

Follow Him

Episode 2

Guest: Dr. Steven C. Harper

Joseph Smith--History 1:1-26

“I Saw a Pillar of Light”

Show Notes

Podcast General Description”

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Sunday.

Podcast Episode Description:

Episode 2

Did you know that the story of the First Vision is the second greatest story ever told? BYU Professor, Historian, and Editor, Dr. Steven Harper takes us on a deep-dive into Joseph Smith History. From Joseph's humble beginnings to facing overwhelming odds, we see Joseph Smith as the hero of a great story, one that includes each one of us.

Part I focuses on the context of Joseph Smith's childhood, family relations and religious influences that culminates in the First Vision.

Part II focuses on the First Vision.

Timecode:

Part 1

- (00:07) *Introduction*
- (02:27) *The Second Best Story in the Scriptures*
- (09:07) *Joseph and Lucy as Parents and a Necessary Move*
- (13:13) (15:10) *Typhoid Fever (in New Hampshire)*
- (19:57) *The Smith Family, Finally Moves to New York*
- (24:31) *The Smith Family Chooses Methodism, Presbyterianism, or None of the Above*
- (29:22) *Look for Answers in the Scriptures*

Part 2

- (00:07) *Introduction*
- (01:56) *Is It All Lost?*
- (03:16) *“For a Time”*
- (04:09) *Seekers Discern Facts*
- (05:46) *The Most Consequential Choice*
- (9:19) *The First Words of the Restoration*
- (10:39) *1832 Autobiographical Account*
- (14:10) *The Creeds*
- (22:06) *Tell Your Story*
- (22:54) *The Accounts of the First Vision*
- (33:08) *Interrogate Your Assumptions*
- (37:34) *Testimony of Dr. Steven Harper*

Sources:

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“Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom God that ye should read them that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost.” Moroni 10:3-4

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/first-vision-accounts?lang=eng>

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“After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction” JSH 1:15).

It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!* (JSH 1:17)

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Biographical Information:

https://religion.byu.edu/steven_harper

Steven C. Harper is a professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University. In 2012 Steve was appointed as the managing historian and a general editor of *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*. He was named editor in chief of *BYU Studies Quarterly* in September 2018. He served in the Canada Winnipeg Mission (1990–91) and married Jennifer Sebring (1992). They graduated from BYU (1994). He earned an MA in American history from Utah State University, where his thesis analyzed determinants of conversion to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1830s. Chapters were published in the *Journal of Mormon History* and *Religion and American Culture* and awarded by the Mormon History Association with the T. Edgar Lyon Award for best article of the year and the Juanita Brooks Award for the best graduate student paper. Steve earned a PhD in early American history from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He began teaching courses in religion and history at BYU Hawaii in 2000 and joined the Religious Education faculty at BYU in 2002. That year he also became a volume editor of *The Joseph Smith Papers* and the document editor for BYU Studies. He taught at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies in 2011–12. His first book was *Promised Land* (Lehigh University Press, 2006), a study of Lenape or Delaware Indians' responses to a fraudulent 1737 land deal in colonial Pennsylvania. He also authored *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Deseret Book, 2008), *Joseph Smith's First Vision* (Deseret Book, 2012), and *First Vision: Memory and Mormon Origins* (Oxford University Press, 2019), along with dozens of articles.



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