talks from Afghanistan that they sent over to them via the internet that they added on the DVD, and Elder Holland and Elder Porter and other spoke in Salt Lake and they melted it together into a single conference DVD.
- Ken Alford: [00:44:42](#) During Elder Holland's talk ... Well, let me just read it to you. I won't try to paraphrase Elder Holland. Elder Holland was talking to them because they printed a thousand copies of this DVD so that everybody in the district, regardless of where they were, and sometimes there was just one member in a site, but they all



would receive a copy of the DVD and they sent also copies to their families. Here's what elder Holland had to say.

- Ken Alford: [00:45:13](#) He was the last speaker on the DVD for the district conference. It was on the 5th of May the year they did it. He said, "Brothers and sisters, we've had a wonderful district conference with you. As I said at the beginning, I only wish I could see your faces. I wish I could have stood with you to sing as we stood here to sing. I wish that I could shake your hand. More than that, I wish I could lay my hands on the head of each one of you and give you a blessing."
- Ken Alford: [00:45:39](#) Then he looks at the camera and he says, "So in lieu of being able to do that personally, I'm going to do it apostolically. I'm going to do it by the authority that is mine through this telecast and onto this DVD." Then he said, "By the power of the holy priest that I hold and the authority that I've been given, I pronounce a blessing on each one of you within the sound of my voice," recognizing that would be through DVD, "And the reach of this telecast. I do it as if indeed my hands were upon your head and with the power of the priesthood upon you, just that efficaciously."
- Ken Alford: [00:46:23](#) Then he blessed them, "Each one of you, that although you are in harm's way daily, that you will have the powers of heaven upon you, including the attendance of angels on your right hand and on your left. I bless you that you will know that you are being prayed for at home and abroad, and especially by the leaders of the church here at headquarters, all of us, and we pray for your loved ones. Wherever they may be, wherever home is."
- Ken Alford: [00:46:52](#) Then he blessed them to, "Be men and women on a mission and that you'll strive to help others to embrace the gospel and live their religion. I bless you that in such a time of war and such a period away from home will be a strengthening time and not a debilitating time, in the formation of your character and the strengthening of your faith."
- Ken Alford: [00:47:14](#) I bless you that you will draw near to God and that you will know how much all of us need Him in good times or bad, in war time or in peace. I bless you," he continued, "Not to worry about your loved ones. I pronounce in this blessing, a blessing on them as if they were in this congregation." That was sent out to every service member that they were aware of in Afghanistan. The membership records that they tried to keep an Afghanistan changed every single week.

- Ken Alford: [00:47:49](#) They spoke over or a dozen languages. I think they had members of that district from over 15 allied countries, inside the country, but it was so successful that they duplicated it inside of Iraq. When they created the district inside of Iraq, the first district president was a guy by the name of ... A colonel, Guy M Hollingsworth.
- Ken Alford: [00:48:17](#) Guy said that when they tried to organize the church in Iraq, you can imagine all kinds of difficulties came about. They were able to organize it in Afghanistan, because Jean, as a civilian, President Wykle, went back to Salt Lake and they took care of it in salt lake. The president that was called in Iraq was a military colonel. So he wasn't able to just get on a plane and go to Salt Lake to get set apart.
- Ken Alford: [00:48:48](#) So they needed to bring a general authority into Iraq, an active war zone. So he sent a request up the line. The church told him that Elder Paul B. Pieper was called to do that. So he sent a request up the military chain and said, "May we have this civilian come into the war zone to make me a president of a church group?"
- Ken Alford: [00:49:15](#) When the military stopped laughing, they said, "You're out of your ever loving mind. There's a war going on, son. The answers not only no, but no." So to make a long story, short President Hollingsworth was inspired to bring in Elder Bruce Carlson, retired four-star United States Air Force.
- Ken Alford: [00:49:41](#) Elder Carlson as a retired four-star was able to speak a little bit differently. So he got on and there was communication between him and General Petraeus and permission was miraculously granted for Elder Pieper to enter the country of Iraq for 24 hours. While there he established the district and set apart the district presidency and both the district presidency in Iraq and in Afghanistan were given the keys of a state president, even though they were districts so that they would have the full ability to help members of the church go through the repentance process.
- Ken Alford: [00:50:27](#) So it was a very unique, unique district, but really a great faith promoting story to see Elder Pieper being able to go into an active war zone as a civilian for the purpose of establishing a military district of the church. I got a book full of stories. I promise I won't share them all, but Elder William K. Jackson, who's now a member of the General Authority Seventies. He was sustained in a recent conference.

- Ken Alford: [00:50:59](#) He served as an area authority out of India, and he was a doctor for the State Department and as a doctor for the State Department, his area of responsibility covered Afghanistan, which meant he had full rights to fly into Afghanistan and around the country. Exactly the kind of access that the Lord needed to help establish the gospel in Afghanistan. So he tells some miraculous stories of catching helicopter rides at the very last minute and just those kinds of things, but the most interesting, and I think miraculous story he tells is he was in Kandahar.
- Ken Alford: [00:51:38](#) They were in a motorcade. He was in an up-armored SUV and he had a truck ... Well, armed trucks. Truck gunships, for lack of a better word in front of them and in back of them. He had his briefcase that had both military and church business in it and he said as they were riding along in this SUV, a car pulled up to the side of him and tried to track their convoy and got very close. It was a suicide bomber and he detonated a tremendous amount of explosives in their vehicle. It actually picked up this multi-tone SUV and threw it and flipped it over and they landed a good way away. All they found of the car that exploded was the front bumper. The rest was vaporized.
- Ken Alford: [00:52:37](#) What it did is it flipped them on their top and the doors of the up-armored SUV were so heavy that they couldn't open the doors. So they had to kick out the windshield and that was bulletproof glass and very difficult, but they kicked it out and they were stunned from the explosion, but he said he got out of the vehicle, they got everybody out safe and he realized, oh, I left my briefcase in the vehicle. So he started to run towards the vehicle called to get his briefcase and he was tackled by a soldier who said, 'Are you crazy? That's going to explode.'
- Ken Alford: [00:53:16](#) He said, just almost like it was on cue from a movie, the vehicle exploded. He said, "If I'd gone back for the briefcase, I would have been killed," but as it was, he said, "We had ringing in our ears for quite a while, but no one in their vehicle was actually killed."
- Ken Alford: [00:53:31](#) Although several of their guards and folks were killed, but he said, "The Lord protected us in that case." Another funny incident is I got an essay from a helicopter unit commander Scott Pace. I knew Scotty as a cadet at West Point Scotty was killed in Afghanistan when his helicopter went down. He's buried here in Springville but Scotty tells two funny stories.
- Ken Alford: [00:54:08](#) He was a real character and he says, "One of the weirdest things about going to church," now, this is in Afghanistan. He said, "Is

you have to take your rifle with you," and he says, "Once you get to church, what do you do with the rifle?" He said, "The rifle's too tall, and it's taller than the bench and if you've leaned it up against the bench, then somebody stretches and knocks your rifle on the ground," and the tradition in the military is if your rifle hits the ground, you have to do pushups.

Ken Alford: [00:54:32](#)

So he said, "If they knocked my rifle on the ground, should I do pushups right in the middle of the sacrament talk? I'm not sure what I should do there." He said, "But if I set it on the ground, then it'll get dirty and I'll get yelled at for having a dirty weapon." He said, "And if I do lay it on the ground, do I point the rifle barrel at the speaker or the person sitting next to me, who's sitting a little too close the bench?" He said, "I'm just never quite sure what to do with my rifle."

Ken Alford: [00:54:55](#)

He also had another funny incident happened. He said, "When we'd fly over the cities," and he said, "Taking a page out of Gail Halvorsen's book," from the Berlin airlift, Uncle Wiggly Wings, the Candy Bomber.

Ken Alford: [00:55:07](#)

He said, "We took bags of candy with us." He said, "The people from home send us lots of candy." He said, "As we'd fly over the villages, we would throw bags of candy out and then they would hit the ground and the kids had lots of candy." So they would look forward to seeing the American helicopters coming over. He said that he was flying one day. He said, "I had this bag of candy," and he said, "I threw it out and I didn't see it hit."

Ken Alford: [00:55:34](#)

He said, "The kids were kind of gesturing at me like, hey, quit messing with us," kind of things. He said, "I figured it must've just gone somewhere that he couldn't see," or something. Maybe it went in the bushes or something, but he said, "When I landed," he said, "There on the machine gun," what had happened was that the bag of candy as he'd thrown it out, the wind and the bag of candy and the weight and everything was just right, that the bag of candy went right across the barrel of the machine gun and impaled itself and it got stuck on the barrel, the machine gun.

Ken Alford: [00:56:09](#)

So he said, "I flew around with this bag of candy, covering my left gun for that whole flight." He also, again tells a story in a sacrament talk. This was given, I believe the week before he was killed. He spoke in sacrament meeting there in Afghanistan and he talked about an incident that happened at the Bagram Airfield which was a very large military base and complex in Afghanistan.

- Ken Alford: [00:56:42](#) He said, "As we were flying back," and he was the company commander of the helicopter unit. He said, "As we were flying back," he said, "We received a, a distress call from the base and it said that there were hundreds, hundreds of agitated local Afghans who were threatening to storm the base and they weren't armed, but they were angry."
- Ken Alford: [00:57:06](#) What had happened was in the previous week, a minister in the United States had publicly burned a copy of the Qur'an and it inflamed people all across Afghanistan. So they were going to assault the air base. He said, "We received the call on the wire that they had breached the first line of wire. They were approaching the military police who were armed." He said, "We were about to have a really bad situation," because they couldn't let them enter the base and deadly force was being authorized.
- Ken Alford: [00:57:42](#) So he said, "I got the call," and they said, "Basically, fix it." He said, "Here I am, I'm in a helicopter. How am I going to fix this? They're on the ground? There's hundreds of angry Afghans. They're upset. They're not wanting to be reasoned with." He said, "I'm flying helicopters back and I'm supposed to fix it." Then he said, "The spirit just told me what to do."
- Ken Alford: [00:58:06](#) He said, "I knew exactly what to do." So he said, "I radioed to the gunships behind me. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to shoot some flares to get their attention, some Starburst flares." He said, "And then we're going to just fly across the crowd," at what they call tree top level, but it's basically as low as you can go.
- Ken Alford: [00:58:29](#) He said, "No weapons." He said, "We're just going to do that." So he said, they flew in, they buzzed the base first, as I recall and then they flew in, shot their flares off, got their attention, and then went down just as low as ... He said, "We were just barely above their heads." These helicopter gunships came roaring across this crowd and it was one after another of their doing it.
- Ken Alford: [00:58:58](#) Then he said, "We peeled in and went in and landed at the air base to see what else we needed to do," but he said, "The shock effect," he said, "If you've ever had a helicopter, or a gunship come over you at about four feet above your head," he said, "It's a pretty sobering event." He said, "It was enough to shock the people into realizing this is about to turn really ugly." He said, "They basically just dispersed and went home." He said, "As we landed our helicopters on the tarmac," he said, "We then saw the world's press. There were dozens of reporters because Bagram was such a large base."

- Ken Alford: [00:59:40](#) He said that if this had turned into a shooting match, he said it would have been on front page of basically everywhere in the world the following day. He said, "But the Holy Ghost knew how to diffuse that situation." He said, "My commander came running up to me and said, 'Captain, how in the devil did you know what to do?'"
- Ken Alford: [01:00:02](#) He said, "All I could do is smile at him and say, 'Well, I just knew, sir.'" So there's just incident after incident where the Holy Ghost just reaches in and took care of people but I love how Section 87 ends. Section 87 ends on such an upbeat. Now, the Lord is an optimist. Even as He's going to Gethsemane and then Calvary, He says, "Be of good cheer." So Section 87 ends with this injunction and charge from the Lord. "Wherefore stand ye in holy places and be not moved."
- Ken Alford: [01:00:48](#) He tells us how long to do that. "Until the day of the Lord come, for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord." Now His quickly and our quickly are probably a little different, but I love that He says, "Stand ye in holy places and be not moved," and there's just some wonderful, wonderful, prophetic commentary on that. President Nelson in just the April, 2021 conference addressed that statement.
- Ken Alford: [01:01:17](#) He said, "Often when the Lord warns us about perils in the last days he counsels thus," and then he quotes Section 87. "Stand ye in holy places and be not moved." Then President Nelson says this, "These holy places certainly include the Lord's temple and meeting houses, but as our ability to gather in these places has been restricted in varying degrees, we have learned that one of the holiest places on earth is the home."
- Ken Alford: [01:01:47](#) Then president Nelson added this little aside, "Yes, even your home." Sister Larsen, when she was on one of the general boards in 2002, she said this. She said, "The Lord said to stand in holy places. There are places where the spirit would never be. You know where those places are. Stay away from them. Do not encourage a curiosity that ought to be stopped. Pay attention to what you're feeling so you'll know when you're feeling uneasy or unsure."
- Ken Alford: [01:02:20](#) I just think that's such a wonderful phrase. When Elder Stevenson was presiding Bishop of the church, this is before he was called into the Quorum of the Twelve, he said this in Conference. He said, "The demonstration of righteous courage will often be as subtle as to click or not to click." Thinking of a mouse. "Missionaries are taught from Preach My Gospel, what

you choose to think and do when you are alone and no one is watching is a strong measure of your virtue.

- Ken Alford: [01:02:58](#) There's just some wonderful, wonderful, wonderful thoughts. So I just love the end of Section 87. It's sobering that we live in a time of war, but there is a way through this. Those military officers led convoys through Iraqi towns, there's a way through the last days where we triumph, where we win, and this is the dispensation where the good guys and good girls win. It's the only one. All the other dispensations ended in sadness. This one ends in a rousing and tremendous victory.
- Ken Alford: [01:03:40](#) So living in this day and age, we get all these wonderful things, especially with electronics and all the ability with communication, but there are two sides of every coin. On the other side of our coin is we live in an age of war and that's just the reality. But I appreciate all the Lord's given us on this and especially comments like Elder Holland made about, "The Lord knows who you are and what you're doing." I think it's just important for each of us.
- Hank Smith: [01:04:14](#) Well, it's obvious that soldiers and their families have a special place in your heart, your research, your work. I think that's a beautiful thing. John, you're very similar in that you like to record stories, but if you're going to record it, it has to do with an airplane, right?
- John Bytheway: [01:04:35](#) All mine are related to airplanes and flying just because that was my interest but very, very similar. I love the idea that as a soldier, you still have the priesthood, you still have to gift to the Holy Ghost and the Lord still has His eyes on you. Always has, always will and these wonderful stories confirm that you're not forgotten. You're in some of the toughest circumstances on the planet, but you're not forgotten by God and I'm so grateful for those inspiring stories.
- Hank Smith: [01:05:11](#) That's beautiful. That's beautiful. I had such a good time. I felt like it was just story time. I just was like, everyone loves a good story and we got a good dozen, I think, and I loved it. I loved every minute of it, Ken.
- Ken Alford: [01:05:22](#) One quick, short PS. In Afghanistan, also, I think in Iraq as well, there were incidents when the district president called an Elders Quorum president to function in one of the branches and never physically met him. He was interviewed via email and he accepted the call through email. Then what they did is they arranged ... They had a high council and then when a high counselor was going to be ... They just worked it out where the

next time they were going to have the two priesthood required people together, they would do that. They even had a functioning relief society inside the district with a district relief society president. So just some really unique experiences as far as organizing the church.

- Hank Smith: [01:06:18](#) That's fantastic.
- John Bytheway: [01:06:19](#) It's something else I love about some of those situations that happen is when you have an Elders Quorum president, who's a sergeant or something and in his elders quorum, he's got captains and majors and colonels and all of a sudden the rank disappears and something else happens, which is-
- Ken Alford: [01:06:39](#) Exactly, and that happens quite frequently.
- John Bytheway: [01:06:43](#) In the temple, the model for the temple is, we all look the same in the temple with what we wear and the rank and worldly things disappear as well.
- Ken Alford: [01:06:56](#) I would also just share briefly, there's one unique story. In the book, I call him Brother Abraham. I don't give his full name, but there was one Afghan member of the church who joined the church and it's a long story that I won't go into here, but he joined the church in Germany after he escaped from Afghanistan, but then the Holy Ghost told him to return to Afghanistan and he did so. As far as we know, he is the only Afghan in history who has exercised priesthood in his own country. He served in the Elders Quorum presidency in Kabul.
- Ken Alford: [01:07:39](#) There's a whole bunch of stories could share about his story, but I would just share that during the pandemic in February, about 18 of us were able to go with Brother Abraham as he received his endowments in the Ogden Temple, and the gospel net gathers far and wide.
- John Bytheway: [01:07:59](#) And what a pioneer. What a pioneer that guy is. We still have pioneers.
- Hank Smith: [01:08:05](#) It's always 1830 somewhere.
- Ken Alford: [01:08:07](#) It's always 1830 somewhere.
- Hank Smith: [01:08:10](#) Well put right there. Hey, Ken, let me ask you a last question. You are a military historian. You're a church history, historian. You're a scholar. You've been doing these things for ... Now, you



don't look it, but I'm going to say decades. Multiple decades, you've been doing.

Ken Alford: [01:08:29](#)

Unfortunately so.

Hank Smith: [01:08:31](#)

I think John and I and our listeners would love to hear is, is what Joseph Smith and his contemporaries and the restoration means to you personally, as you've dove in to all of the documents and all of the stories and you've even, as a military historian have seen, I would say, some of the darkest sides of humanity. The most difficult sides of humanity, which might turn you into someone who says, "Oh, God does not love His children. Look at these terrible, terrible things that happen," yet here you are. So I think our listeners would love to hear from you on your personal feelings about the restoration.

Ken Alford: [01:09:14](#)

As you look at it, I have found that the more I learn and especially the more I learn about Joseph, I'm in no rush to meet Joseph. I will preface that, but that will eventually occur. I'm looking forward to being able to just thank him. The more I learned about Joseph and his calling and the way he exercised that crazy, heavy responsibility, the more I love Joseph Smith.

Ken Alford: [01:09:53](#)

Brigham Young made the statement. He said, "I just want to shout hallelujah all the time that I ever knew Joseph Smith." I only know Joseph vicariously through his words and deeds and writings and scripture things that he recorded, but I would just echo Brigham. I think Brigham got it right. I just want to say hallelujah, that I have learned about Joseph Smith because Joseph has helped me approach the Savior better.

Ken Alford: [01:10:24](#)

I think without all the things Joseph gave us, I would have a harder time approaching the Savior because the Savior that's portrayed outside of what we understand in the gospel, through the restoration, it's not the full picture. Joseph is just kind of, I don't know. He's just like the world's best teaching aid, if you like. The more I learn about him, Joseph surely isn't perfect, but my goodness, he comes as close I think as anybody I've seen and Joseph's intent always is to do what the Savior and the Father want.

Ken Alford: [01:11:22](#)

What makes the Savior such a perfect Son was he always did the will of the Father, and I see that trait in Joseph. Joseph makes mistakes. He lets Martin take the 116 pages. So Joseph makes some mistakes along the way, but the thing that I just find so amazing is Joseph, I don't find him making the same mistake twice.

Ken Alford: [01:11:43](#) He is just the ultimate fast learner. He'll make a mistake, but he doesn't make the same ... I'm in the normal Joe kind of school. Made a mistake and when I made that mistake again, yup, it's still a mistake, but Joseph doesn't seem to do that. He just makes a mistake, fixes it and moves on. I just love ... I don't know, the insights that Joseph gives us, just the ability ... Joseph figured it out. Joseph, he just figured it out.

Ken Alford: [01:12:20](#) The heavens have probably never been thinner than they were with Joseph, except the Savior Himself. Joseph, he just figured out how it worked and as a result, holy smoke, look at everything we've got. I just love learning about Joseph, and also those that are associated with him. I really have just a huge feeling of gratitude for the early leaders of the church, men and women who just laid this foundation.

Ken Alford: [01:12:55](#) It says that in the Doctrine and Covenants, a couple of times that their job was to lay the foundation. Now, our job is to build the building and try to put the roof on and get things ready so that the Savior has a fully finished building to come to when the millennium starts, but they got to lay the foundation and, oh my gosh, how hard that was and how great of a job they did. So I guess I would just close where I started. I just want to shout hallelujah all the time that I've learned about Joseph Smith, because he's brought me to my Savior, Jesus Christ. Joseph's a prophet. Just in my mind, plain and simple. Just, Joseph's a profit.

Hank Smith: [01:13:36](#) Ken, thank you so much for spending your time with us.

Ken Alford: [01:13:42](#) My pleasure. Thanks for the time

Hank Smith: [01:13:44](#) It's been such a joy. I think anyone listening is going to just shout hallelujah.

Ken Alford: [01:13:51](#) Great. Thank you.

Hank Smith: [01:13:53](#) Well, thank you again to Dr. Ken Alford. Thank you to all of you who stayed with us and listening. We couldn't do this without listeners. So we love you. We're grateful for your support. We also couldn't do this without our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen and we have an incredible production crew. David Perry who is behind the scenes doing so much work, same with Lisa Spice, who is not ... They're not getting enough credit, John, for all the work they do on this. Jamie Neilson, Kyle Nelson, Will Stoughton and Maria Hilton. Thank you to our

incredible team, and we hope all of you will join us on our next episode of Follow Him.