

Follow Him

Episode 110: Dr. Jordan Watkins

Doctrine and Covenants 20-22

“The Rise of the Church of Christ”

Show Notes

Podcast General Description:

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

Podcast Episode 8 Description:

Part 1:

How do we define church? Is it an organized group? Is it people with a common idea? Listen to John, Hank, and Dr. Jordan Watkins as we learn how the Church was organized, how to define church, and are reminded to not argue with members of other religions. Learn how Joseph and Oliver develop the first “handbook,” why we shouldn’t conflate men with the priesthood, and we are reminded about this being a continual restoration.

Part 2:

Joseph and his friends officially organized the Church on April 6, 1830, in the Whitmer home. Hank, John, and Dr. Watkins return to discuss the importance of record-keeping in the early Church, the reality of the Lord bringing the Saints along gradually, and how the Prophet grows in understanding for what the Lord has in mind for His people. We, along with Joseph, learn to put aside our prejudices and preconceived notions to help the Lord establish His baptism, his covenants, and His Church.

Timecode:

Part 1

- 00:00 Welcome
- 02:19 We Introduce Dr. Jordan Watkins
- 06:22 Instructed to Be Builders as a Church
- 09:16 Content Against No Church
- 20:25 Abner Cole Starts Publishing Negative Responses to the Upcoming Book of Mormon
- 11:57 Abner Cole Wants to Fight Joseph Smith
- 15:15 John Gilbert Adds Punctuation to the Book of Mormon
- 21:59 Joseph Realizes He is to Organize a Church
- 26:21 Revelation Is Not a Passive Exercise
- 29:59 Much of the Doctrine and Covenants Revelations are in Response to the Book of Mormon Translation
- 38:38 Transcendentalism and How it Affects Joseph and Oliver
- 47:00 Restorationists near Palmyra in 1820-30s
- 49:25 Not Unusual to Have a Church with Very Few Members Hold Office in 1830

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II Begins
- 00:20 Offices in the Church in 1830
- 03:38 Moroni and His Influence on Early Church Structure
- 05:31 Benefit of Wrestling with a Project
- 09:03 Joseph Officially Organizes the Church
- 11:42 Members Given the Gift of the Holy Ghost
- 15:32 Wilford Woodruff Keeps Records
- 19:04 Abundance of Records in Nauvoo but Not as Many Previously
- 22:01 The Lord is Going to Ask His People to Do Hard Things
- 28:02 Zion is Now a Place and not a Cause
- 30:44 Joseph is an Emotional 24-year-old Man
- 34:14 Revelation upon Mary and Joseph Smith Senior and Lucy Mack Smith Baptized
- 37:43 April 6 is Often an Important Day in Our History
- 42:04 Baptism is Viewed Differently in Different Denominations
- 47:17 Section 20 Reminds Us to Set Aside Preconceived Ideas
- 51:46 The Sacrament is a Tool to Access the Savior

- 53:16 Elder Packer Story with Young Man Having Trouble with the Sacrament Prayer
- 55:48 Dr. Watkin's Testimony

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BIO:

Jordan Watkins is from Alpine, Utah. He received a PhD in American history from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He also has a BA in history from BYU and an MA in history from Claremont Graduate University. His book manuscript, *Slavery and Sacred Texts: The Bible, the Constitution, and Historical Consciousness in Antebellum America*, examines the ways in which antebellum biblical and constitutional debates over slavery brought awareness to the historical distance separating Americans from their hallowed biblical and Revolutionary past. His interest in American history stems from a lifelong fascination with Latter-day Saint history, and his work in that field has appeared in the *Journal of Mormon History*, *Mormon Historical Studies*, and a number of edited volumes. He has presented at conferences of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, the Society for U.S. Intellectual History, the African American Intellectual History Society, and the Western History Association. He was a volume editor of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* before joining the faculty in Religious Education.



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Follow Him Podcast

Episode 10 Part I Transcript

Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:01</u>	Welcome to Follow Him, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come, Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:09</u>	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:10</u>	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:11</u>	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:13</u>	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:15</u>	As together, we Follow Him.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:18</u>	My friends, welcome to another episode of Follow Him. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with my amazing and funny co-host, John Bytheway. Hi, John.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:29</u>	Hi, Hank. How are you?
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:31</u>	I am well. John, I feel like my Come, Follow Me studies have increased a thousand times from last year to this year just doing this podcast. How are you feeling on your Come, Follow Me studies this year?
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:45</u>	This has been such a blessing. In fact, I went to Dollar Tree and invested in a red pen because I don't have time during the podcast to sharpen my red pencil. So now I did an uptick in the technology and I've got my red ballpoint pen so I can take notes.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:01:03</u>	Yeah, for those of you don't know Dollar Tree and John, are very close. It's a very close relationship.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:01:09</u>	I once asked the cashier do they pay you a dollar an hour? How does that work?
Hank Smith:	<u>00:01:12</u>	Yeah, it's all Dollar Tree. All right. John, I got to tell you this before we get into this interview. I received a message from a listener in China.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:01:23</u>	Wow.

Hank Smith:	<u>00:01:24</u>	A listener in China who said, he told me, he said, "I just want you to know that I love the podcast and it helps me feel not so isolated out here in China." So we want to give a shout out to him, let him know he's not alone. His name, some people might even know it. His name is Jimmer Fredette. And Jimmer, thank you for being a fan of the show and know that the show is a big fan of you. So keep doing that thing, Jimmer.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:01:52</u>	That's so fun. I showed that to my son, because I have a picture of Andrew with Jimmer, when we went down to that father and son's basketball thing they used to have, or I guess they still have it. Maybe not this year because of the pandemic, but I've got Andrew and Jimmer together. So that was a fun day. He was super nice.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:02:10</u>	That's wonderful. So the Follow Him and Jimmer Fredette, we are mutual fans of each other, mutual fans. John, who do we have with us today?
John Bytheway:	<u>00:02:19</u>	<p>Oh, we are excited to have Jordan Watkins with us today. And I am going to go right into it and read his bio, if that's all right. Jordan Watkins is from Alpine. That just sounds like a beautiful place to be from. Anything named Alpine. He received a PhD in American history from University of Nevada Las Vegas. He has a bachelor's in history from BYU, a master's in history from Claremont Graduate University. And his book manuscript, Slavery and Sacred Texts: The Bible, the Constitution, and Historical Consciousness in Antebellum America examines the ways in which antebellum biblical and constitutional debates over slavery brought awareness to the historical distance separating Americans from their hallowed biblical and revolutionary past.</p> <p>So antebellum means before the Civil War. His interest in American history stems from a lifelong fascination with Latter-Day Saint history and his work in that field has appeared in the Journal of Mormon History, Mormon Historical Studies, and a number of edited volumes. He has presented at conferences of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, the Society for US Intellectual History, the African-American Intellectual History Society and the Western History Association.</p> <p>He was a volume editor of the documents series of the Joseph Smith papers before joining the faculty in religious education. Wow. We are thrilled to have you here, Jordan and thank you for taking some time with us today.</p>
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:03:56</u>	I'm very excited to be here.

Hank Smith:	<u>00:03:58</u>	Yeah. I think it's fair to say he is a real historian. From that bio, I'm going, "Okay, okay. I've got it. He is a real historian." What would-
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:04:10</u>	Not a lot else, but I am a historian.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:04:14</u>	That's fantastic. What did Garrett teach us about pseudo scholarship? Jordan, I don't think we're going to have any pseudo scholarship here today. I'm excited for this. Let's just jump right into the lesson material. Doctrine covenant section 20 and April 1830 are big, big days for us, but they were probably even big bigger days for the prophet, Joseph Smith. Let's talk about the time between the sections 18 and 19 and section 20. We've got a couple of stories to share John and Jordan. I want to ask you about that time period. Let's talk about this little group of followers and coming up on coming from the summer of 1829 into April of 1830. Where is Joseph Smith and who's doing the work?
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:05:13</u>	<p>Whenever I think about section 20, I like to go back to 1829 to some of the revelations that start to talk about church. Right? So there's an early revelation to Martin Harris section 5 of the Doctrine and Covenants where the Lord says if this generation doesn't harden their hearts, he'll establish his church among them, which is kind of anticipating this ecclesiastical organization. That's repeated in section 10 as well. In that section, the Lord also says that he doesn't say this to destroy the church, but to build it up, which is kind of interesting, right? Because then we're dealing with multiple concepts of church, and it's in that same section, section 10 where he says, "Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same as my church."</p> <p>So I think that's quite fascinating, right? In the period before the organization of the church the Lord is working with multiple sort of definitions of what church is. One of the reasons I find that interesting is because I think in the church there's a tension between a sort of inclusivity and exclusivity because of the church's claims. And really early on, the Lord is saying, "This understanding of church, there's an inclusive understanding and please don't forget that." It's almost as if he's preempting he knows the members of the church are going to be prone to really emphasize the exclusive part and he's saying, "Well, remember, there are other people out there who are seeking to build up my church who are in this broader definition part of my church." So don't forget that.</p>

If that is an important message in the early church when they actually do need to set themselves apart in some ways, they have to establish their identity. If that inclusive message is important then, it's probably even more important now. We have a pretty firm foundation, right? We don't have to stake out our unique identity. That's a given at this point. So I guess part of the point here to highlight some of these early revelations mentioning church is to say that we need to be builders, not destroyers.

Hank Smith: 00:07:44

I really like that.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:07:45

Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:07:46

Yeah, I really like that. That section 10, verse 67 that you quoted, "This is my doctrine. Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church." We did talk about this with Dr. Haws, but it's something that is worth repeating that we are not... Let's fight with other christian churches, right? That's not what the Lord is asking of us is to stake our claim against those churches, yet we see that plenty of times. I did that as a missionary, I think.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:08:23

Well, so do they, right? As early missionaries. You'll get to this later on, but think of Parley P. Pratt going to the Shakers, and really having it out there and and shaking his coattails, and leaving the meeting in anger and the Lord in later revelations is saying, "You're not supposed to preach the gospel with contention." But I think part of it is related to this inclusivity and exclusivity, right? There are some claims about exclusivity that are made in the church and that are part of the revelations, but at the same time I think the Lord is trying to remind us always, "But don't don't forget the bigger picture here. They're all my children and I'm interested in all of them and their salvation, right?"

Hank Smith: 00:09:16

Wow. Well said. Well said.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:09:17

We mentioned this too. We talked about this too briefly in section 18, verse 20. It's easy to remember 18:20. It's kind of important, but "Contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil," which is oh. And this is as you said before, this formal organization even happened and it's kind of the Lord's drawing a different boundary about what a church is. I'm glad you brought that up.

Hank Smith: 00:09:44 Yeah. Me too, me too. Let's just mention a couple of things before we jump into the section. So after the experience of the three and eight witnesses, Joseph Smith moves back to Harmony, Pennsylvania. He goes back. That's where his farm is that he bought from his father-in-law. That's where his wife, Emma is. But he leaves Hiram and Oliver in Palmyra to watch over the printing. And something interesting happens that I think this is such a good story, John. Did you find that? Where can our listeners find this next story. They're going to want to find this.

John Bytheway: 00:10:24 I think they could find it here. This is what we call a book if you go back in time. It's in the gospel library, the saints book and I am on page... If you use pages, page 80. Well, I'll just read it. I'll use my most interesting voice. That fall while the printers made steady progress on the Book of Mormon, a former judge named Abner Cole began publishing a newspaper on Grandin's press. So remember the Book of Mormon was being printed at the EB Grandin's press building in Palmyra. Working at night in the shop after Grandin's staff went home, Abner had access to printed pages from the Book of Mormon which was not yet bound or ready for sale.

Abner soon began poking fun at the gold bible in his newspaper and during the winter, he printed excerpts from the book alongside sarcastic commentary. When Hiram and Oliver learned what Abner was doing, they confronted him. "What right have you to print the Book of Mormon this way?" Hiram demanded. "Do you not know that we have received the copyright?"

"It's none of your business Abner said. I have hired the press and I will print what I please. I forbid you to print any more of that book in your paper," Hiram said. "I don't care," Abner said. Unsure what to do, Hiram and Oliver sent word to Joseph in harmony who returned to Palmyra at once. He found Abner at the printing office casually reading his own newspaper. "You seem hard at work," Joseph said. "How do you do Mr..." He was on his phone. I mean, today that's what would be going on, right? But now he was reading his own newspaper and says, "How do you do, Mr. Smith?" Abner replied dryly, "Mr. Cole," Joseph said, "The Book of Mormon and the right of publishing it belonged to me and I forbid you meddling with it."

Abner threw off his coat and pushed up his sleeves, "Do you want to fight, sir?" he barked pounding his fists together. "If you want to fight just come on." Joseph smiled. "You would better keep your coat on," he said. "It's cold and I'm not going to fight

you." He calmly continued, "But you have got to stop printing my book." "If you think you are the best man," Abner said, "Just pull off your coat and try it." "There is a law..."

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| Hank Smith: | <u>00:12:38</u> | Man, this guy he really wants to box. He wants to fight. |
| John Bytheway: | <u>00:12:43</u> | And Joseph could wrestle people. When I first heard this, I wondered what might happen. "There is a law," Joseph responded, "And you will find that out if you did not know it before. But I shall not fight you for that will do no good." Abner knew he was on the wrong side of the law. He calmed down and stopped printing excerpts from the Book of Mormon in his newspaper. That's the whole thing from Saints. |
| Hank Smith: | <u>00:13:07</u> | That is just fantastic. I love that story. I think I'm going to share that. I have four boys and I like that statement. "I will not fight you, it will do no good." I think I am going to share that with my... I have a couple of older boys who think that sometimes fighting does a body good. |
| Dr. Jordan Watk...: | <u>00:13:24</u> | We just talked about the Lord telling them not to fight against other churches. |
| John Bytheway: | <u>00:13:28</u> | Not to contend. |
| Dr. Jordan Watk...: | <u>00:13:29</u> | Yeah. And Joseph's kind of going, "Okay." |
| Hank Smith: | <u>00:13:32</u> | <p>The other thing we need to talk about just a couple of items before we jump into the section, Jordan. I want to mention, one the printer's manuscript. A lot of people don't know that there are two different basically original manuscripts. One is the manuscript that Oliver Cowdery actually took down as Joseph dictated, but then following that, it seems they'd learn their lesson from having just one original copy. So they make a second copy called the printer's manuscript and that's Oliver Cowdery going back through and rewriting the entire thing.</p> <p>We think about, "Oh, yeah. He just had to make another copy." But can you imagine sitting down and rewriting the entire thing? There's also a man I'd like to mention by the name of John Gilbert. John is, I think, he is on staff, right?</p> |
| Dr. Jordan Watk...: | <u>00:14:34</u> | Yes. I think he's the chief compositor of the type. |
| Hank Smith: | <u>00:14:41</u> | Yeah. We often talk about Grandin being kind of the printer, but he's more of the businessman. This guy John Gilbert is the one who's actually setting the type for the Book of Mormon. I just |

wanted to mention him. He gave a lot of interviews and important interviews it says that he was actually quite proud of the fact that he set most of this type after the book becomes a little more famous. Robin Scott Jensen, who's writing this.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:15:11

He's a historian at the JSP, so he's good.

Hank Smith: 00:15:15

Okay, great. It says, what I find interesting about John Gilbert is of course we all know the story that the Book of Mormon manuscript was not punctuated. It was one giant run-on sentence, which isn't totally true. There are a few scattered punctuation marks here and there. Sounds like my middle school term papers, which isn't totally true. There are a few scattered punctuation marks here and there, but essentially John Gilbert had to punctuate the entire Book of Mormon manuscript. He says, "And you know, I'm not an english major. I'm a history major, but I know enough about the English language to know that punctuation matters in engaging with a text. It's subtle, but it's important to know the phrasing or ending of a sentence."

Gilbert introduces paragraphing. So the formatting structure, the way in which people pause at certain phrases is coming from someone who's not a believer in Joseph Smith. I find that absolutely fascinating that here's this man, and I don't know if he's inspired or not, but he is putting in the punctuation. And then one last person I want to mention is Thomas Marsh. Jordan, do you want to tell us a little bit about Thomas Marsh. I have his story here.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:16:29

Correct me, if I'm wrong but as I recall he's from New York. Actually, I believe he works in a press for a time, but I know he leaves his home very young. We don't know all the reasons why. In the subsequent revelation given to him, it mentions his background briefly. But eventually he hears about this golden bible, something of that nature and finds his way to Palmyra and shows up just as the first 16 pages are coming off the press. And Martin Harris is there and Martin is obviously excited. He's put a lot of work and money into this endeavor. Marsh shows up and Martin excitedly, I would imagine shows him, "Hey, look at what the prophet has produced?"

Hank Smith: 00:17:23

Right. And he joins the church. The book isn't even focusing off the press and here he reads just 16 pages of it, receives a witness of its truthfulness and moves forward. That to me is amazing. And Thomas B. Marsh is going to become a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, right?

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:17:43 Right, right. 1835. He's a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. He's one that eventually like a number of the early converts leaves the church for a time, but finds his way back to Utah, and back into the church.

Hank Smith: 00:17:57 Wow. And you mentioned Martin Harris, and I think we just need to give one last shout out. We have been talking about Martin for many weeks, right, John? I mean...

John Bytheway: 00:18:06 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:18:07 Martin Harris has been a subject for us for a long time, but everyone just kind of remember this date that on August 25th, 1829, Martin Harris mortgaged his farm to Grandin for \$3,000 to print 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon. I just feel like let's just give a moment of fist pump to heaven for Martin Harris, because to me that is, I don't know. To me that is just a beautiful and amazing thing that he was asked to do, and he came through.

All right. Should we jump into this... Is there anything else? Before we get into section 20, Jordan. Before we get in, what else do we need to know? What else do you teach your students before they get into to this section?

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:19:05 Well, this is a section you've already talked about but section 18 is really crucial to understand in relationship to section 20. So section 18, of course is directed to all... Well, it's actually directed to three audiences, right? Oliver Cowdery. Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, and then this future 12 disciples. Just before that in Joseph Smith's history, just before this revelation in section 18, Joseph says that they are at the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York. They're working on the translation at this point. So June of 1829, and they are praying about a question and the question they have is John came in May. He delivered the priesthood of Aaron and he said that he acted under the authority of Peter, James, and John, and said that they had the keys to a higher priesthood and that that would be given to us at some future point.

So now here we are in June of 1829 and they're asking about that promise. There's a really interesting account that says that the word of the Lord came to us in the chamber meaning the room in the Whitmer home commanding us that I should ordain Oliver Cowdery to be an elder in the church of Jesus Christ that he also should ordain me to the same office and after having been thus ordained we should proceed to ordain others to the same office according as it should be made known unto us from

time to time. Also, commanding us, and this is I think what is most relevant here, also commanding us that as soon as practicable we should call together all those who had already been baptized by us to bless bread and break it with them to take wine, bless it, and drink it with them. And doing all these things in the name of the Lord.

But to defer our own ordination until we had called together our brother and had their sanction. So I think that's really notable because it seems like the Lord here is saying call all the believers together and organize yourselves, and don't ordain each other as elders until you have called them together. By the way, it's pretty interesting that this source... So this is from Joseph's Smith's history, 1839, and in the first draft of this history, James Mulholland who is a scribe for Joseph Smith, he's writing this down and he says that, "The Lord said to defer our own ordination until we had called the church."

It doesn't quite finish and then that's crossed out. Well, there's no church in June of 1829, but that tells us something about being careful about reading these historical documents. Sometimes, they're projecting their views onto the past, and sometimes they catch it like they do here and say, "Wait, we didn't have a church. Cross out church. Just say call together our brethren." But what that does tell us is that by the summer of 1829, I think Joseph is quite seriously thinking about the organization of a church.

I also mention this because in Joseph Smith's history, that 1839 history, what is now section 18 of the Doctrine and Covenants directly follows that account of the void hearing the voice of the Lord in the room in the Whitmer home. And in section 18 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord describes Oliver Cowdery as being an apostle, or he's called with the same calling as the apostle, Paul, which... And maybe it's important here to note too that in the late 1820s and early 1830s, the term apostle was used synonymously with elder and with disciple.

So for example actually in June of 1830 after the church is organized, John Whitmer gets his elder's license and in that elder's license, he's referred to as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Now, somebody comes along later, I think in 1835 and crosses that out and you can see it crossed out. But those terms take new meaning over time. And I think that's an important lesson about the restoration in general that all of these terms and ideas are developing over time. But section 18, the real reason I wanted to mention it is because in that section, the Lord told Oliver Cowdery to rely on the things he had written, meaning

the Book of Mormon and noted that it contained all things concerning the foundation of his church.

He promised that, "Hey, Oliver, if you build up this church according to my gospel, according to the Book of Mormon, the gates of hell will not prevail against you." So then in the summer of 1829, Oliver Cowdery starts using the Book of Mormon to create a document called the Articles of the Church of Christ. And this is actually notable in part because this is the first document that contains the church's first name, the church of Christ. And notice this, this is how it opens. A commandment from God unto Oliver how he should build up his church.

It's written in the voice of the Lord, which I think is pretty interesting and that's of course similar to many of Joseph's revelations. I think Oliver is wanting it to be received in that way. And then it goes on to repeat some of the language and the revelations given to Oliver Cowdery. So section 18, you can find some of the language there in his Articles of the Church of Christ. It contains much of the content from the Book of Mormon on these particular issues about baptism, about ordination of priesthood and teachers, about the administration of sacrament, about church meetings.

So I think that's important to know that the question becomes, okay, well, what is the relationship between Oliver Cowdery's Articles of the Church of Christ and the Articles and Covenants, which we now know as section 20. It's hard to know that for sure. We actually also don't know for sure when section 20 is produced. Parts of it may be produced as early as the summer of 1829 because in Joseph Smith's history, it's also included after the experience in the room in Father Whitmer's home. But we also think that he probably doesn't finish this document until after the church is organized because of the way that it talks about that day on April 6th as something that has happened.

So this is a curious revelation, and it is received as a revelation even though it's quite different from Joseph's classic revelations. In Joseph's classic revelations, we have the voice of Lord speaking directly to his audience, including Joseph Smith. And that's not the case in section 20. What that suggests, I think is that there's a very active process by which this revelation is produced. I think that's true of every revelation, but it's not a passive process, right? God is working through his prophet. He's not Grant Underwood.

I remember this from a class at BYU when I was an undergrad. Joseph Smith is not a fax machine. He's not a human fax machine, right? God works through the mind of that prophet. And I think in this instance we have a really interesting case of that. Joseph, I think is perhaps reflecting on the Book of Mormon in producing this text. Perhaps, he even is reflecting on Oliver Cowdery's document. But unlike Cowdery's document, it doesn't present itself explicitly as a revelation in the same way that Cowdery's does, which is again I think also interesting.

Hank Smith: 00:27:26

Well, Jordan, I was just going to say that I love... You're giving our listeners, and John and I a skill here, which is don't assume that the terms and the development of the church happens the way you think it would with your 2021 knowledge, right? A lot of people think, "Well, didn't..." They were using terms Aaronic priesthood, Melchizedek priesthood when they got them, right? No, no. This was a developing thing. It wasn't okay, the Lord is going to lay out the plan here and we got to get bar codes on the temple recommends, it was more, they're kind of, I don't know if I want to say winging it, but they're figuring it out as they go.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:28:13

I think that's an essential lesson here. When it comes to the things of God, for some reason we think to ourselves God works in sort of an instant rather than through a process. But that kind of neglects the human element here. We know the phrase, Elder Holland's said it that, "We're imperfect people as all God has ever had to work with and he deals with it, and so should we." And that's an excellent point, but we can also add to that, not only is it all he has, but people are actually part of his work and his glory, right? So if the restoration itself is not part of this process that allows us to make mistakes and repent, and grow, and develop, then what's the point, right? If the purpose is for us to become like Jesus Christ, why would he not also use the process of the restoration as a means to that greater end?

Hank Smith: 00:29:17

That is a beautiful connection. Because if we don't come at it with that lens, we might end up really confused going, "Wait, their name wasn't the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints from the very beginning? Was the Lord not... Did he not know the name of his church?" No, he's letting human beings figure this out as they go. And that's my experience in life. John, I don't know about you. You're very spiritual. You two both are very spiritual, but for me I'm figuring this out as I go, in parenting, in marriage, in my own spirituality. It's a day-by-day thing where I'm figuring things out.

John Bytheway: 00:29:59 Well, one of the things that I just love about the Doctrine and Covenants as a whole is the majority of the sections are answers to a question, because they're figuring it out. How do we do this? How do we do this? Or we just read this in the Book of Mormon, do we need to do this? And then of course going through the JST and all these questions came up, and the Lord knows the answer, but maybe sometimes he waits until we ask. And then sometimes they're sorry they asked, I think. He puts a further, burdens and obligations on him and everything. Maybe I shouldn't have said that, but you know what I mean.

Hank Smith: 00:30:34 Yeah. Well, I'm with you. So Jordan, what I'm hearing is section 29 was not... Or section 20, I should say was not a sit down, write it out in one sitting. It sounds like years maybe.

John Bytheway: 00:30:47 Yeah. It doesn't appear to be like... And many of his other revelations are like that where somebody shows up and says, "I'm interested what the Lord wants from me," and Joseph is like take out a pen, right? In the case of Orson Pratt, he's too shy to actually write his own revelation. But this appears to be more of a process. Now again, we can't say for certain because the dating of these documents is complicated. But it does seem like he begins before the church is organized perhaps as early as summer of 1829, and doesn't end until soon after the church is organized.

The Articles and Covenants was the first revelation published in the church's newspaper, The Evening and Morning Star. It's actually the only revelation that appeared there twice. It became the second section of the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants right after, as you might guess the preface. Its importance is also suggested by the fact that there are various extent copies remaining. And what that suggests is that they made multiple copies of this document, because it was so important. Even a newspaper, not affiliated with the church, The Painseville Telegraph published what actually might be our earliest version of this revelation that's actually published in the Joseph Smith papers. And in doing so, the editor described the Articles and Covenants as the Mormon creed.

I think in part of the reason for that is because it contains similar kinds of information to other creedal documents. An account of the organization's history, a description of beliefs, instructions about things like baptism or administration of the Lord's supper church duties and offices. It really orients the early member's lives in a pretty profound way. You could think of it as the constitution of the church perhaps comparable to

something like section 42 and the way the law of consecration sort of orients early members of the church.

Hank Smith: 00:33:00

It could be considered a manual. We have a handbook of instructions. This feels like a handbook of instructions in part.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:33:09

Yeah. I think that's fair to say. I think it's worth repeating what you mentioned a little bit earlier, this handbook will take on new meaning over time as they gain new insight and understanding about things like priesthood, right? But yeah, I think it does function in that way. In fact, we know that it functions in that way because a couple of months later in that June 9 conference, they are reading this document and then they are using it to perform the sacrament, to give out licenses, right? So they do use it as a manual.

John Bytheway: 00:33:52

I think what you said, Jordan about making copies of this and taking out, I mean if you were a missionary, and taught people about the gospel, well, then what do we do?

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:34:01

That's what I would say, yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:34:04

It was like, "Okay, so believe this. I'll see you later." Should I organize a branch or what does a branch do? What happens there? This becomes an early handbook of instructions. I think I read that that's one of the reasons it was copied is so the missionaries could go out and how do I organize a branch? What does that look like exactly?

Hank Smith: 00:34:26

Yeah. When I was a kid, this was one of those sections where we hid it as a family and I started looking ahead going, "Oh, wow."

John Bytheway: 00:34:33

Like 84 versus long.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:34:36

It was long. Yeah, it was a Jacob chapter five moment, right?

John Bytheway: 00:34:39

Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:34:40

We're going to be here all day. Where do you take your students as you jump into this, Jordan?

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:34:48

There are maybe three or four different sections here. We could say that the first section, maybe even the first just four verses, I read it almost as we're a church too. We're official too. There's even some evidence perhaps that what goes on, on April 6th occurs in relationship to a law in New York that has been passed

that you have to organize in a particular kind of way. So in some ways, it presents itself as a church among churches. But pretty quickly it also presents itself as a sort of the church among churches.

Following that section, you have the second section. I don't know verses 5 through 12 or so, which I think is indicating Joseph has received authority from God. And this is kind of what's cool about this, I think, it's kind of the early history of the church summarized in these passages. This might be our first earliest account of the first vision, right? Notice that passage after it was truly manifested under the first elder that he received remission of his sins. He was entangled again in the vanities of the world. Now, we don't think that's all that detailed of an account, but that might be our first account because Joseph doesn't write his first account until 1832.

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| Hank Smith: | <u>00:36:15</u> | That's big news I think. I think that could be considered a very short account of the first vision given here. This is years before the first account that we have. |
| Dr. Jordan Watk...: | <u>00:36:27</u> | And it accords well with that 1832 account where Joseph is emphasizing I went in and prayed and got a remission of my sins. I was forgiven of my sins. It also aligns in suggesting that he then got entangled again in the vanities of the world. That's like 1832 account that he repents and God sends an angel, right? |
| Hank Smith: | <u>00:36:54</u> | This is cool. |
| Dr. Jordan Watk...: | <u>00:36:55</u> | It's an early text about our history in this revelation. It mentions the Book of Mormon of course. It mentions the three witnesses. I like to highlight this part when I teach my students. So it's got this phrase here, the holy... All of this demonstrates that the holy scriptures are true and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation as well as in generations of old. Now, we can talk a little bit as we get to the next section about the theology in this document, but what really is sort of radical about belief among these people at this time is belief in a new prophet, right? Most of Joseph's American contemporaries believed that the Bible was the ultimate and final word of God, right? Sola scriptura. And they rejected the idea that you could have new revelations that would somehow be as binding as the bible. |
| John Bytheway: | <u>00:38:02</u> | That kind of comes up, skip ahead a little bit to section 21 where, "Okay, this is his word. You shall receive as if from my own mouth and all patience of faith." This idea of a living prophet. And as you were saying that, Jordan I'm thinking about |

Jesus coming along with the sermon on the mount and saying these completely audacious things. Like you've heard it said of old time, but I say and for them it was the old prophets. That's what you rely on and would you say these folks, "Hey, this is all about the bible. And now whoa, this whole idea of no, "We've got a living prophet as well."

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:38:39

Yeah. To drive home that point you're making, there are a few people in this period who are starting to challenge the idea that it's the bible alone. So I studied the transcendentalists a little bit. So Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker, others. Ralph Waldo Emerson gives an address in 1838 to the graduating class of Harvard Divinity School and he says a lot of things in that address. One of the things he says is men have come to speak of revelation as somewhat long ago given and done. And part of what Emerson wants to say is, "Why can't God speak to me today?" Theodore Parker will say similar kinds of things. He'll say, "God made the bible for the soul, not the soul for the bible." In other words, why would it be the bible alone? Why can't God speak to me today?"

Now, that's pretty radical stuff. Emerson doesn't get invited back to Harvard for 30 years. So that's that's not seen as being okay. And I guess I would also note that transcendentalists are not saying what Joseph's saying. What makes Joseph's position right more radical is he saying, "No, it's not just that me through my conscience can reach the divine. It's that we have prophets like we had prophets in old, and those prophets can produce written revelations that are as binding as the biblical text." That's what makes this, I use the term radical. It's radical for Joseph's contemporaries.

Hank Smith: 00:40:12

Yeah. I don't think Joseph would have been invited back to Harvard Divinity School either.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:40:17

He never would have been invited in the first place, right?

Hank Smith: 00:40:22

I like how you're breaking this up for us. So we've got our first section here. We're a church among churches, but we're also the church, which is fascinating to me because we have that same concept today. Yes, we're a church among churches. By the way, we're the church among churches. We have that same kind of tension today. Then the history, I like that you've done this 5 through 12. I've never really noticed that before. Look at this just brief, concise history. What do we do after that? Where do you go from 13?

Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:40:51</u>	<p>That third section, I think is outlining beliefs. And I just talked about how radical the idea of having a new prophet was. Many of these beliefs and these verses are not all that unique. What do we get? We get creation. We get fall. We get the need for an atonement. Those aren't beliefs that would have set the church apart from their Christian contemporaries. Now, we should know, "Yeah, of course Joseph's understanding of these concepts in their particulars will evolve and develop over the years and they will become distinctive."</p> <p>But right here in 1830, in this section, a Christian maybe could have happened upon this section and gone because they didn't know that somebody was claiming to be a prophet producing it. Gone, "Yeah, I believe that stuff."</p>
John Bytheway:	<u>00:41:53</u>	<p>And what did you call it? It was sometimes called the Mormons' creed? Somebody wrote that. Because that's what I see here. This is like basic Christianity about Jesus coming and all the things that he did. In fact, one of the things I love to show my students with paper scriptures is when you find a page that has that many footnotes on it, then you know it's doctrinally rich. This is page 35 that we're looking at right now.</p>
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:42:25</u>	<p>It kind of highlights what are the basics. These are the basics. And again, it's no surprise that this document has a relationship to the Book of Mormon, right? If you're a member of this church, you believe in these basic teachings, right? We sometimes forget that every early member of the church was a convert from another Christian denomination. And they would have seen this and gone, "Okay, good. I've believed in these things. I now believe in some other things too. But these things are central."</p>
John Bytheway:	<u>00:43:01</u>	<p>These first principles. I think I've talked about this before, sorry. But I had somebody ask me once, "Hey, how many years you taught the Book of Mormon? What's the one thing that you've noticed?" And I said, "It's first principles. How often faith in Christ and repentance are mentioned together? And how sometimes followed by baptism, Holy Ghost..." I'm looking at verse 29. And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ and worship the father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end. I mean, it's this basic restatement. So I like the way you said, that people would read and go, "Yeah, okay, yeah. This is what I've always known and there's more."</p>

Hank Smith:	<u>00:43:44</u>	Yeah, and you've got the, what Elder McConkie would call the Pillars of Eternity here, right? You've got creation, fall, and atonement.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:43:50</u>	The fall and the atonement.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:43:52</u>	Resurrection. Yeah.
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:43:55</u>	Yeah. I think that's right. There are a few things that maybe would stand out a little bit. So verse, what is it, 27, those would come after who should believe in the gifts, spiritual gifts, gifts of the spirit. Now, there were people in this period who did believe in gifts of the spirit, charismatics as they were called, many evangelical groups. But there were also others who were saying, what are called cessationists, right? They believe that the gifts ceased with the apostles. So this does distinguish them in some ways in suggesting these are people who believe in a return of the spiritual gifts.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:44:34</u>	What would you say, Jordan about verse 32 that a man may fall from grace? Wasn't that a contrast with Calvinism of the time.
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:44:45</u>	<p>Yeah. So that's a clear rejection of Calvinist belief, right? Unfortunately, whenever we talk about Calvinism, we only talk about like this one thing. When it's really rich theologically in so many ways. But the idea of predestination, right? You are elected for salvation or damnation and you can't do anything about it. And along with that idea is this concept of the perseverance of the saints. If you are elect, you will remain elect. You cannot fall from that elect position. So this passage, it seems like a direct response to that, right?</p> <p>There is a possibility that man may fall from grace. Now, it bears noting I think that during the revivals of the 18th and then early 19th centuries, there is somewhat of a theological shift from Calvinism to what is called Arminianism. Not Armenianism, but Arminianism. It's tied to a Dutch theologian, Jacobus Arminius. He emphasized that the individual had a role in accepting or receiving the grace of Christ. So that is a rejection of Calvinism. And during the revivals, many of the evangelical groups, Methodist, Baptists, others started to embrace that concept a bit more.</p> <p>I mean, that's why you would go to a revival so that you could perhaps be moved to embrace the grace of Christ, right? So I suppose what I'm suggesting is it's kind of this verse wouldn't have stood out as strange to those from Evangelical</p>

backgrounds who have already started to accept this Arminian emphasis on receiving you, have the ability to receive the grace of Christ as an individual.

- Hank Smith: 00:46:37 That's interesting. A lot of the early converts and maybe I actually haven't done my historical research on this, but it seems that Brigham Young comes from methodism a little bit. John Taylor, Wilfred Woodruff. Maybe it was easier for someone to bridge into this new religion from methodism than it was from maybe presbyterianism.
- Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:47:00 Yeah. I think that's probably true. I mean, we could also talk and maybe we will talk a little bit about restorationists, right? Like the Campbellites. Now, they also have some serious problems with Joseph Smith, but it's no wonder that a lot of the converts come from in and around the area of Kirtland where there are these Restorationist groups people who are talking about the restoration of certain things, right? But I think evangelical groups were more prone to accept this message.
- John Bytheway: 00:47:38 I love what comes after that verse about that there's a possibility that man may fall from grace. Therefore let the church, and notice who is being addressed, take heed and pray always lest they fall into temptation. So there's some counsel that comes after that idea that it is possible to fall from grace. The perseverance of the saints is not what we're talking about here. Then again in verse 37, and again, by way of commandment to the church and we see why they would read this a conference because this a commandments for all of us.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:14 And it seems now they shift into, okay, now that we know what we believe, is this like how we're going to put this into practice? Is that what comes next, practices?
- Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:48:25 Yeah. I think that's the fourth section. That's the really long section. That's the section where your kids might tune out a bit, right? It turns to instructions regarding ordinances, offices, duties. Now, again, it bears emphasizing. We've said it before. These offices are not clearly associated with Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods at this point. Now, they will become associated with those priesthoods later especially after 1835, but nonetheless, it is clear that certain offices have certain rights. That's one of the other things that is starting to set this church apart, right?
- Hank Smith: 00:49:05 I wanted to ask one thing or maybe just say one thing and you could comment on this. And that is, I think when I read this with my family and I read deacon teacher priest. In my kid's minds,

They're automatically going to come 12, 14, and 16. And that's not the case here.

- Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:49:24 No. That's not the case here. It probably bears emphasizing that not all men have the priest that conferred upon them or are ordained to an office during the 19th century. In fact, I've seen some recent research by Paul Reeve that suggests... I've got one example here. 1842, Salem, Massachusetts. 66 members of the church, one priest, one elder. Now, it wasn't always that way, but I think maybe around 40 of the adult male membership. It depends on the where you're at. So that's a 20th century development that we are preparing every male to receive the priesthood. That is not the case in the 19th century and certainly not the case at the churches in the church's beginning.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:23 So it doesn't sound like it would be odd at all to be a member of the church, be a man and not hold any office of any priesthood?
- Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:50:30 Which probably bears emphasizing. We have come to, and hopefully I think we're moving away from this, we have come to conflate priesthood and men more than they did in the early church probably because of that, right? This idea that every adult male can get the priesthood. We've probably come to make that conflation in ways that they perhaps would not have because they were not conferring the priesthood upon all male members of the church.
- Hank Smith: 00:51:02 Right. So they wouldn't say we'd like to thank the priesthood for stacking the chairs, right?
- Dr. Jordan Watk...: 00:51:07 They would never say that.
- John Bytheway: 00:51:09 Yeah. I'm glad you bring this up. I think that the Come, Follow Me manual suggests a great talk to go read from President Oaks in April of 2014. In fact, I have my students write a paper on this. Tell me what the difference is between the keys of the priesthood, the authority of the priesthood, the power of the priesthood, and who holds it and who uses it, and things like that?
- I think in that talk that the Come, Follow Me manual recommends that we read, he even says we shouldn't refer to the men as the priesthood. It may be holders of the priesthood, and some of them may be and not all of them may be, but I'm glad you brought that up.

Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:51:49</u>	Yeah. Maybe something to note there too, and maybe I already mentioned this, but they do immediately start using this document in relationship to the offices for example. So at the June conference that follows Joseph and Oliver Cowdery ordain some of the members to these offices. Samuel Smith one of the original members of the church is ordained as an elder. Joseph Smith, Sr. and Hiram Smith are ordained as priests at that June conference. So they are taking this instruction and applying it pretty immediately.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:52:24</u>	I have always loved in section 20 that the Lord has a bigger church in mind than this small little group of six people, right? Because we've got to visit the house of each member and they're probably looking at each other going, "We all live in the same house."
John Bytheway:	<u>00:52:39</u>	Yeah. We've got the Colesville branch, the Harmony branch. They're just basically three families, right? In fact, Craig Osler said something really funny about this because if you've ever been to the Fayette, the Whitmer home, he said there are 60 people in there. He says, "That could be the first miracle of the church if you've got 60 people in there." Because it's you walk in there, you think, "You have 60 people in here. Were they smaller back then?"
Hank Smith:	<u>00:53:06</u>	And he says if you go from one place to another, you can take a recommend with you basically, right? That you're worthy.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:53:12</u>	A license, yeah.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:53:14</u>	They've got to be thinking, "We all know each other." I like to sometimes call it kind of a patriarchal blessing for the church that, "Hey, you're going to get bigger. Hey, you're going to succeed. Hey, this is going to be great, so get ready." And it's got to be kind of an exciting document in that way.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:53:33</u>	Yeah, that's kind of an implied message. This church is going to stay and it's going to grow and you're going to need some order here and how you do things. When did we decide you become a deacon at 12 and a teacher at 14. Now, it's the 12th year. It's not 12th birthday anymore.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:53:54</u>	Yeah, I'm going to pretend to be smart here. I actually read a book called Mormonism in Transition.
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:53:59</u>	Yeah, it's good.

Hank Smith:	<u>00:54:00</u>	Thomas Alexander, and that's really that shift from 1880 to 1930 is the church changes dramatically. And then John, that's where a lot of that comes from is this the idea of curriculum and young men's, young women's programs, all of that primary, all comes into its own there in that 50-year period.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:54:23</u>	I think maybe it's a good time just to bring up I love this phrase that I believe is President Nelson's phrase, I may be wrong, but the idea of a continuous restoration. I like to tell my students, "Hey, these documents are new relatively. We've had the bible for thousands of years, but we've only had the Book of Mormon for a couple of hundred." We're learning things and still the restoration continues. I like that idea.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:54:53</u>	Jordan, I want to ask you a question. With the understanding of these priesthood offices changing so much, is it still appropriate for me to use section 20 to talk to deacons today, teachers today, priests and elders today. Would you feel like this is still a usable document when it comes to those priesthood offices?
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:55:16</u>	<p>Certainly. I would add the maybe the caveat that it's a usable living document in the sense that... I think it is important as a historian to try and understand the original meaning of these texts, right? But after I've done that work, why should I not then work to apply these revelations to my own life? I think God wants us to do that and we just know that the early church was doing that, right? So in June of 1829, when they get section 18 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Lord explains what the 12 disciples will be doing, they maybe read that in one way in 1829.</p> <p>Well, in 1835 when the Quorum of the Twelve was actually called and the church has been through so much since then, they may read it in a bit of a different way at that point, and that's perfectly fine. Now, again, I do think we have to be careful and recognize that we are making applications that they may not have made. But that's an okay thing. Can't that be part of as, John suggested, sort of the process, the continuing restoration that we go back to these texts and treat them like living documents and allow them to continue to teach us.</p> <p>And in that sense, Hank, I think your comment about a patriarchal blessing is spot on. I read my patriarchal blessing one way when I received it, and then I lived my life and realized that, "Oh, not quite how I thought it would go. But I went back or I'd go back and read it again and draw new meanings in light of my new contexts, and I think the Lord wants us to be doing that."</p>

Hank Smith:	<u>00:57:14</u>	Oh, that's excellent because I'm seeing things here that priests and teachers still do visit the house of each member that's taken on different title and different names over the years, home teaching, now ministering. But it's still there. Teacher's duty is to... I have a son who is in the teacher's quorum. I would love to tell him, you're watching over the church, right? Make sure there's no lying, and backbiting, and evil speaking. Hey, everyone should be doing that.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:57:49</u>	Just the other night in young men's, "All right. We're all going. Bring your snow shovel. We're going to shovel some driveways." It was a watching over the church physical kind of thing that they could do. My boys took off and did it. It was great.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:58:03</u>	Let's keep going here because I want to talk about the actual day of organization. How far does this fourth section go? Is that really the rest of it?
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:58:12</u>	<p>Yeah. I think it's kind of the rest of it. Maybe some kind of standout things to mention might be... So there's a mention about candidates for baptism, right? And that candidacy follows the Book of Mormon except this one phrase that they will truly manifest by their works, that they have received the gift of Christ under the remission of their sins, right? So in verse 37, it includes requirements for baptism and it follows the Book of Mormon. The one addition it adds is this phrase that the candidates will truly manifest by their works that they have received the gift of Christ under the remission of their sins.</p> <p>Now, Oliver Cowdery's Articles of the Church of Christ included a similar but different phrase. His phrase was that each member shall speak and tell the church of their progress in the way of eternal life. Now, that idea of sharing your conversion story accepting Christ's grace, that was not uncommon among many denominations in this period, and I think that's probably what Oliver Cowdery is tapping into. But you notice the difference there. Cowdery is placing an emphasis on words. The Articles and Covenants is placing an emphasis on works, and I think Cowdery's feeling like this is undermining the Doctrine of Grace. He commands Joseph Smith in the name of God to change this passage.</p>
Hank Smith:	<u>00:59:51</u>	Wow, okay. I'm excited to hear about it.
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>00:59:56</u>	And Joseph's response, "Who are you?" what was that they fought about. No, they didn't fight it. Abner Cole.

Hank Smith:	<u>01:00:05</u>	He's like, "Take your coat off."
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>01:00:07</u>	<p>Let's go. He said, "By what authority he took upon him to command me to add or diminish to or from a revelation or commandment from Almighty God." By the way, that language is in section 20, which echoes passage in revelation. But that highlights an important point. These early members are figuring out what it is to have a prophet. Joseph is figuring out what it means to be a prophet. And this isn't of course the end of this, right? There will be future settings in which Oliver Cowdery is chastised for maybe paying attention to Hiram Page or placing sort of faith in somebody else who has not been designated as God's prophet, right?</p> <p>And Joseph incidentally, right? Joseph doesn't, in those situations just say, "Hey, don't you remember section 20, and we'll talk about section 21? Don't you remember those sections?" He's like, "Well, okay. I guess, I need some more insight here, right? Which tells you something perhaps about his kind of growing into the role of prophet as well."</p>
John Bytheway:	<u>01:01:21</u>	I love that. That is so important. They are figuring it out. Let's have patience with them and not hold them to a standard that they should have it all figured out and they should be doing everything perfectly. Well, do we hold ourselves to that same standard? We're still trying to figure out how to receive revelation. We're still trying to figure out our own patriarchal blessings, and our duties, and our callings. We're still trying to figure it out.
Hank Smith:	<u>01:01:49</u>	It's funny. I gasped hearing that someone's going to command the prophet.
John Bytheway:	<u>01:01:54</u>	Oh, I know.
Hank Smith:	<u>01:01:55</u>	But in that day, Oliver probably would have said, "What? What's the problem?"
John Bytheway:	<u>01:01:58</u>	I'm one of the elders of the church.
Dr. Jordan Watk...:	<u>01:02:01</u>	<p>Well, also note that Oliver had written a document that he thought would be used. And it doesn't get used, it gets sort of pushed aside. By the way in the Revelation Book One. Revelation Book One is a book of the earliest revelations. So they would there would be copies and then they decided, "Well, we probably should have a book of all these revelations, right? In Revelation Book One, this revelation says, "Given to Joseph</p>

Smith, the seer." And then there's an addition by Oliver Cowdery and to Oliver, an apostle. Oliver, he had done a lot. He was very invested and he wanted to make sure that people knew his place, even though sometimes he didn't know his place, right? And Joseph to some extent is willing to say, "Get some pushback." Right?

Hank Smith: 01:03:03

Right.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 01:03:03

Now, he clearly corrected him there. It's a different setting in part because of the context, in part because of Joseph's own personality.

Hank Smith: 01:03:13

Oh, man. I can't tell you how much I like this. And I will add that the tension between grace and work is still going on today. I mean, if we still have that in the church today like where do we fall on that, it kind of depends on which church leader you're listening to along that spectrum. So I love that that was happening on the first month of the church is this tension between grace and works.

John Bytheway: 01:03:41

I think another phrase that they added, isn't it true in verse 37 that we were just on is the broken heart contrite spirit phrases, which I love those. And I made a note because I wanted to comment that... And I heard Sherry do talking about the process of making a wild horse to a tame horse, and what is the phrase that we use at least to break them? She said a broken heart is one that's submissive to its master. So I like that idea, which is also a Book of Mormon and it's in the bible too of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. As part of that requirements for baptism, I just wanted to... Isn't that true, Jordan that was also added?

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 01:04:31

I think you're right. I don't know when it's added, but I think that is one of the phrases that is added, and that bears mentioning too, right? That this is a text that is revised. Not heavily, but it is revised as are a number of the revelations. That tells us something about the process of revelation, right?

I think that point too is interesting. Joseph is not saying throughout his life he emphasizes the need for Christ, right? And the revelations do as well, and the grace of Christ. I think one of the things that this is anticipating is members of the church are going to have to do a lot of work. They are going to be called to do hard things. So it's sort of anticipating all of that work that they will have to do as members of the church in emphasizing works.

Maybe it bears mentioning, and then we maybe we can move to actually... I guess, we haven't actually talked about the organization of the church yet, but there are these phrases in here, right? The prayers for the sacrament. And those come out of the Book of Mormon, right? But I love this thought that BH Roberts... So BH Roberts, a convert to the church, an amazing thinker of the church, early historian of the church, he said this about those prayers. He said these prayers of consecration are the most perfect forms of sacred literature to be found.

When I read that, I'm like, "Really? Are they? I think we read them so much, we hear them so much that we just take them for granted." Truman Madsen who wrote a biography of Roberts said that Roberts found these prayers to embody in masterful rich, heavily freighted phrases the whole of the gospel. That's pretty cool stuff, right? Again, I think we just take it for granted like okay, there's the sacrament prayer. But for Roberts, this was actually sort of proof of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. So it's, of course, I think important that we find these prayers in the church's organizing document.

John Bytheway:

01:06:58

Thank you for saying that. And I think that in the Come, Follow Me manual, it actually says as you read about the sacrament in the doctrine in section 20, "Try to read these sacred prayers from the perspective of someone hearing them for the first time. What insights do you receive about the sacrament, about yourself? How might these insights affect you, the way you prepare to take the sacrament this week?"

And I have a friend who you guys might have heard of, Brother [Gary Pohl 01:07:28] and he just... I love the way he said it once, he said, "If Heavenly Father had a favorite scripture," and he said, "I don't know if he does, but if he did, he might arrange it, so that his people would hear it often." He might even arrange it so the person saying it would be kneeling. And all of us would be listening. I'm really intrigued with the things the Lord has us repeat and this one is a weekly thing. And it is slow down and see how beautiful and rich this prayer is and what it's saying.

I was going to ask you because I was intrigued by this that it says before the prayer here that the priest would kneel with the elder or priest will kneel with the church. And I wonder did they used to all kneel down for that time?

Dr. Jordan Watk...:

01:08:22

Yeah. I think that is the case. Now, the difficulty here is the records. Even, if they are kneeling every time, they're not going to tell us that because it's just something they do. But I do think that's the case and I think one of the reasons we don't is just

kind of logistics. We're sitting in those pews, and that's not going to work. But I think it would have been the case and somebody probably could tell us that yes, they would have all knelt for these prayers.

Hank Smith:

01:08:55

Wow. I get a chance to do this in my New Testament classes. I feel kind of left out sometimes in these church history discussions going, I don't know what I'm doing. But we do study the sacrament in the New Testament classes. And I love to ask my students questions they probably haven't thought of. Why are there two prayers? Why don't we do this in one? Why are there two symbols instead of one? Why do we sing before, right? All of these things that we just do. If you go through it, you think, "Well, there's probably meaning behind everything that we do.

I've often told my students take a dollar bill, something you handle every day and find something new on it. And if they actually stop and look at it, they go, "Oh, I've never noticed that. Oh, I've never noticed that. I've never even looked at that before. What does that mean?" And we can do that with the sacrament. We can stop for a second. Something we deal with often and say, "Let me look in closely at this?" It's rich. There's so much there. I've had students draw out the most interesting ideas. They've said the atonement overcomes two deaths, spiritual death and physical death. And maybe there's two prayers.

They said that the savior had two experiences, the garden of Gethsemane and the cross, and perhaps each prayer... They just draw out things that they never would have seen before. Can't we just slowed down a little bit and really taken a look at the sacrament and all the little things that we do around it? It's been a fun experience to hear my students draw out things I never would have seen.

John Bytheway:

01:10:33

Stephen Covey in *Spiritual Roots of Human Relations*, a book that my dad had from the '70s or something. He equated Moses 139 with the sacrament. Immortality, that's the bread. That's Jesus's body. That's accomplished. He was resurrected, the First Fruits in eternal life. That's because of his blood, that's the wine, the water, the atonement. I can't think of the sacrament now, and the bread, the water, without equating immortality, eternal life. And another just fun insight, and I love Jordan, as you mentioned that this is from the Book of Mormon. This is from Moroni going back and getting... And I've had students ask why are they in both places? Well, I think this answers the question. This is what Oliver was told to do in section 18, right?

Hank Smith: 01:11:25 I wonder if Moroni elbows Mormon, I put that in there. This is good stuff.

Dr. Jordan Watk...: 01:11:25 It's good stuff, yeah.

John Bytheway: 01:11:32 Please join us for part two of this podcast.

Follow Him Podcast

Episode 10 Part II

John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:02</u>	Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:06</u>	Well, I had a question about bishops because this isn't something we started to do. Is this added later when we started getting bishops or was bishops an idea on the original, and it's okay if we can't answer that.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:00:19</u>	Yeah. Somebody probably can. I can't. I do know that there are certain things listed here, deacons, for example, that we don't have a record of a deacon being called until 1831. So it's also possible. And of course, Section 18, which we've talked about, Twelve Disciples, but we don't get that until 1835. But we don't get our first bishop until Edward Partridge the next year. So it's certainly possible that it's anticipating that, though I don't think it's added. If it is added later, I don't think it's too much later.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:00:56</u>	So it's probably just more anticipating, but again, I think that's an important point. They might be looking around and being like, "Who's a bishop? We don't have any bishops. What is a bishop?" I guess it says that here a little bit, it gives us some sense, but they don't really find out what that means until you get Edward Partridge called as bishop and you get the Law of Consecration and that's really what becomes his role. [crosstalk 00:01:17].
Hank Smith:	<u>00:01:17</u>	Wow. I think that's an important point. We've hit this so many times, but the idea that they are... What is that?
Dr. Jordan Watkins.:	<u>00:01:24</u>	They're figuring it out.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:01:25</u>	What did he mean by that? That's going to lead to the next revelation. What is that? That's the next revelation. I'm really just fascinated by this. So let's talk.-
John Bytheway:	<u>00:01:34</u>	Jordan, can I make one more point?
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:01:37</u>	Oh, yes, please.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:01:40</u>	In verse 71, I just thought this is right out of the Book of Mormon too. Really, "no one can be received into the church of Christ unless he has arrived onto the years of accountability

before God and is capable of repentance.” And I thought, “Whoa, that is Mormon’s letter to Moroni Chapter 8. And he uses those exact two words,” capable and accountable of committing sin”, which I think was... Here is two adjectives to describe a candidate for baptism has to know what he's doing, has to be capable of committing sin and accountable.

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| John Bytheway: | <u>00:02:16</u> | So the footnote's not there, but I wrote Moroni 8, verse 10 next to that verse because I love those two words to describe, you submit to baptism. It means you're capable of sinning and you're accountable for your sins. |
| Hank Smith: | <u>00:02:30</u> | John, I can't tell you the ways you've pointed out so far in all the episodes is where the Book of Moroni comes up here. Because sometimes as I've read the Book of Moroni, it almost is an afterthought. Here's a couple of things that you're just, "Oh, here's a couple letters. Here's a sermon. Let's throw that in." And all of a sudden I'm seeing how useful the Book of Moroni was to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. |
| John Bytheway: | <u>00:02:54</u> | I'm such a fan of Moroni those last 10 chapters. And he starts out saying, "I'm not supposed to have written anymore, but I have not yet perished. So I'll write a few more things, they may be of benefit to my brother-in-law Lamanites in some future day." And then he gives Oliver Cowdery all of this stuff. In fact, I was marking you won't see this, maybe all of the Moroni footnotes right here on page 39, Moroni 4:1, Moroni 5:1, Moroni 6:4, Moroni 6:7. Because this is exactly what Oliver was told in Section 18. Look at what you've already written and look at this handbook of instructions Moroni already wrote and go there. |
| Hank Smith: | <u>00:03:38</u> | I'm excited to teach the Book of Mormon again. And when we get to Moroni include how crucial this book was to the beginnings of the Restoration. |
| John Bytheway: | <u>00:03:47</u> | And what I love to say to people is Moroni's best work, this is just by the way talking, but Moroni's best work was accomplished while a single adult. I think that's really cool. And he's up there all alone on the temples and that imagery of Moroni is his best work.” I have no kindred, no friends, my father's been killed in battle.” And then he writes these extra chapters and what a gift, how useful they became. |
| Hank Smith: | <u>00:04:14</u> | I really identified with him in high school. He had no friends nor whether to go. |

John Bytheway:	<u>00:04:20</u>	When I was hired at BYU, I was single, which made me pretty rare. I'm no longer single so I can relate to that. I think it's also interesting to note perhaps that Moroni of course would've been the last thing that Cowdery's writing down and copying. So it's on his mind. So perhaps it's not so surprising, but isn't it great and perhaps there's some providence here that those final chapters are there. Just a word of clarification. So Cowdery does not produce this document. He produces the Articles of the Church of Christ, which is comparable to this document. And you can find that on Joseph Smith Papers website.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:05:10</u>	But Joseph is the one who produces, it says, I think, "By the spirit of prophecy and revelation" produces Section 20." And I think one of the things Cowdery's upset about is that this replaces that, or supersedes that document.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:05:31</u>	This has happened now a number of times when we talked about the Preface, it was that way as well that these three guys got together, created a preface and then said, "Okay that was good. Here's mine."
John Bytheway:	<u>00:05:46</u>	I hope he got some benefit from wrestling with it, but now let me show you the real thing.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:05:52</u>	It'd be interesting to do something as a study like that, Jordan is to go and look at the two side-by-side. To look at all the Cowdery's-.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:06:00</u>	It's interesting because there's a lot of similarity there. There are notable differences. One that Cowdery was most insistent that be taken out. But there are some notable differences. But it will be plain that these documents are related to each other. We just don't know exactly how. Joseph doesn't say, "I took Cowdery's Articles of the Church of Christ. And from that I produced this." So we're left to speculate a little bit, but I think it's very clear that they are both thinking about organization of the Church and what should be included.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:06:41</u>	I think I was just going to reiterate again, Moroni when he first took over for his father Mormon, he said, "I have no kin . . . or I have or have I none. I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know how long the Lord will suffer that I live." And then he finds his mission. Apparently he finds some or, and as you know Hank you can take this part out, David, in fact, please do. But I wrote this book about Moroni because I love that he found his voice and said, "Here's what I'm going to do." And there was nobody to impress by writing a book, but he left those last chapters and

the Book of Ether, "Here's how nations fall when they reject Christ," and put that all in there.

- John Bytheway: 00:07:27 That's amazing that this became so useful. And I confess, I hadn't noticed Oliver Cowdery being told in Section 18, "Look, you've already written it." And it just blew my mind. I wish I'd stuck that in the book.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:42 The things we find out later.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:44 Yeah.
- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:07:45 Yeah. I think it's also worth noting that scholars have pointed out that the Book of Mormon in the early Church functions as sign or symbol. In other words, more than as a document from which you teach.
- John Bytheway: 00:08:00 It's just a sign of the Restoration.
- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:08:02 Right. When Joseph Smith gives sermons, he's not usually using the Book of Mormon, he's using the Bible. But what we see here, so the Book of Mormon, the idea is that the Book of Mormon functions as a symbol yes--that God has called a new prophet through an angel. And this is a symbol of that call. But it's very clear in these early revelations, and this one in particular Section 20, that the Book of Mormon is informing much of the content.
- John Bytheway: 00:08:33 Yes. And that's why I love underlining these Moroni references. I'm like, "Attaboy, attaboy." You already told us that." And that's awesome.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:44 Let's talk about, I often call it the day of days, April 6th, 1830. Who knew we were going to have so many meetings and this is our first one. Jordan, what can you tell us about the preparation for that day, what's happening before that day, and then that day itself?
- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:09:03 Yeah. So this is spring of 1830, and well, Joseph is still in Harmony but he's going to be traveling up to Fayette. In fact, Joseph Knight, Sr., one of these familiar faces in the early days of the Restoration. He picks comes down from Colesville picks up Joseph from Harmony and then travels that three to four day journey up to Fayette. Joseph Knight in his reminiscences says that as they're traveling, Joseph tells him, "Lord has commanded me to organize a church and He's told me to do it on April 6th."

- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:09:51 So on that day, they get up there, April 6th is what, a Tuesday in 1830. And I didn't just calculate that somehow in my head, I'm just remembering it. And a small group of between 30 to 60, we're not exactly sure individuals assembled in the Peter Whitmer home. Even if it's 30, that's a lot of people in the Peter Whitmer home. By the way, there are a number of other sources that say Manchester, and there's been some confusion about that. But most scholars and historians at this point are pretty clear on this being Fayette and it being the Peter Whitmer home despite some confusion from other sources.
- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:10:36 But then what do they do? Well, they follow point by point, the direction that they're given in June of 1829 in the chamber of Father Whitmer, which incidentally would've been upstairs. So now they're meeting and doing exactly what the voice of the Lord had told them to do in June of 1829. So they have a prayer, Joseph and Oliver ask if the group gathered accepts them as their teachers and the things of the kingdom of God. There's a unanimous vote in the affirmative. After the vote, Joseph again, following the command they'd been given in June of 1829. Joseph ordains Oliver Cowdery as an elder, Oliver Cowdery then ordains Joseph Smith as an elder. And that's our church structure right now. It's pretty simple and it makes sense given how small it is, but there's no First Presidency in 1830. There's no Quorum of the Twelve. All of that will come in time.
- Dr. Jordan Watkins.: 00:11:42 And then after these ordinations, they administer the sacrament again, as they had been told to do. Now, there is some question as to whether or not maybe they had participated in the Lord's Supper before the Church's organization. And we wonder about that because Lucy Mack's history suggests perhaps that that was the case. All of Oliver Cowdery's Articles of the Church of Christ have the direction to participate in the sacraments. So it's possible. But nonetheless, they do it on this occasion. And then they give the Holy Ghost to those who have been baptized. David Whitmer says that, and this is a reminiscent account, but he says that around 70 people had been baptized before April 6th.
- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:12:25 Now, that strikes me as maybe a little bit high, but there had been a number of people baptized. Those who are present are given the Holy Ghost, and again, as the Articles and Covenants have indicated that has to be done by certain people. So authority's becoming important. Original six members of the Church: Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Samuel Smith and David Whitmer. And then after they're given the Holy Ghost, they are confirmed as members of the Church of Christ. And that's the meeting.

Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:13:05</u>	Now that doesn't conclude the day though. Incidentally we don't have minutes for this meeting, which in some ways makes Section 21 a revelation given on the day the Church's organized even more important. Because it at least gives us some insight, a contemporary document that gives us some insight into what is taking place. Why don't we have minutes for that account, for that day? Maybe because the Lord hasn't given this first command to the Church yet, which is, "There shall be a record kept among us." And I guess maybe somebody should've grabbed a pen and paper at that moment. And I suppose that bears noting too. They're not always great at doing this. And sometimes we as historians or just people who are interested in the Church, we look back and think, "Why did you not come out of the grove, Joseph and write an account? Or why did you guys not write an account in 1829 when John the Baptist came?" Well, that's not necessarily something that was in their cultural practice. We're told in General Conference again and again to do it and we don't, or at least lots of us don't.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:14:23</u>	So it's no surprise that we don't have a lot of documents from the early period. What might be surprising is how many documents we do have. And much of that, I think owes to this command, God saying, "Keep a record. This stuff is important." This goes to your earlier point about thinking ahead, this thing is going to last and it's going to grow, and you're going to want to keep records of this. Now, in some ways they're a record, people of the book. They have the Bible, which is a Book of Books, and they've got the Book of Mormon. Is there any book more obsessed with record keeping than the Book of Mormon?
Hank Smith:	<u>00:15:04</u>	Every year, has to be.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:15:06</u>	Yeah. So there's already some sense of record keeping as important because of those texts. But now the Lord is saying, "You people in these latter days, you keep a record. You be a record-keeping people." And really, as a historian and again, I thank the Lord for this commandment because we have so many records.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:15:32</u>	I'm remembering Wilford Woodruff. I think it's in that movie, he Church made, let's call it the <i>Mountain of the Lord</i> where he says, "Well, Joseph admonished the Saints to be a record-keeping people." And ever since I heard him say that I couldn't let my head hit the pillow before I'd written down the events of the day. And the journals of Wilford Woodruff are huge, aren't they to historians?

Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:15:57</u>	They are probably the single best source that we have. In fact, the Church actually has all of the digitized copies of his journals on the Church History library. So you can go read them and [crosstalk 00:16:13] sometimes he doodles. But actually there's a press, Benchmark Books that has just published all of Wilford Woodruff's journals with annotations and it's seven, eight volumes. So yes it's not much of a stretch to say that Wilford Woodruff's record keeping is also tied to this command.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:16:46</u>	Yeah. He heard that. I just remember him really taking to heart this idea of being a record keeping people. And parenthetically, it's just funny, when I went to get my marriage recommend to marry Kim, my wife, I had to go see her Stake President whose name was Bruce. His middle name is Bruce, but his real name is Wilford B. Woodruff. And he had access to all those original journals because he's a great grandson or a great, great grandson or something. And boy, that was fun to talk to him about his ancestor. And he's like, "Yeah, here's a letter from Vincenzo Di Francesca." You've all seen that that movie, what's it called? <i>How Rare a Possession</i> and beautiful handwriting and everything. But thankfully people like Wilford wrote everything down.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:17:39</u>	Yeah. I was going to say in all my interviews with these historians, Jordan, one thing I noticed is we don't have a lot of record of what happened then. It's almost this frustration of, "They didn't write it down. They didn't..." And they're always saying, "Well, our best record of this is Lucy Mack Smith. Our best record of this is..." Because they didn't write stuff down. And to be fair, neither do I. I think it was Dr. Scott Esplin, didn't he say on the podcast, "If you read my journal, you just think I went from breakup to breakup because that's the only time I wrote in my journal." So it's got to be frustrating, Jordan, as a historian to go, "Write it down."
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:18:20</u>	It's frustrating. But again, we do have an abundance of material. Because of this relative to other church organizations, relative to other organizations from this period, we now have shelves of books. Joseph Smith Papers is a perfect example or maybe the perfect fulfillment of this command. So yeah, we get frustrated because we don't have documents about events that we really like. And then we look in Joseph Smith Papers and we have documents for events we don't care about like when cows got lost in the street in Nauvoo. But there is really an abundance of material available.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:19:04</u>	Thank you for saying that because I've had students, "Okay. Peter, James, and John comes and nobody wrote down the

date?" And stuff like that. So you're saying, "Well, look, we don't keep journals either, even though we've been told to."

- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:19:19 Yeah. It's just not part of their culture. And Joseph's First Vision, including from his 1832 Account, we know that it's a very personal thing. We don't have anything from Joseph Smith at this period. I don't know if he knows how to write very well in 1820 at all. Well, I'll tell you this, I know he doesn't know how to write very well in 1832 because we have that account. So it's not in their mind to, "Oh, I had a spiritual experience. I'm going to go write in my journal about it."
- Hank Smith: 00:19:55 Just one small thing is the availability of paper and pencil.
- John Bytheway: 00:19:59 Yeah. You know what it costs to get yourself a journal these days?
- Hank Smith: 00:20:03 The abundance of supplies we have and we still don't do it. They didn't have the supplies readily available and they didn't do it. And here we are thinking, "Well, why didn't you?"
- John Bytheway: 00:20:12 Yeah. And even remember that Joseph Knight had to provide them paper for the translation process at a certain point. Another thing to note here is, so the Lord says, "Keep a record." And then He tells them how Joseph will be known in the record. Joseph will be known as "a seer, a translator, a prophet, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and an elder of the church." So that's what Joseph will be known. And a couple of decades later, well, actually 17 years later, Oliver Cowdery writes that on this occasion, he ordained Joseph Smith as "prophet, seer, and revelator" in relationship to Section 21. Then the revelation goes on to say, "Okay, this is how Joseph will be known. The church needs to give heed unto all his words and commandments and receive those words as from my own mouth." Now, once again, this is an idea that the members have to get used to. What does it mean to have a prophet? After this is when Oliver Cowdery writes to Joseph Smith and commands him in the name of the Lord to remove that passage.
- John Bytheway: 00:21:24 So we're so formalized right now. We're so set up that we understand how these things work or at least the ways in which they do work. And that's taking time here for these early members of the Church. But the part that I love most about this is what follows the Lord's statement to receive this as if from my own mouth, "Receive it as if from my own mouth, in all patience and faith." I think that is crucial. You've talked about section one, the preface. In Section 1, I think the Lord gives us a key of how to understand the revelations by saying, "I speak

unto my prophets according to, in their weakness, after the manner of their language." I think that's a key to understanding the revelations. I think He's giving us another key here in saying, "To receive Joseph's words in all patience and faith." That's a really crucial message for early members of the Church. The Lord is going to ask them through Joseph Smith to do some very hard things. He's going to ask them to leave their homes, some of them multiple times. He's going to ask them to endure persecution. He's going to ask them to endure failing, to build Zion.

- John Bytheway: 00:22:48 He's going to ask them to give up all of their properties and become stewards. That is a counter-cultural revelation, right when you have the emergence of capitalism. He is going to ask them to try and accept some really radical new teachings like Joseph Smith's vision, Section 76. He's going to ask them to do some hard things and He's telling them, "You need to have patience and faith." And I think he's also saying, "That's okay if you struggle with these things. That's okay if you don't immediately feel excitement when Joseph tells you we're going to leave New York and go to Ohio." And of course that applies to us today. We sustain imperfect prophets and apostles, and sometimes they teach us to do hard things or they teach us things that require patience and faith. What if we're sitting in general conference and we don't just love everything that's being said. I think the Lord in some sense is going, "That's okay."
- Hank Smith: 00:23:56 He anticipated that here.
- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:23:58 He's anticipating that and He's saying, "But exercise some patience and exercise some faith." This also applies to our conversation about records. So the Lord gives us command to keep records. The Lord knows that those records are going to contain beautiful truths and inspiring stories. The Lord also knows that those records are going to highlight Joseph Smith's and the Saints' imperfections. And he knows that someday people are going to have access to these documents. And we're in that day now more than ever. And I think he knows that we're going to need patience and faith in approaching the words that they contain, including Joseph Smith's revelations.
- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:24:44 Maybe that even applies to, "I have to learn a little bit of history to understand some of these revelations?" That requires some patience and faith for a lot of us. So I think that phrase is so crucial. And I imagine Joseph dictating it and thinking, "Oh, yes, yes. Thank you for that."

Hank Smith:	<u>00:25:08</u>	Because it doesn't need to be said, "For His word you shall receive if from my own mouth." Period, stop right there. But the word in all patience and faith, let's cut everybody some slack here.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:25:20</u>	Yeah. Another message there too, I think the Lord is saying, "I'm the source of these revelations, but I am delivering them through this imperfect person. And his language is imperfect." You're not getting the revelations in God's language.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:25:38</u>	It's not the fax machine.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:25:40</u>	Yeah. It's not the fax machine. It's through Joseph. So not only is Joseph going to ask you to do hard things, or I'm going to ask you to do hard things through Joseph. The language he uses to ask you those things you might sometimes trip up on and go, "Is that revelation? Is that scripture?" And of course, this is what leads to the conversations about the preface, which you've talked about. And in Section 67, the Lord actually delivers a revelation in which He says, "You've seen his imperfection." And that's the Lord acknowledging them. And then He says, "And you have sought in your heart's language to express beyond what he has expressed." The language isn't good enough for some of you. And then of course the Lord challenges them to try and produce something better and they don't. And it requires patience in multiple ways here.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:26:33</u>	I have a quotation from Harold B. Lee in October, 1970, "There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the church. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things as if from the mouth of the Lord Himself with patience and faith. The promises that the gates of hell shall not prevail against you and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you and cause that heavens to shake for your good and His name's glory." So me too, I underlined that idea of patience and that the Lord would say that, I'm so thankful that he would say that. And I hope we can apply that today, as you just pointed out, Jordan, thank you.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:27:23</u>	And there's a promise that comes with it in verse six, "Do these things and here's a promise that comes that the gates of hell..." What does he say? "The gates of hell shall not prevail against you and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you and cause the heavens to shake for your good and His name's glory." I've seen that happen in my own life as I followed the counsel of the prophet in patience and faith.

Jordan, what does it mean when He talks about Joseph and He says, "I've inspired him to move the cause of Zion in mighty power," which is an interesting phrase that has popped up here and there so far yet again,

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:28:02

Yet again an idea that develops over time. Right here it's pretty vague, called to the work of God in some way, the cause of Zion. Pretty quickly they'll have an idea of what Zion is supposed to be through the Bible revision when you get discussion of Zion of Enoch, but it remains pretty vague here. Pretty quickly you will start to get discussions about, I'm thinking of Section 28, Zion seems to be a place. And then Sections 52 and 57, Zion is a place, it's in Jackson County, Missouri, that's the center spot. But here they're not working with that. So it is a bit more vague. But it becomes more defined in the early years of the Church. And then actually they have to continue to adapt to their understandings when they fail to build Zion. When they are removed from Missouri and they start to internalize what does it mean to be a Zion-like people a bit more. So it's another concept that develops over time.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:29:12

I think that passage in Doctrine and Covenants 21 is interesting. I actually don't really know what to make of it, "His weeping for Zion, I have seen. And I will cause that he will mourn for her no longer." He mourned again after this. Just think of Liberty Jail. So I don't know what's going on here. Maybe some of you have some thoughts, but is it possible? We've talked about how the revelations come through Joseph the prophet. They partake of his language. They are informed by his mindset. Maybe this is Joseph hoping that that day is over. Or maybe it's just what he needs to hear right now. He's been through a lot. And maybe just right now, he needs to hear this from the Lord, "I've seen your tears and we're good right now." So I don't know exactly what to do with it, but those are a few thoughts.

Hank Smith: 00:30:22

Yeah. And it just seems that we think of Joseph Smith as confident, I know what I'm doing. And it seems here he's showing some vulnerability that he's weeping, doesn't know exactly what to do. He still feels condemned for his sins because the day will come unto the remission of his sins. So this is something that constantly is on his mind, his own sin.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:30:44

And I think that's fair to say. Again, this is Joseph's language and it's informed by him. That is to say if it's another person it's going to sound differently. So I think you can see Joseph's guilt in Section 3 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Is that the exact thing that the Lord wanted to say? Would He have said it precisely that way? What if He had said it through somebody

else to Joseph, would it have been as harsh? Maybe not. I think it's filtered through his mind and I think you're right. He's constantly interested in as we all should be a remission of his sins. So it's not surprising. I don't think that that shows up. And I think this does give him a great amount.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:31:31

Remember when he comes after the Three Witnesses, to see the plates and the angel and he comes to his father and his mother and he says, "I am not the only one now." And he is so thrilled, it's like a huge weight has been lifted off his shoulder. He's an emotional person and with good reason. He's dealing with a lot. And he's 24-years-old right now.

Hank Smith: 00:31:59

He's 24. I know 24-year-olds, I teach them at BYU and they're great people, but would I put them in charge? I don't know.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:32:09

I know a 38-year-old who couldn't do anything like this.

Hank Smith: 00:32:17

Yeah. Well, you're 38, I remember when I hit 38 and thought, "This is as far as Joseph got. He got to 38. That was it." And I don't feel like I had even started by that point. And yet he was done at 38 and look at what he did accomplish at such a young age. Sometimes we forget what a miracle that is.

John Bytheway: 00:32:43

I hope at some point when we get to the organization of the first Quorum of the Twelve is that 1835 February 14th to... I need to do the research, but I want to put an age on each one of them. Because I think that except for Joseph Smith, Sr., you would feel like you're walking into a Young Adult activity. And that's amazing with what we're talking about.

Hank Smith: 00:33:09

I want to know what else do we know about this day? So they gather in the Whitmer farm or the Whitmer home, they have the meeting. Is Section 21 received right then? Is it received that evening? Do we know?

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:33:22

I think the record says before they had dispersed. So again, guess I don't know exactly when they first met. So I don't know if that's morning, afternoon, or evening. So it's before the group leaves and that would've been profound, because some of these individuals had seen Joseph dictate revelation, but most of them had not. So that probably also makes this revelation fairly unique. I'm thinking of Section 76, which is a very different experience where it's a vision and you have a group of men watching Joseph and Sidney watch the vision. So that's a strange one or a different one. But this one, I don't know, I haven't really thought about this. But I don't know that there's

another occasion where there's that many people present when Joseph dictates a revelation. So that must've been pretty exciting stuff, "Oh, we know this is the prophet. We believe this is the prophet. We've read some of his revelations. But I have not seen him actually dictate a revelation." I don't know who writes this by the way. But they would have people on hand to do so.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:34:34

So yeah, it makes it quite interesting. I think we do know that after Joseph's, at least one version, so there are multiple drafts of Joseph's History in 1839. One of the drafts does say that they proceeded to enjoy the gifts of the Spirit. After this meeting, the Spirits poured out upon them. I think it's also that same day that Joseph Smith, Sr. is baptized and this is Lucy Mack Smith's History. Joseph says, "Oh, my God, I have lived to see my father baptized in the true church of Jesus Christ." There's also an account he says, "My own father and mother were baptized to my great joy and consolation." And about the same time Martin Harris and Porter Rockwell. So it appears that there are other baptisms that take place along with a general spiritual outpouring.

Dr. Jordan Watkins.: 00:35:34

This is Joseph Knight reminiscence account, that Joseph, then at some point during the day or after this has occurred, he went out into the woods and prayed which is quite fitting. He had done that 10 years earlier. And Joseph Knight said that his joy seemed to be full. Now, Joseph probably had no clue of what else he was going to do or have to do and that's probably a good thing at that stage. But his joy was full on April 6th, 1830.

Hank Smith: 00:36:06

Wow. That is beautiful. And that name Porter Rockwell, he's going to become famous in the Church. He's just 16-years-old on this day, April 6th, 1830. And he probably also has no idea what's in front of him. But at this time I think he constitutes almost the entire Young Men's program of the Church, is Porter Rockwell on that one day. Probably the youngest, maybe the youngest person baptized that day, I would think at 16.

John Bytheway: 00:36:32

Hey, can I ask another question about the April 6th date. There's a feeling that that is the exact day, the birthday of the Savior. When did that-

Hank Smith: 00:36:46

Do we really want to get into this? Elder Bednar says, "We know, we know." I'm like, "Oh, wow. We know." Jordan, what do you think?

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:36:55

What I would say is we don't know from these documents.

John Bytheway:	<u>00:36:58</u>	From these documents, that's a good way to put it.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:37:02</u>	I could see how somebody would read Section 20, is it the first verse, that way. But this is just a way of speaking. The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days being 1,830 years, since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you can find that kind of language in other documents from this period. I don't think it's saying anything about the birth of Christ. That's not how I read it.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:37:29</u>	Yeah. I could've said, "I met Hank 16 years ago," and it doesn't mean it was February 19th. But I've always wondered about that because I think when did we take that so literally?
Hank Smith:	<u>00:37:43</u>	I will say that April 6th seems to be, well, at least it becomes a very important day for us. President Hinckley loved doing things on anniversaries. And didn't we dedicate the Conference Center? I want to say the Conference Center was dedicated on April 6th.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:38:00</u>	Wasn't the Salt Lake Temple dedicated on April 6th?
Hank Smith:	<u>00:38:04</u>	April 6th. Yeah. So I think that it becomes a significant day. And I'll just say, I've always been jealous of people who are born on April 6th. I don't know. I feel like the Lord's putting the stamp of approval on all of you who were born on April 6th.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:38:16</u>	My son, Matthew was born on April 5th. And I pled with Kim to just... No, I'm just kidding.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:38:23</u>	Come on.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:38:25</u>	Well, lastly what can you tell us about Section 22? It's a short one, I've read that 20 and 22 were sometimes put together. And how is this significant and important?
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:38:38</u>	Yeah, that's correct. Some of the earliest versions we have of the articles and covenants included the revelation contained in Section 22. So I mentioned <i>The Painesville Telegraph</i> version which might be our earliest version also contains section 20. Which suggests to us that early members of the church are reading these texts as being very much related. Now the obvious relationship is the conversation about baptism and the instruction given about baptism in section 20 and section 22 follows up on that. Now, the question that arises here, according to the documents is what do we do with individuals who seem to meet all of the requirements for baptism? Have

been baptized by immersion in another denomination, this would've applied to a number of Baptists. What do we do with them? Do they need rebaptism? In fact, a couple of decades later, Orson Pratt, and Orson Pratt was not present.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:39:44

So he would've heard this secondhand. But he says that in the early days of the Church, there were certain persons belonging to the Baptist denomination. Very moral and no doubt as good people as you could find anywhere who came saying they believed in the Book of Mormon. And that they had been baptized in the Baptist Church and they wished to come into our church. The prophet Joseph had not at that time, particularly inquired in relation to this matter, but he did inquire and received a revelation from the Lord.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:40:16

Now, of course, this goes back to John the Baptist appearing in May of 1829 conferring the Priesthood of Aaron and saying that one of the things that the Priesthood Aaron allows for is baptism. So the question of authority in baptism had been present earlier on, at least a year earlier. But what does that tell us again? That Joseph doesn't just have this all figured out, like, "Oh, I know exactly what we need to do here, and I don't need to go to the Lord about it." But he does. He goes to the Lord. And I guess we should say perhaps that there are other Baptists in particular had emphasized immersion and accountability.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:41:06

So that is related to what we've seen in Book of Mormon passages and in Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants. So it wouldn't be a surprise that it's them who are asking the question. I am accountable. I was baptized when I was accountable and I was baptized by immersion. So the answer given by the Lord is this revelation that the date is 10 days after the organization of the Church. And the revelation given is that all old covenants have I caused to be done away. And this is a new and everlasting covenant.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:41:42

Now that would've been a bit of a departure for other Christian denominations. And this of course relates to the emerging concept of priesthood. But yet again, another indication of them gradually understanding what priesthood is, what its function is, how it relates to the ordinances. I think that's important. The earliest conversations we have in the documents and in the revelations about priesthood are tied to ordinances. And think of Section, what is it? 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the power of godliness is manifest in the ordinances. So there's a very close tie between authority and ordinances, but that is something that they're figuring out over time. Alexander Campbell, a minister in Ohio, Campbellites had

rejected infant baptism like Baptists. But whereas Baptists viewed baptism as a sign of a remission of sins that had already taken place. Campbellites believed that baptism actually affected the remission of sins. In the act itself, the remission of sins comes, which is the position of the Church of Christ.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:43:03

When Baptist Minister, Sidney Rigdon meets Alexander Campbell, Rigdon adopts Campbell's view of baptism. But Rigdon wants a more complete and full restoration. So Campbell is a Restorationist of a sort, he's interested in restoring primitive understandings of New Testament interactions. But Campbellites move away from organization. This is part of what is called the Democratization of religion in this period, where they're trying to get more and more people involved in religion. And Campbell takes it to the extreme of saying, "We don't need an organization. There should be no church." So he's got a different view of Restoration. But one of the things that he doesn't believe in is a restoration of spiritual gifts or communal living. And Sidney Rigdon is interested in a restoration of spiritual gifts and communal living. And he'll get evidence of spiritual gifts and he'll get a call to Communal Living through the Law of Consecration.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:44:06

Well, I mentioned Campbell and Rigdon because Rigdon's preaching convinces another minister, Parley P. Pratt, but Pratt had questions about authority. For people like Campbell, you can be baptized if you, as an individual have decided to accept the grace of Christ. That you don't need some sort of external authority. Again, he's moving away from this idea of authority. Some Protestants are suspicious of priesthood because they tie it to Catholics. So he's moving away from that, but Pratt's thinking, "I think there should be somebody who has authority to perform baptism."

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:44:51

So summer of 1830, he's on a canal boat returning home with his wife, thankful he feels impressed to disembark. And upon doing so he meets this Baptist Deacon who has this book and he wants to read it because it sounds interesting. And it's the Book of Mormon, of course, he reads it all night and then he travels to Palmyra where he meets Hyrum Smith and then they travel to Fayette. And Parley P. Pratt is baptized by somebody with authority. And not long after that, he's ordained as an elder. So his quest for authority is fulfilled. And this revelation in Section 22 is articulating the importance of that authority.

Hank Smith: 00:45:42

That is a beautiful story. And I love that it's happening at the same time Joseph is over here organizing these... It's almost like a chess game where the Lord is moving these separate pieces to

come together. The Church is organized in April and when is Pratt baptized?

- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:45:58 So Pratt seems to be baptized about September 1st, 1830. So just a couple of months after churches organization.
- Hank Smith: 00:46:06 Man, I love this, that all these separate pieces are coming together.
- John Bytheway: 00:46:09 I think if people would like to see a movie that's not in high definition, they might see if they can find *How Rare a Possession*, because it starts with the story of Parley P. Pratt, and it's really well done. And the things that Jordan was talking about, how he meets Hyrum and they are up half the night talking about the Book of Mormon, he gives him a copy. The deacon... What was the guy's name? Hamblin that had the Book of Mormon that he borrowed from him. Anyway, I agree Hank that this is being orchestrated from somewhere else. In spite of our human frailties, the Lord is putting things in place and putting things in motion.
- Hank Smith: 00:46:50 I love to hear these names that have become household names for members of the Church. And all of a sudden we're saying, "Oh, all of a sudden, this person heard about this person." When I first heard Parley P. Pratt, I really didn't like that he said, "Eating was a burden." He'd rather read the Book of Mormon than eat. And I thought, "Oh, if that's required. I am going to be in trouble."
- John Bytheway: 00:47:12 It's like, "Can we do both? Doritos in here, Alma over here?"
- Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:47:17 I think one other thing to mention about Section 22, because here's one where we can go, "What's the application for me?" I guess the application is we needed authority. Okay. But isn't there another application there? I think much of it is about being humble enough to set aside outdated beliefs and practices. So this is a way for early members of the Church, "I have been baptized. I'm fine." Well, this is going to show your investment in this new faith. And I think that's something that all new members had to do to some extent. But I wonder if we too, in our lives have to step back and say, "Are there things as an individual, as a family, as a church that maybe we could set aside?" I think we live in the full, brilliant light of the Restoration and perhaps we can become complacent. That comes with many blessings, but maybe it also blinds us to some extent to necessary personal and societal development.

Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:48:21</u>	So the question would be, what are our dead works? What are our old covenants? And we can look to a prophet to help us with some of that. Recently we've had President Nelson call upon us to abandon attitudes of prejudice and racism. Are we bound up in that in some way? Are there some dead works there that we need to investigate and set aside? I also think maybe another thing related here is these Baptist individuals who show up and want to be part of the Church. It took somebody in a different organization to say, "Hey, there's something else that perhaps you can do."
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:49:07</u>	We can also look to the outside world. And President Nelson, I think to some extent is modeling this in the relationship the church has established with the NAACP. Maybe we don't fully understand all of the issues of racism and prejudice. Now that we're in a pretty firm place, our identity's, I mentioned at the start is pretty firmly established. I think we should feel pretty comfortable and willing to learn from others on matters that will allow us to identify and set aside our own dead works and dead beliefs.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:49:44</u>	I love that because the Lord just flat out tells him in verse three, "I don't love dead works. That's why we have a church. That's why I did this, is I want you to learn and grow and be able to..." What did you say, I love that, "To leave behind outdated practices or beliefs that are not benefiting us. Let's move forward." Man, that was really well said.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:50:14</u>	Yeah. The humility that you mentioned, I just love the very last phrase, "Seek not to counsel your God." Let's make sure we understand who's the counselor and who's the listener here.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:50:29</u>	I really like that. I wonder how often I try to counsel God. Like, "I know that You can answer this any way You'd like to. But I think this would be best. I really don't see a better alternative. So let's do this my way." Don't counsel your God.
Dr. Jordan Watkins:	<u>00:50:48</u>	So John pointed out that early versions of the Articles and Covenants sometimes also included the revelation now contained in Section 22. Some of them also included a revelation that you'll talk about in the future, which is Section 27. And I think that's really interesting, the obvious connection there is the sacrament. The occasion there is August of 1830, Newel and Sally Knight have come down to Harmony from Colesville. They're partaking of the sacrament. Joseph goes to procure wine and an angel stops him. And what are the angel's instruction? I say, as if that's how it goes. And what's the instruction, "It matters not what you shall eat or what you shall

drink when you partake of the sacrament. If it so be that you do with the [inaudible 00:51:40] to my glory, remembering under the Father my body, which was laid down for you and my blood, which was shed for the remission of your sins."

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:51:46

Now we've been discussing the Restoration of certain powers, ordinances, and institution. I think it bears emphasizing that like those emblems of the sacrament, all of these are means. They are means meant to foster our use of Christ, the atoning sacrifice, which I guess in some ways is the ultimate means. So that, that which is of most worth our souls, souls of God's children might be saved and exalted. So I say that because I think sometimes we get too focused on the means. It has to be bread and water or even we can extend that to the Church. It has to function in precisely this way. And it should always function in that way. Well, all of this, including the Church is a means, ultimately. I don't think there's going to be a church in the Celestial Kingdom. I don't know, maybe there will be, but I don't think so. I think it's a means by which we are to become like Christ and become a Zion people.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:52:53

And I think remembering that these things are ultimately means, now they're really important means the sacrament, the emblems are important. But they're only important to the extent that they lead us to reflect upon Christ and lead us to be more Christ-like. So I think that perspective perhaps can help us better keep those first two great commandments.

Hank Smith: 00:53:15

Oh, I'm so glad that you brought this up. I was a younger Elder's Quorum President in a college board. And I got to hear Elder Packer tell a story. He came to visit a big regional meeting and I was in a priesthood leadership meeting and he was talking about the sacrament prayers. And he said that he was in a ward recently. And the priest was really struggling with the sacrament prayers, just could not, I think it President Packer was there maybe. And he was just so nervous and he had messed up once and the Bishop said, "Do it again." And he had messed up a second time. And on the third time, the Bishop was actually going to stand up and go over and talk to him. And Present Packer, put his hand on the Bishop's knee, he told the story himself. He put his hand on the Bishop's knee and said, "Don't you think the Lord knows what he's trying to do?" Like, "It's okay. Let's move on."

Hank Smith: 00:54:14

And I think that what you said there is, yes, these means are important. Yes, what we're doing is important, but only if we understand why we're doing these things. And I think that is absolutely crucial. We are doing these, Section 27, verse two,

"Remembering my body, which was laid down for you and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins." That's the overall why, don't you think? This is why we're doing these things, man. So good. Dr. Watkins, you are a historian and a scholar and it is obvious you know your stuff. Man, I am just so impressed. You know Church History, you know Joseph Smith as well as any Church Historian. And I know you're going to say, "Well, there's people who know more than me."

Hank Smith: 00:55:04

But you know these documents and this history, as well as any critic of the church. And yet there's a myth out there that, "Hey, if you know too much you want to be careful, you'll end up leaving the Church." But here's someone who knows a lot. And here you are a believer, faithful. So I love asking historians and scholars this question, how do you feel personally about the Restoration of Joseph Smith? What has it done for you in your life as Jordan, the husband, Jordan, the Church member?

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:55:41

Yeah. That's a really good question. And I hope it's okay that I'm still working on that question. I assume I will be throughout my life for the answer to the question. But I suppose one thing that we've emphasized is that these ideas continue to develop and evolve over time. What does it mean to have a church? What is authority? What are these offices? My feelings have also changed over time. As a child, I was pretty interested in Church History. And at that time, that meant that I was reading things like *The Work and the Glory*. And that provided me with one perspective of Church History. And it was a meaningful perspective. I'm not going to say that it doesn't have meaning, it did have a lot of meaning for me. I remember my first trip to Navuoo, I went with my family and I think my older sister was there.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:56:47

And I remember we pulled in and I was so excited. I was maybe 15, 16, or something like that. I was so excited and we just drove directly to the grave site of Joseph and Emma and Hyrum. And I just broke down. It was a profoundly moving experience. I think it was just the accumulation of feelings about Joseph and about all that he had done. And I cherish that experience. I now have a very different or more nuanced or more complicated or complex understanding of the history.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:57:34

I studied History at BYU. Then I went and studied History at Claremont with Richard Bushman. And I've continued to study these things in a, I would say much more rigorous way than I did when I was younger. And that has shaped and reshaped my view of the restoration. It's made me see it as a more complex process, something that's ongoing rather than an event through

which God revealed seamlessly divine truth through an almost perfect person. To an understanding of a God who was willing to condescend and work with His imperfect people to gradually restore truth over time despite, or maybe because of their imperfections. That has been a journey of understanding. And in the journey, the question arises, what do you believe or do you believe, or do you still believe? And I guess I would want to emphasize that that's a choice. Belief is something we choose. Now, we're informed by our experiences, by what we read, what we study, our interactions with the divine, our culture, our nurture.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 00:59:16

I lived in Alpine, Utah. I'm informed by all of that, but ultimately at the end of the day, I've got to choose, do I believe, or do I not believe? And I make the choice to believe because of experiences that I've had. Because this more complex understanding of the history of the Church actually aligns better with my life, than did that more naive understanding. God to the extent that He works in and through me, He does it in ways that I don't even always notice. Or when I notice it, I think maybe He's working through me, but sometimes that's hard to really grasp for sure. But that to me aligns better with this more nuanced understanding of the History of the Church and the restoration. So at the end of the day, it's a choice I make because living the life of a Latter-day Saint brings me joy and happiness. I'll also say from the perspective of somebody who's interested in the life of the mind. I think our theology is fascinating and interesting and requires that we be thoughtful people.

Dr. Jordan Watkins.: 01:00:50

Think of Section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord is very clear that He wants us to study by learning and by faith. We have a very robust theology in terms of the Lord asking us to try and obtain all the knowledge that we can. And to me, that's really exciting that we're commanded to seek knowledge of history, to seek knowledge of all of God's work really. And why should we not? If it's all God's work, why should we not seek understanding in it? So that theology, I find really moving and inspiring. And I think is one of the reasons, it's not the only reason, but it's another reason that I choose to believe because this theology is so beautiful.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 01:01:50

And I think at its best or when I understand it best, it demands a lot of me. I don't always live up to that, but it's okay. I can go read section three of the Doctrine and Covenants and see that Joseph didn't either. And that's a comforting thing to the extent that I've felt the divine in my life, it's been in my efforts to be better in my failures to be better. And when I read through the

restoration and the life of Joseph Smith, I see that going on with him as well.

Hank Smith: 01:02:22 To me, I know when I have felt an increase of the Spirit is I just don't want it to end. I want to stay here and just keep learning and keep listening. And John, we are very lucky to be here.

John Bytheway: 01:02:38 Yeah. That was just beautiful. In the end, it is a choice, but for me, sometimes it's such an easy choice because I taste those fruits and I feel that. And I love that it's Section 88, that it's rigorous, it's study wars and the perplexities of nations and look at all of it. We're not hiding anything. I love that. So Jordan, what a privilege to be with you today. Thank you so much for everything you've shared and your knowledge and testimony today. Thank you.

Hank Smith: 01:03:09 Absolutely.

Dr. Jordan Watkins: 01:03:10 Thank you both.

Hank Smith: 01:03:12 Dr. Jordan Watkins everyone. Thank you so much. And we want to thank our listeners. Those of you who've been with us this whole time, thank you for listening. Thank you for supporting this podcast. We want to thank our producer Shannon Sorenson and our production crew, David Perry and Lisa Spice. We hope you'll join us on our next episode of followHIM.