



“All Flesh is in Mine Hand”

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:

Part 1:

Have you ever felt that your efforts fall short? Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat returns and teaches how the elders are called to travel from Kirtland to Jackson County, Missouri, and, “Preach by the way.” In their month-long travels, some work harder than others and the Lord addresses this and us and encourages us to remember that our testimony of the gospel is like a “talent.” This episode encourages us to serve and teach because the Lord is with us, as with the early Saints.

Part 2:

Dr. Dirkmaat continues teaching that as the difficulties persist and that the Lord commands the Saints to “be of good cheer,” and reminds us that the Savior is “in [our] midst.” We discuss where much anti-LDS literature has been discredited. Dr. Dirkmaat shares dynamic and compelling personal stories that will endow listeners with power because of and through our difficulties. If you only listen to one podcast this week, THIS IS IT.

Timecode:

Part 1

- 00:00 Introduction to the Podcast
- 00:44 Introduction to Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat
- 04:54 Background to Sections 60-62
- 08:10 Church Faces Difficulties with Headquarters Being in Ohio and Growing Membership in Missouri
- 12:17 Saints Found Success Teaching Native Americans but Government Stops Saints from Teaching
- 15:13 Saints Ask for Direction and Told to Preach Along the Way to Missouri and the Lord Isn't Pleased With Their Missionary Efforts
- 24:25 Northerner Saints are Mistrusted by Southerner Missourians and Begins a Rising Tide of Anti-Mormonism
- 30:57 Joseph's Spelling and Probable Accent
- 32:33 Difficulties Traveling by Steamship via River
- 35:42 Missionaries in Every Time Period Struggle Finding Success and Facing Disappointment
- 38:39 Tension Among the Saints Due to Temperature, Land Disputes, and Travel Difficulties, etc.
- 47:42 The Lord Gives Them a Terrible Experience Travelling via River in Order to Testify to Others the Benefits of Land Travel
- 52:43 Joseph Teaches the Saints Need to Expend Every Effort to Learn by Experience and Compare to Revelation
- 54:30 Satan Controlling the Water and Mormon Mythology
- 57:14 Ezra Booth Experiences False Expectations of Zion
- 1:01:05 For Times We Feel Forsaken by God
- 1:14:00 Elder Maxwell Describes the Knowledge of a Premortal Existence as a “Flood of Light”
- 1:15:00 End of Part I

Part 2

- 00:08 Ezra Booth Begins to Write Against the Church
- 03:08 Doctor Hurlbut Commits Adultery Twice and Then Fights Against the Church
- 07:26 Why Joseph Couldn't Have Written the Book of Mormon
- 09:10 Solomon Spalding Manuscript, Hurlbut's Acquired Affidavits Against Joseph and Booth's *Mormonism Unveiled* Beginning of Serious Antagonism Against the Church and Joseph Smith
- 18:40 No Plausible Explanation for Joseph Creating the Book of Mormon and Spalding Manuscript Discredited by LDS and non-LDS Historians
- 23:47 Joan of Arc Viewed Through a Historian's Lens
- 26:00 Dr. Dirkmaat's Personal Story with Anti-Mormons During Fast and Testimony Meeting (aka The Creation of the Dirk Moss Historical Society)
- 35:35 Ezra Booth Tries to Return to the Methodist Ministry but Dies an Agnostic
- 36:59 Section 62 Background: Joseph and Sydney Were to Travel Quickly and Missionaries Were to Walk and Preach on the Way to Conference in Zion in Order to Testify by Their Own Experience
- 43:02 John Shares Personal Story of Inactive Woman Appearing to Her Husband in the Temple, After She had Passed
- 44:39 Dr. Dirkmaat Shares Personal Story About His Late Brother and His Son Kai
- 48:06 Dr. Dirkmaat Shares His Testimony
- 60:04 End of Part II
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Biographical Information:



Gerrit J. Dirkmaat is an associate professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University. He received his PhD from the University of Colorado in 2010, where he studied nineteenth-century American expansionism and foreign relations. His dissertation was titled “Enemies Foreign and Domestic: US Relations with Mormons in the US Empire in North America, 1844–1854.” He worked as a historian and writer for the Church History Department from 2010 to 2014 with the Joseph Smith Papers Project and served as a volume coeditor/historian for Documents volume 1, the lead volume editor on Documents volume 3, and has continued to work as a volunteer editor for the Joseph Smith Papers project on Administrative Records, Council of Fifty, Minutes, March 1844–January 1846 and Documents volume 8. He is the coauthor, along with Michael Hubbard MacKay, of the award-winning book *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith’s Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon*, published by the BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book in 2015. He is also the author of dozens of academic articles as well. In 2015 he published a groundbreaking analysis of the differences between the originally recorded versions Utah-era sermons of Brigham Young and other Church leaders and those later published in the *Journal of Discourses*. This article, “The Prophets Have Spoken, But What Did They Say?: Examining the Differences Between George D. Watt’s Original Shorthand Notes and the Sermons Published in the *Journal of Discourses*,” won the 2016 Article of Excellence Award from the Mormon History Association. Before his work at the Church History Department, he served as the senior assistant editor of *Diplomatic History* from 2003 to 2009. He currently serves the Research Director for the Religious Studies Center and on their Review Board, as editor of the academic journal *Latter-day Saint Historical Studies* published by the Ensign Peak Foundation, and on the Church History editorial board for *BYU Studies*. He and his wife, Angela, have four children.

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EPISODE 23 • PART I

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat



D&C 60-62

Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their <i>Come, Follow Me</i> study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway, we love to learn, we love to laugh. We want to learn and laugh with you. As together, we followHIM.
Hank Smith:	00:00:18	Hello, everyone and welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name is Hank Smith and I am here with my engaging co host John Bytheway, welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	00:00:28	Thank you. We used to say at BYU when our fellow board members became engaged, they were engaged. You can never find them to do their Home Teaching anymore, too. It was tough.
Hank Smith:	00:00:41	Well, it came from our last interview with Alex Baugh, with Dr. Baugh, as we talked about anxiously engaged. Hey, I need to remind everybody, you can find us on social media, Instagram and Facebook. You can go to our website, followhim.co , followhim.co for transcripts, references, anything you need. You can also rate and review the podcast, we'd love it if you do that. John, who is our guest expert today, I got to tell you, I'm pretty excited.
John Bytheway:	00:01:11	We are excited to have Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat back and he did with us, what was a heck? Section 3?
Hank Smith:	00:01:17	Section 3, when we were just getting started. We were brand new podcasters John, now we know--
John Bytheway:	00:01:23	We're so experienced now. And so we're so excited to have him back because we had so much fun and since that time, I've seen him on <i>History of the Saints</i> , a bunch of other places. So let me refresh our audience's memory about Gerrit. Gerrit J. Dirkmaat is an Assistant Professor of Church History and Doctrine at BYU. He received his PhD from the University of Colorado, (go

Buffaloes!) in 2010, where he studied 19th century American Expansionism and Foreign Relations.

- John Bytheway: 00:01:54 His dissertation was titled *Enemies Foreign and Domestic: US Relations with Mormons in the US Empire in North America 1844 to 1854*. He worked as a Historian and Writer for the Church History Department from 2010 to 2014, with *The Joseph Smith Papers* project and served as a volume Coeditor, Historian for *Documents: Volume One*, the Lead Volume Editor on *Documents: Volume Three*, has continued to work as a volunteer editor for *The Joseph Smith Papers* project on *Administrative Records: "Council of Fifty, Minutes, March 1844 to January 1846*, and *Documents: Volume Eight*. How would you like everything Hank, that you had ever written or texted or posted to be compiled in a book one day?
- Hank Smith: 00:02:41 [inaudible 00:02:41] a word.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:43 I know. He is the co author along with Micahel Hubbard MacKay of the award-winning book *From Darkness Unto Light*, which I am still waiting for the notification from the Salt Lake County Library to go pick up. Maybe I should just go buy one from, *From Darkness Unto Light*, I was going to say. I was like, "John, come on." Joseph Smith is, let me give you the full title, *From Darkness Unto Light: Joseph Smith's Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon* published by Religious Studies Center at BYU and Deseret Book in 2015, the author of dozens of academic articles as well. Is that enough, Gerrit?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:03:20 Honestly, my name is enough. I don't think we need to-
- John Bytheway: 00:03:24 -I'm a third of the way through. This is great.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:03:28 I didn't send this one over in particular.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:33 I got this. I just grabbed it from the Religious Education website, but we're just glad to have you. Welcome. And thanks for coming back. In spite of us, thanks for coming back again.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:03:46 Well, I'm glad to be here. Happy to spend some time with you guys.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:49 You knew what we were when you picked us up. That snake story thing.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:03:53 I'm carrying you down the mountain now.

Hank Smith: 00:03:57 I would encourage everyone who hasn't heard our first episode with Gerrit, Dr. Dirkmaat to go back. It's Episode Four. Definitely want to go back. He tells some just wonderful personal stories about his degree. He also tells us about these Stolen 116 pages. Just really and his testimony there is just fantastic. So if you haven't heard that one, please, after you listen to this one, or right now, go back, listen to that one first.

Hank Smith: 00:04:28 I have a couple of comments before we get started, John, if that's okay. Dr. Dirkmaat Gerrit and I shared a hallway for a couple of years at BYU. And I heard some really fun stories. And I thought our listeners deserve to hear at least one of these stories. So the one I'm thinking of Gerrit, I'm going to ask you about two today, but the one I'm thinking about is one I just don't know how to work into our interview. So I'm just going to ask you about it. And that is now I don't want to build it up too much, because people might be like, "Well, that wasn't a great story."

Hank Smith: 00:05:02 But for me personally, I have thought about that story, and people that I've told this story to, I can probably tell it, the people I've told the story to love it. All right, Gerrit, we want to take up all the time we can in this week's lesson, having your expertise here, we're studying Sections 60 through 62 of the Doctrine and Covenants. All three of these are received in the first half of August of 1831. So let's back up a little bit. Let's remind everyone what brought Joseph Smith and some of the members of the Church to Missouri, and what they did there, and now that it sounds like they're going to head back soon.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:05:39 Well, the culmination of what the early believers all wanted was to know where the city of Zion was going to be built. And it's interesting, if I were to have a congregation of Latter-day Saints today, write down what you think the most important doctrines of the Church are, right? I mean, if you made the list long enough, somewhere between having a year's supply of food storage and above, understanding how to use ham radios, would be the idea of a city of Zion.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:06:20 And it's so incredibly foreign, our concept of Zion to what these early believers. I mean, I'm obviously being a little bit in jest there. But my point is, most of us are driven today in our testimonies by things like Joseph Smith's Vision, the Book of Mormon, other doctrines that have been revealed, many, many early converts to the Church are converted specifically because of the idea of a city of Zion, the idea that there would be the city of God, a place where everyone was equal, a place where there was nothing but Christianity and love in it.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:07:02 So they're driven by that. And so they're driven so much by it that, in your previous podcasts I've covered the fact that you actually will have the ability for people to be deceived by false revelation surrounding Zion, like with Hiram Page, because so many believers are so desperate to have that promised blessing.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:07:27 Well, finally, in the summer of 1831, Joseph Smith receives the revelation that they're all to go to Missouri, and that when they got there, God would show them the place where the city of Zion is to be built. This is a pretty big deal. And Missouri is 1000 miles away, at least that part of Missouri is 1000 miles away from where the Kirtland area is.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:55 I'm going to stop you real quick, Gerrit, I heard someone say once, "Oh, how convenient that Joseph Smith said the city of Zion is in Missouri, so close to Ohio." And I'm like, "Wait, wait, wait!" Tens of miles.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:08:13 Technically, if you were in eastern Missouri and in Western Ohio, then I guess it would only be like 500 miles away from them. The problem is, they're going from Eastern Ohio to Western Missouri. And before, there were as many interstates. I mean, obviously, we haven't had Harry Truman as president yet. And so, the reality is, it is not an easy journey. It's incredibly far. It's incredibly difficult. It usually takes, if you're going fast, three weeks, four weeks, five weeks, six weeks, depending on the time of year, the weather, it's massive. And actually, this space will create an ongoing problem for the Church.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:09:01 Because as the Church begins to grow in Missouri, the members there are 1000 miles away from the headquarters of the Church and there's no telephones and there's not even any telegraphs, and so they are at best two months away from getting any answer from Church headquarters, if you were to call it that. So you're in Missouri, and there's a question that comes up. "Oh, what do you think we should do about this? Well, we better ask Joseph. I write a letter, I send it."
- Hank Smith: 00:09:33 [inaudible 00:09:33] a month later.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:09:35 It takes a month to get to Ohio, and if Joseph opens it, first of all, he's there, he's not off preaching somewhere, he's there when the letter comes. And the moment he gets it, he opens it, reads it, hurriedly jumps into a desk and writes a reply back and then sends it on the next passing horse. Then, if that happens, you're two months away from that. So imagine you're like, "Joseph, it's April now we have to find out if by May we're going to buy this land."

Hank Smith: 00:10:11 We did it yesterday.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:10:12 I guess, hopefully you did. I don't know what to tell you. I mean, those exchanges don't happen like that, again, I'm being a little facetious. But the reality is a communications breakdown is going to be an ongoing problem as the Church continues to have two locales, the headquarters of the Church in the Kirtland area where Joseph is, and now the eventual headquarters, not only of the Church, but where the New Jerusalem and the city of Zion is to be built there in Jackson County. And as more and more members move, the tensions created by that are going to become a lot.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:10:51 But for our purposes, there was so much anticipation surrounding the city of Zion, that when they arrive, and you covered this in a previous podcast, Joseph is going to receive a revelation of where the temple is to be built there in the city of Zion. The problem for many of these people that they've been walking for four or five weeks to get down here with the idea that, "When we get to that place, I imagine it's going to be the most beautiful place that's ever been." And it's a dirty Western Missouri gambling town with a bunch of horse thieves and liars in it.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:11:39 I mean, it is not, no part of it to suggest that, "Oh, yes, this is clearly going to be Zion." I mean, it's a real disappointment for some of the people who took the journey. And there's not a lot of prospects for preaching to the people that are there. I mean, there are some people there, not very many people have listened, that the intention of going to this part of Missouri in the first place for all over cadre, and those who went on the mission to preach to the Native Americans was to go into what's today, Kansas, but was Indian Territory then, and preach to the Native Americans.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:12:17 But those American Indian tribes, while apparently quite receptive to those Latter-day Saints that were preaching, the missionaries were almost immediately driven out by the Federal Government. It's actually the first time that the federal government is going to take a stance that is essentially an anti-Mormon stance, and the Federal Government will say, "Well, you can't preach to the American Indians without a permit." Okay, well, can I get a permit? "No." Well, then that.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:12:48 So it makes it, "Well, you can't preach without a permit. And also, you can't get a permit." And so they've really been stymied in their efforts to try to do that. And so there's some angst, obviously, these people have been gone from their families for a

while. There are those who are moving to Missouri who are going to be a part of Missouri, but there's this idea that they need to return.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:13:12 And so the revelations that we're covering today all occur in the context of people beginning to return back to Ohio, how they're going to return back to Ohio, dealing with some of the fallout of the disappointment that occurred when God declared that the place that the New Jerusalem was going to be built was a place that in many of these missionaries' estimation, was the least likely spot for Zion.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:47 Beautiful place, not beautiful surroundings, circumstances.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:13:55 I don't know. I mean, they didn't have air conditioning. So I mean, they're there in the summer, it's western Missouri. If you've ever been in Kansas City in late July, without air conditioning of any kind, I mean, I could see the reason why you're like, "New York's climate seems a lot better. Are you sure? Maybe we can check on the revelation again."
- Hank Smith: 00:14:18 This doesn't seem right. Edward Partridge writes to his wife like-
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:14:22 I don't know what happened but wow.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:28 All right. John, you want to go to?
- John Bytheway: 00:14:31 Sure.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:32 Quite a broad question for you then.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:34 I served my mission in the Philippines, and I thought that I had experienced the max of heat and humidity. And I, on a Church History Tour, was at Adam-ondi-Ahman one time and I thought, "Oh, this is the max of heat and humidity. And do we have to grab our stuff and come here one day?" Because it was warm, and like you said, "They didn't." Boy! So let's jump into Section 60 and look at some of the content. What are some of the things that we ought to see here for sure, Gerrit?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:15:13 Well, I think the background of Section 60 is the question that is, how are we to return or are we to return back to Ohio? I think, John Whitmer, when he writes the earliest heading we have to this revelation, he just calls it directions to some Elders to return to their own land, is the background that they have for it. And the reality is, all these men have been called by revelation to go

to Missouri, and told how they were to go to Missouri and told how to preach along the way.

John Bytheway: 00:15:52

In companionships, right?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:15:54

In companionships, and that they're to preach to people along the way, that there were all kinds of things they were supposed to do as they went. And D&C 60 is essentially the, it is the book end to that. It is that, okay-

John Bytheway: 00:16:08

You didn't do it.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:16:09

... Now you're to go back, and this is how you're to go back. And so that's what you initially get out of Doctrine and Covenants Section 60 is how directed at almost a micromanagement level, this first trip to Missouri is, God called through revelation, not just Joseph saying, "Hey, would you like to go to Missouri?" God calls through revelation, everyone who goes to Missouri, and then he's going to, again, by revelation, return those elders back that are going to go back.

John Bytheway: 00:16:40

And some are going to stay, Colesville Saints, W. W. Phelps.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:16:44

Yes. Most of them are not all there yet. Right? If they're coming in a larger group, it's going to take them some time to get there. In fact, some of the elders who were called initially to go and be a part of this conference in Missouri, they're not there yet. And the reason why they're not there is because they took seriously the commandment that God had given, that they were to preach all along the way.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:17:12

And there were some who, well, it's a month-long journey to the Western Missouri to begin with. I don't know that I need to spend a ton of time in Western Ohio preaching to people. And so that's actually going to come out and some of these revelations, the Lord is going to chastise people for the fact that some of you didn't really make the effort that I wanted you to make in trying to preach the gospel on your way down here. Instead, you got down here quick, and you hid your talents under the bushel and, you candle under, but you hid your talents, and you-

John Bytheway: 00:17:50

You mixed your parables there, that was.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:17:54

I did, I mixed my parables, that's what happens when you have not a very good scholar on, but the reality is that, at least some of them didn't meet the approbation of God in the sense of how

he expected them to preach. So there are still people coming. For instance, Hyrum Smith is not there for the dedication of land design. He's still coming, because he was actually taking his time on his way down preaching the way that he thought they were supposed to. So they're most people that are going to be permanent residents of Missouri. Well, I think we all know, there are no Mormons that end up being permanent residents during this time.

- John Bytheway: 00:18:41 Some were permanent.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:18:42 But the ones who plan to stay there until the Millennium only to be driven out by mob violence, most of them are going to be arriving later, this initial missionary group is coming with primarily just the men who are going down there, a few of them are going to stay, most of them are going to go back and then the larger groups of actual migrating Latter-day Saints families, they're going to be coming later in the year.
- John Bytheway: 00:19:10 All right, let's go into Section 60, Gerrit, what do you see here?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:19:16 I think part of what we talked about there and some of the initial verses, right, God says that he's not well pleased for those people that wouldn't open their mouth. Why? Because they had a fear of man. And Latter-day Saints are, they're not even Latter-day Saints yet, right? Members of the Church of Christ who believe in the Book of Mormon, these people are not well received primarily in most places that they go.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:19:48 So you could see how, for some of these people, was a very difficult prospect and you're on this really long journey that is arduous, that's in the middle of the summer, that requires a great deal of physical effort, you start preaching to a few people, they tell you very unkindly to move along, you can see how quickly, after the first couple 100 miles, that you might say, "You know what, even if I go try to talk to those people, they're not going to listen to me." So if they're not going to listen to me, even if I go try to talk to them, I'm not going to expend any more of my effort to do that.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:20:23 And probably, there's a lot of people who've served missions in more modern times who've had similar thoughts, right? I mean, I went to Wisconsin on my mission, there were very few people who ever listened to us at all. And certainly a thought would arise all the time. Like, look, whether I spend the next two hours knocking on these doors or not, the results are actually going to be the same. Only my hand will hurt more. I mean, there's not...

So reality is that you can see how continual rejection can help fuel that kind of apathy towards preaching.

- John Bytheway: 00:20:59 I remember, as a missionary, I was like, "Oh, I just kind of avoid this confrontation," avoid this awkward moment. To me, that's fear of man, right? I think nowadays I'd probably be a little more bold in my 40s than I was when I was 19. But I can see that being fear of man. Not necessarily, I'm scared they're going to hurt me, but just scared of the interaction, fearing the awkwardness.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:21:28 I mean, I think human nature is such that we are social animals, and that we want to be comfortable socially, and we want to be liked. And when you're talking about religion today to somebody, right? I mean, if you want to make someone feel uncomfortable, you're like, well, I would love to talk to you about God for a minute. Okay, let's dial it back. I mean, imagine in the 19th century, when people's religion is much more interwoven into their society, in their culture, but they also feel so much more passionately about it.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:22:08 And if you happen to be departing from what the accepted, protestant narrative is, which, of course Latter-day Saints are, I mean, it is a fundamental absolute of Protestantism in the 19th century in America, the Bible is the only revealed will of God. And you have these Latter-day Saints saying, "Well, let me tell you about the Book of Mormon."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:22:31 I mean, so their opening line is essentially going against 300 plus years of absolute protestant bedrock theology that there could be any truth, let alone an entire book of it, outside of the Bible is just, it's a blasphemy to them. And so my guess is rather than just disinterested stares, many of the people reacted to them with a kind of, "Well, you're a blasphemer. If you're trying to tell me that there's truth outside of the Bible, well, then you're a liar, you've been deceived, you're a blasphemer." I can imagine. We have accounts of missionary efforts that didn't work as well, from other times during this era.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:16 And I think too, we are talking about the fear of man, but this is, like you said, this is the frontier, too. It's not like there's a cop around every corner to help with things. I mean, I don't know if they were ever physically assaulted or anything, but perhaps threatened. What do you think, get off my record [crosstalk 00:23:34]?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:23:34 We don't have a record of that at this early period. I mean, although the Federal Indian Agents in the Indian Territories did

threaten to take all the missionaries to jail, and Fort Leavenworth if they didn't get out, I mean, so they are getting that. I don't know if there are any specific threats, but I think more, it's a matter of, no one's listening, but it is a very rough place.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:24:01 I mean, I think it's one of the Knights who explains that, the only way that you could tell the difference between the Sabbath day or not in the area was that the saloons and gambling houses were more filled on Sundays than the other days of the week. I mean, it is certainly, it is a rough place to be a religionist, it certainly probably does not help that these are primarily almost exclusively northerners coming into what is a hotly contested Southern state.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:24:38 I'm not saying they're preaching abolitionism all the way but the reality is, they lived in very different worlds. And so they would have been mistrusted as outsiders even if they were, as Episcopal was the day is long and in an accepted religion, there would have been a great deal of mistrust. They're coming in, they're preaching a new religion. I don't know who they are and then you add to it this kind of cultural divide between people from New England and Ohio and people from a specially contested slave state like Missouri. I'm sure there were many difficult encounters.

Hank Smith: 00:25:23 The Saints there, did they know that Joseph had been pulled out of the John Johnson Farm in the middle of the night? Did they know that Sidney Rigdon had been dragged by his heels?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:25:33 Because this is happening before that, right? So what will start to happen in late 1832, in part as a result of Ezra Booth's apostasy that we'll talk about here in a minute, what starts to happen is what I call a rising tide of anti-mormonism, that it really hits Ohio and Missouri at about the same time. And it became violent, first in Ohio, with the assaults on Sidney Rigdon and Joseph and the loss of Joseph's child as a result, I mean, in 1832. But then it became widespread violence in Missouri in early 1833.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:26:16 So here at this early stage, in early 1831, I think for the most part, the reason why there's not as much violence is there's very little threat, right? I mean, the reality is, I don't know what towns everybody lives in, but if like six people showed up from some weird Protestant sect in your town and started preaching, and they started saying things like, "We're going to own this town, this is God gave this to us." And they have obviously a high pitched voice like that. I mean, your primary reaction would

not be like, well, I guess we've got to go tar and feather. Your primary reaction would be.

- Hank Smith: 00:26:59 "They're crazy."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:27:00 "Those clowns are crazy, but whatever. I mean ..."
- Hank Smith: 00:27:04 There's so few of them.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:27:05 Exactly. Generally, what starts to cause physical problems for the Latter-day Saints, is that, as they gather, the very fact that they're gathering presents political, economic, religious, and societal social problems, those problems don't really exist when there's not a large group, right? So that happened in Colesville, in New York, right? In Fayette, there aren't any mobs because nobody lives there, right, except essentially, for the Whitmore's extended family. No one lives there today.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:27:48 But in Colesville, when you got to the point that a significant portion of the town, I mean, nothing near a majority, but I don't know what the percent is. And any number I throw out, Larry Potter could later listen and be like, "That's not even close." Even if it started to approach 15 to 20%, that is a big deal. That's transforming what your town is, it's transforming your relationships in the town, it could possibly transform economies, the local politics.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:28:20 So when it's just a dozen, two dozen people that are there and then leaving, I mean, the reality is in order for people to react violently, usually, they have to feel like that there's something that is long term that they are fighting against. I mean, I'm sure initially the people that are there are basically saying, "Well, this is great, actually, because these newcomers are coming here and buying our stuff. And we're of course charging them outrageous prices, because they're just showing up with nothing but desperately wanting to live here." I mean, I'm sure we could talk to any Real Estate Agent, and they would tell you that their favorite client is the one who absolutely has to live in this town no matter what, and has to be on this street no matter what.
- John Bytheway: 00:29:10 We can do that.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:29:11 If you're going to pay me a premium, we can do that. I mean, and that's essentially what the Latter-day Saints are doing, right?
- John Bytheway: 00:29:17 We gotta be here.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:29:19 They're moving to this area that is, I mean, literally no offense to any Latter-day Saints in Kansas City today. But at the time, this is essentially the most worthless land in the United States. It's as far west as you can possibly get. It has such poor connections to the remainder of not only the state of Missouri, where almost all of the settlement is in the St. Louis area, right, it is so disconnected from the rest of the country that, I'm not saying the land isn't fertile, the land's beautiful, the land is fertile land. But it doesn't matter how fertile your corn crop is, if it takes you three months to get it to a market somewhere, right?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:30:02 I mean, the reality is it is the cheapest land that exists. And so when you have a group of people moving in, who desperately have to live in a specific part of this land that's relatively inexpensive, I think at first, it's actually seen as a boon. I can sell my land for twice what it's worth here. Right?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:30:25 But as more and more people come, right? And look, that's the reality of migrating peoples all the time, is that often they're seen as an opportunity at first. And then as more and more come, then they're seen as a threat. And that plays out, I think, for the Latter-day Saints in Missouri. What's funny is that, there are a couple of times when you're reading Joseph Smith's writing that you wonder, I mean, it seems to come across the heat, like he's not educated, right? So he's trying to spell things phonetically a lot of the time.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:31:01 And one of the words that he misspells multiple times the same way is the word church. Right? He misspells the word church with, instead of C-H-U-R-C-H, he spells it with an I. And I think it's because Joseph's from New England. I mean, I know that every church movie, we see him and he's got this wonderful Utah accent. He's like, "We've got to get the brethren out." But the reality is, the guy's born in Vermont, he's raised in New Hampshire, he's not from Utah. And so it makes you wonder if the reason why he's misspelling that is if, the reason why he pronounces it is because it's not the church, it's the 'chirch.' New England going to the 'chirch.'
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:31:49 And the other name that he misspells is actually Edward Partridge's name, he leaves the R out of it, because it's not Partridge. It's Partridge type 10. "Me and Edward Partridge going to go to the chirch, and maybe catch a Sox game after." I don't know what his accent sounded like. So again, I don't want to make anyone feel uncomfortable. If you don't want to think of Joseph talking about the first vision with a kind of New England accent, you don't have to.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:32:16 But I'll tell you what the New England Saints should probably be like, "Actually, Joseph sounded a lot more like us than you people out in Utah." In Section 60. So one of the other things I think to take away from it, is not only of this chastisement, they're directly commanded by God to how they're supposed to go home, right, they're supposed to either make or purchase a craft, which they're going to try to take the river down. Now, where Jackson County sits, where they're at, is on close to anyway of the Missouri River.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:32:51 And the idea, of course, is you couldn't do it this way going there unless you run a steamship. And there's really not a lot of steamship travel up that far that early. But you can go with the river down the river, right? So you can get in a canoe or get on a flat boat or something and you can float down the river, you don't have to walk as much and that'll take you all the way into St. Louis.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:33:14 Now from there, you're going to have to probably go over land because, the Ohio River, you'd be going up river on the Ohio and you'd be going up river on the Mississippi, whichever way you decided to go. But it's verse five and six that tell them that they need to essentially get some boats and take their journey speedily to St. Louis. And then they're going to go from there, Joseph's told that they're going to go through Cincinnati on the way back, which makes sense.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:33:48 They are told that they aren't supposed to again, preach on the way back. The reason why I point that out is they're specifically commanded to get some watercraft in order to take their way back. And that matters because of the sections that follow, at least one of them is directly resultant of the fact that they follow this commandment. They're commanded to take this water route. And the fact that they actually listen, it's going to lead to some issues, I don't, spoiler alert, I don't want to let everyone know immediately.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:34:30 But I think verse 14 is also pretty good. "After that has come up into the land Zion, has proclaimed my word thou shalt speedily return, proclaiming my word among the congregations, the wicked, not in haste neither with wrath, nor with strife." So this idea that again, don't try to just make the journey. Also, not with contention. I mean, that idea with not with wrath, not with strife, that suggests that maybe there might have been some on the way to try to make it a more peaceful exchange.
- Hank Smith: 00:35:05 My dad used to quote to me verse 13, "Thou shalt not idle away thy time." He loved that one

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:35:11 Dads love most scriptures that have the word idle in it. And that was before there was the internet. So I can only imagine now, that's-

Hank Smith: 00:35:21 Get moving, get working. I remember.

John Bytheway: 00:35:24 I think I like the context, though, because as Gerrit alluded to a minute ago, "Neither shalt thou bury thy talent." The idle part was not preaching the gospel, by the way. Isn't that right?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:35:42 Yeah. And even when they got there, I mean, I think the missionaries that were already there had, in some respects, stopped trying. I don't know how many future missionaries are going to listen to this, or, but the reality is, just about every mission you go on, you will find yourself feeling like your efforts don't really matter, they don't bear fruit. And that becomes a really difficult thing. I mean, that it's hard as a human to have negative result, negative result, negative result, again, and again, and again, and again, and to still have faith that your next result might be different.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:36:37 I know we all hear the missionary stories of, "There I was. It was 400 degrees below zero, my companion wanted to go home. But I said, 'Wait, there was one more house at the far end of that street.' And then that person's baptized, and they become an Apostle later." Whatever, those are the missionary stories that we share with each other all the time. And because they're miraculous experiences. But we sometimes miss the whole other part of that, and that is, remember, I started the story with we'd been out tracting for 15 days, 15 hours a day, and no one had talked to us at all.

John Bytheway: 00:37:19 That's [crosstalk 00:37:20].

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:37:19 I mean, the reality is, I think Satan tries to convince us that our past failures are in some way indicative or predictive of our future results and tries to wear us down. And if you're going to serve a mission, I mean, the reality is, you actually have no idea what person is going to listen next. And you might have been cursed off the doorstep from the last person, and this person embraces the truth of God.

Hank Smith: 00:37:56 Searching for Israel, right, it will speak into them. I wonder if verse 15 is, I honestly don't know if Parley Pratt is around when this revelation is given. But it says, "Shake off the dust of thy feet against those who receive the not."

John Bytheway: 00:38:11 “Not in their presence.”

Hank Smith: 00:38:12 “Not in their presence,” unless she'll provoke them, because we just talked about- [crosstalk 00:38:17].

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:38:16 Might be a reference to D&C 49, shaking the coattails-

Hank Smith: 00:38:21 Right in front of them.

John Bytheway: 00:38:24 Everybody looks at Parley.

Hank Smith: 00:38:27 Gerrit, sections 61 and 62 are not received in Jackson County now, but on the river. Are these the only two sections received on the Missouri River? I think they probably are.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:38:39 Yeah, at least for right now, during this time period. These are the ones that are received here. I mean, and it's because it's for their journey back. So with Section 61, they went and got the craft that they were told to get, right, in Section 60. And in fact, Ezra Booth will bitterly complain about the fact that he had to go find canoes. The group is traveling back in these canoes, because they've been told to by revelation.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:39:11 And there's some simmering hostility that's going on. I mean, it's interesting, like if you've ever been on a trip with a group of friends, right, you can make three days on a trip with a group of friends and things are fine, right? You get 12 or 13 days in and you don't care how good that guy's Missouri accent is, you've got a problem. Benjamin Franklin right, he said, "Fish and houseguests stink after three days."

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:39:50 I mean, the reality is, these guys have been on this arduous trek together to get down there, in the heat in the sun and a month plus journey to get there. And there are some tensions that really start to boil over in part because of the disappointment that, I think some people really thought that the city of Enoch is going to come down when they got there, that they'd see the streets paved with gold. And this would be, it'd be like a Garden of Eden spot. And then this is where the city rebuilt and that wasn't the case.

Hank Smith: 00:40:23 These are thoughts all in a month.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: [00:40:24](#) Exactly. Well, of course, because we're “God's Chosen Elders” here, we're going to be baptized. I mean, there's not going to be water enough in the Missouri River to baptize the people that we're baptizing. And none of that happens. So in many ways,

you have this physical exhaustion, combined with this, the familiarity that being with each other so much. And then there's the temporal, really disappointment of, that's not what I thought Zion was going to be.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: [00:40:56](#) And now look, not everyone complains about the location of Zion. But, as you learn in one of your previous episodes, I mean, it's bad enough that Edward Partridge and Sidney Rigdon get into a massive fight over this, and it's a fight that they have, it will actually take a long time before they ever seem to be reconciled. So you already have some bad feelings among the group that didn't quite seem to get [crosstalk 00:41:24].
- Hank Smith: [00:41:23](#) Joseph Smith was involved in that argument as well, Partridge always talked about that.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: [00:41:25](#) Yes. Because look, Partridge is a businessman. He's got an eye for real estate. And when Joseph says, "This is the place where the temple is going to be built." I mean, for Partridge, it's kind of like, "Well, I can see like 1000 other places that are better than this, why is it here? Why don't you check again?" Not to be trite about it. But I think that Partridge has just sacrificed unbelievably, in a very short amount of time, in order to be a part of the movement.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:42:03 And it really seemed like he felt like Joseph was wrong. And then, of course, Sidney Rigdon tries to jump to Joseph's defense. And one thing that no one's ever said about Sidney Rigdon was, he had such a mild personality that he never ... So I mean, the problem is that when Sidney Rigdon gets involved, you're going to know about it. I mean, the guy is going to come at you, and he's going to come at you hard.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:32 He's got away with words. He's good with words.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:42:34 He's very good with words, but he's also very biting with them, right? And so all of us have been in a situation where we've had a fairly sharp disagreement with someone that we otherwise really care about. Even when you both slap each other's backs and say you're sorry, those words, they linger. There's some lingering sting from that. Well, maybe he was, I mean, every time Hank and I get in an argument, he's like, "You're just a hack . . . and you aren't even good at all." I'm like, "Ah." He says he's sorry, but I really feel like he means it.
- Hank Smith: 00:43:08 Maybe he really means it.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:43:10 I feel like Hank means it. But anyway. So I think there's that, there's some lingering things. And then there's apparently, we don't know the nature of it. But as they start going down the river, there's really some grumbling going on among the group, to the point where Oliver Cowdrey starts to try to chastise people that, "Hey, you need to straighten up and fly right." And so there's just some bad feelings going on.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:43:37 And in the midst of all of that, this was not the pleasure cruise down the Nile that they thought this was going to be. The Missouri River today, it's been dredged, and there's been dams built in it. And it is a navigable waterway. In 1831, it is a treacherous, treacherous river and even after they start trying to make improvements on it, it is a regular thing that there are massive catastrophes that occur on the river. I mean, there are shifting and uneven sandbars. It is all the time that things can get submerged into the water.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:44:26 And in this case, that's exactly what happens with the group. There's a sawyer or sire that is essentially a tree that is just under the water, but it's a fallen tree, right? So the tree is on the back and then falls into the water. The bottom is now stuck into the water, the other parts now sticking up, and it's going to present this huge snag opportunity for any boat because the water's going over it, but it can't draft all the way over it. So if you're in your canoe and you hit it-
- Hank Smith: 00:44:56 You're going to hit it.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:44:57 Well, you're going to flip, right, or you're going to, something's going to happen. They run into one of these at McGill Wanes Bend, which is a place essentially lost to history because since they've redone the river and improved it, and it nearly capsizes Joseph and Sydney's canoe, these guys, it's not like they've been taking swimming lessons at the YMCA. I mean, not everyone knows how to swim in the 19th century.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:45:23 I mean, it's not everyone who does. And so it's a terrifying experience. They all make their way to the bank. But not only have they been carping at one another, not only are they all exhausted from this journey, now they feel like their lives were just about threatened. And again, if you're looking for a way to criticize, why were we in that boat in the first place? Well, because Joseph received a revelation telling us to be in that boat.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:45:52 So in the context of D&C 61 is it's this revelation that's received on the bank of the Missouri River, after they've had this kind of, I

don't want to call it a near death experience, but they were certainly terrified with what had happened in their water journey, a water journey that they think that they were only on because God gave them a revelation, telling them that they should do it.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:46:18 Something that God talks about in, the Lord talks about and D&C 61, he first starts with verse two in saying that, "Whose sins are now forgiven you, for I, the Lord forgive sins, and I'm merciful, one of those who confess their sins with humble hearts, verily I say unto you that it's not needful for this whole company of mine elders be moving swiftly upon the waters, whilst the inhabitants on either side are perishing in unbelief."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:46:46 So it was always kind of odd, right, that God kept telling them they needed to take their time and preach to people along the way, but at the same time, told them to take this water route to St. Louis. I mean, I don't if you're going to like shout to people as you go down the river. You're like, "We're Mormons!" How quickly can you teach a First Discussion? I mean, if you're on someone's door, and they're like, "I'll give you one minute." You're like, Joseph Smith, most people just going to spring meeting even though call them by different for names. We believe that God lives, [inaudible 00:47:15] you're going to . . . and you're trying to get it out.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:47:16 And clearly, there's not a whole lot of opportunities to preach the gospel while you're in a canoe going down the river. And so that seemed like maybe a contradiction. And then the Lord explains that here in verse 4, he says, "I suffered it that you might bear record, behold, there are many dangers upon the waters and more especially hereafter."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:47:42 So what these guys are going to do when they go back to Kirtland, is they're going to say, "Listen, you just take the overland journey, okay? That you don't want to try to take the river journey. I know it looks inviting, but it is a nightmare that is so dangerous. It's not worth it." And so apparently, God allowed them to have this experience so that they would be able to know firsthand how treacherous the river route actually is, so that other people would not take that route. So it's an interesting concept of where God apparently put them in a position where they would have a very negative experience, so that they could, with experience, testify to other people about what it is they should do. You get that out of D&C 61.

Hank Smith: 00:48:37 Very interesting. A lot of people are going to be going back and forth between Kirtland in Missouri, and it might be like, "Oh, we'll take the river now."

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:48:45 And look, eventually in Nauvoo, obviously, the Latter-day Saints are going to use river traffic all the time, right. I mean, they're even going to have the *Maid of Iowa*. I mean, they're going to utilize it. But, frankly, the Missouri River up to Kansas City, at that time, was just not as navigable as the Mississippi River, which was also filled with all kinds of trash. I mean, if you read 19th century newspapers, you will read catastrophe after catastrophe that occurs on the river. The reality is, they are not easily navigable, but they're so tempting to navigate, because it's so much easier and so much and you can carry so much more freight if you can navigate them.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:49:38 But there's that danger. And so that really becomes the practice to try to avoid the water route to Zion after 61. I mean, they aren't going to have too many years to be able to worry about that because within less than two years after that they're going to be driven out by mob violence.

John Bytheway: 00:50:03 I had just never, I'm so glad you talked about this, because we've all been to Nauvoo, got to the end of that and we see the Mississippi and there's that big Keokuk, is it-

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:50:14 A dam there.

John Bytheway: 00:50:16 A dam there that slows the flow, evens it out, whatever, I just had not thought of this and I was going to ask you to compare the Missouri to the Mississippi as far as width and stuff, I'm not even sure.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:50:28 Boy, I don't even know at the time, right. So the reality is the way those rivers look today to us, especially near those urban centers, is just nothing like they looked like back then. We have flood control levees all along them. So what do we know? We know from the time period that this particular stretch of the Missouri River from Kansas City to about a third of the way to St. Louis, was particularly treacherous that people got capsized, that there were problems, that there were boating accidents that occurred there all the time. And so, we don't really know what it would have looked like. But there's at least a pretty regular record of shipping disasters along the Missouri there.

Hank Smith: 00:51:27 And I like the principal here, I like the principle here of you, so I put you in a difficult situation, now we're going to get out of it.

But now you can tell other people, don't do that. Don't go that way. I'd like that idea. I think the Lord sometimes uses that in our lives, we can learn big time lessons, and he lets us learn them. And then he's going to say, pass that along.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:51:51 I've seen it in other places where God knows that there is no replacement for actually having the experience. I mean, I guess we could all say that about mortal life to begin with, but in the Council of Fifty, there's an experience where the Saints are trying, I mean, the members of the Council of Fifty are trying to write the new Constitution for the location of the Kingdom of God, when they finally leave Nauvoo. And imagine the pressure of "I'm writing the Constitution for the Kingdom of God, right? I mean, obviously, how am I going to get that right?" And at one point, they simply are frustrated, and they just asked Joseph, "Well, can't you just receive this by revelation? Because anything we write is going to just, I mean, obviously..."
- Hank Smith: 00:52:41 He's going to throw it out anyway.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:52:43 It's going to be wrong. So why don't you just do it? And Joseph teaches them that, actually, no, you need to create the very best thing you can create and expend all your efforts in this thing. And then I'll receive revelation. And the reason why he says, there have always been some great big elders in this Church, who we know come along, who would criticize. Frankly, if Joseph received the Constitution by revelation, some of the people who thought themselves to be a little bit more intelligent than Joseph would have behind the scenes be like, "Well, that's not how I would have put it. I don't know, maybe if Joseph knew what I knew about it, then he probably would have changed it."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:53:19 And so instead, what Joseph says is that it's necessary for the elders to exercise all their efforts in this thing. And then when they see that they cannot get the revelation, and I can, they will know from once wisdom flows. So if you've already expended all of your efforts to do it, then you can't, when Joseph receives, they go like, "Well, that's what I was going to say." I mean, you can't, because you had a chance to say it, and you didn't say it, because the revelations actually coming through the prophet.
- Hank Smith: 00:53:48 Remind me of Doctrine and Covenants, Section 1 where write a preface and toss it.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:53:53 Well, and I think that's exactly-
- Hank Smith: 00:53:55 They tore that to shreds.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:53:57 They don't say that specifically in the Council of Fifty minutes. But I think that the men involved who asked Joseph to receive it, I think that's exactly what they have in their mind. I mean, because it's W.W. Phelps, it's John Taylor, they know that that was the case with the preface to the Book of Commandments, which became D&C 1 that they tried and Joseph eventually received the revelation. Well, let's just cut out the middleman here, let's not try and just have Joseph receive the revelation.

Hank Smith: 00:54:26 No, it's good for you to try, because then you can see.

John Bytheway: 00:54:33 There's just a question that, for my, I haven't done as much reading and studying as you have Gerrit, but that maybe we overdo the idea of the destroyer riding upon the waters. Was it specific to everything that you have just taught us about the Missouri? Is there more than that? Do we overdo it? And did W.W. Phelps have a vision of it?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:54:55 He has a vision where he's the one who sees the destroyer riding upon the water. I mean, it's unclear exactly when he sees that, if he sees that while they're going through their crisis of nearly being drowned in the river and that makes sense, that that's when they see it. But actually, it's not a solely W.W. Phelps' vision. While he's the only one who sees it, there are other members of the group who say they hear it, that they they can hear this interact... And I'm not entirely sure what the destroyer Satan sounds like, but whatever it is, it was such that they all experienced this. So you can look in *History of the Church* volume, it will say that the other brethren heard the sound but didn't see the vision.

Hank Smith: 00:55:47 Interesting.

John Bytheway: 00:55:48 I personally, and maybe I'm way off here, Gerrit, you can correct me, but I think we've taken the idea that Satan controls the water. I remember hearing that as a missionary. Why can't missionaries swim? Satan controls the water. I'm like, why did we baptize people in water? Why do we have the sacrament with water?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:56:05 Well, I always use it as an excuse, why do I shower?

John Bytheway: 00:56:11 That thing controls a lot.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:56:12 It's easy when you have a practice that's in place to then try to find scriptural reasons for that practice that exists. If that's what the prophet wants us to do, then that's what the prophet is

going to tell us to do. And we have to be careful because, even though sometimes our looking beyond the mark is spawned by fervency, right, it's spawned by a desperate belief. Sometimes we get so enamored with what we think is going to happen, that when that thing doesn't happen, it becomes a faith crisis.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:56:53 We see that with Zion. That's certainly what happened with Ezra Booth, Ezra Booth joins the church because he sees Joseph Smith heal somebody. He's a Methodist minister, so certainly he's educated, he knows the Bible. He is very skeptical of whatever it is that these Mormons are selling, right. But he witnesses Joseph Smith heal someone's paralyzed arm.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:57:23 Well, that's a pretty big deal. And to him, it's essentially irrefutable. He buys into the idea of Zion, he buys into a member of the Church, he's an elder, he is going down on this mission. But in his mind, he had built up that they would have ridiculous amounts of success preaching, that everyone would believe this. And that, essentially, Zion was going to drop down out of heaven, that when they got to the spot of the place, it was going to be the most beautiful place that ever existed. And it was a dirty frontier gambling town filled with houses of ill repute and saloons. I mean, it was nothing that he expected.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:58:02 Now, the thing is, Joseph had never said that, Joseph had never said, "Hey, we're going to go down to Missouri, we're going to baptize like, seriously 1000s of people on the way, folks, so it's going to be." But that's what he had come to believe. And so when his projected reality failed to match the actuality of circumstances, it caused a faith crisis for him. It seems to not help that there was bickering and difficulties among the elders. I think he thought-

John Bytheway: 00:58:34 The big argument between-

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:58:35 Elders of God should never have a problem with each other. I mean, clearly, right? Because Christ's Apostles never argued about things. Obviously, they did, right? I mean, the reality of this false expectation can really cause problems. And I think that's-

John Bytheway: 00:58:53 It happens today.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:58:54 All the time.

John Bytheway: 00:58:55 I had the expectation of Church History, and when I started reading and learning, it didn't meet my expectation, and no one

ever, how did we create that expectation? Where did it come from?

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:59:07 And sometimes things are more innocent, sometimes they're not. I mean, the reality is, sometimes people deliberately try to deceive people to create their own following in order to build themselves up, I mean, to try to make themselves a light, to demonstrate, "Oh, look, I have this special knowledge." I just think it's, I know history, right? Well, I mean, someone listening to this who's another historian is like, "Not as well as I do." I'm sure okay, not as well as you, but I mean, I study history, that's what my training is in, but I'm not a prophet, right. I'm wearing a lavender shirt here for a reason.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:59:49 I mean, I don't have any access to how God interprets these revelations. I can place them in historical context. They have this terrible accident where they nearly all drown. They don't receive the revelation right then, they actually, they kind of bicker and argue and they have this discussion through the night and really by the next morning, they've come to terms with one another.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:00:17 And it's in the aftermath of that kind of spirit of peace that's pervaded, that this revelation's received, which is part of the reason why I think God's saying, "Listen, your sins have forgiven you. Yes, you're mortal, but now you're coming on back." And you get that out of verse 37, where he says, "Inasmuch as you've humbled yourself before me, the blessings of the Kingdom are yours." Right?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:00:43 And probably, verse 36, is also very uplifting to your listeners. "What I send to one, I send to all, be of good cheer little children, for I am in your midst, and I have not forsaken you." That idea that you're little children, which is exactly what Jesus, you become like a child in order to inherit the Kingdom of God. I think that we feel an awful lot of times in life like God has forsaken us.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:01:11 And I think it's in part because there's a lie that is repeated, sometimes unintentionally and sometimes very intentionally, that we tell ourselves that if only we're doing everything that's right, the bad things aren't going to happen to us. I know we talked about this a little bit, we talked about D&C three and Joseph and Emma losing their first child. This is also happening in the aftermath of yet another catastrophe for Joseph and Emma, right, that they're going down there, having lost their next set of children, their twins.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:01:52 And I think it's really easy for believers who are sacrificing so much for God to start to wonder why they're still terrible, bad things happen to them. And it is hard. I mean, in the past couple of months, I lost my brother, he died very unexpectedly, my youngest brother. And he left two little kids under the age of two at home, and a wonderful, loving wife. There's a lot of horrible people in this world. And they're still rolling around, right. And when you're faced with catastrophes like that, I think it's a natural thing for us to wonder, God, things have been really, really bad. Why are they so bad? It's actually the question that has perplexed the religious, in every religion from the dawn of religion. And that is, why is this world so terrible?

John Bytheway: 01:03:04 Why suffer?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:03:06 Why? Why is there suffering? If there's a God who can stop suffering, then let's see it. And I think God in these revelations and further ones, you saw this with the death of Polly Knight, he had to remind them that this world has tribulation. But it's not about this world. We are living about this world, we are living for the next world. What makes Christianity great, what makes the message of Christianity great is that while this world is terrible at times, they're suffering at times, there is going to be a time when there is no suffering, there's going to come a time when there is no tears, where there is no ill treatment of others, where there is no bigotry and hatred. There's going to come a time when everything that you've lost is going to be restored to you.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:04:02 And that's in this next life. And I think that that's part of what God is trying to remind them here, look, you guys have had a rough go of it. I'm still with you. I haven't forsaken you. Life is just hard. Things are bad. That's how this mortal life is. And I hope that anyone listening, I mean, I hope anyone who's suffering has some kind of bomb that's given them from God, that they know that at some point, they are going to be recompensed, at some point, God is through, the power of the Lord going to overcome their suffering, and possibly not until the next life. But that's the only one that really matters, because that's the one that lasts forever. That's the whole point of what Jesus taught.

Hank Smith: 01:04:59 Again from the Book of Revelation, right, "God shall wipe away the tears--"

John Bytheway: 01:05:04 [crosstalk 01:05:04] "from your eyes."

Hank Smith: 01:05:05 ... Do away with suffering and pain. I love that verse 36.

John Bytheway: 01:05:09 That's beautiful.

Hank Smith: 01:05:10 "Be of good cheer little children, I have not forsaken you."

John Bytheway: 01:05:12 "I have not forsaken you."

Hank Smith: 01:05:14 You might think I have, I promise you I haven't.

John Bytheway: 01:05:17 "In this world, you have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." But there's that waiting period, President Benson called it, the wicked think they're getting away with something, or the righteous think where's my blessings. But there's a waiting period as was the case with Job and Joseph And I think that having, there's such a hopeful thing that as believers in God, we know there is a reason, there must be a reason. And as you just said so beautifully Gerrit, a God of justice will, there will be, things will be restored to us. I think, if Joseph Smith, if I got it right, "All of your losses will be made up to you and the resurrection by the vision of the Almighty, I have seen it." Joseph Smith said, I love that one.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:06:06 And that's what I think is really what gives us hope. And at the same time, he tells them to be of good cheer. I mean, it can be easy in this world that's filled with horrors, to curl up into a ball, and think about how awful things are, and dwell upon how terrible they are. And yes, look forward for that blessed day of Zion or the resurrection or something that will end this horror show. But that's not who Joseph was. All of our accounts of him and even the account he gives him himself, right, that he had a native cheery disposition, right. He suffered all kinds of absolutely unfair, horrible things that happened to him.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:06:57 And yet, he greeted people with a smile. He loved other people that were around him. And I hope that that's what we can at least try to do. That we can expect and understand that this world is filled with all kinds of horribly unfair suffering that God has promised through his prophets will be made up to us in the next life, in some way that we don't understand, in a time we don't comprehend, all of our suffering will be made up.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:07:30 And that we can try to as cheerfully as we can go about this life and recognize the blessings that we do have. At my brother's funeral service, my older brother commented on the fact that my brother Bryant when he was born, it was very bad delivery, premature, all kinds of complications, and he nearly died and was in the hospital for a month. And my brother commented on it, he said, we can look at this as the most unfair thing that's

ever happened and the worst tragedy, or we can look at it that we almost didn't have Bryant at all. We should have lost him when he was a two-week-old. And we got 37 years with him that we never should have had, by a miracle he survived and that doesn't fully assuage the loss, but it is at times like that, that you are grateful that you know that you are going to see your loved ones again.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:08:43 And not because it's a "myth or cleverly devised fables," but because Joseph Smith saw Jesus Christ. Jesus is resurrected, and if Jesus is resurrected, then all of our losses, everyone we've lost is going to be resurrected.
- Hank Smith: 01:09:00 Amen.
- John Bytheway: 01:09:00 I thought of a Book of Mormon verse. This is Alma the elder, he's being, he and his people have been enslaved by Amulon. And this is what it says. Mormon writes, "And now came to pass, the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brother were made light, the Lord did strengthen them, that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord." I'm okay if it just says, I'm totally fine if it says, "They did submit with patience to all the will of the Lord." Like I'm good there. But he says they did submit cheerfully and with patience. And that reminds me of that verse 36, "Be of good cheer, submit cheerfully."
- Hank Smith: 01:09:44 That's [crosstalk 01:09:45] Liberty Jail too, "Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power." Out of Section 123, right.
- John Bytheway: 01:09:52 And Gerrit's the epitome of cheerfulness, and yet here he's going through this difficulty. Gerrit, when I heard about your brother, I mean, the same thing happened to me in December, my oldest brother passed away and it just was, and then my father last month and I know you lost your father just a couple of years ago.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:10:14 A few years ago.
- John Bytheway: 01:10:15 But you're the epitome of cheerfulness, you really are. And it's not a fake cheerfulness, really, the gospel has made you a cheerful, happy person. And that's not to say you're never sad, and you never grieve. There's a place for those. But I think what Elder Scott once said, "These difficult things that happen to us are laid on the background of a very happy life." They are kind of laid as portions on a background of a very happy life.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:10:46 Reminds me of President Hinckley quoting the Jenkin Lloyd Jones, the newspaper editor.

John Bytheway: 01:10:55 "Some putts don't drop."

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:10:56 Exactly.

John Bytheway: 01:10:57 "Some beef is tough."

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:10:58 Saying that it's the rail journey, right? That it's slow and chugging and problems all over, but it's occasionally blessed with beautiful vistas and thrilling bursts of speed. And that's the reality. I mean, we live in a mortal world, which I think, as you get further on this podcast, this revelation will be revealed to people, and that is that a lot of this, our premortal life is one of the most important aspects of dealing with the suffering we have in this life.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:11:33 Because all of us chose to come here knowing, not specifically what terrible things would happen to us, but we've been around, we saw what mortal life was that it was filled with inequity, it was filled with disease, it was filled with sickness, it was filled with betrayal, it was filled with all kinds of horrible things.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:11:56 And knowing that, we still said, if that's the only way I can become like my Heavenly Father and my Heavenly Mother, then that's what I'm going to do. And so, I mean, we chose to be a part of that. And so, again, I'm not saying we chose our individual trials. But we weren't tricked into this either, right? It wasn't like it was a timeshare presentation. And we were showing a whole lot of, like actually that does sounds pretty good.

John Bytheway: 01:12:24 Ice cream and pizza.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:12:25 "No, like if you go down, you can't even believe it. I mean, there's this amazing stuff down there. Wait till you meet the mosquito, boy, you'll love that. "I think we knew full well what we were getting into when we came into it. And we knew that it would be terrible. And yet, we made that decision. And we just don't remember that we made the decision.

John Bytheway: 01:12:49 But you're right, it's a crucial piece of our doctrine, you signed up for this.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:12:55 It's really one of the only ways that we can sort out the reason why there is suffering, and we can sort it out in a way that others can't. Because if you believe God created everything out of nothing, and created you out of nothing, just whenever you were conceived, and that you didn't exist before that, well fundamentally then, the suffering that you go through, I mean, not only could God have mitigated it, I mean, there's a real question as to why God created you with an immortal spirit, if he knew you're just going to burn in hell forever.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:13:28 I mean, he already knows whether or not you're going to heaven. Why did he give you an immortal spirit then, right? Like, I'll create you out of nothing for my own will and purpose, and also you're going to burn in hell for eternity. There you go. I mean, not only in a mortal sense.

John Bytheway: 01:13:41 What kind of being is that [crosstalk 01:13:44]?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:13:44 As that starts to be revealed more, the idea of this preexistent life in Joseph's revelations, I think that helps an awful lot that this is not our beginning.

John Bytheway: 01:13:56 This is Act II.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:13:57 Certainly isn't our end.

John Bytheway: 01:14:00 It's Elder Neal A. Maxwell, I believe that was him that used the phrase about the knowledge of the premortal existence as a wonderful flood of light. That sound familiar? And it is, it changes everything, we're in the middle of, we're in the hard part, and it's a very short part of this long existence and this little testing. President Packer, you remember "The Play and the Plan," he called it Act I, Act II, Act II, and we're in Act II that and he said it's characterized by test trials, temptations and even tragedies. Nowhere in Act II he said appears, "To live happily ever after. That's reserved for Act III."

Hank Smith: 01:14:44 Please join us for Part II of this podcast.

EPISODE 23 • PART II

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat



D&C 60-62

- John Bytheway: 00:02 Welcome to Part II of this week's podcast.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 00:08 Maybe this is a good place to transition into talking about people who didn't take this advice very well. I mean so one of those is Ezra Booth. Ezra Booth has this miraculous conversion experience, is so disappointed by Zion, even more frustrated by the way home that really a month later, by September, his preaching license is being taken away from him and he's essentially being cut off from the Church. But Ezra Booth does not go quietly into the night.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 00:44 Ezra Booth, he begins writing, I think in part because he's trying to find a way to get back into his ... I mean he used to have a job. It was being a very prominent Methodist minister. Well, one way to lose your job as a Methodist minister is to become a Mormon elder. So that's not his life anymore.
- Hank Smith: 01:04 Trying to get back in.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 01:04 So he's writing back to Ira Eddy who's one of the leaders of the Methodist groups there in Ohio. He is writing to him about this in a very, very, very critical way, essentially saying, "Well, look, I must have been deceived because this is not what we thought," and writing scathing letters against Joseph Smith, against the Church. He really becomes the first concerted effort to put into writing anti-Mormon attacks from a former member of the Church. There had been other people who'd certainly said negative things about Mormons.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 01:46 Eber Howe was writing all kinds of negative stuff in his newspaper there in Painesville, just outside of Kirtland. You'd already had Alexander Campbell dedicate a great portion of his publication to what a fraud the Book of Mormon is and things like that, that Joseph Smith just wrote it, and other arguments that aren't really that great. He hadn't met Joseph, so he didn't realize, "I guess Joseph couldn't have written this." But here you have Ezra Booth who was an Elder and is able to use the fact

that he had insider information to really stir up negativity against the Church.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 02:30 Now, he publishes a series of letters that are published in the *Ravenna Ohio Star* newspaper. You might hear about them at some point, *The Joseph Smith Papers*. We'll quote from them or talk about them multiple times. Ezra Booth's letters are just this real attack from the inside of this former apostate. Of course, we see that happen multiple times going forward, but this is really one of the first concerted efforts. Because it's an internal attack, it ends up being more devastating.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 03:08 He's able to fuel the fires of anti-Mormonism in Ohio, and antagonists of the Church are able to say, "Look, here's someone who was one of their Elders. He'll tell you how he was duped by them." In much the same way antagonists of the Church today who leave it will say the same thing, "I'm an insider. I know what it's like." That's true of anyone who leaves any movement under negative circumstances. They claim that they have the real understanding. It's really a forerunner of what will become the most concerted effort of written anti-Mormonism from the time.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 03:50 That's Eber Howe, that newspaper editor, not only is he going to gleefully repeat the things that Booth has to say but, in early 1833, another very big or important apostate, I mean it seems kind of weird to say it that way. But a guy by the name of Doctor Philastus Hurlbut is going to be excommunicated from the Church for adultery. And then he's going to beg to get back into the Church. He's going to tell Joseph, "I'm so sorry. Please let me back in." So Joseph will let him back into the Church, and then he'll promptly commit adultery again and get cut off again. Now, this time-

John Bytheway: 04:32 Now, hang on. You said, "Doctor." Is he a doctor?

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 04:39 No.

John Bytheway: 04:40 Okay.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 04:41 His parents named him Doctor. This is a really good tip for those of you who are about to have children, if you want your son or daughter to sound like they really succeeded in life, go ahead and give them a name like Doctor. I've always said this would be like naming my son MVP of the NBA Finals Dirkmaat, and then you got to call him that. It's his name. It's his name. And then however he turns out in basketball.

John Bytheway: 05:10 It reminds me of when people used to tell me about the King Follett Discourse when I was a kid-

Hank Smith: 05:12 King Follett, that's what I was just thinking.

John Bytheway: 05:14 I was like, "What was he king of?" That was his name.

Hank Smith: 05:15 King of what? Or what about the framer named Gouverneur Morris?

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 05:21 Yeah, yeah. Gouverneur Morris. Yeah, very well.

Hank Smith: 05:23 That's his name. You're like, "Wow."

John Bytheway: 05:25 So Doctor is his first name.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 05:27 Doctor Philastus-

John Bytheway: 05:28 Philastus.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 05:29 ... Hurlbut, the good Doctor, the good Doctor who's anything but. In fact, his-

John Bytheway: 05:33 He commits adultery again. That's what you said.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 05:35 Yes. It seems to be a pattern. He is going to become very important to Church History because he is going to claim that not only does he have all this insider information, "Because I was an Elder in Mormonism." Not as many men were ordained to the office of Elder then as are now. It wasn't universal. But it was still also a play upon the fact that in the Protestant community generally, an Elder was a pretty big deal in a church, especially in the Presbyterian church. I mean it meant you were in the leadership of the church.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 06:15 Many of the early converts were Presbyterians. You've probably seen this in newspaper reports today. I mean every so often there'll be a Latter-day Saint who commits a crime and the news media will make a really big deal about it. "So-and-so, an elder in the Mormon Church," which to every Mormon-

Hank Smith: 06:40 A High Priest.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 06:41 Yeah, exactly.

Hank Smith: 06:41 A High Priest.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 06:41 A High Priest ... So he was over 50 then? We have a democratized priesthood where essentially every worthy male-

Hank Smith: 06:48 Every male.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 06:48 ... member receives it. But that's just not the case among Protestant churches. People don't have titles unless they actually have large positions-

Hank Smith: 06:56 So when they hear, "I was an Elder, it's ooh."

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 06:58 Yeah. It's a helpful way.

Hank Smith: 07:01 He was second only to Joseph.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 07:03 He has this insider claim, but then he's going to make a much more fantastical claim. He's going to claim that while he was on his mission in Western Pennsylvania, he found the actual source of the Book of Mormon. He is the originator of the claim that a former minister by the name of Solomon Spalding-

Hank Smith: 07:24 Solomon Spalding.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 07:24 ... had actually written the Book of Mormon. Because part of the problem was, again, Alexander Campbell dismissed the Book of Mormon out of hand because it wasn't the Bible and the Bible's all that mattered. So he went through the Book of Mormon to try to find every place where it wasn't the same as the Bible to prove, "See, this can't be true. It's not the Bible." So Campbell, very blithely, like, "Joseph Smith ..." In fact, he says, "It is certainly the work of Joseph Smith himself as Satan is the father of lies." He doesn't know Joseph, so his conclusion is, "Joseph Smith obviously wrote this."

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 08:02 There's a couple of problems. The initial reactions of the Book of Mormon are, "Well, I'm just going to dismiss it because this is obviously garbage," or, "Well, I mean Joseph Smith just sat down and pounded this out apparently." The problem is if you, A) see lots of people reading the book and they start to be convinced by it. It's one thing when it's crazy person you don't know, but what happens when it's your brother or your sister? What happens when it's your wife? The argument, only idiots would believe this is from God, is not as powerful an argument when you know the people that are converting. Now you need a better explanation.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 08:42 Second of all, if you know Joseph Smith, if you know Joseph Smith, it becomes harder to say, "Oh yeah, I'm sure he just wrote this all four years ago and he just put it all out there." I mean it seems beyond his capabilities. Well, Solomon Spalding solves both of those problems. Why is it that people are "falsely," falsely I'm putting in air quotes because it's not falsely, but they're saying falsely, being convinced of this Book of Mormon? How is it that it's as well-written as it is? Well, I know why. Because a former minister who, of course, knew the Bible backward and forward, he wrote a book that he intended to be what they called at the time a romance.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 09:28 That sounds as if it was going to be something that would be on a Lifetime Movie Channel at some point. It's a Hallmark celebration. But that was 19th century terminology for what we would today call a novel. A romance is something that's not ... It's fiction. It's a fiction story, that Solomon Spalding wrote this fictional book. Of course, because he's a minister and knows the Bible backward and forward, he works all kinds of biblical stuff in there and that's the reason why when people read the Book of Mormon they think that it sounds like scripture because this pastor wrote it.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 10:06 Oh, by the way, why is it written in an ability that's well beyond Joseph? Well, because it's this educated pastor who did it. Now, of course, the best part of this claim is that Solomon Spalding is dead. So that makes it impossible to go ask Solomon Spalding. So Hurlbut's claims are apparently he begins making these public rounds. They are very dramatic and, in fact, very ... He makes threats against Joseph Smith.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 10:39 Apparently at one point says that he is going to wash his hands in the blood of Joseph Smith and makes enough threats against him that even in a time when it's very difficult for Latter-day Saints to get any kind of justice in the courts, Hurlbut is actually charged with making threats against Joseph's family and is convicted of it and is essentially placed on probation and has to put up a bond saying that he'll keep the peace. So Hurlbut's going to be hired by Eber Howe, this newspaper editor.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 11:10 He's going to be hired by him to go back to New York and Pennsylvania to collect as many negative affidavits about Joseph Smith as he possibly can. He's going to collect these all in a book, and he's going to publish them in this book called *Mormonism Unveiled*.
- Hank Smith: 11:28 -Unveiled.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 11:29 *Mormonism Unveiled* is the first comprehensive anti-Mormon book. I kind of transition to that from Ezra Booth because Ezra Booth makes his claim in writing and in public, attacking the Church from the inside, and it kind of transitions to a little while later Philastus Hurlbut doing something like that, with him and Eber Howe conspiring to kind of do this on a much more grand scale.

Hank Smith: 11:51 Does Eber use Booth in the book as well?

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 11:57 Not directly. He's not interviewing Booth, no.

Hank Smith: 12:02 But he uses it in his newspaper?

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 12:04 In his newspaper, they're certainly going to reference what's being published in the Ohio Star.

Hank Smith: 12:08 So Hurlbut goes back to Palmyra. Who's there? Anybody who likes Joseph Smith?

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 12:17 It's funny. Why did Joseph leave Palmyra? Because there was so much persecution, he had to get out. And then when you go to Palmyra and ask people about Joseph, surprisingly, people didn't like him. It's a really weird thing.

Hank Smith: 12:29 Shocking.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 12:29 I went to the place where we drove him out of town on a rail, where we were planning to tar and feather him when he left town with Emma. But, luckily, the doctor was able to intervene and stop them from doing that. Their plan was to physically-

Hank Smith: 12:46 That's a different doctor. It's a different doctor.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 12:49 Yeah, different doctor. McIntyre, I think is that doctor. But their plan is to physically assault Joseph is how angry they are. So, look, Philastus Hurlbut is paid to go back to Palmyra and Harmony and get negative affidavits. Surprise, surprise. Being paid to get negative affidavits, the guy comes back with negative affidavits. It's stunning. I'm sure that was a sample set where he asked everybody and, "Every single person I talked to said negative things." I mean he's clearly going to people who already have an ax to grind, and he's having them say things like, "Oh yeah, Joseph Smith told me that he never had any plates and that what he really loved to do is just lie to people."

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 13:40 I mean, frankly, when you read many of the affidavits in *Mormonism Unveiled*, they're really bad. I mean they're just, "Oh yeah, Joseph and his family were totally addicted to lying and they would actually brag to everyone about how good they were at lying." Actually, no, you don't. You're either really, really bad at lying, therefore you brag to people about it. There are just so many things. That book and that Solomon Spalding claim, it provided people with an explanation of where the Book of Mormon came from for years, really throughout most of the rest of the 19th century.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 14:26 Educated people who wanted to have a way of dealing with that book ... They were easily just able to say, "Oh yeah. Sure, it sounds like it's good because it was written by that pastor."
- John Bytheway: 14:37 Minister.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 14:38 There were claims in it like, "Oh yeah. Every name in the Book of Mormon ..." I mean even Solomon Spalding's kids got in on the action. They would later claim to people, "Oh yeah. My dad used to talk about Lehi and Nephi all the time from the book that he had written." And then they eventually found the Solomon Spalding manuscript. They found it and a non-Latter-day Saint compared it to the Book of Mormon and said there's not any names that are the same in both of them.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 15:11 There's no part of the story that's the same and, in fact, said some other explanation of the origin of the Book of Mormon must be arrived at if one's to be had. So for decades, very intelligent people, I mean the halls of Congress talked about the fact that when they were trying to deal with the Mormon problem that it was just a Solomon Spalding forgery. It's all spawned from this era of these earliest apostates attempting to undermine the church. So we don't know. We don't ever know where it is that attacks on our faith are going to come.
- John Bytheway: 15:52 I just think this Philastus Hurlbut, Doctor Philastus Hurlbut, I think the arguments against Joseph today still come from those affidavits.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 16:08 If you're reading something negative about Joseph Smith from his formative years, from when he was getting the plates and the translation, almost all of it is going to come from *Mormonism Unveiled* and the Philastus Hurlbut affidavits, almost all of it.
- Hank Smith: 16:30 From a guy who had been excommunicated for-

John Bytheway:	<u>16:33</u>	Adultery, adulteries.
Hank Smith:	<u>16:35</u>	... multiple adulteries, who has been paid to go back to get dirt and brings it back with him.
Dr. Gerrit Dirk...:	<u>16:41</u>	Eber Howe himself has a dog in the fight. I mean he's not a fan of religion to begin with. He's not a fan of organized religion. He feels like that there's a lot of excesses. So he's making fun of Latter-day Saints when they first show up. I mean when Parley Pratt and Oliver Cowdery show up preaching, he makes fun of them in his newspaper right away. But over the course of time, things become much, much more personal for him. First, his sister joins the Church.
Dr. Gerrit Dirk...:	<u>17:12</u>	Suddenly, again, it's one thing to like, "These crazy idiots. Why would anyone ever believe anything they have to say?" And then my sister joined the Church. And then his wife joins the Church. I don't imagine that the mealtimes at the Howe homestead were ... I mean she not only joins the Church, she's actually one of the women that we have on record as having donated money for the Zion's Camp march to go redeem Zion. So he has a very personal interest in this too. Obviously, we all have personal interest in the fact that we believe and we know people who believe.
Dr. Gerrit Dirk...:	<u>17:49</u>	But when we're dealing with religion, kind of like we talked about the last time I was on, the reality is whether or not Joseph Smith saw an angel is something that you can only know through God. You can read Joseph's account and ask God. If someone says in an affidavit, "Yeah, Joseph told me that he didn't really have the plates, that he made that up and then just told people that he had the plates," that's great. That's wonderful. Thank you for your commentary on it. It can't overturn the fact that Joseph is saying that he had a miraculous experience, and that miraculous experience is that an angel appeared to him.
Dr. Gerrit Dirk...:	<u>18:32</u>	People can say whatever they want. People said that Jesus was a wine bibber and a blasphemer, and they were wrong.
Hank Smith:	<u>18:40</u>	I think it's important for our listeners to understand, anyone who's maybe even new to the Church, that this is no other plausible explanation that anyone has given for the production of the Book of Mormon. There is none. There's no cohesive argument that anyone has made that said, "I know how he produced it." There's all sorts of, "He's a religious genius. He's a crazy whatever." But there's still, to this day, not any cohesive,

"This is when he wrote it. This is where the drafts were." There's not one.

- Hank Smith: [19:14](#) Another explanation does not exist. I think that's an important thing for people to understand.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [19:17](#) There's certainly not one that's universally accepted even by non-Latter-day Saint historians. There are lots of different claims. I mean there are certainly people who say, "Well, Joseph's just a religious genius," in which case, it just becomes much harder to explain why all of his other writing from the time period doesn't reflect that at all. Well, that's because Oliver Cowdery was a religious genius. Okay. Well then how come Oliver Cowdery's other writings from the time doesn't reflect that at all? Well, that's because Sidney Rigdon was secretly already a believer.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [19:44](#) He came to Palmyra. He hatched this plan with Joseph Smith, and then he went back to Ohio. He pretended to get converted, and that's how the Book of Mormon was written, because Sidney Rigdon wrote it. The problem is there's no evidence for that at all, except for it would help you sleep at night. Like I said, I call that Unisom Anti-Mormonism. It's what would help me sleep at night. But that's not what historians do. Historians deal with what facts actually exist. The reality is when you read most books that talk about the history of Mormons from a non-Mormon perspective, they generally try to pass over the actual creation of the Book of Mormon pretty quickly.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [20:28](#) That's because there isn't a really good argument. Now, look, there are obviously books that are written when the specific topic is the origin of the Book of Mormon. But I'm thinking of Daniel Walker Howe's book that he wrote for Oxford on the history of the United States during that time period, when he covered the Book of Mormon and he says, "Look, true or not, this is an impressive literary work." But he doesn't really attempt to try to tell his readers where he thinks it actually came from.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [21:04](#) Joseph is saying that he created it, and I think the historical default has to be, look, outside of some other reason, then Joseph has to be the one who's doing it because that's what he's saying. We don't have any other credible arguments. And then what do you do with the fact that he's clearly not capable of producing that? Well then-
- Hank Smith: [21:27](#) What do you do?

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 21:28 ... it goes to, well, there has to be some other conspiracy. He got it from somewhere else or maybe he fell into some kind of trance-like state and produced it, even though all of our physical witnesses of the translation, they say something the opposite. So I mean even the theory that, well, Joseph Smith was able to somehow ... He ate some bad mushrooms and he hallucinated and was able to create this far beyond his abilities. Even that theory is actually in the face of our existing historical records, because we have records from the people interacting with Joseph Smith at the time and during the translation and that's not what they're saying.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 22:10 So, again, even those theories are more about how can I make these things equal? Because Joseph's a real problem. He, by all the documents you read, Joseph really believes he was called by God, that there's nothing in anything that Joseph has that suggests he doesn't really believe. If he really believes, it becomes much harder to explain how he fabricated the Book of Mormon and the gold plates and everything like that if he really believes. Honestly, a lot of historians simply take a pass on it. They simply say, "Joseph claimed that he had received the gold plates from an angel," and they move on beyond it because the story they're trying to tell isn't the origin of the Book of Mormon. They kind of move past it.
- John Bytheway: 22:57 That Solomon Spalding tided people over for a little bit.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 23:01 I mean all throughout the 19th century. Even now, you'll hear some people say, "Well, maybe there's actually a second Solomon Spalding manuscript."
- Hank Smith: 23:08 No way. Part two.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 23:11 Okay. Yeah. And there was a shooter on the grassy knoll and all kinds of stuff. I mean the reality is that conspiracy theories are always ... They're fun because you don't actually have to have proof for them. But when you're doing history, you need evidence. Evidence really suggests two things, that Joseph Smith really, really, really believed he was called by God, that he wasn't a fraud, no matter how often someone wants to call him that.
- Hank Smith: 23:38 All the evidence points there, right?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 23:39 All the evidence.
- Hank Smith: 23:43 He doesn't have a secret journal, "I can't believe this is working."

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 23:47 It's a case with a lot of religious people from history, that historians are not in the position to judge whether or not they've actually had the experiences with God that they claim. All we can really do is examine whether or not they seem to be legitimately believing the things they're saying. Look, sometimes they're not. It happens that people are two-faced and you can tell from their other records that they deliberately are being that way. It's not a historian's job and therefore it's not a historical argument to have a discussion about whether or not Joan of Arc actually heard the voice of God.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 24:31 She says she did. You can say as a person, "Well, I find that pretty unlikely," especially if you're English, I suppose. "I find that very unlikely that this French general beating the English would hear ..." but, as a historian, you don't really have a reason to say, "That Joan of Arc, she's a liar." Instead, what you can really say is, "Joan of Arc really seemed to believe that she'd heard the voice of Jesus." Now, that doesn't prove that she heard the voice of Jesus, but it does mean she's not a fraud.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 25:09 A fraud is someone who knowingly tells a story to people in order to curry favor that they know they don't deserve. There is a difference between someone who really believes they're acting in the name of God and someone who's saying those words in order to curry favor. There's just no evidence. You can read the 100,000 pages of Joseph Smith documents and you can read them, the 12,000 different ... You can read them all, all the documents. There's nothing in any of them, private, public, that even suggests that Joseph doesn't really believe he's called by God.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 25:48 So you have to deal with him on that level. He really believes he's called by God. He's not a fraud.
- Hank Smith: 25:55 And then he comes up with this book that is pretty incredible, not just pretty incredible.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 26:00 Yeah. That seems to be entirely outside his abilities. But Solomon Spalding manuscript really for a long time, it helped provide that explanation. Why does this seem so good? Why does it confuse so many people to become Mormons? That's because an actual real Christian wrote it and this imposter took it and used it for his own nefarious purposes. So I did not want to tell this story, but I've been impressed upon to tell us, so I will.
- Hank Smith: 26:35 By your friend, Hank, yes.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 26:37 Yeah. Just to do Hank a solid, I'm going to-

Hank Smith: 26:42 This is one of my favorite stories.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 26:45 The reality is you don't actually know when and where you're going to have people attack your faith. I think we live in a time, especially with the Internet, that you're sometimes surprised by it. I mean you will casually post something on Facebook and someone will, in your comments, tell you that you're a Satan worshiper. The reality is there's obviously a lot of vitriol. That's exactly what Joseph was told.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 27:12 We were building a house and so the contractor was a little behind schedule. Because of that, we were kind of transient members of a ward that we were in just temporarily. We were essentially renting month to month in a place and we already knew the new ward that we were going to be in if they ever actually finished our house, which was on the other side of town. So we were actually, at times, attending this other ward that we were going to be in because that's where we were really going to be. So we were not as invested in the ward as we should have been, obviously.

John Bytheway: 27:46 In your rental property ward.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 27:48 Yeah, yeah, exactly. My wife was pregnant and she's super sick when she was pregnant, so she wasn't able to go to church very often. So here we are in this very temporary ward because we'd thought we'd be done in time. It's wasn't. So we had to move somewhere where we could rent very temporarily. I went to fast and testimony meeting one Sunday. Someone goes up and begins bearing a testimony. This person had a stack of papers with him. He began to systematically speak this false ... He began to attack the Church from the pulpit.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 28:32 The stake president comes up and whispers to the guy and the guy, he just keeps right on going. Eventually he runs out of material. I can see that there are a group of them and they're all down there on the first pew ready to go up as soon as this guy's done. But they had one fatal flaw in their takeover of the sacrament meeting plan and that was they hadn't gone to enough of our fast and testimony meetings to realize that you can go sit up on the stand to be the next person in line.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 29:06 So as this guy, as I realize there's a whole group of them, as he starts to finish and their next member of their group down there gets ready to start to come up, I essentially sprint to the ... I'm in

the back of the chapel and I ... all the way up to the front of the pulpit. I get up there first. And then I just proceed to ... I filibuster the whole rest of the meeting. I gave a 35-minute testimony because that way time's taken up. Eventually I get the signal from the people behind me. They're like, "Okay. We can end now." The Stake President stands right up and he closes the meeting and that's it.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 29:50 I mean I'm working through *The Joseph Smith Papers*. So I'm essentially going through point by point and saying, "There are some people who make this claim about Joseph ..." repeating what this guy said. "But they obviously haven't read this. They haven't read this. They haven't read this. They haven't read this. We know from this source and this source and this source that this is the case. I mean I'm just going through the whole thing. So I go to Sunday School and, at the time, I was meeting ... It was a very old building, and I was meeting on the stage with the Gospel Principles class actually. I was in the Gospel Principles class.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 30:27 As I'm in the meeting, I can hear our Stake President had a very distinctive and loud booming voice. I can hear him going around to the various classrooms looking for somebody. It was one of those buildings that had the old dividers that they had in the gym to create classrooms. Anyway, so I can hear him going to each of those and he's looking for someone. The person he's looking for, he thinks is named Dirk Moss. So he keeps knocking on these doors and he's saying, "Is there a Brother Moss in here?" They're like, "No, I don't think we have a Brother Moss." "No, no, a Dirk Moss? Is there a Dirk Moss?" "I don't know a Dirk Moss."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 31:11 I think what happened is he asked the Second Counselor, because I was out like a shot when that thing was gone. I think he asked the Second Counselor, "Who was that?" I mean to that Second Counselor's credit, he had met me one other time and he-
- Hank Smith: 31:30 And he remembered your name.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 31:30 ... remembered my name. He was like, "That's Brother Dirkmaat." So the Stake President thought my first name was Dirk and that my last name was Moss. So he's wandering around the church asking for someone that no one thinks exists because he keeps asking for a Brother Moss and they're like, "We don't have a Brother Moss." "No, we have a Brother Moss. You know the one in the sacrament meeting." "I don't know who that is."

Because they didn't know me because I was never there at church.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [31:59](#) Anyway, eventually I hear him coming to the stage and I hear the ... the big knock. Like I said, he's got a booming voice. Teacher answers it, "President, what do ..." "Do you have a Brother Moss in your class?" "I don't think we have ..." "No, Brother Moss, a Dirk Moss. Do you have a Dirk Moss in your class?" "President, I don't think ..." And then he saw me in the back and he's like, "Brother Moss," and he comes striding all the way across. I was so far down in my chair like, "Please don't see me. Please don't see me."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [32:34](#) He comes up and he's like, "Brother Moss." He's like, "I just wanted to come talk to you about what happened in there." He said, "Thank you so much for being willing to stand up and say those things. Brother Moss, how did you know those things you were talking about?" Look, at this point he's said my name wrong, like shouted it wrong about 30 times. At this point you can't be like, "Actually, my name's Gerrit." You let people save face. If someone said your name wrong that many times, you just let it go.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [33:12](#) "Brother Moss, how did you know those things?" He said, "I've been a member my whole life and there are lots of things that you said that I've never heard before. It seemed like you knew everything there was to know about Joseph Smith from that time period." I mean I was working on *Documents, Volume One* at the time of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, which was the 1828 to the 1831 time period, so everything that this guy was talking about. I wanted the conversation to be over and I didn't want to try to explain it. It had totally interrupted the whole class.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [33:46](#) So I was like, "I guess I'm just lucky, I guess. I just remembered some of the stuff I've studied." He's like, "Well, I just want to thank you." So the best part about that story that I think the reason why Hank wants me to tell it is not actually part of the story. That part of the story shows that you never actually know when someone's going to challenge your faith and make all kinds of claims.
- Hank Smith: [34:10](#) Right. That's an important claim, yeah.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [34:10](#) It happened in my own Fast and Testimony Meeting. But the best part of the story is that we got a call that week that our house was ready, so we actually never went back to that ward again. So what I want to believe, but I don't know, is that that

Stake President was like, "I went back to my office and I looked on the records of my stake and there was no Dirk Moss. There had never been a Dirk Moss in my-

- Hank Smith: 34:41 We never heard from him again.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 34:42 "He was there by himself. He was sitting alone by himself. He seemed to know everything there was to know about Joseph Smith, and then he was gone."
- Hank Smith: 34:51 Almost did.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 34:52 "And then he was gone." So if you ever hear a story about a Three Nephite coming out of Layton, Utah, not true. It was just happenstance of circumstances that the anti-Mormons came to a Fast and Testimony Meeting that I was actually in as they attacked Joseph Smith on the basis of early Joseph Smith history, I think. So yeah. There was no Dirk Moss. I'm sure that that's how Three Nephite stories get started.
- Hank Smith: 35:26 Yeah, exactly. We started here with Ezra Booth who was so disappointed and turns really angry on the prophet.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 35:35 Really angry. You know the sad part about Booth is that while he seems to initially be trying to ingratiate himself back into the Methodist fold, what we learned from another history, this is not a Latter-day Saint history, he actually abandons religion entirely. By the time he dies, he's an agnostic. He just doesn't believe. I mean he's agnostic. He's not atheist, which you couldn't really say you were in the late 19th century anyway. But he's kind of abandoned it.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 36:05 It's a sad thing. I think it happens to a lot of people who do lose their faith, in the sense that it's one of the more unfortunate things. I mean I hope that if people leave our Church, they'll at least still believe that God loves them and that Jesus is their Savior and that there's still truth out there. It's unfortunate when people have kind of lost all hope, and that really is what happens with Ezra Booth.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 36:33 The other reason I told that story is that Sidney Rigdon is going to publicly challenge Ezra Booth and eventually Hurlbut and others to meet him in the public square anywhere, Symonds Ryder, he challenged Symonds Rider, to meet him in the public square and he will debate them on any point of doctrine. He was never taken up on that, but he's more than willing to do it.

Hank Smith: [36:59](#) Let's finish Section 62. It's, what, the next day, Section 62.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [37:04](#) It's very brief.

Hank Smith: [37:05](#) Yeah. They're still on their way back, obviously.

John Bytheway: [37:09](#) I'm still on the legend of Dirk Moss. I'm still on that.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [37:12](#) So then they run into this guy named Dirk Moss who seems to ... So what happens is they actually, it's precipitated by the fact that what happens is they run into a group of other Elders because now they're no longer taking the water route because ... They run into a group of Elders that are coming down from that initial missionary call in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 56 that they're going down. So they run into Hyrum [Smith] and others who actually had not made it to Zion yet because these Elders had actually taken seriously what God had commanded them to do, that they were to preach the Word as much as they could along the way.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [37:54](#) One of the unfortunate aspects of that is they had taken so long to get down there as they preached on their way down that Joseph had arrived, received the revelation of where the temple in Zion was supposed to be built, held their conference that they were supposed to hold, and then went back on their way back-

Hank Smith: [38:16](#) On their way home. Let's clarify, Gerrit. Let's clarify for our listeners that Joseph wasn't commanded to teach on his way. It was him and Sidney, go. You get there.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [38:26](#) No, they were supposed to go, but all of the other Elders were supposed to preach along the way-

Hank Smith: [38:29](#) I just wanted to make sure.

Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [38:30](#) Yeah. I mean obviously, I'm sure they did preach where they had the chance. But Hyrum [Smith] and others had taken it very seriously, and so they were weeks behind the other people. They run into each other. As negative as D&C 61 was, this negative near-death experience, D&C 62 is it's kind of this reunion of these beloved friends, but it also precipitates some questions. I mean, "Well, Joseph, if our goal was to preach all the way down to Zion so we could be there for the conference that's held in Zion that you guys had last week, so do we just turn around and go home with you now or do we keep going to Zion?"

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 39:25 So I think there's some cool things to pull out of that. I think verse 3 is something that has every missionary who's ever gone out and felt frustrated has probably had hopefully someone point them to 62:3, "Nevertheless, ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon, and they rejoice over you and your sins are forgiven." I mean on just the possibility that my sins could be forgiven if I'm bearing testimony of the truth, I'm going to bear my testimony to every person I meet.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 40:08 I'm guessing that these Elders felt similarly frustrated like everyone else was that this was not the thousands of people marching into the river to be baptized all at once. They'd essentially not been listened to. This had not been successful. It was a terrible, arduous trek, and now they even missed the conference they were trying to get to. The Lord, trying to remind them that, "What you did was follow me and even if you don't convert anybody, what you were supposed to do was be obedient. You were obedient and you're going to be blessed for that obedience even if people didn't follow."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 40:50 So I think that's a beautiful part of that section. And then secondly-
- Hank Smith: 40:54 Helped them to keep going, right?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 40:55 Yeah. Secondly, they get the answer to that question. That's verse 4, "And now continue your journey to Zion." They're going to hold their own meeting there to celebrate the fact they're there. Now, why is it that they are told to continue to go? It's very similar to the same advice that was just given about why the Joseph group, why his party had taken boats even though God obviously knew that they were eventually going to have some problems on the boats. Why? Because I want you to be able to bear a testimony of the experience you had.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 41:32 This is the same thing that these people are told here, that they're going to go and that they're going to be able to bear testimony of that when they go back. "And then you may return," this is verse 5. "And then you may return, to bear record, yea, even altogether or two by two as seemeth you good. It mattereth not to me. Only be faithful and declare glad tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth and among the congregations of the wicked." Well, I guess we do [verse] 6 too. "Beyond I, the Lord, have brought you together that the promise might be fulfilled, that the faithful among you, should be

preserved and rejoice together in the land of Missouri. I, the Lord, promise the faithful and cannot lie."

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [42:18](#) So part of the reason why He still wants them to go is, first of all, they were promised that they'd get to see the land of Zion. Second of all, they're going to not ... When they go back to bear testimony in Kirtland to the main body of the church, they're not going to be able to say, "Yeah, we got most of the way there and then we just kind of turned around." They're going to be able to say, "We saw the spot where the Lord told Joseph Smith the temple as the center of the city of Zion is going to be built. We saw it. It's real. We were there." There's nothing to that.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [42:51](#) There's something to the testimony of that experience that makes it all the more powerful for those who are still wondering about belief.
- John Bytheway: [43:02](#) When I was a Bishop, we had this guy whose wife died, elderly couple, very inactive, went and talked to him. He said, "Well, my wife just had this hang-up with plural marriage. I was a Ward Clerk before." We invited him back and he said, "Okay." He came back to church. Then one day he knocked on my office when I was a Bishop and he just came in and he sat down. He said, "I had a dream last night and she said, 'Take me to the temple.' Now, I can't exactly wrap my head around how cool that is because she was in the temple in the dream. She said, 'Take me to the temple,' and suddenly something made sense. She came walking out and she looked beautiful. She was in front of this white cloudy thing."
- John Bytheway: [43:50](#) So we're like, "I'm going to get you signed up. We're going to get you the temple prep lessons." Okay. He takes the temple prep lessons, finally goes to the temple. Long story short, knocks on my door again. He says, "Bishop," and I kind of gave it away. He said, "Bishop, I went to the temple and when they said, 'We will now reveal the veil of the temple,' that's what it was."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [44:09](#) That's awesome.
- John Bytheway: [44:10](#) She was in the temple. Went to the next life with this very bad opinion, confusion, whatever, about plural marriage. But she showed up in the temple, apparently forgiven, apparently everything made sense and said, "You got to take me to the temple," and he did.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [44:30](#) That's awesome.

- John Bytheway: 44:31 Passed away a few months ago, but I'm still wrapping my head around how cool that is that she was in the temple when she came to him and told him, "You got to take me here."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 44:40 It's amazing the experiences that, again, are miracles that there's something beyond. Even just recently with my brother dying, my 12-year-old son, Kai, he was playing basketball in a Comp Basketball League. They played a pretty tough game and they ended up losing at the end. But it was a really late game at night and we're driving home. It's 11:00 at night. Even though I said, "Hey, man, as soon as we get home, you got to get to bed. You got school in the morning. We got to go."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 45:21 So we got home and I was doing the dishes. My wife was in there doing some other things too. He just kind of sat there. He just sat at our counter. He was sitting there and it was just kind of weird. I mean if you had teenagers, you know it's like, "Hm, what's going on with him today?" I said, "Hey, Kai. Man, what you doing? It's time for bed. Go get in bed." He said, "I had to write a biography for school." So I immediately went to the most negative place because that's what parents do because you've been through this rodeo before.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 46:08 So I'm like, "Are you trying to tell me that this is due tomorrow and that you didn't do anything and now we have to spend tonight ..." I mean that was my reaction, which obviously was literally the worst reaction and a demonstration of how un-in tune with the Spirit I was. That's why I was like, "Son, did you not even do it?" He kind of interrupts me. He's like, "I'm doing it on Uncle Brian." That was my brother. "I'm doing a biography on him." He said, "Dad, while I was reading ..." Because he had the obituary. He said, "While I was reading the obituary, I just started crying because I miss him so much."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 46:52 He said, "Dad, I heard a voice. I heard his voice. He said, 'Everything's going to be okay.'" I know my son, and I know my son wasn't making up a story. So I think it's beautiful when we get these connections from the other side. I'm a believer that what we think a chance is here of getting the Gospel is ... I think every single person that God can shove into those kingdoms, He is going to by hook or crook, by all means. He won't exercise any compulsion except that, to force people to take another chance to try because He loves them so much, He wants them to be saved.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 48:00 That's why I mean I love D&C 76 for that very reason. I mean it's just transformative of Christian thought.

- Hank Smith: 48:06 I think our listeners would love to hear your personal thoughts on Joseph Smith, the Restoration and what it has done for you, especially considering all that you've been through recently.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 48:24 Probably I'm not capable of expressing what it is I feel and believe, I think. I don't have the ability to speak with justice to what it is I feel. I've studied Church History I mean my entire adult life. There are obviously other people who are far better scholars than I am and people who are more intelligent than I am, certainly people who probably follow the Gospel better than I do. But I have in studying the life and documents of Joseph Smith and those early men and women who were early Latter-day Saints, I've had the Spirit speak to me multiple times and tell me that this is God's true work.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 49:27 I was working on *The Joseph Smith Papers* on a volume with another colleague. It was interesting. As we were going through the documents, we'd read each of the documents separately next to one another. Then we'd try to figure out, "Okay, we need to annotate this. We need to annotate this." There were multiple times that we'd be reading the document and we would look up at one another at exactly the same time without anything being said and it was because we both felt the same thing at the same time where we expressed what we just read was not written from Joseph Smith.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 50:14 What we just read was a revelation that came from God, and it was truth that came from God and that it was so enlightening. I realized, obviously, I have all kinds of friends that in the Church, out of the Church, on their way out of the Church, hopefully coming on back into the Church. I mean we all have friends in every aspect of our life. Sometimes there are aspects of Church History or doctrine or belief that cause us to struggle and they make us wonder if the whole thing is true.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 50:46 If you're someone who's thinking, "Well, I have a few doubts, so I guess I just don't have a testimony at all," well, if you have a few doubts, it's called being a person. It's called existing at all. The fact that you have questions about things and that you don't have all the answers does not mean that you don't have faith or a testimony. It just means you're like every other person who's ever sought out faith in the history of the world. Sometimes because we can't get all the answers, it causes us to spin a little bit to the point where the thing we can't get the answer to is such that it causes us to forget what it is that we even have.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [51:31](#) It is sometimes a very real frustration. I am not belittling this frustration in any way. I understand why this is a very difficult concept. That is what is marriage going to be like in the next life? I mean it is something that is such a major part of not only our church but our culture in this mortal world and trying to figure out how it's going to work, and then especially when it comes to things like, "Now, wait a minute. My grandmother, she was married to four different men when she was alive. But when we went and did her temple work for her, we sealed her to all four of them but obviously she's not married to all four of them in the next life. So who's my grandmother going to be with? Because I mean I read her journal and I really think she was closest to the second husband that we sealed her to, but they told us to seal her to all of them."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [52:22](#) You can start to see how people start to get really worked up in their mind because they don't understand how it is that marriage is going to work in the next life. Sometimes that frustration that you don't know, that it hasn't been revealed, can get such that it causes people to have a faith crisis. It causes them to say, "I just don't know what to believe anymore." But it's important that when you're in those times that you realize the very reason that you're asking the question is because you believe Joseph Smith's a prophet. Because, frankly, there ain't no Presbyterian wondering who great-grandma's married to in the next life, because the answer is nobody because marriage doesn't exist in the next life.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [53:05](#) The only reason you have a question of who's married to who in the next life or what that marriage is like in the next life is because Joseph Smith's a prophet of God. The moment he stops being a prophet, you don't have to worry anymore about how marriage or eternal families work in the next life because they don't. The moment Joseph stops being a prophet, you don't have to worry about how the Premortal Life factors into our progression because it doesn't because there wasn't a Premortal Life because there isn't a progression.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [53:35](#) I hope that when people struggle with the questions they have, they will realize that the truths that we have, the ones that you can hold onto are so powerful and so important that you're not willing to give them up, not on the basis of a possibility that you don't understand a maybe. At the very least, I hope we can adopt Pascal's Wager, that we can at least say what he said and that is that, look, if you're uncertain about the existence of God, you should always bet on God. You should wager on God. Because the reality is if God doesn't exist and you live your

whole life like God does exist and you die, well, you won't be able to regret the fact that you lived your life like God existed.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [54:29](#) Because if there isn't a God and you die, then you don't exist anymore. So there is no regret. There's no sitting back and like, "Why wasn't I drunk more often? Why did I even follow the Word of Wisdom?" Because you won't exist, so it won't matter. On the other hand, if God does exist, then how we choose to live this life actually does matter. The amount of regret that one might have if they choose to reject and throw away the possible truths because there are great difficulties and trials in this life, that might engender a great deal of regret. So that was probably not what you were looking for at all.
- Hank Smith: [55:10](#) No, no, no.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [55:12](#) I got to tell you-
- Hank Smith: [55:12](#) The very questions we have come from the doctrines revealed to-
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [55:17](#) They come from the fact that Joseph was a prophet. So do we know exactly why X happened or Y? Do we know exactly what happened with the Kirtland Safety Society? Do I understand why God instituted plural marriage? Can I frankly understand all the different aspects of different prophetic utterance? The answer's no. But I can tell you that the reason why I know my brother is still alive, the reason why I believe that Jesus is the Christ is because I know that Joseph Smith saw resurrected Jesus and not just once, but on multiple occasions.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [55:54](#) I'm not giving that up. I've got all kinds of questions I don't have answers to. That's especially frustrating for me because I've dedicated my life to trying to find answers. But I'm not giving that up. I mean I just hope your listeners, if you're struggling with your faith, I hope you will remember what it is that we believe, that we don't believe that people are burning in Hell for eternity, that there's every single person, outside of a few saved people, are suffering in some kind of eternal horrible hell.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: [56:26](#) We believe in the eventual salvation of essentially every person who's lived in this Earth. We believe in an equality of people being able to go to the Celestial Kingdom, that every single person who's ever lived in this Earth will have an equal opportunity in this life or the next in order to go to the Celestial Kingdom. We believe that all of the horrible things that have happened to us in this life are going to be made up to us in the

next life. We believe that families can be and will be together forever, that marriage can be forever, and that if you didn't have a chance for marriage in this life, you'll have it in the next life.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 56:58 All of these things that we believe are so beautiful. I hope we won't casually give away what we believe because of the questions that we can't answer. I testify as much as I can that even though I'm a historian and I've studied things from an academic perspective, I have also had the Holy Spirit speak to me and tell me that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God and that Jesus is the Christ. I think that all of us can have that experience. If you had it once and now you're losing it, have it again. Read, spend some time reading the things that Joseph Smith wrote, and not just what people said that he wrote.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirk...: 57:43 Go read them. *The Joseph Smith Paper* are all online. Start reading them and the Spirit will speak to you that he's a prophet of God.
- Hank Smith: 57:52 Amen. This is our second episode with you and it was every bit, if not better, than our first-
- John Bytheway: 57:57 Beautiful.
- Hank Smith: 57:59 Yeah, John, I'm with you. Absolutely beautiful.
- John Bytheway: 58:01 And powerful and exactly ... Just brings clarity to think of it that way. I love the way you said that.
- Hank Smith: 58:11 We, of course, want to thank Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat, not Brother Dirk Moss, for being with us today. We want to thank all of you who listened and laughed with us. We're very grateful for your support. We want to thank our Executive Producers, Steven and Shannon Sorensen and our production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Nielsen, Kyle Nelson, Will Stoughton, and Maria Hilton. We hope you will join us on our next episode of followHIM.