

followHIM

Episode 112: Dr. Kerry Muhlestein

Doctrine and Covenants 27-28

Part 1: Transcript

Hank Smith: 00:01 Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their *Come, Follow Me* study. I'm Hank Smith.

John Bytheway: 00:09 And I'm John Bytheway.

Hank Smith: 00:10 We love to learn.

John Bytheway: 00:11 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 My friends, welcome to another episode of followHIM, a podcast designed to help individuals and families with their *Come, Follow Me* studies. I'm here with the greatest co-host on the planet, John Bytheway, welcome John.

John Bytheway: 00:35 I've never been introduced that way. Thanks.

Hank Smith: 00:37 You are, of all the co-hosts I've had on podcast, John-

John Bytheway: 00:40 -I'm one of them.

Hank Smith: 00:41 You are my favorite podcast host. I'm very excited to introduce Kerry Muhlestein, and I'm reading this bio and just going. I don't want to do any talking today. I just want to listen. Let me read, and I can't even read the whole thing. There's so much here, but Kerry received his bachelor's degree from BYU in psychology with a Hebrew minor. As an undergraduate, he spent time in the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern studies in the intensive Hebrew program. He received an MA, master's of arts

in ancient Near Eastern studies from BYU, and his Ph.D. from UCLA in Hebrew? No, Egyptology.

- Hank Smith: 01:25 So Hebrew and Egyptology wherein his final year, he was named UCLA Affiliates Graduate Student of the Year. He's taught courses in Hebrew and Religion part-time at BYU and UVSC extension center, which is now UVU as well as in History at Cal Poly Pomona and UCLA. He also taught early-morning seminary at the Westwood UCLA Institute of Religion. Early-morning seminary from an Egyptologist sounds awesome. He's the Director of the BYU Egypt Excavation Project. And I thought if that was an acronym, that'd be BEEP, which I think would be a cool acronym. If you go there twice it's BEEP, BEEP. He was selected by The Princeton Review in 2012 as one of the Three hundred best professors in the nation.
- John Bytheway: 02:16 My goodness.
- Hank Smith: 02:17 He's published six books, over 55 peer-reviewed articles, done over 80 academic presentations. He and his wife, Julianne are the parents of six children and together they've lived in Jerusalem. He's the co-chair for the Egyptian Archeology Session of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 02:33 Well, thank you. Thanks, it's good to be with you guys. I think we should add to the end of that, bio. That I took a course on how to pad a bio. So that's the only A I ever got, but I got an A in that class.
- Hank Smith: 02:45 All right, Kerry let's jump in. We are going to be in Sections 27 and 28 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The dates that I see here in the Section heading is August 1830. Our Church is now just four and a half months old. I tease my students when I teach this, I'll say it was just a little baby church picture, a little four and a half month old. It's just a brand new church. What leads up? Can you tell us what leads up to this revelation what's life like for Joseph Smith and his friends?
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 03:18 There are I think a number of important things that are happening just before this. So as you said, I mean, the Book of Mormon has just come forth. They've just organized the Church. They're getting close, so that organization is at the first conference of the Church that's in April. And this comes in August and September they're going to have the second conference of the Church. So they're getting close to that. Another couple of significant things that have happened that will affect a little bit Section 27, but even more Section 28 when we get there. Sometime in June, midway between April and

when the Church is organized and this happens, Joseph Smith has a revelation that he calls the Visions of Moses. We now call it Moses 1. But that has just come to him.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 04:09

And sometime in between there, we know sometime in between July and the end of September, most likely towards the end of September. And again, this may coincide with the reception of Section 28. He gets a second, as he's working now on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, he calls it the New Translation. So that's a project he's starting right as these things are happening. And he receives a kind of vision or revelation that will become Moses 2 and 3. That also happens. All we know is sometime between July and October, for sure, but evidence places, it most likely towards the end of August or probably towards the end of September, but that's the setting that's leading up to these things. So he's getting revelations that we put in the Doctrine and Covenants, but he's also getting revelations that we later put in the Book of Moses. For them right now they're just a whole bunch of revelations coming from all sorts of sources, including working on the translation of the Bible. So that's some of the background.

Hank Smith: 05:12

I've mentioned this, one thing that I don't think I understood before looking into it was the role of the Joseph Smith Translation project of going through the Bible and the Restoration. I don't think I understood that early on. But I think it's pretty instrumental for our listeners to understand, this was part of the process of the Lord saying you're going to go through the Bible. And in going through the Bible, you're going to start asking questions and those questions aren't going to enable me to continue to restore the gospel. Would you say? You can say it better than me.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 05:49

That's absolutely true. Well, I think a lot of the revelations we have in the Doctrine and Covenants are the result of questions that happen as they do the translation. So this is something you can discuss in your next week's podcast because for example, we can't tell for sure, but it looks like there's a pretty good chance that that Moses 2 and 3 are received right at about the same time that Section 29 is received. And Section 29 is about the Fall, two and three is the Creation. And then the next thing he's going to do is to Joseph Smith Translation so, I mean, all of this is interconnected. He's learning about Creation and Fall in a number of different ways, but all revelation from heaven. So they're absolutely interconnected.

Hank Smith: 06:32

Very good. I think I would have thought early on, Oh, the Joseph Smith Translation, I'm getting a correct version of the Bible,

whereas probably that was maybe a side issue was, “Hey, we're going to correct some things that have been lost out of the Bible, but more importantly, we're going to be asking questions that are going to lead to the restoration of certain principles and doctrines that the Lord.” He's going soon read about Enoch. And to start asking questions about Zion and that's going to become a huge part of their lives.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 07:05

Yeah. In fact, I think the revelations about Zion and Enoch also coincide, and we're going to see that this, I think Moses 1, cast light on Section 28. So we'll talk about that when we get to Section 28, but I think all of these things interact with each other in ways that we... because we compartmentalize them, we put them in little boxes, that's a D&C box. That's a Book of Moses box. We sometimes don't recognize how well they interacted for as far as the Saints, just receiving a flow of revelation that restored truth.

Hank Smith: 07:36

Yeah. I think if I remember, it was when I met Bob Matthews and I thought who's Bob Matthews? And then all of a sudden this Joseph Smith Translation project took on new role. John, anything about Joseph Smith Translation before we jump in.

John Bytheway: 07:47

So glad you mentioned that. I know that Joseph McConkie used to tell us, he said that for Joseph Smith Translating the Book of Mormon was gospel 101. It's so strong on First Principles, faith in Christ, repentance, baptism, Holy Ghost. And when he went into the JST, it was graduate school. That's the way Joseph McConkie put it. And I think that's a wonderful thing for people to see. It reminds me of the line in the *Spirit of God like a fire is burning/the Lord is extending the Saints understanding*. And I feel like it's almost like the funny metaphor of trying to drink from a fire hydrant where it's all coming at once. And now we've had years to go over and pour over these things, but imagine the volume of it coming all at once and trying to, as Kerry said, “We're putting it in boxes, but they were getting it all at once.”

Hank Smith: 08:41

That's a really cool idea. The moment they're just get one, there comes another one out of the pipeline.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 08:48

In fact, to tie that together with your Book of Mormon thing, sometimes we forget this time. So the translator of the Book of Mormon took him a little while to get it published, but for the Saints receiving it, the Book of Mormon comes in spring of 1830, Book of Moses starts in summer of 1830. It's just the Lord, he's not giving them a break. He has given them plenty to try and digest.

Hank Smith: 09:09 Yeah. We've had decades and centuries to look at these things while they're getting them hot off the press, literally off the press. Anything else before we get into Section 27, Kerry that you'd say, "Hey, you need to understand this as background."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 09:26 Yeah. And I think some of this, you can get it, I even brought most of my picture to see, but some of that you can get from the *Come, Follow Me* manual. So at the time, Joseph and Emma just before Section 27 is received, they've visited the night family. The night family were some of his earliest supporters, they were in New York, they were involved with the translation of the Book of Mormon as a support and so on. So just before this, Emma and Sally Knight, that's Newell Knight's wife had been baptized and they were going to confirm them and you give them the gift of the Holy Ghost when there were some threats from mobs and they kind of had to stop and break up at that point. So they weren't confirmed for a period of time.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 10:12 So now Joseph and Emma are in Harmony and the Knights are going to visit them. And they decide let's confirm Emma and Sally. Let's give them the gift of Holy Ghost and get this done. And so they're going to do that at a meeting. It's kind of like we did recently, they're going to have sacrament meeting in their home, but they want some wine to do that. And so Joseph is on his way to get that wine. And it's as he's doing that, that this revelation comes to him. A messenger, he says, a heavenly messenger meets him and delivers this information.

Hank Smith: 10:48 I hate to say this, but it's almost old hat to say this now, Joseph Smith talked to a heavenly messenger at this point?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 10:56 I was on my way to the forum and to get some wine and an angel came. Right? It's just how it goes.

Hank Smith: 11:04 It's just, Joseph's life. Just Joseph's life interacting with divine beings.

John Bytheway: 11:08 I think that it's significant too that. I like to tell my students and almost all of the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants came as a result of a question. There are some exceptions, John Taylor announcing the martyrdom and this one I think, because it was just, I'm going to get some wine and he's interrupted in that process, which makes this kind of unique. Would you say?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 11:31 Yeah, well, yeah.

- John Bytheway: [11:32](#) Let's jump into the section itself and maybe give us a big picture. What is the message to Joseph and the Church and why is this important for us to have today?
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [11:43](#) So I think there are a couple of different messages, they're intertwined, but we'll miss some of them if we don't look carefully for them. So, I mean, the first message is really about the symbolism of the sacrament and that it doesn't always have to be the exact same thing that will convey that symbolism. So he's on his way to get wine. And if we look at verse one is worthwhile. We've had this a couple of times, we've got it in this verse. We're going to get a whole string of Sections in the Doctrine and Covenants where the first verse is always Christ introducing himself and telling us something about his nature or who he is. So in this one, he says, he's your Lord, your God, and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful. So all of those are things that tell you something about who he is. And he just does that in Section after Section to make sure we know who he really is. And I think that's worth looking at.
- Hank Smith: [12:37](#) That word quick. If one of my children said, "What does he mean that his word is quick?" Is that the same quick as you see in both the quick and the dead, that idea?
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [12:48](#) Many people take it that way. I mean, he doesn't give us a definition. So typically scripturally, when we talk about quick or being quickened, it means life. It means that you've got some kind of power and life to it. And so there's probably something to that here, but it may also be because often this quick and powerful word is associated with the sword that cuts through things. And there may be something to the fact, I think that word can play a double purpose here because it is a live power, but it also is something that, a sword that's going to cut through joint marrow that's the kind of thing that's associated with his word frequently. That's moving quickly. So I would guess that there's more than one meaning intended here.
- Hank Smith: [13:32](#) And that's the Book of Mormon idea. Mormon loved that idea of the word is like a sword, it will pierce you to the soul.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [13:39](#) But the next verse is when he's really going to move into talking about the sacrament and I love this phrase, we actually get this phrase a number of times in the Doctrine and Covenants as well, where he says, it matter if not. And then sometimes, it matter of not to me, whether you go by land or by sea or whatever else, it just gives you this idea that some things matter and some things don't matter. So for him, it doesn't matter exactly what we're going to drink if it's so be that you do it with

an eye single to my glory, remembering under the father, my body, which was laid down for you and my blood, which was shed for the remission of your sin.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 14:14

So here we have Christ telling us what the key elements of the sacrament are that we have to do it in remembrance of what he's done for us and with an eye single to the glory of God, whether it is wheat bread, or we've just started using gluten-free bread in my ward, whether it's wine or grape juice or water is not the issue. Now there's symbolism actually in all of those things. And it's worth looking into the symbolism. I love the symbolism of the water and I love the symbolism of wine, they're both great. I don't want us to stop taking the symbols seriously because there's a power in symbolism. And I think we don't address that enough. The actual thing we're taking, he's telling us is less important than our intent as we take it. And I think that's one of the key elements of this revelation.

Hank Smith: 15:03

I like that. I like that a lot, because it helps me in my own home to try to say, "Okay, what's the most crucial point here?" Some things are important. Some things are crucial to me, that's yes, the symbols are important, but why we do it is crucial. I've read in war to run Europe, World War II, there was no bread to be found. So they had to use potato peelings. And I think the Lord would say, it matter if not right, it matter if not, it's okay. It's okay. I think to some soldiers, all they could find was a candy bar and my kids would love that if it was candy bar.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 15:43

And if I remember correctly, sometimes they use shell casings to put the water in, to partake of the sacrament. That's okay. Whatever works.

Hank Smith: 15:52

Right. I love it. I mean, the actual items themselves are important, but they're not the *most* important. I really like that.

John Bytheway: 16:00

I'm intrigued with things that the Lord has us repeat, and the sacrament is a weekly thing. And the word remembering, I just had to remember in there and I love quoting this. I think it'll change the way my students read the Book of Mormon to watch for remember, and it's opposite forget. And there's an old president, Spencer W. Kimball quotation, where he said, "When you look in the dictionary for the most important word, do you know what it is?" And he said, "It could be remember, because all of this has made covenants to remember." And we think of, Nephi saying, "How could you have forgotten three times in a row to his brothers?" We think of Helaman saying, "Oh, remember, remember, and how quickly that pride cycle goes up and down." And here's a weekly remembrance and

keep your eyes single to the Savior, what's important. And there's a hierarchy, like you said, "Yes, the symbols are beautiful and we can draw meaning from them, but it's all about remembering Christ."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 17:00

Yeah. And I think as you say that you hit on a really key element we often don't recognize that helps us see a theme that I think often is under recognized in this chapter. And it's kind of fun that you talked about how often the Book of Mormon says remembering because I have not quantified this for sure. So one day maybe I'll sit down and count and say, but I tell my students, at least my impression is if you're just going to talk about the themes in the Book of Mormon that are talking about most often, it would be number one, Christ and his atoning sacrifice. It would be number two, promises made to the house of Israel and three, remembering.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 17:37

But two and three are actually intertwined because one of the covenantal obligations for Israel is to remember what God has done for them. And I find that really interesting because here, we're talking about the sacrament, which is when we renew the covenant. And that's interesting because Emma and Sally are about to renew the baptismal covenant so they can do the confirmation, but we're renewing the covenant. So this is the covenant, and this is another thing that I find members of the Church are sometimes a little confused on, we talk about the New and Everlasting Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, or Baptism Covenant and we don't know how they relate. They're all the same thing. So New and Everlasting Covenant and Abrahamic Covenant are two different names for the same thing. I mean, Abrahamic Covenant has some connotations of a specific time and place that the New and Everlasting Covenant is renewed and so on.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 18:24

And baptism is the way we enter into that. So it's not a surprise that right after we get him talking about renewing this covenant and remembering, and then he goes on to tell them that you shouldn't purchase wine from your enemies. So we have him still addressing this specific thing. And that's always a good idea. Don't get drinks from your enemies. All right. I'm just going to throw that out as general advice. And then he says that at some point he will come and partake of this with them. I think that's what he means when he says he'll drink of the fruit of the vine. And then he goes through this list of people who he will do that with. So who he will go through this covenant renewal ceremony with. And he starts with Moroni and tied it in with the Book of Mormon, but immediately says to stick away from so immediately he's tying that in with Israel.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 19:20

And then he's going to talk about Elias. Now, Elias here is a title that's getting used for a number of people. So this is a part that can also be confusing to people. Elias is the Greek version of the name, Elijah. So sometimes Elias means Elijah, but often it's a title for a forerunner, which Elijah is a forerunner, but so is John, so is Gabriel. Actually, so is Zacharias, and they're all going to be mentioned here. So he talks about forerunner for John, which is Gabriel, who comes, he's going to talk about John being a forerunner. And then John, of course, is the one who was sent to Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith to give them the priesthood, the Baptismal Covenant, when they partake of the sacrament, that ability was given to them by John the Baptist.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 20:10

And then he immediately takes that into Elijah. And Elijah is an Elias, "Who will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers." Now, this is an important thing to stop and think about as well, because we typically as members of the Church, think of that as temple work, turn into your Family History work. "Turning the hearts of the children to the fathers and the fathers to the children." And it is that, but I think that we're getting a smaller piece of the puzzle, if that's all we think of. So I think and maybe, right now, President Nelson has told us to look at the blessings promised to Israel and study that. And I've just written a book on that. And people are asking about that a lot right now, because they're trying to figure this out. So maybe I'm just super covenant focused right now, and I'm seeing it everywhere. And you'll have to tell me if I'm seeing it where it's not.

Hank Smith: 21:02

I think being super covenant-focused is probably a good thing. I'm just going to throw that out there as a good, a general piece of advice. Like you said, don't way up to now, don't buy drinks from your enemies and super covenant focused is okay.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 21:17

So we'll keep a list of good general advice.

Hank Smith: 21:19

Of good general advice.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 21:21

So this is talking about Elijah, but it's talking about Malachi's prophecy to Elijah. And if you were to go back to Malachi's original audience, the Israelites, and you say, "The fathers, turn your heart to the fathers," the fathers they think of are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which by the way, is who is mentioned in the next verse. And so if you mentioned Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, what you're really doing is you're talking about the covenant God made with them. And that would have been clear to the original audience. Malachi's original audience, the Israelites. I think when Christ comes and quotes Malachi to the

Nephites, who are Israelites and are very conscious of being Israelites, that it's clear to them. In our day, we're not quite as covenant conscious or President Nelson's getting us there, but we haven't always been quite as covenant consciousness. And especially in Joseph Smith's day, that idea of covenant had really been lost.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [22:16](#)

And so it's interesting that when Moroni quotes this to Joseph Smith, he quotes it differently than it is in the Book of Mormon or in the Bible. And he says, "He will turn your hearts to the promises made to the fathers." Now that's very clearly about the covenant in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And it seems to me that he's just, I mean, I don't know, but I would guess he's changing it a little bit because his current audience needs that change to know what they're talking about. The early audience has got it, needed a little help at that point. And again, in case we're missing it when we read verse nine where it says, "Elijah unto whom I've committed the keys to the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with the curse." In case we're going to miss that he immediately goes to verse 10. "And also with Joseph and Jacob and Isaac and Abraham, your fathers by whom the promises remain."

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [23:09](#)

You cannot get more clear than this, I think. He is telling them, you are part of the Abrahamic Covenant. This is essential for you. And it's tied to the sacrament in this section. That's the covenant you entered into at baptism. So when you're taking the sacrament and renewing it, it's the same covenant. And so he's just walked him through how, at some point he will renew that covenant with all of these key covenant players, including verse 11, also with Michael or Adam, the Father of All, the Prince of All the Ancient Days, which is again crucial because when Abraham receives the covenant in Abraham 1, he's very, very specific that what he's looking for is the same covenant that Adam, the first of all had. And so Christ is making that same connection here.

Hank Smith: [23:55](#)

This is a crucial point that we call it Abrahamic Covenant, but really it was started all the way back to Adam. And like you said, it's all the way through till today. It might come by different names, but it's the same idea of I'll make you certain promises, if you will live up to the certain obligations that you've been given.

John Bytheway: [24:17](#)

And I think one of the kind of fun things about the Book of Abraham is when it begins, Abraham is saying, "I sought for the blessings of the fathers," and you're like, "Wait a minute, you're

one of the fathers. You're Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” And so I think you're right. It's that God made the same covenant with Michael, with Adam, with Enoch and others. And so we've called it the Abrahamic Covenant because he kept it so well, modeled it so well and maybe it's similar to why we call the Melchizedek Priesthood after Melchizedek because he was such a great High Priest. And we call this the Abrahamic Covenant, because he wanted the same thing that his fathers had received. Is that a fair way to put it Kerry?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [24:57](#)

Yeah, I think so. I think there's another element as well, but I think that's absolutely correct that that's one of the reasons. But additionally, there is a change that comes with Abraham and that is that after Abraham, anyone who will become part of the covenant will be Abraham's seed. And so I think that's also part of the reason why we'll refer to it as the Abrahamic Covenant, because that's now the next source. We'll also talk about it and this is what President Nelson did in General Conference, as the blessings promised to Israel, because additionally, anyone who becomes part of this covenant will become part of the House of Israel. So the names Abraham and Israel get continually associated with this covenant from here on out, because that's the family that you will now belong to.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [25:44](#)

And I think this is important to understand that salvation is a family affair. God is saving families. And so what he's done is he's tasked a family with getting everyone else to become part of the covenant or become part of that family. And this ties into what I was talking about with the turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers. And we think of that as family history. Well, it is, but we need to think of it as not just a great grandma, Joanne, who we should think of. But also great, great, great grandma, Rachel and Rebekah and Sarah and Asenath and so on. We need to think of this as a huge family history that ties us back to Abraham and then to Adam. And the idea is that God wants us all to become part of this family so that we're connected. The covenant connects us vertically to God, but it connects us horizontally to each other in a family. I think that's fantastic.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [26:41](#)

We talk about the human family, but he's wanting us to become on another level, the human family to be sealed together through that Covenant, to each other and to him, which is beautiful. And again, I think as people, I mean, this has become such a big thing right now where people are trying to understand the blessings promised to the House of Israel. And sometimes they're struggling to find those blessings. Well, when you recognize what's going on here, you see this whole Section

actually is about blessings promised to Israel. And one of them is, you can renew your covenant by partaking of the sacrament and you'd be connected to everyone. So this section is absolutely about blessings promised to Israel.

John Bytheway: 27:20

Yeah, this is fantastic stuff. And when I explain this to my students, you'll see the light bulb go on. Oh, I didn't know that. Oh, those are connected. Those stories are connected. For example, we use the name Israel but a lot of people wouldn't know where that comes from. So let's do a little Gospel 101 here, Kerry. Where does the name Israel even come from that you use them interchangeably, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And then you talk about the Israelites or Israel. Where does that come from?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 27:47

That's a great question. Again, the same President Nelson kind of highlighted that. That when Jacob wrestles and man, we could go on, I could get into this wrestling with the angel story for an hour. I think it's so fantastic. When Jacob is there, but he's coming back into the Land of Canaan because God asked him to, and he is afraid his brother's going to kill him and his entire family. So much so that he's sending gifts to his brother. He's divided his family in half so that if maybe half of them get killed, half can survive. I mean, it's a real concern for him that his brother might kill them all, but he's going anyway. Not because he wants to, not because he's hoping his family will get killed, but because God asked him to, so he's making an Abrahamic sacrifice. He's willing to sacrifice his entire family if that's what God is asking him to do.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 28:33

But then he prays. Once he's done everything he can think of doing, he prays. And he asks God, save me and save my family. And that's when he starts to wrestle with an angel. And again, that's that symbolism. And that seems to make it clear it's a real wrestle because his thigh gets thrown out of joint, but it's also a spiritual wrestle. And because he wrestles and the angel tries to leave and he will not let go, he's hanging on. He is not going to let go until he gets the blessing he wants. Then God says, "As a prince, you have prevailed. And so I'll change your name to Israel," which there, you can translate that a couple of ways. One is that he has prevailed with God. So the Isra part of that is wrestler, prevail, persevere. And the el is God. So he will prevail with God is one way of translating it.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 29:27

And another is that God will prevail. And I think both are intended. I think it's a name that's intentionally just vague enough to mean both. And so that's part of what president Nelson has been talking about that "God will prevail" or "let

God prevail” and so on. And frankly, that's why the book I just wrote on the Abrahamic Covenant, I called, *God Will Prevail* because this idea is that when you make this covenant with God, you are allowing him to prevail in your life. And as a result, he will cause you to prevail. And that's what Jacob's name has changed to. And so inherent with the name change, which denotes a change in nature, he's a higher, holier being and so on, is the idea that he is leveling up into covenant.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 30:15

If we're going to use gaming terminology, that my kids and my nephews... he's leveling up in the covenant, made the covenant at Bethel, but here at Peniel, he levels up further into the covenant, kind of like we do. We enter in a baptism, but we level up as we go to the temple, level up in temple marriage, he's demonstrated that God fully and completely prevails in his life. And as a result, God is promising him, now you're going to prevail. And that is available to us because we make the same covenant. And we renew the same covenant in the way that it's being talked about here in Section 27.

Hank Smith: 30:45

Oh, I love that. That's excellent. And oftentimes, someone might say, “Why did the Lord change Jacob's name to Israel?” And I'll say it happens in our life all the time. The Lord gives us a new covenant and he changes our name. When we were baptized, we took upon us the name of Christ. When you go to the temple, you get a new name and I've had students say, is that the name I was known by in the premortal life? And I'll say, “No, not at all. That's the name that is a symbol.” Just like you said, it's a symbol. Because you're a new person. You're a new person. I hate to burst their bubble, but you're a new person. It's a symbol that you're brand new. Kerry, I've noticed in the Book of Mormon, the parts that talk about the Abrahamic Covenant are the ones that everybody skipped, 2 Nephi with all the Isaiah chapters, people are like, “Well, I don't really understand that. I'll just keep going.” Then they get to Jacobs 5.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 31:33

And those that are completely about the Abrahamic Covenant. But anyway, you're absolutely right. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 31:37

And then you get to Jacob 5 and you're going, I don't know. That's a lot of pruning. There's a lot of dunging going on. I don't know what's happening. I'll skip that.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 31:44

And I don't like dunging anyway. Yeah. Move on.

Hank Smith: 31:47

And then you've got the Savior's second day with the Nephites, which whenever I asked my students about the Savior's visit, they talk about him letting them come up and touch his hands,

his feet. He blesses the children, which are all incredible events, but they never talk about the second visit the next day, which is all house of Israel. So you could, if you read the Book of Mormon and skipped 2 Nephi, Jacob 5 and the Savior's second day at the Nephites, you're going to miss what we're talking about here.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [32:14](#)

That's exactly right. And so it's dangerous to get me going on this topic because I'll go for forever.

Hank Smith: [32:22](#)

Keep going.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [32:23](#)

But I do see an interesting parallel. So actually, I have gone through and counted how many times something about the covenant is mentioned in the Book of Mormon and which prophets are doing it the most. So you get covenant mentioned a ton, as you said, 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi and Jacob those are the places you find it the most. Then it really kind of starts to drop off. It's still pretty good in Enos and Jarom, but it really drops off so by the time you get to Helaman it's barely mentioned at all. And the first part of 3 Nephi is really mentioned, where it comes back is 3 Nephi 10 with the voice of the Savior. And then, like you say, chapters 15-20 are all Abrahamic Covenant, 29-30 are all Abrahamic Covenant. I mean, it's a ton. It really feels like the Christ issue is a little bit of a corrective to them and says, "You haven't been thinking of the covenant as much. So I'm going to talk about it. And again." Christ talks about the covenant more than any other theme when he's with the Nephites by far, it dwarfs every other thing.

Hank Smith: [33:22](#)

It always makes me laugh in 3 Nephi on the Savior's first day, he starts to quote Isaiah to them. And then he says, I noticed you're getting a little sleepy. Why don't you go home and we'll talk about this tomorrow.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [33:38](#)

And we do the same thing in our classes, right?

Hank Smith: [33:39](#)

I know. I was going to say those of you who are listening to this going, I'm kind of lost, I don't understand it. Don't worry. Don't worry. It happens to everyone including record, in the Book of Mormon from Jesus himself. So keep going, Kerry.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [33:52](#)

I almost feel like, and this is just my opinion, this isn't doctrine or anything, but I almost feel like we're seeing the same thing in modern church history. At the beginning of this dispensation, Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, John Taylor, Brigham Young, they're talking about the covenant a ton. And they're tying us in

with Abraham, with Isaac and Jacob all over the place. And it's really strong at the beginning. And then it slowly kind of starts to go down. And President Nelson is bringing us right back up just like that same curve we saw in the Book of Mormon.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [34:21](#)

President Nelson is serious about us understanding the Abrahamic Covenant and what it has to do with our lives. And he tells us, this is the greatest cause on the earth today. And he says that two or three times. And yet I'm finding that a lot of saints, they catch the enthusiasm he has for it, but they're not quite sure what to do about it. So that's kind of become one of my little missions of latest, I created websites with this, written a book, written articles. I'm just trying to help people understand what president Nelson is doing with all of this.

John Bytheway: [34:52](#)

When I teach Book Mormon, I love to just joke about, "Hey, if you're going to write a book or give a talk, here's a formula: tell him what you're going to tell them; and then tell them; and then tell him what you've told him." And I'll put the Title Page of the Book of Mormon next to the last page and on the Title Page, it says, "Which is to show into the remaining of the House of Israel, the great things the Lord has done for their fathers, that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they're not cast off forever. And then convincing Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ." And the last line, "You may be found spotless at his judgment seat." And then I show them the last page.

John Bytheway: [35:28](#)

And in verse, the Book of Mormon ends with Moroni 10:34, Moroni 10:31, "That the covenants of the Eternal Father which he has made into them, O, House of Israel may be fulfilled. And then come unto Christ, be perfected in Him," and then end of verse 33, "That you may become holy without spot". Christ covenants and you can become spotless through the Atonement, Title Page, last page and every page in between. I think it was Elder Bednar that said the central recurring theme of the Book of Mormon is the invitation to come unto Christ. But covenants and there constantly. And I tell him the same thing with Isaiah, the Isaiah chapters--watch for Christ, watch for covenants.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [36:12](#)

And Moroni actually twice equates the covenant with Israel, with the glory of God. And then we have in Moses where he says his, "Work and his glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." Well, the covenant is where we're promised eternal life. I mean, it's all intertwined here, but sometimes we miss a part of it. So it's fun stuff.

Hank Smith: 36:30 It is. And I didn't think we'd be talking Book of Mormon, that's fun because I think that, can I say this in the modern day, we talk more about I'm a child of God and I like to say we are, and so is everybody, but we have another level of understanding. We are also Abraham's seed. And what does that mean? And then that's when we can talk about the covenant and the last part that all the families of the world can be blessed. I mean, I just love that part as you've talked about so beautifully Kerry, that's what it's about. We're going to unite this family and bless all of the families of the world because of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 37:10 Right. And I think one part that is missed on us is that we don't understand the "Gathering of Israel" because we probably don't understand the Scattering of Israel.

Hank Smith: 37:20 And if you go back, if you do a little bit of your history and you look at what happened when Israel decided they wanted a King. They come into the promised land with Joshua centuries later, they want a King. And Samuel says, "This is a bad idea," but they go for it anyway. And they choose Saul, David and Solomon. It just kind of, "I told you it was a bad idea." There's a lot of, "I told you not to along the way." And then it divides into two separate kingdoms. You have the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom was called Israel. The Southern Kingdom is called Judah and they eventually both are taken.

Hank Smith: 37:51 And what we don't recognize is that Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, they're all part of the Scattering of Israel. That's why they talk about the gathering so much. They love Isaiah because he talked about the future gathering. I got to read, I do this with my students. This is from Elder Bednar from *Ensign* from the General Conference of 2005. He said, "I give them this part of the quote and see if they can finish it. 'We were foreordained in the premortal existence and born into mortality to?' and I'll stop it right there. Why were we born?" And the typical answer is, "To get a body, to get a body and to be tested." And that's not what he says. I'll show them the end. "We were foreordained in the premortal existence and born into mortality to fulfill the covenant and promise God made to Abraham."

Hank Smith: 38:42 I have two, nine-year-old twin boys. It'd be funny if their Primary teacher said, "Why did we come to earth?" And they said, "To fulfill the covenant promise God made to Abraham." Because that, we've forgotten it, Kerry You're exactly right. We've forgotten it. And some of us have missed it in the Book of Mormon entirely that we're not just here to do that. We are

here to bring to pass the promise gathering made by Isaiah. And I want to ask you Kerry about this verse and we've already read it, and please fill in any thoughts that you just had come to you. Section 27:9, about the prophecy of Malachi about Elijah, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think this is probably one of the most, if not the most quoted verse. It's in all of our standard works, it keeps coming up over and over again. And yet when I see it, I don't know if I quite understand it. Moroni quoted it to Joseph Smith. Jesus quotes it to the Nephites this verse isn't going away.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [39:44](#)

This is the second time it's in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Hank Smith: [39:47](#)

So how would you understand that? And then one other thing is why does he list of all the tribes, but why does he list? He lists Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but you also see Joseph there. One of the Twelve Tribes. And I will ask my students, I'll say, "Who saved the family from the famine?" And they all know it was Joseph. And I'll say, "Who's going to save them from the spiritual famine?" And again, I think the Lord has called on the tribe of Joseph or his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh to save the children. All right, I'm going to turn it over to you. What else? What are you thinking?

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [40:19](#)

So there are some really important elements in there. So first of all, we'll do the first part of the question then the second so, with the promise... and note how he says the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children. These are keys that were bestowed. And we know in the Kirtland Temple that Elijah and Moses come to restore keys, and they're both associated with the covenant and the Gathering of Israel, both of their keys are, we usually think of it as just sealing keys to perform temple marriage. But it's more than that. Again, temple marriage is specifically about sealing us together as a family with Abraham it's entering or leveling up more in the Abrahamic Covenant. So this idea is really, I mean, so let's take the way Moroni quoted it to Joseph Smith. "It is that our hearts are turned to the promises made to the father." We have to become more covenant conscious.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [41:16](#)

Family History is absolutely part of that. And doing temple work is absolutely part of that crucial parts. Let's not forget that, I'm not dissing that. But we lose some of the power in doing it, if we don't recognize that it's part of this great overarching covenant, that God wants us to turn our hearts to. So that again, I hope people read Genesis and Exodus as family history, every bit, as much as they read their grandma's journal. I hope we think of Sarah as much as we think of our pioneer ancestors or ancestors

that joined the Church in Zimbabwe or wherever else. I hope that we understand that what we're trying to do is have our family be part of this covenant and participate in the blessings promised to Israel. That's what I think those keys are about.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [42:08](#)

And then it's interesting that you mentioned Joseph, Joseph is mentioned in there along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He's that next line and then as you said, the next line down is Ephraim and Manasseh. So what happens is... and if we're going to talk about this, I think we need to have a little bit of a larger discussion and make sure we understand it correctly because the world doesn't want us to understand this correctly and has been trying to get us to misunderstand this right. Eve or Joseph receives the birthright blessing. And now Judah kind of does too. And that's another story, but Judah kind of does too. And he's going to have Kings come through him most especially Christ. So let's not ignore that. That's a pretty important thing.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [42:44](#)

But Joseph receives the birthright blessing. And when we hear birthright, we think power, privilege, prestige. It's called a leadership. It's for sure called a leadership. But when we hear leadership, same thing, the world has conditioned us to think power and prestige. It's conditioned us so much that Joseph Smith later, so you'll do this in a podcast at the end of the year, where it says, "As soon as you get a little authority, you use it for your vain ambition."

John Bytheway: [43:09](#)

Righteous dominion.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [43:11](#)

That's exactly right. That is not what authority or that's not what leadership is about. Leadership is a call to service. So Christ explains this well, when he talks to James and John who come to him and they say, "Let us sit on your right and your left hand." And he says to them, and I think this is an exact quote. He says, "You guys don't get it." You're not getting it.

Hank Smith: [43:31](#)

That's an exact quote.

John Bytheway: [43:33](#)

That's the exact quote. That's in my version.

Hank Smith: [43:35](#)

It was lost in translation that King James translators put it a different way. But I think it originally said in English, you don't get it.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [43:42](#)

And then he says, "The princes of the Gentiles want to exercise authority over them, but that's not how it should be with you. Whoever would be great it should be least, whoever's going to

be..." I can't remember now exactly. But you have to be the servant of all is what he says. That's what, according to Christ leadership really is, it's not authority or prestige. It's you serve, you're the lowest, you're the least you serve everyone else. So when Joseph is given a call to leadership, it's not to say you're better than everyone else. And when he's given blessings of great posterity and all sorts of other things, it's not so he can be more cool it's so that he has enough people to do what he's being asked to do. And what he's being asked to do is to gather all of Israel. And then as Israel is gathered, they need to gather all the world.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 44:30

And that's part of the benefit they're scattered because they're wicked and they need to be humbled, but the side benefit, and I think it's an intended side benefit is that once you're scattered to all the world, when you're gathered, you can bring the whole world with you. And that's exactly what they're supposed to do. And Ephraim and Manasseh as well. And Ephraim will be the lead of those two, but they both received this charge in this blessing. And President Nelson has been specific, they both have this charge to lead out in gathering Israel. And if you compare their blessings, they're given the same blessings. And Ephraim is told you'll be given more of it. But the more it seems to be like literally more people, more descendants numerically, so that you can do what I'm asking you to do.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 45:11

And that's what the birthright always was. The birthright child was given a lot of things he was supposed to do to take care of the family. So he is also given an extra inheritance or portion of the inheritance so that he was given the tools to do what he needed to do. And so that's exactly what this birthright or leadership call is for Joseph and his two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh is that they are given a task and God has giving them enough people and ability to go out and do that task. And that task is get the whole world to be part of this family, get them all sealed to me and to each other so that we can be exalted together and to have the kind of relationship that we should have with each other.

Hank Smith: 45:54

And God promised Abraham he would do that. And he's using the Latter-day, Ephraim and Manasseh and others. Those who can be adopted in to go out and be the net. I like what you said there, the Scattering is like a big net. I'm going to throw you all over. So when I gather you grab onto people, because I'm going to bring you home. And I think it's Nephi who says, they carry them on their shoulders. They carry them in their arms as if they're these service oriented people. Same in the Gospel of

John, the Savior washes their feet. This is how we lead in this church, in my kingdom.

- John Bytheway: [46:32](#) I like to tell my students being chosen doesn't mean to sit on a throne and be admired. It's more like being chosen to mow the lawn. And then we talk about to bear the ministry is one of the phrases in the Abrahamic Covenant. So it's obviously a blessing because we have the blessings of the priesthood and the gift of the Holy Ghost and everything that comes with it. But it's a burden as well. And so they're calling it now a lot of times, President Nelson, the work of salvation in any time you do anything that helps anyone to come closer to Christ, to make a covenant with him in the temple, you're helping to gather Israel. You're doing the greatest work in the world. So I'm excited to... I want to get your book, Kerry. I want to read it.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [47:20](#) I hope you do. And it may put you to sleep, but I hope not.
- Hank Smith: [47:24](#) John, I'm just going to have to say this, that I was reading up on my *Timeline of World History* and August 1830, which is when we were receiving this exact Section of the Doctrine and Covenants is when the lawn mower was patented by Edwin Beard Budding the exact same time. So I think you're inspired to talk about chosen to mow the lawn.
- John Bytheway: [47:44](#) You've been chosen to mow the lawn.
- Hank Smith: [47:45](#) Kerry, let's get back into the Section. We did do a little tangent there off into the House of Israel, but I think it was an important tangent.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [47:54](#) I mean it's actually the central part of the Section, but yeah.
- Hank Smith: [47:58](#) Yeah. The Lord's just not saying, "Hey, we're going to have a big sacred meeting and look, who's going to be there. It's going to be star studded." He names these people on purpose because this is the Covenant of Abraham.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: [48:11](#) And it goes with the next verse as well. Peter, James, and John who are Apostles. But again, those are people who restore the keys of the covenant. So anyway, sorry. Keep going.
- Hank Smith: [48:20](#) No, I think you're right on here. This meeting, when we said in 27:5, when the Lord said, "I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you." I thought of my new Testament, Luke 22, this ties in beautifully when the Savior's with his last evening with the apostles, this is Luke 22:18, "For I say to you, I will not drink of

the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." To me, that's a big verse. Because the kingdom of God, here we are, the Doctrine and Covenants, the kingdom of God is coming.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 48:50

And I think it's a clear illusion. I think when Christ says this in verse five of Section 27, he is absolutely alluding to what he'd told his Apostles. And he wants us to make that connection.

Hank Smith: 48:58

In Luke 22, yeah.

John Bytheway: 49:00

I think sometimes I've taught my students, "Oh, isn't this great, all the sacrifices that were offered pointed to those events of the Atonement and now the sacrament points backwards to those events of the atonement. "But now I'm seeing, as I'm reading these, it's, there's also a future sacrament reading that it is pointing to. And I like verse 14. And also with all those whom my father has given me out of the world that, yeah, those people are going to be here, but it sounds like we are too, or maybe have that opportunity that all of us will be there speaking of blessing all of the families of the world. And the future sacrament meeting.

Hank Smith: 49:44

Let's have Kerry answer that. But John, I really liked that, that idea of the sacrament isn't now just about looking backwards to the Atonement. It's looking forward to the Second Coming of the Lord. Here He comes. I think that's a crucial point, that could really change your sacrament experience, not just looking backwards, but also looking forward to the Lord's coming and having the sacrament again. All right, Kerry, over to you.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 50:08

Oh, no, that's right. And to the full fulfillment of the covenant. Because again, we're renewing the Abrahamic or all of our covenants at the sacrament and the full culmination of that is exhortation. But this is an important step along the way when we do this with Christ, right. All those whom my father had given me out of the world, which again, I think is a clear to both John 17 and, and John 6, where he talks about those whom the Father has given him. So this section alludes to scriptures all over the place, including the next part. The next part is all in Ephesians 6, allusion.

Hank Smith: 50:45

Before we go there, just wanted to mention that the manual has you go to D&C 110? And I thought, yeah, because a lot of these wonderful individuals who have been mentioned showed up personally at the Kirtland Temple to restore keys. And so I thought, Hey, I'm looking at the list here. This list sounds familiar.

- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 51:08 Yeah. Well, I think this is the prophecy that those keys will come and be restored. It's going to be a few years, about six years, but still they're working towards that.
- John Bytheway: 51:20 If anybody listening is able to go on a Church History Tour, hopefully they'll start those up again and open the sites, make sure you see the painting just inside the door at the Kirtland Visitor Center area, there's a line of angels coming down one at a time. And Joseph and Oliver, they're behind the pulpits of the Kirtland temple, it's beautiful.
- Hank Smith: 51:45 That's a wall [inaudible] right?
- John Bytheway: 51:47 I don't know if it's a [inaudible]. I wouldn't be surprised. It's beautiful, but just when I saw it. And I think of Hymn 110, I think of that line, "the visions and blessings of old are returning and angels are coming to visit the earth." And the look on Joseph's face in that painting. You've got to see it right inside the Kirtland Visitor Center. That always reminds me of this, sorry.
- Hank Smith: 52:10 Oftentimes I feel like, you know how you watch a fitness video and there's two really good ones. And then there's a modified version. I feel like the modified version sometimes in this podcast, because I had never realized that each one of these people that are listed in this section were part of the restoration. And I probably had never realized it just because of the inclusion of Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, but now Kerry's taught us, this is part of the restoration is the covenant. Then you've got Adam, Peter, James and John, Elijah, John, Elias. This is a restoration. We're going to bring everybody back at once and have a big sacrament meeting.
- John Bytheway: 52:52 You know what? It's elegant. And it makes sense. It's symmetrical. I mean, it wasn't just the first vision. That was the beginning of this delegation of all these others with keys was just makes me go. I love the symmetry. I love the elegance of that to use a couple of lofty words.
- Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 53:11 And even in the First Vision, in one of the accounts of the First Vision, Christ says that the reason he's appearing is because they've broken his Everlasting Covenant. And then in one of the versions of Moroni's visit, he says that he's there to restore the Everlasting Covenant. And it's all aiming. I mean, in many ways, the First Vision, the Book of Mormon, the building of the temple are aimed at being able to have this covenant fully restored. And that's what all the people here are associated with covenant and keys. All the people listed in here.

Hank Smith: 53:41 Here they are in Northern Pennsylvania and Joseph has no idea, I don't think. Maybe has some idea at this point that this meeting is going to take place, at least to my knowledge, at a place he's actually going to set foot out in the middle of Missouri. I wonder in his mind, if he's going, I wonder where this meeting's going to take place, and Lord's going, well funny you should ask about that because we're going to take a long trip.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 54:07 Yep. I'll tell you later, but this is going to take a while.

Hank Smith: 54:09 It's going to be a few years before all of this pans out. And I've noticed that in all of these opening sections, Kerry, the Lord kind of drops little hints here and there of things that are going to come later.

John Bytheway: 54:22 He's always preparing.

Dr. Kerry Muhlestein: 54:24 He's always just getting you ready for the next thing, and then ready for the next thing and ready for the next thing.

Hank Smith: 54:31 Please join us for Part II of this podcast.