

Hank Smith: 00:02 Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their *Come, Follow Me* study. I'm Hank Smith.

John Bytheway: 00:10 And I'm John Bytheway.

Hank Smith: 00:11 We love to learn.

John Bytheway: 00:12 We love to laugh.

Hank Smith: 00:13 We want to learn and laugh with you.

John Bytheway: 00:15 As together, we followHIM.

Hank Smith: 00:21 Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM, a podcast created to help individuals and families with their *Come, Follow Me* study. I'm here with my cohost, John Bytheway.

John Bytheway: 00:32 Hi Hank.

Hank Smith: 00:33 We, of course, are your hosts each week, but we also invite an expert, a guest, to help us. And this week, we have an amazing man, really, a scholar, historian, just an outright great guy. His name is Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat. Welcome, Gerrit.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 00:53 Thanks for having me. I'm glad to be here.

John Bytheway: 00:55 Brother Gerrit J. Dirkmaat is an Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Colorado in 2010. He's worked as a historian and writer for the Church History Department from 2010 to 2014. He's been involved with the Joseph Smith Papers project, which has been wonderful. He is the co-author with Michael MacKay, who we've had on the program before, of the award-winning book, *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith's Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon*. He and his wife, Angela, have four children. And we're so glad to have him here today. Thanks, Gerrit.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 01:32 Thank you.

Hank Smith: 01:33 Yeah, this is going to be exciting. One gift that Gerrit has is that he can speak to scholars. He can write the articles the way they need to be written to be in that conversation, but then he can speak to ordinary people like us, John. If I'm a first-time reader in the Doctrine and Covenants, I run into the name of Martin

Harris. Now, if I don't know my Church History, this is the first time I'm really going to hear from this guy, except for a little bit in Joseph Smith History. So Gerrit, tell us before we get into the meat of the section, tell us about Martin Harris and how he met Joseph Smith.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 02:08

Martin Harris is a prominent farmer in the Palmyra area. It would be overselling it to say that he's wealthy. He's well-off, right. He has considerable acreage. He's well-respected in the community. In fact, he's so well-respected that even when people are antagonized to him, when they're angry with him, for instance, the local newspaper editor in Palmyra, he attacks Joseph Smith and attacks the Book of Mormon. And then when he comes to Martin Harris' support, this is in 1829. He says that Martin Harris was duped, even though he was an honest and an industrious farmer living in this town. So, even people who were looking to castigate the work generally held Martin Harris in high esteem, and they see him as being totally fooled by Joseph Smith and they see him as being totally fooled by Joseph Smith.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 03:07

And this is probably the most boring part of your entire podcast so let me just get this out of the way. There's this idea that people had that was known as competency. Okay. So what is competency? Well, today, when you use the word competent, it usually means--I'm looking for a way to not be mean. You know what I mean? Like, "Oh, is she a good surgeon?" "Well, she's competent." I mean, thank you for the resounding applause, right? I mean, in our terminology today, we use the term competent as, it's kind of like, "Yes, they're good enough." Right. Competent as, it's kind of like, "Yes, they're good enough." Right.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 03:41

In the 19th century, there was a term known as competency that what it meant was for you to really have made it, for you to be considered a real contributing member of your society, you needed to be a competent farmer. And that doesn't mean that you could make the pumpkins grow bigger than other people could. What it meant was that you had the ability with the land that you had under tillage, with the things you did on your farm, whether it's fruit trees or whatever you're doing, that you could support your own family, and your family would not have to work outside of the farm. So yes, they would work all kinds of stuff on the farm. But if you had to hire your sons out, then you were not a competent farmer. You were not able to take care of your family on your own. The average American in Joseph Smith's time makes around \$300, maybe \$350 a year. And so the Smiths are poor. They are hiring out their labor. And there's

lots of reasons behind that, right? The crop failures and the business ventures that the Smith family had.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 04:49 But for our purposes, what it meant is that Martin Harris was on the higher rung of Palmyra society, a long-time resident, well-landed, well-respected. The Smiths were newcomers. They were Johnny-come-latelies, who also came without a lot of property, who were on the lower end. Now, it doesn't mean everyone hated them. It meant that they were among the least respected in terms of their property.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 05:19 So, I don't know exactly how they met. Almost all of our information from this era all comes from reminiscent accounts. What I mean is people decades, decades later saying, "Oh yeah, yeah. I remember when Martin Harris met Joseph Smith." Well, they're saying it in 1880. I don't even remember when I met Hank, actually, right? And that was only like a few years ago. If you asked me 60 years from now the exact circumstances of our meeting, I'll say, "I'm sure it involved Diet Coke." Right? But I won't know, maybe, the precise nature of it.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 05:53 So, apparently, their families are acquainted somehow, and it's a small community. So, it's very easy. But the first inklings, according to Lucy Mack Smith, who gives us most of our history from this time period, is that Preserved Harris, which is not a jam, but Martin Harris's brother, he actually comes to Palmyra because . . . Preserved, yes, is his name. Yeah, that's very Calvinist. Preserved Harris comes to Palmyra investigating these reports that he's heard that Joseph Smith has found some kind of ancient plates, right? Martin Harris probably has already heard the same things at the same time, but at least according to these later accounts, Preserved Harris seems to be the one who kind of brings it to Martin and says, "Hey, I'm interested in finding out about this." His wife, Lucy Harris, is also similarly interested. Joseph will actually, according to Lucy Mack Smith... This is going to be very confusing because there's two Lucy's. Lucy Harris, Martin Harris's wife, and Lucy Smith, Joseph Smith's mother.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 07:01 Joseph Smith, according to his mother, sends his mother, Lucy Smith, to the Martin Harris home to see about getting some kind of support for aid in this publication of this translation work that they are going to, at some point, undertake very early on. And at first, Lucy Harris is incredibly interested in what Lucy Smith has to say. At least again, all of this is coming from Lucy Smith. So, you have to always put a little bit of . . . she's reflecting on this. And at least as she tells it, Lucy Harris was very interested, even said herself, "I'll help pay some money for

it to bring this forth." And then eventually, she'll meet with Martin, and they agree that they're going to go back to the Smith's home in a few days to go meet Joseph and to discuss it. Lucy Harris comes with her, and they actually have this experience. Lucy Harris comes with Martin Harris, and they have this experience of lifting the box that the plates are in. They're heavy. In fact, Martin Harris's daughter also lifts the box that the plates are in.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 08:07 So there's these three different people who all lift this. And Harris's daughter says, "Oh, I can barely lift it." And they can hear the metal inside. They can feel the weight on it. So they have this kind of physical witness of the plates very early on. That really piques Martin Harris's interest, but it actually kind of drives Lucy Harris's interest to want to see more. While she's an early proponent of Joseph and the plates, she's actually very quickly going to become a very big antagonist, in part because she's never allowed to actually see the plates. That's in 1827 that all that is going on.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 08:48 At the end of 1827, the Smiths are going to make the determination to move down to Harmony that's where Emma's from--her family's down there. I can't imagine what the reunion was like, given the fact that the reason why they left in the first place was Joseph had eloped with Emma against Isaac Hale's wishes. Joseph will buy a property, a 14-acre farm that has an existing home already on it. It apparently also already has a barn. He buys it from his father-in-law, Isaac Hale. He buys it all for \$200. And that kind of gives you an idea of what money is worth, right? He buys a 14-acre farm with a house on it, and it's already got improvements on it for \$200. Now, when I say he buys it, I mean the same way I own my house. I mean, he makes an agreement that he will make payments on it, and it's actually well beyond his means. He's going to struggle to make those payments on it. But they do have this home that they'll be living in.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 09:51 Martin Harris will come down and serve as a scribe for part of this early translation process. The primary scribe of this early translation, this 1828 translation process, is actually Emma herself. She serves as the scribe for most of what we today call either the Lost 116 pages or the Book of Lehi. I don't even know why we call it the Lost 116 pages. I even had someone the other day ask me like, "Well, where did they lose it at?" It wasn't. It was stolen. I mean, if I went outside to get in my car today and it wasn't there, I wouldn't say, "I've lost my car. My car is lost. Where is my car?" It was stolen. And we know that they were stolen because the Lord tells us they were stolen. So, we really

should call them the Stolen 116 pages. But Emma serves as a scribe for the first part of that. She, according to Martin Harris, actually writes more of that early translation portion than Martin does.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 10:54 There are other people who help out. It's always hard to know exactly how many scribes there were on the Book of Mormon translation, in part because most of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon doesn't exist anymore. It was destroyed. And so, with the remaining a little bit less than a third that we have, we only have so many handwriting samples of them. David Whitmer gives a much bigger list of people who participated in the writing.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 11:22 Martin Harris has a really important role for Joseph Smith. And I think that really informs Doctrine and Covenants, Section 3. Martin Harris is essentially in 1827, the only person that's not a Joseph Smith family member that believes Joseph Smith. Lucy, for a little bit of time, right? And even Martin's kind of like-- sometimes. I mean, the reality is Joseph's been told that it is God's requirement of him that he not only translates this book but that he brings it forth to the world. Now, think about what I said earlier, about how much Joseph Smith's farm-
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 12:00 Now, think about what I said earlier, about how much Joseph Smith's farm cost. A 14-acre farm. If Joseph sold everything that he had, which he didn't even own, so he wouldn't have got any money out of it, but let's say that he did. Let's say that he owned it outright. The cost of printing the Book of Mormon was fifteen times Joseph Smith's entire value that he had. There was no possible way in Joseph's mind that he could ever pay for the printing of the Book of Mormon. I think that's part of the reason why Martin Harris, not only is he one of the first people who believes, so Joseph has that kind of connection with him because only Martin has been willing to say, "Yeah, this is real." But also, in Joseph's mind, how in the world could this ever actually be accomplished? This could actually be printed. And from the beginning, Martin Harris has said, "I'll pay for that. I will pay for it. I'll give whatever money I have to do. I'll pay for it to be printed." And so I think that's why when Martin, who is now facing a very antagonistic wife, when he makes a request of Joseph, "Joseph, I know I can't show the plates to anybody. What if I just showed them the manuscript? If I showed them the pages, they would know that this is obviously something beyond your abilities. They would know that this is not something I'm making up. They won't see the plates, but they'll see the pages. They might even read the pages. They'll know this is from God. And of course, this is a very familiar story to

Latter-day Saints, right? That Joseph asks the question, and he's told no, but Martin Harris is unwilling to accept the answer no.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 13:43 "Just ask again, I really need this. My family needs to know." And he asked again, and he's again told no. And then again, after further inquiries from Martin Harrison, that's the third time, and this time finally, he's told, " Okay, you can do this." But on the very strictest of conditions that Martin Harris would not only covenant to protect the manuscript, which kind of seems like a no brainer, but that he would only show it to certain individuals that were already named.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 14:17 He made a covenant. Yes, he's going to show it to his wife, he's going to show it to his brother preserved, he's going to show it to several other family members, and that's it. D&C 3 actually has a longer history than we think because of this history with Harris, but also because Joseph already knew that there was a problem by the summer of 1828, because after he asks that third time, he gets the affirmative answer, "Okay, you can do this."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 14:50 But he also knows that he's under the censure of the Lord because the angel returns to him and demands the plates and the Urim and Thummim . . . stones . . . the interpreters, whatever we want to call them. He demands them back from Joseph, and so Joseph is left knowing that his request to get Martin Harris these pages has cost him the plates, has cost him at least temporarily the Urim and Thummim seer stones and that he can't be in very good standing with God at that moment.
- John Bytheway: 15:23 This is really wonderful for our listeners to kind of get a sense of a social standing of Joseph as opposed to Martin. I was just going to mention in the *Come, Follow Me* manual, it says, "Early in Joseph Smith's ministry, good friends were hard to come by, especially friends like Martin Harris, a respected prosperous man who was in a position to provide valuable support, and Martin willingly supported Joseph, even though it cost him the respect of his peers and required financial sacrifice. So it's easy to see why Joseph wanted to honor Martin's request to take the first portion of the Book of Mormon translation to show his wife." And I love that you said it wasn't lost, it was stolen. Of course it was, that's right.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 16:04 Joseph has had essentially no one outside of his family except Emma, right? But no one else has accepted what he's been saying. Imagine the pressure of knowing that this person has sacrificed all kinds of things to be the only person to believe you, and now they want just a little something in return. And

they seem to be trying to do it the right way. Right. "I'm not asking you to show me the plates, Joseph. I'm not asking to take the plate, just the pages. The angel didn't tell you that you couldn't take the pages to show people, so couldn't you just kind of?" Right.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 16:43

But the problem is when they got their initial response from God, as the revelation points out, "Both Joseph and Martin feared man more than they feared God." Martin's on the edge here. His wife's putting a lot of pressure on him. "If I don't give him something, I might lose him entirely. Martin's on the edge of my entire social structure. My family life is falling apart because of this. I need to be able to show something."

John Bytheway: 17:15

And that's no small trip, right? Going from Palmyra to Harmony, we think. . . .

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 17:19

It's very extensive. I mean, it's probably a two- to three-day journey. He's going to go back down to Joseph to talk to him about what it is, and Lucy demands to go with him. She comes down. She really wants to see the plates. She's still not allowed to see the plates. Martin Harris isn't allowed to see the plates. And she will, according to Lucy Smith, turn over every single thing she can, and she's even out surrounding the house looking for moved places of dirt where it might've been buried outside.

John Bytheway: 17:49

My goodness.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 17:50

In fact, it was buried outside. Joseph had already kind of taken it off and hid it, but she wasn't able to find it. And so you kind of get the sense of, this is not just a foreign kind of concept to Joseph by summer of 1828. He knows that Lucy Harris is adamantly opposed to what they're doing--that Martin Harris is coming down to talk to him because he really needs this. Joseph's under a great deal of personal stress. His wife is nearing the end of her pregnancy for their first child, and so she will actually deliver the day after Harris takes the pages up to Palmyra.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 18:36

So Harris gets the pages, he takes them up, and then Emma, we have two different accounts, either the baby was stillborn or it was born and died very shortly after . . . and it was devastating to Joseph and Emma. All the more so because Emma nearly dies. She is hovering near death for three weeks. Joseph is worried that when he does go back up to Palmyra to find Harris, he's actually worried that when he comes back, he might come back and she won't be alive anymore because it was such a traumatic delivery.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 19:18 Death in childbirth was the leading cause of death of women her age in the United States. It's a bad time for him. All the while, they've heard nothing from Martin Harris, no letter from Harris saying, "Hey, I showed the pages to people." I mean, the understanding appears to be that Harris was going to take those pages up, show the five people he was allowed to show, and bring them right back. Well, he's caring for Emma for three weeks, so clearly that's not going on.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 19:51 And in fact, according to Lucy Smith, it's actually Emma, who eventually says, "Joseph, you got to go up there and find out." As sick as she is, she's really invested in this too. She is the primary scribe for most of those pages that were gone.
- John Bytheway: 20:10 --that's a lot of work.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 20:10 She has spent months on it, it matters a lot to her too.
- John Bytheway: 20:14 Do we have any information about what was there? Is there a story about Lehi we don't know? Is there any source of this is what was in. . . . Anything about those 116 stolen pages?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 20:28 Yeah, thank you--stolen pages. Unfortunately, nothing outside of like conjecture, actually Doctrine and Covenants, Section 3. The text of it provides you some insight of that. They haven't yet retranslated the small plates of Nephi, right?. This is just the Lost 116 pages, and what does Doctrine Covenant, Section 3 talk about? It talks about the Josephites and the Zoramites. It lists off many of the -ites, right? That apparently were part of that record. Our best source, of course, is Mormon himself, telling us that what was on those plates was a broader history as opposed to what was on the smaller plates of Nephi that he finds and then, rather than editing, places them with the other record. Nephi's history is certainly written later, and it's because God commands him to do it, and that actually is really important, right? Because when people are looking back on their life, they tend to focus on moments of crisis and moments of success. Right.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 21:34 I'm probably not going to look back on the peanut butter sandwich I ate yesterday, right--unless that sandwich kills me. Right (or brings me to the hospital). Then, well, I guess that sandwich, I never should have eaten.
- John Bytheway: 21:46 This was a pivotal moment.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 21:47 This was a pivotal moment. And so I think sometimes when people read Nephi's words, they, they kind of . . . some of these people will criticize that like, "Well, I feel like he's just going from miracle to miracle." Yeah, because he's reflecting back on 30 years of his life, and he's not saying, "On August 12th, yeah we had a fine day of uncooked meat that we had around the fire we didn't build."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 22:13 Usually, when people look back, they're looking back for key events and especially key controversies, and so that tends to highlight the problems with Laman and Lemuel, right? Mormon--I love Mormon because he's really like our first historian, right? I mean, he takes thousands of records--I don't know how many records--he takes all of these different records, and like any historian, creates a narrative of what happened by using those records. And so what you would have with the Book of Lehi is a third-person omniscient narrator perspective, and you get such great insights from Mormon . . .
- John Bytheway: 22:55 Oh, yeah.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 22:55 When he's talking about Alma, right? You can only imagine he's doing the same thing in what was the Book of Lehi because he already knows the end from the beginning. It's not going to be as stark a difference because Nephi also knows the end from the beginning because he's writing his book after they're already in the New World, right? And so obviously, the greatest thing in the history of ever would be when we have those 116 pages to read again.
- John Bytheway: 23:23 I know I tell my students when we get those and we get the brass plates back, you're going to have a lot more classes that you have to take.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 23:28 So many more required classes. It'll just be more things for you to complain about to not finish.
- John Bytheway: 23:33 I'm going to BPL, Brass Plates of Laban class, you know? Yeah.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 23:36 Yeah, that's exactly right. But yeah, I mean, so there are some insights that scholars have tried to show. I mean, so, for instance, Emma talks about the very famous instance of Joseph not knowing that Jerusalem had walls around it, right? Well, she's only serving as a scribe for the portion of the pages that are lost.

John Bytheway: 23:54 When Martin does take the pages, what happens? He gets to Palmyra, do we know anything about what happens when he gets there because ...?

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 24:02 Yeah, it's a lot of ...

John Bytheway: 24:00 What happens when he gets there because-

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 24:02 Yeah, it's a lot of conjecture and mainly from Lucy Smith, right? So apparently, Martin will not only show the people that he has covenanted that he will show. He also begins showing it to other people. He made a covenant with God that he will only show the pages to these five people and also these other people he starts showing the pages to, right? So he's already broken that. Now, at least according to Lucy Smith, Harris at first locks the pages in his wife's drawer for safekeeping. But at one point, a visitor shows up, and Lucy's not there, and she has the key to the drawer. And he's so desperate to show this guy these pages that he actually breaks the lock on the drawer, busts it open so he can get in there, and grab the pages to show this person who he was never supposed to show in the first place.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 25:02 So, I don't know if, after that, they continue to reside in the unlocked broken drawer. There are all kinds of theories that circulate about what happened to the pages. All we know is that eventually, Martin Harris goes back, and those pages are gone. And he searches the house up and down, and he can't find them. And probably he's hoping that somehow they'll turn up, that he'll get a lead on them before Joseph comes calling.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 25:26 When Joseph shows up, and the Smiths send word to Martin to come to breakfast the next morning, it is a traumatic event, according to Lucy Smith. First of all, they're all sitting there waiting to eat breakfast together, and there's already got a ton of tension. Joseph is so worried about this--he feels such a knot that he actually pays the money that it cost to take the stage most of the way to Palmyra.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 25:54 And he's actually so distraught that one of the passengers on that stage is so worried about Joseph that he actually walks several miles with Joseph to make sure Joseph gets his way to his destination because he can tell how upset Joseph is. The stage is really expensive, but it's also really fast. So if they ever take the stage somewhere, that's how you know that this is a big deal. They are really worried.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 26:19 So, Joseph has spent all kinds of money just to get back to Palmyra as fast as he could only to have Martin Harris not come over that night. And then the next morning, when they're waiting for breakfast, still no Martin Harris. Imagine the tension in that home as you're sitting around the breakfast table. First of all, I want to eat. But second of all, you're still waiting for the answer. Everyone's sitting around waiting, waiting.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 26:45 Eventually, they see him walking down the lane to their house. Now, he lives clear on the other side of the township from them, right? So he finally gets to their front gate. And instead of coming in, he just sits down on the fence. He pulls a hat over his eyes and stays there for some time, is what the source says. You have to think that every person in that Smith house is just ready to bust right out the house and go out there. "Where are the pages?" But they don't. They're trying to maintain the proper decorum.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 27:15 Eventually, Harris comes in, and he sits down to the table like they're all going to have breakfast. I can't imagine how deafening the silence was with the tension until eventually, Harris breaks down and just says, "I have lost my soul. I have lost my soul." I'm sure Joseph knew that there was something wrong. That's why he was there in the first place. But like all of us when we're in a terrible situation, there's always that little bit of, "Maybe it's not as bad. Maybe he only lost one page, right? Maybe he can't find one of the pages."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 27:51 I don't know what Joseph thought, but Joseph's reaction is he's both angry and crushed all at the same time. "Have you brought down condemnation upon your own head as well as my own? Have you broken the oath that you made?" And Lucy says that there is just tears all over the house. We talk about Liberty Jail, but I almost can't imagine a lower time in Joseph's life. He has lost the plates and the interpreters only to have his son die in childbirth--his wife nearly die. The only thing he has left is Martin Harris and those pages.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 28:37 And when he comes up, he doesn't have those pages. He is clearly outside of the favor of God. And look, in the modern world, when horrible things happen to us, many of us erroneously begin to start saying, "Well, what did I do that God is punishing me like this?" I can't imagine that Joseph and Emma didn't at least one time think, "I wonder if our baby died because we were violating the covenant we made with God."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 29:10 I don't know that they ever did, but I'll tell you what, in the 19th century in America, if something bad happened to you, it was

always attributed to the will of God. And so it certainly would have been the culture that he would have been taught. He didn't know about the Plan of Salvation yet. He hadn't translated the Book of Mormon yet, right? So it would have been a very crushing experience, and obviously, he's desperate to make sure Emma is okay.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 29:35

He leaves the next day and comes home. And a short time is what he says in his history after he arrives home, he's out walking in the field, I'm sure wrestling with God, praying, thinking, meditating. He has the angel appear to him and give him back the interpreters that were taken from him, the Urim and Thummim stones that were taken from him, in order for him to receive a revelation. That revelation is Doctrine and Covenants, Section 3 that is highly condemnatory of Joseph's actions and certainly of Martin Harris.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 30:11

And the revelation, as you read it, focuses very much on both of them fearing man instead of God, right? Instead of saying, "I don't know how God is going to make this work out, but I did see Jesus, so I'm pretty sure he can make it work out," Joseph is instead the same way I would be. "I need to actually have a plan. I know that God says he's going to help, but I need to actually have a plan." And he allowed that pressure of how difficult the translation and publication was going to be to kind of overwhelm what he knew God wanted him to do.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 30:47

It's very much a chastisement, but it also has some hope in it. The level of pressure that he must have felt would have been incredible because it took him four years and eight visits with Moroni basically to get the plates in the first place, right? And even then, he was prevented from getting them at first because he didn't have the purest of intentions. And so now, he's losing the plates because he isn't following what God is telling him to do.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 31:17

And I don't think Joseph is being evil in any way in this sense, right? He's not got some kind of negative like, "Ah, we've got to find a way to make money off the Book of Mormon." He is simply trying to be practical in a world where he has nothing, his family has nothing, they have no prospects of ever having anything. And Martin Harris is literally the only lead that he has on doing what God has commanded him to do.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 31:44

In many ways, we're asking Joseph to be like the Israelites fighting the Midianites, right? Just, "Yeah, we'll take a dozen, and I'm sure they'll take out 10,000. Whatever. They can do it." We're asking Joseph to have the kind of faith that, even though

there is literally no possible way for him to do what God has told him to do, that he should just still expect that he can. I don't have that ability. I don't know why sometimes people are a little bit harsh about that. To me, the most understandable thing in the world is that Joseph let him take the pages.

- John Bytheway: [32:19](#) I want to throw something in from Elder Holland. He was talking about that breakfast that you just mentioned, Garrett. And he tells the story of the breakfast with Martin breaking down, "I've lost my soul." Joseph standing up, "Oh my God, what have you done? What have you done?" Everybody's crying. And then he makes the point, everybody at this breakfast already believes him. So why do this unless this is actually real?
- John Bytheway: [32:43](#) And this is what he says. He says, "Well, my goodness, that's an elaborate little side story, which makes absolutely no sense at all unless, of course, there really were plates and there really was a translation process going on, and there really had been a solemn covenant made with the Lord, and there really was an enemy who did not want the book to come forth in this generation. Talk about a literary flare and a gift for fiction. Lucy Mack Smith gets an A right along with her son if this is all an imaginary venture, to say nothing of the terrific performances by Mr. And Mrs. Harris and the entire first generation of the Church."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [33:15](#) As we go over the text, the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 3, it certainly is harsh. It is condemning Joseph for what he did.
- John Bytheway: [33:21](#) Right. He's probably excited to get him back, only to find out, "Oh, you got them back because you need to hear something."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [33:27](#) At the same time. If we take what Lucy Smith says that Joseph says when Martin Harris says "I've lost my soul," Joseph at that point believes that he is totally condemned by God. It's over. You have brought condemnation upon me and upon you. If you have that in your mind, that Joseph returns home believing that he has lost his soul forever because of what Martin Harris said, then when you read Doctrine and Covenants 3, it's not as condemnatory as you thought it was. Like the teenage kid who comes home after wrecking his dad's car, he knows it's going to be bad. But the Lord still lets him know that he still loves him, right? There's still a way forward.
- John Bytheway: [34:18](#) I think that this is where we can take the story for Joseph, but apply it to us and say, "Look," in verse nine, "Behold, thou art Joseph." And okay, I still know who you are, that was chosen to do the work of the Lord. But because of transgression, if thou

art not aware, thou wilt fall. It sounds like there's a glimmer of, you still have a couple of strikes left or something.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 34:43 And then the next verse tells him, "Remember that God is merciful." Right? It's almost as if Joseph has forgotten, with all of the fear that he has of the impending doom of what's going on because of the breaking of the covenant, because of the loss of the pages, because of this 10-year odyssey to get to where he's at now that's now gone, that God is still merciful, that God's still willing to forgive.
- John Bytheway: 35:10 I think one of the beautiful things about the Doctrine and Covenants for all of us to apply is how many times Joseph gets in trouble and is told, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." And we can all go, "Whew, he messed up from time to time too."
- Hank Smith: 35:25 Let's get into the meat of the section here. The Lord starts out by saying, "The works and the designs and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated. Neither can they come to naught." That's got to be an interesting opening for Joseph, right? Like, "I know you're devastated, but really it doesn't ride on you."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 35:47 Yeah. "I think an understanding that you think that the whole Book of Mormon project is over because of what happened, but I hate to break it to you. I'm God, and that's not how things work. That in fact, yes, people with their agency do evil things, but no one, no matter how much agency they apply, will ever be able to prevent the Second Coming of our Messiah." The reality is that's happening. That's going to happen. And so I think that's what the Lord is presenting to him here.
- Hank Smith: 36:21 Yeah. The work of God cannot be frustrated. Right?
- John Bytheway: 36:24 Yeah. He already had a plan in place, which we read about in the Book of Mormon. There was already, "This is going to happen."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 36:31 For a wise purpose that Nephi doesn't know, "I've already done all this. Now, I've got to do another thing." Okay. And then Mormon feeling the same impression that, "Well, I've already done with my work, but then I found these and I'm going to put them with these other plates." A lot of steps going on there.
- Hank Smith: 36:47 Yeah. We're talking what, 2,400 years in advance, the Lord says, "Yeah, well, I knew you were going to do this." It's almost as if Joseph's going to go, "You knew?!"

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 36:57 “Why didn't you tell me?” I think it's important when people study Doctrine and Covenants, Section 3, that they should also concurrently study Doctrine and Covenants, Section 10. Early portions of it, are received in 1828, as part of the response, to the loss of the pages. As they're asking, what's going to happen, that will help give some of the answer. But in this initial answer, you have the Lord assuring him, that don't worry. The work's going to go forward without this.
- John Bytheway: 37:23 This is one of those places where they're not exactly in sequence. Doesn't 10 come right after three?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 37:27 Our earliest written copy of D&C 10, also suggests that there's some 1829 portions of it. And so one of the things that we dealt with the Joseph Smith Papers, is that there are some revelations that are, what we might call, composite revelations. Where they received one part of it in 1829, and then another part of it in 1830. And then they eventually published it together because they were the same topic, essentially, right?
- Hank Smith: 37:54 There's a part of Section 3 that I love and I think the Lord must get somewhat tired of telling us the same thing of, "You should not have feared man, more than God." I can't tell you how many times in Isaiah . . . Isaiah says the same thing. “Don't trust in the arm of the flesh.” God frequently tells Old Testament prophets, why do they trust in people that will die? When they've got someone who won't die, right? Why is it constantly this fight? “You should not have feared man, more than God. You should have been faithful,” in verse eight. “And I would have been there for you.” How do we as parents and teachers help the people in our stewardship, whether they be adult children or young children, not fear man, more than God, or in other words, not give in to peer pressure or not worry so much about what other people think?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 38:47 I am not an expert on parenting, as my teenage sons would let you know, but I can say that really the question, it's about Christianity in and of itself. The reality is that as Christians, we of course, hope that God will bless us as we try to do the things that are right. But fundamentally, as a Christian is believing that the real reward is not on this earth, right? That some of the greatest people who've ever lived have suffered all kinds of horrible difficulties in their life, even to the end of their life. That we are, laying not up for yourselves, treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through to steal: but lay up for yourselves, treasures in heaven.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 39:36 This is really a question of all mortality, right? There is the immediate pleasure, power, fame that comes from our mortal flesh and our mortal experiences that we can be engaged in, and having to stop and say that there is something else. Trusting that there is a God that is going to make things work out somehow, even if it's only eternally. Over what my friends have to say tomorrow. For me and my sons, I try to help them reorient themselves.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 40:09 I try to help them remember who we really are. Who we really are . . . are sons of a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother. Who we really are, is someone who has an eternal existence. And however important that relationship with that friend of yours, who was just a jerk you was, today. Not only in 10 years, will it not matter? Certainly in the eternity, it won't right. That we have to focus on what our value is.
- Hank Smith: 40:36 John, what do you think? How do you help young people, and even old people, fear God more than man? And I don't know if I want to use the word fear here, but to care more about what God thinks than what so-and-so thinks.
- John Bytheway: 40:52 Well, I think this section, and many others, provide a model. Joseph just learned a choice and a consequence and try to help our kids. "What have you learned? Did you see this choice and did you see this consequence? What happened? What did you learn? And are you discovering, that not only is it better to follow God, it's probably easier because the consequences of not following him are so bad, that when it comes to the standards." I love to teach that. The Gospel is the easiest way to live because the consequences of not living it are so bad, that you eventually learn--and the Lord lets us learn--and this is one of those. Connect choices and consequences, and then notice that he's saying, "Okay, you can be forgiven and let's move forward."
- Hank Smith: 41:42 And Gerrit, you could speak to this better than I could, but it seems to me that the Joseph of 1828, and the Joseph of the 1840s, is someone who trusts in God. By the end of his life, I think he has this lesson.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 41:57 One of the things that we get with the 2013 Edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, is a redating of many of the sections and a reorienting of them. By getting back to the earliest manuscript, and revelation books, some of the Section Headings provided an entirely different context than what we once thought it meant. This was due to no fault of anyone in the past, the reality was the *Book of Commandments and Revelations*,

which was this giant manuscript revelation book, it had been lost for years and years and years. It was only rediscovered at the beginning of the 20th century. Right? And so you can't fault people, from before, for not knowing the sources. As a historian, you get very used to knowing that, whatever you think today might change based upon a source that's found tomorrow. For other people, it's really hard thing. "No, no. It's always been. . . ." because we didn't have the best source. Right?

Hank Smith: 42:46 I just think, Doctrine and Covenants 3 can be such an excellent lesson. One, that God is merciful. He says in verse 10, "God is merciful." And two, "Let's be like Joseph and learn the lesson." Remember the pain, like John said, of being disobedient. Remember the pain of what you went through when you made that choice to fear man, more than God, and don't do it again. Or at least really, keep your drive up, to not do it again. Because to me, one, I love the story. Two, I just loved Joseph for adding it in the Doctrine and Covenants.

[crosstalk 00:43:23]

John Bytheway: 43:22 Why would you want to put that in there, if it was about this big mistake that you made?

Hank Smith: 43:26 Now, let's take that out.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 43:28 We'll edit it down. One thing I think is really interesting as verse four, "For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet, if he boasts his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels, of God and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires. . . ." So earthly desires, right? "He must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him." That's already part of what we've been talking about, about this choosing God over man, which is really the choice of mortality, right? To continually, choose God rather than this earth. We in the Church today have had a lot more discussions about priesthood power, and "the power and authority to act in God's name" and the difference between priesthood office and priesthood power.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 44:10 And I want to just point out for your listeners, that Joseph Smith receives more than a dozen revelations. He translates the entirety of the Book of Mormon. He sees multiple visions, multiple powerful manifestations--and he's not a Deacon yet. Okay. All of this is going on, prior to Joseph Smith, having been given one ounce of priesthood authority associated with an office. Of course, it's by the power of the priesthood, that

Joseph Smith is translating the Book of Mormon--that he is receiving these revelations from God. He's literally a prophet and a seer, even though he has not been ordained to those positions, yet. And so I think that's helpful for Church members to understand when they say, "Well, why don't have the ability to perform a miracle because I'm not an Elder or I'm not a man, I'm not ordained to a priesthood office."

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 45:12 I think as our prophets and apostles have been trying to say, "We all have the ability, if it is God's will, to tap into that power of God, to perform mighty miracles in His name--to receive revelations, for ourselves and our families in His name . . .to have enlightening things given to us and to perform miracles.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 45:34 And Joseph Smith is the perfect example of that. He has performed dozens of miracles at this point, and it's not because he was ordained to a formal priesthood office yet. They hadn't been restored yet. He couldn't have been.
- Narrator: 45:51 Please join us for Part 2 of this podcast.