



Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

Do we desire to be called sheep? Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat uncovers the keys to feeding spiritual hunger, cultivating an unshaken faith in Jesus Christ, and embracing the commendation associated with being likened to sheep.

Part 2:

Dr. Dirkmaat delves into the concept of the Lord's mercy and His plan for His children, as well as the pattern established by the writers of the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith for faithfully following the Lord.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat
- 00:42 What to expect in this episode
- 01:42 Introduction of Dr. Dirkmaat
- 02:45 *The Standard of Truth Podcast*
- 03:35 Enos and being a parent
- 07:29 Hunger for spirituality
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- 14:59 The Book of Mormon for families
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- 19:47 Enos’s story paralleling Lehi’s Dream
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- 1:01:04 Omni 1:12-22 - Zarahemla and Coriantumr
- 1:04:28 Omni 1:25-6 - King Benjamin and Jesus Christ
- 01:05:06 End of Part 1 - Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat
- 00:07 A 500-year jump
- 02:45 Mormon tells us why he writes
- 08:18 Where the plates originate
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- 20:34 The religious atmosphere of Joseph's day
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- 38:30 Why the Lord didn't stop Joseph
- 43:56 Trust in the Lord if He is asking
- 48:23 God working through you or others
- 52:36 End of Part II– Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat

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Biographical Information:



Gerrit Dirkmaat is an associate professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University. He received his PhD from the University of Colorado in 2010, where he studied nineteenth-century American expansionism and foreign relations. His dissertation was titled “Enemies Foreign and Domestic: US Relations with Mormons in the US Empire in North America, 1844–1854.” He worked as a historian and writer for the Church History Department from 2010 to 2014 with the Joseph Smith Papers Project and served as a volume editor/historian for Documents Volume 1: 1828-1831, Documents Volume 3: 1833-1834, Documents Volume 8: 1841 and Administrative Records, Council of Fifty, Minutes, March 1844–January 1846. He is the coauthor, along with Michael Hubbard MacKay, of the award-winning book *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith’s Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon*, published by the BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book in 2015. In 2023, they published another book on the topic: *Let’s Talk About the Translation of the Book of Mormon*. It discussed many of the questions people have about the translation process. He is also one of the historians that published the first volume of the *Brigham Young Journals*, published by BYU Press in 2023. In addition to books, Gerrit is also the author of dozens of academic articles. In 2015 he published a groundbreaking

analysis of the differences between the originally recorded versions of Utah-era sermons of Brigham Young and other Church leaders and those later published in the *Journal of Discourses*. This article, “The Prophets Have Spoken, But What Did They Say?: Examining the Differences Between George D. Watt’s Original Shorthand Notes and the Sermons Published in the Journal of Discourses,” won the 2016 Article of Excellence Award from the Mormon History Association. Before his work at the Church History Department, he served as the senior assistant editor of *Diplomatic History* from 2003 to 2009. He currently serves as the editor of the academic journal *Latter-day Saint Historical Studies* published by the Ensign Peak Foundation. Since 2021 he has hosted and produced a weekly Church history podcast: Standard of Truth. It examines Church history questions and sources. He and his wife, Angela, have four children.

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- Hank Smith: 00:00:03 Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my hungry co-host, John Bytheway, and Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat. John, we are in the book of Enos, Jarom, Omni and Words of Mormon today. I know you know the Book of Mormon pretty well. Are you hungry for this lesson today?
- John Bytheway: 00:00:23 I used to think I knew it until we started this podcast, but yeah, I am and Enos hungered. It's only one chapter, but I love what he chose to talk about. I'm looking forward to see what Gerrit says about all this. Can't wait.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:36 Gerrit, what are we looking forward to today in this lesson? Where are we going to go?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:00:40 There's some great aspects of each of these books, especially ways that we can apply these to ourselves and there are ways that these parts of the Book of Mormon especially look forward to the Restoration and to the prophet Joseph Smith. When we can bring all aspects of the Restoration together with our study of the Book of Mormon, it's even more exciting. We're going to see the unfolding of a centuries-long, over a millennia-long miracle of the Lord's foresight in bringing us the Book of Mormon.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:16 John, there's a reason we brought Gerrit on for this because no one knows church history as well as Gerrit, he'll disagree. I would say no one knows church history as well as Gerrit, and this is quite a story. This is something that every member of the church needs to understand. John, Gerrit has been here before, but it's been a while. We had some of our best episodes with Gerrit. What? Two years ago now? Maybe even more than that. John, introduce him for us.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:43 I think I hadn't laughed that hard at any podcast that we have before, but also we learned a ton. We're just really glad to have Gerrit Dirkmaat back. He's an associate professor of church

history and doctrine at BYU. In fact, my daughter Natalie had him for a class and just loved it. He's written two books about the translation of the Book of Mormon, From Darkness into Light, right? Here's one of those. He also has a weekly church history podcast called Standard of Truth, which is a very important phrase to the Sorensen family who sponsors us. That was one of Steve Sorensen's favorite things to recite that part of the Wentworth Letter. Gerrit, I'm so glad you're back. I expect to have a lot of fun and a lot of learning today.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:02:25 Well, thanks for having me. I assume that the reason I hadn't been back in a couple of years is because I did such a bad job teaching your daughter and so you're like, "You know what? That's it." Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:34 See if you can make up for it today.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:02:35 We are not bringing him back.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:37 Yeah, that first year we took anyone. I mean we were just-
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:02:40 Yeah. It was desperation.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:45 John, the episode that I'm thinking of is I think every one of our listeners should go back and listen to, episode 23, our very first year, season one, I guess, Doctrine and Covenants.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:02:55 Doctrine and Covenants.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:56 60 & 62 with Gerrit. He tells maybe the funniest story you and I have ever heard on this show, so we hope everyone will go find that. And then Gerrit one more time, the podcast is called Standard of?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:03:07 Standard of Truth. Yep. We started a few years ago. I think we're in our fourth season now. We try to answer questions that people have about church history. We like to say our podcast is for people who take the gospel seriously but don't take themselves seriously. We like to laugh around a little bit but also bear testimony and we try to answer questions that listeners have.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:29 Oh, everyone, the Standard of Truth, go find it. Go subscribe. All right, let's get started today. Let me read a little bit from the Come Follow Me manual and then let's jump in. The lesson is entitled, He worketh in me to do according to his will, and it starts out with the story of Enos. "Although Enos went to the

forest to hunt beasts to satisfy physical hunger, he ended up staying there all day and into the night because his soul hungered. This hunger led Enos to raise his voice high that it reached the heavens.

00:03:57 He described this experience as a wrestle before God. From Enos, we learn that prayer is a sincere effort to draw near to God and to seek to know his will. When you pray with this intent, you will more likely to discover as Enos did, that God hears you and truly cares about you, your loved ones, and even your enemies. When you know his will, you are better able to do his will. Like Mormon you may not know all things, but the Lord knoweth all things wherefore he worketh in you to do according to his will." That's a great opening paragraph. Gerrit, where do you want to start? How should we go about this?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:04:32 I think a lot of times when we think about Enos, the thing that first comes to mind is I'm pretty sure I can't pray all day. I think almost everyone who's been in either a new church calling or they're going on a mission, they've thought, "You know what? I'll pray like Enos." You get about 15 minutes in and you're like, "I've got another nine and a half hours before I get to the nighttime here, and clearly I'm not as righteous as Enos." But I love his conversion story. Enos isn't an apostate. It's not like he's sons of Mosiah out trying to destroy the church, but he hasn't been converted. He's an unconverted member if you were to say that. You have to think that Jacob's holding family home evening and stuff, you have to think that Jacob's really trying to teach the gospel and yet it hasn't had this overwhelming impact on him yet. One of the first things I take away from this because I have teenage children is this is a way to try to make myself feel better about being a poor father.

00:05:35 You're trying to teach them the gospel, you desperately want them to feel the spirit the same way you feel the spirit. And it's sometimes very painfully obvious that they do not nor do they care to at this time because I want to go play Fortnite with my friends. What comes to his mind is the words that his father has said. I mean how frustrated Jacob must've been. Here's my son. Come on, I'm the prophet. My son won't get on board. He won't fully accept this, but in his quiet moments, those questions about who am I? Why am I here? Is this stuff true? What's the purpose of this life? Those are the types of questions that all humankind at some point is going to ask.

00:06:26 And maybe your 15-year old isn't ready to ask that question of the universe, but there will come a time at some point that they will. One of the things you take away from this is that parents

continue to try to teach the gospel to your children even if it seems like they're not fully embracing it because at some point they're going to have a question and the words that you've spoken, the studies that you've done that will be something for them to grab ahold of the same way Enos did here.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:06:55 | That's fantastic. I like this phrase, nurture and admonition. It seems that Jacob has this correct, I wouldn't even call it a balance, but his high love and a high expectation, nurture and admonition. I love you and I also I'm going to hold you accountable. I care for you. I also have high standards. I like that nurture and admonition. You don't have to choose between one or the other. I hope you're not like, "I'm all admonition. Well, I'm all nurture." And I wouldn't even say balance in both. You can be both high love and high accountability. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:07:29 | I just love in verse four, my soul hungered. How do you get people to that place and maybe the Lord does that through trials even or all of a sudden you really want to know. It's like my body hungered for a refreshment, but how do you bring people to my soul hungered? That's a real intent. That's that Moroni 10 phrase. My soul hungered, what's going on here and what do I do and I love that Enos just has one chapter, but it's so important. Let me tell you the wrestle I had before I received a remission of my sins, like, "You need this too. Let me tell you how it worked for me." |
| Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: | 00:08:06 | I certainly didn't pray all night, but I had an experience when I was in high school. It was when I was a teenager, I was 16. It was something similar where I felt this hunger. Now again, my parents had taught me the gospel and I was never doubting it or rebellious, but there were certainly a lot of things that mattered more to me in my life than going to church. The Nintendo would've just come out. There's all kinds of things that I could have spent my time on while I was at the time with a group of friends that had just started doing things that I knew my parents were teaching me weren't right. It led to a conflict where I was going to be forced to choose between my friends. I mean I didn't want to, I love my friends. This sounds like a made-up story because I'm from Idaho, but I drove my car to a field one night. It was a potato field. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:08:56 | Frankly, that's shocking. |
| Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: | 00:08:58 | It's the only field, so it sounds like I'm making that up, but I had that experience where I desperately wanted to know and the reason why I wanted to know was if this isn't true, it's not worth losing my friends over. It's not worth having people make fun of |

me over if it's not true. I certainly didn't pray all night, but I knelt down in that potato field and I received a powerful, powerful witness that Joseph Smith was a prophet and honestly receiving that powerful testifying witness, it changes your priorities, it changes who you are and John said different things bring us to that hunger, but I think the Lord is always willing to give us that answer when we are ready to cry out.

- Hank Smith: 00:09:47 Enos says, "The words which my father spoke concerning eternal life and the joy of the saints." That's an interesting phrase because we often talk about eternal life, oh, it's going to be so great after, but Jacob seems to talk about the joy you can receive now. It reminds me of King Benjamin. He says, "Consider the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God." That's Mosiah 2:41. I've often thought Gerrit that as parents we probably ought to exemplify that happy state. You're almost a walking billboard to your kids of this is what it's like to live the gospel and if you look miserable, why would your child say, "Oh, that's what I want." If you're an ornery, angry human being and you keep the commandments, the commandments are not for me.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:10:36 I agree. Everyone's going to have rough times and everyone's going to struggle with different things. It's hard because there are days that you're just... Things don't work out. At the same time, at least for me, the gospel provides me a sense of peace because the larger questions in life are never the questions that I have. The how are you going to pay a bill? How are you going to get this done? How are you going to do that? Those are the temporal questions of life that I may find a way to solve them, I may not, but the questions of eternity are the ones that I already know the answers to.
- Hank Smith: 00:11:13 That's settled.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:11:14 Yeah. And I think that that brings a level of peace and it brings a level of happiness. I love life and I love to laugh and I love to joke around, I love to be around other people. I credit all of that to the gospel because it teaches me who I am and who other people are and what the purpose of life is and why the gospel is so important.
- Hank Smith: 00:11:34 Gerrit, could you speak to something just really quick? I know we're going to have listeners out there looking back on their life saying, "Oh, I should have been a better parent. I should have had more nurture. I should have had more admonition. I should have been happier." For someone who's thinking that like maybe me, right now I'm sure John's not. John has zero regrets

as a parent. Right John? How would you speak to someone right then who thinks, "Oh, I should have been so much better?"

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:12:00 Well, first of all, we are all desperately flawed individuals. I know it seems like that the family next door has it all figured out and they're having family home evening every night of the week and every one of their kids has gone on three missions and they're all married twice in the temple. The reality is we're all sinners. We came to a fallen world. We chose to come to this fallen world knowing that we would mess up all kinds of things. One thing we should get from the Book of Mormon is everyone has agency. I remember very well, I was probably the type of person that no one ever wanted to talk to when Angie and I were first married and didn't yet have kids because I would see people with kids I'm like, "You should probably just put a limit on their screen time."

Hank Smith: 00:12:52 So easy to parent. Yeah.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:12:54 The easiest parenting you've ever done is someone else's kids before you have any. And then you have your own children and you realize the things that work with one won't even work at all with the other one. There's no giant recipe book that tells you exactly how to turn out. And look at the Book of Mormon. Look at these amazing prophets who are speaking directly to the Lord and their children are falling away. Their children are unconverted. It's not because Mosiah didn't decide to share the gospel with his sons. The reality is in this fallen and broken world, Mosiah was probably asking the same question too, "What more could I have done? Maybe I should have been a little bit stricter on this, or maybe I..." I think that the Lord knows the effort that we've put in and he also knows our regrets. He also knows that we wish we had done better. Anyone who has any self introspection at all looks back on their life and says, "Man, I could have done a lot of things differently," but that's hindsight.

00:14:03 As historians, it's great to be a historian because you always get to be right. It's like the greatest thing ever because you already know what's going to happen and so you get to look back on the past and be like, "Well, they probably should have done this." It's perfect. It works out great because you already know what's going to happen. And none of us has that roadmap in life. I would say don't be too hard on yourself and remember, God is a God of miracles. God is a God who will use your faith and prayers to move things in a way that will bring eventual happiness, and I believe that God will miraculously change the lives of our children and in part because of our faith.

Hank Smith:	00:14:48	The Lord I think sometimes says to me, "I'm that good. I can overcome your parenting on your children. That's how good I am."
John Bytheway:	00:14:59	Like you said, just look at the Book of Mormon. Look at the families in here and the ups and downs they have. I'm so glad you mentioned that, and it's like don't miss the fact that King Mosiah and the high priest Alma and the four sons of Mosiah are the ones not just knocking mailboxes over, but they're out trying to destroy the church. Imagine their feelings, what was going on with them. So yeah, it starts out that way and I love that my soul hungered, think the footnote, yeah, it takes you to the blessed, they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness.
	00:15:33	It doesn't say blessed are the righteous. When your soul hungers, you're hungering and thirsting after that, and I think it's good to be at that point where you want that and I think Enos was at that point, so I really love this story. Some of my memories of really thinking about God, were being on camping trips and seeing the stars at night and I wonder if getting out in the wilderness made Enos, I'm going to set down my bow here and I'm going to pray because it's so beautiful out in the wilderness.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:16:04	There's at least something to the fact that he's by himself. He doesn't have to figure out how to put down his iPhone the way that some of us might have to. Enos isn't doom-scrolling on Facebook, but no doubt as the son of the leader of the people, there was always something going on and there was always people around and there was always commotion and that by going out when you have time to think, then these kinds of deeper thoughts come in. I mean as CS Lewis who talks about in the Screwtape Letters that Satan does some of his best work keeping thoughts out of people's heads, if you can fill up things with all kinds of commotion and business, then you never have time to think more deeply on things. And for Enos, whether it's the stars in the sky or whether it's just I am somewhere where I'm by myself, no one can see me, there's no one judging, oh, there's Jacob's son going to pray in front of everybody. It's just me, and he thinks about those things and goes to pray.
Hank Smith:	00:17:11	I often connect to verse four, my soul hungered with verse 17, my soul did rest, and then you can use those as bookends and say, "Okay, what happened? How do you go from a hungry soul to a restful soul?" Look in between those two verses. It's an easy exercise for children or students to just say, "Oh, here's this prayer, forgiveness, praying for others, unshaken faith."

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:17:34	The next verse gives us part of that answer to that, and I often think, what was it like for Joseph Smith to translate verse five because it mirrors Joseph Smith's own first vision experience with what Jesus tells him. So in verse five, there came a voice unto me saying, "Enos thy sins are forgiven thee." When you go to Joseph Smith's 1832 account of his first vision, this is his earliest account, the one that's written in his own handwriting about this. He says, "I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying, 'Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee.'"
	00:18:18	I often wonder when Joseph translates those words, did this hit him that Enos just had this same experience that I had and you know what? I was out praying in the woods. I was out praying, asking an answer, and the first thing that Jesus said to both of us was your sins are forgiven, and I think that is what brings peace. Joseph is actually going to say that my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy and the Lord was with me in the aftermath of the Lord telling him his sins were forgiven.
Hank Smith:	00:18:56	He calls him by name just like he does with Enos. The Lord spake unto me, calling me by name, I know who you are and I forgive your sins. Interesting in verse four, Gerrit, he says, "Mighty prayer, supplication for my own soul." It's a great definition of prayer, and what does Joseph Smith say? "I knelt down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God." That's a different prayer than a rote Heavenly Father.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:19:20	It's very much an open communication and a hungry soul is desperate for answers, is willing to do anything to get those answers.
Hank Smith:	00:19:30	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:19:30	I love that parallel with Joseph Smith's first vision, the calling by name, the seeking forgiveness. I'm glad that that other account of the first vision mentions that and it just reminds me of is it Section 64, I the Lord forgive sins, just a sermon in a sentence.
Hank Smith:	00:19:48	John, I remember Section 64, our guest, it was Mike Wilcox who called God a delightful forgiver.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:19:54	I love the fact that in the Enos story you see a real life playing out of the Tree of life vision that Lehi has. So you have Enos desperately desiring, he takes the fruit, he receives forgiveness, and then what's the next prayer that he prays? It's for his brethren, it's for his family. The first thing he wants is I want to

know for myself. As soon as he is done with that, he then is, to use the Lehi vision phrase. He's casting his eyes round about to find his family, to pray for his brethren and he prays for the Nephites because he wants them to have this. And then it's expanded one more step out beyond that where he's now praying for the Lamanites and receives the assurance that this record is going to come forth to them.

- Hank Smith: 00:20:49 Gerrit, could you speak to someone who has a hard time forgiving themselves? I mean verse six, Enos says, "I knew that God could not lie." The Lord told him he was forgiven and he accepted that. Elder Callister has said, "Some people are harder on themselves than the Lord is." Of course, we need to repent and be cleansed by the Atonement, but there's no right ankle bracelet that says 2008 sin.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:21:12 It's a good thing.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:12 You're on probation.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:21:14 If that was the case, we'd all be wearing ankle bracelets.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:18 In your experience, how does someone say, "I've been forgiven of my sins, I can sweep that away, my guilt was swept away?" Enos says.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:21:28 I appreciate the fact that of the things that Hank thinks I'm an expert in it's sinning and trying to repent and that's the reality.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:36 That's why I invited you. I thought, who's our-
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:21:38 Who can we have on? Who is a sinner? Oh, I don't care. If anyone knows repentance. It isn't a funny thing that Satan gets us coming and going and when we commit sin, he spends most of the time telling us that what we did isn't even wrong. Justifying it to ourselves, telling us that we're totally fine, everything's great. It's not really a sin. I mean everyone else is doing it. I mean, come on, what else was I supposed to do? I mean, whatever kind of excuse he can give. And then the other half of the time once you actually accept your sin, once you accept that I have done wrong, then immediately turns to, "Well, you're worthless. You're horrible."
- Hank Smith: 00:22:20 Shame.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:22:20 "You couldn't possibly have the love of God anymore. How could someone like you who has a testimony commit that kind

of a sin? Jesus doesn't want you anymore." When you hear those whisperings, that is not the Lord. There's only two great powers in the universe, President Woodruff said. The reality is if you're hearing whisperings in your mind that are not coming from Jesus, they're coming from the adversary and it's the evil spirit that teaches the man not to pray. It's the evil spirit that teaches people that they can't repent. Some sins are more grievous than others.

00:23:00 If you have sins that need to be repented of through the process of confession and repentance and you haven't done that. Well, then yeah, you're probably going to feel like you aren't fully clean because you didn't go through the process that our Lord outlined in the restoration of his church. The questions even further than that, you're asking what about people who've even done that? What about people who've even gone through all the steps and they still can't forgive themselves for what they've done? We need to show mercy to ourselves in order to fully show mercy to other people. In order for us to fully be able to extend that healing hand to someone else, we have to be able to know what it's like to actually have our sins, though they're red as scarlet become white as wool.

00:23:55 Every single person who has ever lived on this earth is a sinner and is going to desperately have to have the Atonement to be saved. Now, whether our sins are great, whether they are little, whether they are massive, whether they're so small that no one even thinks of them, every one of us at some point has to have the Atonement to be saved. And I would hope the people listening, if you have gone through the proper steps of repentance and you know that you are a changed person, let it go. Let that anxiety, let it be put towards serving and helping someone else. Every time you think to get down on yourself because of something in the past, take that moment and say, "I'm going to call somebody right now who I know needs some help. I'm going to go visit somebody who I know is struggling. I'm going to do something that's for someone else." And I feel like those feelings might, they might dissipate.

Hank Smith: 00:24:57 I love it.

John Bytheway: 00:24:58 Gerrit, I love what you said about it's the sequence that Enos prays for things. Verse four, he prayed for his own soul. Then verse nine, my brother and the Nephites. Then verse 11, my brother and the Lamanites and then verse 16, the records. I love how you equated that to Lehi's dream, how he looks around. There's a statement that Joseph Smith said that I've always loved that demonstrates this. He said, "Love is one of the chief

characteristics of deity and ought to be manifested by those who aspire to be the sons of God. A man filled with the love of God is not content with blessing his family alone but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race." And you can see that with Enos, myself, my brother and even my enemies, and then it's the records. I want the whole human race to be blessed.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:25:49

Another Joseph Smith teaching on this. One way we can determine how close we actually are to God is how we feel towards other people. If all of our teaching and learning and studying doesn't make us love other people, it isn't very helpful. And so Joseph In 1842, he says, "It is one evidence that men are unacquainted with the principle of godliness to behold the contraction of feeling and lack of charity." If you don't have love for other people, then however Godly you think you are, well you're not. He says, "The power and glory of godliness is spread out on a broad principle to throw out the mantle of charity." God doesn't look upon sin with allowance, but when men have sinned, there must be allowance made for them. All the religious world is boasting of righteousness, it is the doctrine of the devil to retard the human mind and retard our progress by filling us with self-righteousness.

00:26:55

The nearer we get to our heavenly Father, the more are we disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls to take them upon our shoulders and to cast their sins behind our back. I feel like Enos' conversion because it was a real conversion, instantly went to I want to give compassion to other people. And Joseph is teaching this as well, that when you're converted, yeah, you're going to want to roam the whole earth to bless everyone else. You are going to desperately want to extend mercy to others. Another place when he is teaching the Relief Society, he says that suppose Jesus Christ or the angels should object to us over a little thing. We must have mercy and overlook small things. And it really is one of Joseph's most favorite topics that he teaches on. He teaches about repentance and mercy over and over and over again.

00:28:01

And frankly, the restoration that the Lord reveals through him is a gigantic expansion of the Christian understanding of the mercy of God that it is not a few select people who just so happen to be born at the right time and just so happen to be born with the right Christian parents who just so happened to hear about the Gospel that can be saved, but this plan is universal. This plan is for everyone and everyone is going to have a chance at that salvation, not just the lucky few. The atonement that Joseph Smith is going to be teaching about, the

Lord's atonement is so encompassing and so expansive, and I mean I think we get a little bit of an insight in it here from Enos. He immediately feels just how expansive that power of that Atonement is.

- Hank Smith: 00:28:59 John, I'm guessing a talk has come to mind knowing you so well from Elder Holland. It's called, Remember Lot's Wife. He goes into this idea of forgiving yourself and also being merciful with others. This is a long quote, but I'll try to be fast. Elder Holland says, "Let me pause and add a lesson that applies both in your life and in the lives of others. There is something in us, at least too many of us, that particularly fails to forgive and forget earlier mistakes in life, either mistakes we ourselves have made or the mistakes of others. It's not good. It's not Christian. It stands in terrible opposition to the grandeur and majesty of the atonement of Christ."
- 00:29:37 He says "it happens in marriages. I can't tell you," he says, "the number of couples I have counseled who when they are deeply hurt or stressed, reach farther and farther into the past to find yet a bigger brick to throw through the window pane of their marriage. When something is over and done with when it has been repented of as fully as it can be repented of, when life has moved on as it should and a lot of wonderfully good things have happened since then, it is not right to go back and open up some ancient wound that the son of God himself died trying to heal."
- 00:30:08 And then he says this just a little bit later, "Dismiss the destructive and keep dismissing it until the beauty of the atonement of Christ has revealed to you your bright future and the bright future of your family and your friends and your neighbors. God doesn't care nearly as much where you have been as he does about where you are and with his help, where you are willing to go." I mean the whole talk is fantastic. I can't see Enos coming home to Jacob and telling him this experience. "I'm forgiven of my sins" and Jacob says, "Well, I don't know."
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:30:38 Yeah, remember when you first started dating? I don't know.
- Hank Smith: 00:30:41 Yeah. Let's talk about the things you've done, things you've said to me. I don't know if you've been forgiven of that. One way I can know, Gerrit, if I've been forgiven of my sins is how I feel about other people, what I hope for them.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:30:55 Look, it's hard. I'm a broken, sinful, mortal person as much as anyone else, and it's one thing when someone hurts you, maybe they didn't mean to, but they still did and it was thoughtless and

it was careless and it was wrong, but then there are those who deliberately hurt you. There are those who know full well that what they're doing is going to hurt you and they're fine with it. And how do you reconcile that? And look, there's so many different situations, there's so many different places where people are at. Hopefully, ultimately, I can get to a place where I can extend the same level of mercy and forgiveness that I want my father in heaven to extend to me. When we're talking about someone else who's wronged us, we always want to judge them on their worst day. We take their worst day and we say that's who that person is.

00:31:53 They are this, this is them, and yet when we are on our knees begging God to forgive us, begging for God to accept us into the celestial kingdom, man, we desperately want God to judge us by our best day. We desperately want to say, "I know that I messed up here and I know I messed up there, but eventually I got it right." I mean that's the great part about the plan of salvation is the person who's making the final judgment call is perfect and not like us and will extend as much mercy as is possible to be extended.

Hank Smith: 00:32:34 Interesting phrase, how Enos describes it in verse 11, I prayed unto the Lord with many long strugglings for my brethren the Lamanites. I don't know if he's like, I prayed with love for the Lamanites. I struggled to pray for the Lamanites, but I labored in diligence.

John Bytheway: 00:32:51 And he wrestled too. I hope people will find the Walter Rane, R-A-N-E painting of Enos because this artist captured what it would look like to wrestle and struggle in prayer. My son is the captain of the wrestling team. It uses every muscle and I imagine Enos spent every spiritual muscle he had in this wrestle.

Hank Smith: 00:33:15 That's great, and isn't that son about to go on a mission? Where's he going?

John Bytheway: 00:33:21 Yeah. Timothy opened his call a couple of weeks ago to the Uruguay Montevideo West Mission, so we're really excited about that.

Hank Smith: 00:33:29 Maybe he can say to people like, "You have to let me teach you if I can pin you."

John Bytheway: 00:33:32 Yeah. That means you have to hear the first lesson. You know what I love here is almost Enos's surprise. I mean it sounds to me like surprise in verse seven, how is it done? Really? How is it

done and the answer because of thy faith in Christ whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. Faith in Christ is so important. We ought to make it, I don't know, like a first principle of the gospel or something.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:34:00 Or something like that.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:01 You know what I mean? Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:03 It ought to be. If they ever put you in charge, John, make sure you put that in the articles of faith. I think that is John, I'm glad you brought that up. That seems to be the center point of the story. Prayer is important, forgiving others is important, but how is this whole thing done? Verse eight, because of thy faith in Christ.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:19 It's almost in disbelief, really? How did you do that? And I hope that people that are struggling with this question we just had will do what Elder Bednar suggests. Get yourself a new blank copy of the Book of Mormon. Go through it this time and find every time it says something about God's mercy or God's forgiveness. Don't get your information from Satan because he can lie. Go to sources that only speak truth like Sheri Dew says, get your Book of Mormon and read every time it talks about mercy and forgiveness and read that through and watch what happens.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:54 Wonderful.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:34:55 One of the aspects of the plan of salvation that I think is underappreciated by Latter-day Saints, and in part it's because maybe we don't fully understand what other Christians believe about salvation and hellfire and damnation is that as President Oaks said in the last general conference that with exceptions too few to mention, every child of God is going to because of the atonement of Jesus Christ eventually inherit a kingdom of heaven. We often think things like, if so-and-so doesn't repent, well then they're not going to heaven. Well, actually, Doctrine and Covenants section 76, Joseph Smith's revelation that he receives is that the Atonement is such because we are all God's children because we all kept our first estate. That even those who don't repent in this life, yes, they will suffer for their sins after this life, but it is radical Christian theology that Joseph Smith receives from the Lord that the Atonement is such that even those who are horrible sinners, who refuse to repent in this life,

	00:36:17	that at some point by the time of the end of the resurrection they will be resurrected and they will go to a kingdom of glory, a kingdom that Joseph describes as a kingdom of bliss. In fact, the celestial kingdom, as he says, is so great and so glorious that you can't comprehend it unless God opens the heavens and shows it to you. We are not a religion that believes that everybody around us is going to be writhing in the agony of an eternal hell forever. The Atonement is so all-encompassing that there will be an eventual peace and happiness for everyone, but we're concerned with that eternal life that Enos was praying about and exaltation. How do we become like our Heavenly father? That's the purpose of the church. It's the purpose of God to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. The purpose is eternal life, but that doesn't mean that there's not mercy outside of that.
Hank Smith:	00:37:27	John, how many times have we talked about so far this year? It is by grace that ye are saved. You're saved by the merits and mercy and grace of the holy Messiah. I think it was Stephen Robinson who said, "Mercy is only mercy because it's undeserved." The moment you deserve mercy or the moment you earn mercy, it's no longer mercy. It's justice. It has to be undeserved.
John Bytheway:	00:37:49	And king Benjamin. Are we not all beggars? That's saying the same thing. We are all in the position of a beggar, but we have a merciful God. Thank heavens.
Hank Smith:	00:38:00	Gerrit, we talked to Dr. Bowen about this last week, but I wanted to get your take on it because Jacob and Enos use similar terms. Verse 11, he says, my faith began to be unshaken. Same thing that Jacob said, I could not be shaken. How do you get to that point? If someone were to say to you, "Dr. Dirkmaat, I want to get to the point where my faith is unshakable." Because here you are, you've read pretty much all there is to read about Joseph Smith. It's your career-
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:38:30	Right. It's my job so-
Hank Smith:	00:38:32	I shouldn't give you too much credit for it.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:38:33	Yeah. No.
Hank Smith:	00:38:34	But how do you get to the point where, oh, that doesn't shake my faith?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:38:38 Wow, if I had the absolute formula for that, I'd bottle it and not sell it because I'd want everyone to have it. I'd give it away for free. Let me speak for myself. I'm not a prophet. I'm not Enos, so I don't know exactly what his experience is. I'm reminded in the New Testament of the experience that after Jesus feeds the 5,000, this is John chapter six that look, this is the ancient world and in the ancient world there is no social safety net, so the question on the minds of nearly everyone in the ancient world, every day that they woke up is, where can I get food? Am I going to have enough to eat today? You would be living in a perpetual state of hunger almost. When Jesus performs these great miracles where he miraculously creates the bread, there are so many people who ate that bread or heard about that bread who stopped seeing the forest for the trees, who instead of saying "This is clearly the Messiah," they started saying, "Hey, there's a way we can get bread here. I'm not going to be hungry anymore."

00:40:00 And when they come to Jesus and Jesus starts to teach them the more difficult doctrine that he's the bread of life, anyone who eats this bread, the bread that I created just like Moses in the wilderness, the people who ate manna, they've died, but this is the bread of life. The response from his disciples, it's not from the crowd. The response from the disciples is after that time, many of them go away and don't follow them anymore because they couldn't see how Jesus helps them temporally now and Jesus is speaking about something that's after this life. It was a hard saying for them. Look, it was especially hard in the ancient world because the entire purpose of religion in the ancient world was for the gods to help you. Now, God's supposed to give you what you want now.

00:40:55 You don't sacrifice a goat to Jupiter because you're hopeful that you'll go to the Elysian field someday. You do it so that Jupiter makes your crops grow now that you do it so that your son comes home from war now. The whole point of religion is this world and when Jesus comes along and says, "The point of this life is the next life" Man. It is radical, radical theology that most people cannot even comprehend. Jesus is teaching something that no one else has taught, that's impossible to understand, and many of the people who were his followers said, "I can't believe." But when he turns to the apostles and says, "Will thou go away also?" Peter's response is I think what our response needs to be, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ."

00:41:55 The way to make faith unshaken is to focus like a laser on the Holy Spirit testifying to you that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith saw God. The way to have your faith shaken is to allow details of how God unfolds his plan to become more important than God's plan. People get shaken because I don't know, I was doing my family history and I saw that my great-great-grandmother, she was married to three different men in her life, when we went to the temple I mean we sealed her to all three of those men, but I mean of course she can't be married to all three of them in the next life, so which one do you think she's actually married to? It just seems weird that we don't really know, but I found her journal and it says that she really loved her second husband more. I think that's the one.

00:42:49 We whip ourselves into a frenzy desperately trying to figure out exactly how God is going to make everything right to the point where say on the question of sealings or marriages, people might even lose their testimonies because they can't figure out how sealings work. And the great tragedy of that is the only reason why you even have a question about who's married to who in the next life is because Joseph Smith is a prophet. The moment Joseph Smith stops being a prophet, you don't have to ask that question anymore because the answer is nobody, because marriage doesn't exist in the next life for any other Christian. Why do we believe it exists? We believe it exists because Joseph Smith's a prophet. I don't want to say you don't want to be inquisitive that you don't want to ask questions.

00:43:51 My entire life and career is based upon asking questions and trying to get back to sources, trying to figure out how things happen. Joseph Smith was asking questions. There's nothing wrong with saying, "How did this work? I want to know more about this." But we have to keep a focus on the fact that the only way you can know anything about God is through the Holy Spirit. That's it. It's the only way, and when the Holy Spirit testifies to you that Jesus died for your sins and that this is God's restored church, okay? I may not know exactly why the Kirtland Safety Society fell. Does that change the fact that Joseph Smith saw Jesus? I don't know exactly how marriage is going to work in the next life. Does it change the fact that Jesus died for us? Those questions are still good questions, but we can't allow our questions to dominate the things that the Holy Spirit's already testified to us. That was way too long of an answer to that question.

Hank Smith: 00:45:02 No, I'm right with you. The two questions that need to be answered are, one, do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus? And two, do you believe that same Jesus is the force, the power

behind this book? To me, it feels evident, obvious that Jesus was resurrected, and then anybody who's studied this book so far with us, John, I don't know how you'd see that He is not the source of this material, of this book. And those are your two questions. Now, like you said, Gerrit, everything else can be interesting and you might not know for a long time, and then you might find out one day and go, "Oh, wow, what an interesting thing," but I come back to my base.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:45:42 Joseph Smith has something, he has plates. The reality is this book is something that comes from somewhere, and that's why it's so important to gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon because the Book of Mormon not only teaches us about Jesus, which is essential, but there are all kinds of people all over the world, wonderful Christians, who are doing great things to help others in this world who have strong testimonies of Jesus. Latter-day Saints have a different understanding of that Jesus, because of the Book of Mormon and because of the revelations that Joseph Smith received. We talk so much about it because those two important questions get answered, Is Jesus really my Savior? If this book is true, then Joseph Smith is a prophet and this is really God's church. That means that exaltation is a thing. It means that these revelations that Joseph gives to help us understand what this life is about, that the Lord gives to Joseph Smith, that they teach us what we need to do in order to become like our Heavenly Father.
- Hank Smith: 00:46:58 I think J. Reuben Clark said it's latitude and longitude. Once you have both of those, you can pinpoint where you are, but you got to have both.
- John Bytheway: 00:47:05 We've mentioned this talk before, but Elder Lawrence Corbridge, Stand Forever, answer the primary questions. You got secondary questions? We all do, and that's fine. Answer the primary ones and put them in perspective with the secondary ones.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:47:19 Yeah, I love that, John, because I mean, I feel like that all the time. If you think you are frustrated that you can't find answers to all of your church history questions, it's literally my job. Imagine how frustrating it is when I have a question about some church history thing and all I do is study it all day long and I still can't find an answer to it. It is a natural, natural thing to wonder how things happen, and with our limited understanding, our limited intelligence of what happened in the past to say, "Boy, that doesn't really sit quite right with me. There's got to be more to that story." I'm sure there is. At the same time, it

doesn't change the core focus. Did Jesus die for our sins? Did he restore his church on the earth?

- John Bytheway: 00:48:11 I feel like if I could add words to the scriptures, okay, don't smite me, like Abraham three, "I will prove them herewith to see if they'll do whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." I want to add, "Even when it doesn't make sense," I'm going to see what they will do when they don't have the answers. I'm going to see what they'll do when it doesn't make sense because somebody brings up something like that and I'm going to go, okay, so Jesus didn't visit the Nephites and the Lamanites in the new world? Because where I always go back to. No, he did.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:48:41 It's an odd thing, honestly, and it's part of our humanistic rationalistic worldview that we have today. It's a weird thing that there's actually an expectation.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:53 Everything has to make sense.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:48:55 Yeah. That you don't have to believe if you can't fully understand why you're doing it, and there's no evidence in scripture of that case, there's literally none. And yet you have people constantly saying, "Well, that doesn't make sense to me." Yeah, get in line. It didn't make sense to Abraham. It didn't make sense to Adam. It didn't make sense to Jacob. It didn't make sense to Joseph Smith. Things don't make sense. It's funny because I will sometimes pejoratively be called by antagonists of the church. They will pejoratively call me a sheep and yeah, yeah. It's almost like that's what Jesus is looking for.
- John Bytheway: 00:49:39 I think that's what he wants. I think he's the good shepherd.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:49:44 You're just a blind sheep falling. And I'm like, first of all, obviously I don't want to do this in certain situations. I've done it where again, just because it's my job, not because I'm special or I'm smart, I've read like 10 times more on this stuff than whoever this antagonist person is, so I'm not blind at all. Yeah, I'm a sheep, but I'm a sheep because I'm going to follow the Lord because it's the Lord and I don't have to know. It'd be great to know, but I don't have to know.
- John Bytheway: 00:50:16 And that's part of the test of life. What will you do when you don't know, when you don't know everything?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:50:22 It really is the test of discipleship. I always say the test of your discipleship isn't whether or not you are sharing the general

conference talk that just so happens to perfectly align with your political and social beliefs. The test of discipleship is, are you sharing the one that's totally opposed to what you personally think? We can't turn the church into an extension of our political social arguments that we make. We have to do the opposite. Ultimately, for people to be unshaken in their faith, they need to get to a point where I follow the prophet no matter what, and if I don't agree, I follow, and if it makes sense, I follow, and if I don't want to follow, I follow. And yeah, that's scary to people because it means, well, I'm giving up my agency. No, you are choosing with your agency to say, I am going to follow God's representative.

00:51:21 Well, what if he's wrong? Well, then God will know that I chose to follow his prophet and it will be accounted unto me for righteousness. My job is to exercise faith in the Lord's prophet regardless of the evidence that I have. I hear a lot of people say the opposite. I hear a lot of people say things like, "Well, you've got to figure all this out for yourself." Sure, you do need to receive an answer, but you're not going to receive an answer that, oh, yeah, here's where President Nelson got it wrong last week, but luckily I have the answer.

Hank Smith: 00:51:57 Gerrit, we now come to a fascinating part of the Book of Mormon where we fly through history-

John Bytheway: 00:52:02 Fast-forward.

Hank Smith: 00:52:03 We just hit fast-forward. Is the fast-forward button still around, John? Do they still have those?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:52:08 You just put it on double speed, triple speed, just like people listening to my podcast.

Hank Smith: 00:52:11 Yeah, that's what it does.

John Bytheway: 00:52:12 And the pitch doesn't go up like it used to. It used to go... And now it just stays. Yeah.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:52:17 It's everyone just talks really fast.

Hank Smith: 00:52:20 Gerrit, how do we want to cover these, I don't know, three centuries of Jarom and Omni?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:52:26 It is a fascinating aspect of the internal aspect of the record, which we're going to talk more about with Words of Mormon. Because there's actually two sets of records that you get into

these books of Jarom and Omni. You get a reticence for people to write in them in part because there's another record. This is probably like me not wanting to write in a journal because I'm... Well, my wife's keeping a journal and I mean she's going to be more honest anyway, that there's another record so I don't have to do it. It is fascinating. You wonder what are the things that were not recorded here or that were recorded that we would have if we had the book of Lehi? Because we take things like Jarom verse four, "There are many among us who've had many revelations for they're not all stiff-necked, and as many as are not stiff-necked and have faith, have communion with the Holy Spirit, which maketh manifest unto the children of men according to their faith."

00:53:27 There's a lot going on, but you take verse two, he describes, these plates are teeny. There's not a whole lot of room, and we already know it's being recorded somewhere else, "So as these plates are small and these things are written for the intent of the benefit of our brethren, the Lamanites, wherefore, it must be that I write a little, but I shall not write the things of my prophesying." So Jarom was prophesying something. We don't know what it was, but he was prophesying. "Nor of my revelations," Jarom received revelations, no idea what they are. "For what could I write more than my fathers have written? For have not they revealed the plan of salvation? I say unto you yea, and this sufficeth me." That's obviously a great deal of humility there with Jarom, but also a clarity that the plan of salvation has already been outlined here. "Even though I've received revelations and I've prophesied," it's still all the plan of salvation. It's all right there.

John Bytheway: 00:54:25 That is the one verse that I just love. If they've revealed the plan of salvation, that sufficeth me, and I think sometimes our kids, our critics, they look at the church as a list of rules. No, the revelation is the plan, and then the rules have a context because there's a purpose behind commandments and covenants. But the plan, we've heard so many talks recently, what is the plan of God and the word plan doesn't even appear once in the King James Bible as Hugh Nibley pointed out. It's like looking at a library as, oh, that's a place where you can't talk and missing everything else that's in there. No, don't think the church has a list of rules. The gospel is the plan, and then all the rules have a place and a context, but the glory of it is Heavenly Father has a plan.

Hank Smith: 00:55:17 Gerrit, what happens next in Omni is even faster. I mean, we have Omni, but the book's not really Omni.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:55:23	Yeah, Jarom's basically like Shakespeare compared to the book of Omni. He's waxing poetic there. When you get to the rapid succession of people who have the plates in the book of Omni, now it's still called the Book of Omni because they're still following that. Whoever speaks first, basically in the book, they get the book named after them, so that's why I always want to try to write a forward to someone else's book. Hopefully they'll name the book after me, but-
Hank Smith:	00:55:49	Yeah, Omni's definitely not the one who writes the most in this book.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:55:52	No. He puts something in there and then he passes it down and passes it down. One thing that becomes clear in both Jarom and Omni is that the act of passing these smaller plates down is an act of passing a prophetic mantle. This is something that needs to be passed and needs to be passed and needs to be passed. It is funny to see them spend more time saying why they're not going to write than, I mean you could write something. Instead, you spend two verses saying that you're not going to write anything. You could have said something else, but again, I think it's because they're keeping a larger record.
	00:56:30	Verse 11, the record of this people is engraven upon the plates, which is had by the kings according to the generations, and I know of no revelation save that which has been written neither prophecy wherefore, that which is sufficient is written, and I make an end. Now that's Abinadom, that's making that statement, but again, the fact that there's another record that there's these larger plates is clearly causing them to hold back and to say, "What we have here is already here, and I was told only to write things that are new here," basically is what they seem to be saying.
Hank Smith:	00:57:05	It almost seems like they're running out of room.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:57:08	It sure does.
Hank Smith:	00:57:09	They're like, "Hey, I don't know how to make new plates."
John Bytheway:	00:57:13	It's such a pain to engrave. I'm just going to be really short today. I love the name Abinadom. I think that was the name of the Nephite Sports Arena was called the Abinadom.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:57:27	The Abinadom. Sounds like the one that King Noah would've had unfortunately. One of the fascinating things about Omni is this is the first place in the Book of Mormon. If you're reading

from the beginning where you learn that there are other peoples that are involved, the title page of the Book of Mormon is a spoiler alert, but if you're already moving through reading the book itself, it's really just the Lamanites and Nephites, Lamanites and Nephites, Lamanites and Nephites. Until you get to Omni, you learn something that actually affects all kinds of the remaining stories in the Book of Mormon, both geographically with names, but also with people.

00:58:13 You're going to learn something that you weren't quite aware of at first because if you're Nephi, you simply assume that everyone in Jerusalem is destroyed. So when you get to Omni verse 12, there's a couple of cool parts about this. He says, "Behold, that we'll speak unto you somewhat concerning Mosiah, who was made King over the land of Zarahemla." Okay, Zarahemla, you're actually having introduced here something brand new. Well, it's a good thing that he was made the king over Zarahemla. Thank you for-

John Bytheway: 00:58:47 What's that? What's that?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:58:48 ...ever heard of that? Yeah. What an amazing king he must be. He knows there's context on the larger plates, so he maybe doesn't feel like he has to go into all that context, but he is providing this story here. Who was made king over the land of Zarahemla for behold, he being warned of the Lord that he should flee out of the land of Nephi and as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord should also depart out of the land with him into the wilderness. First part about this that I think is applicable, the Nephites have been living in the aptly named land of Nephi since Nephi separated from his brothers. This is hundreds of years, 300 years roughly, that they have lived in the land of Nephi and Mosiah is told by God they need to leave. Guess what? The people who are faithful leave with them.

00:59:45 How applicable is that to Latter-day Saint Restoration Theology, and I'm not just talking about coming to Salt Lake. In January of 1838 in Kirtland, Joseph Smith receives a revelation. It's not in the Doctrine and Covenants, so I can't point it to you. You can go to Josephsmithpapers.org and you can find it there where Joseph receives a revelation that commands all of the faithful saints who are still in Kirtland because Kirtland has now become a nest of apostasy and lawsuits and threatened mob violence and all kinds of things that are going on. Joseph receives a revelation that all of the faithful that are in Kirtland need to leave and go to Missouri. There are some who say, "Yeah, I'm not. Thanks. I'm not leaving my house. I'm not walking a

thousand miles to Missouri." The worst part about walking a thousand miles to Missouri is that when you get there, you're in Missouri. They didn't have air conditioning. Okay? I mean it's... To all of our listeners in Missouri, it's not a current,

John Bytheway: 01:00:46

This is the frontier at the time.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:00:48

But the reality is in all seriousness, they're being asked to give up everything and walk a thousand miles. Thousands of them do it. Thousands of them say, "Okay, I'm from Ohio. I grew up in Ohio. I've been here since the church was first in Ohio. I'm going to go where Joseph tells me to go." Verse 12 really is this incredible leap of faith. For technical purposes, it's also the reason why the Book of Mormon becomes very confusing for the next several books because the Lamanites take over the land of Nephi. It was always, as a kid, I was like, this is the weirdest thing ever. Why are the Lamanites living in the land of Nephi? Because I was like, "Oh, we went up to the land of Nephi to preach." Seems like you could just turn around and you'd be doing that if you're the Nephites, wouldn't you just already be there?

01:01:33

No. Because they were there and they leave because they're warned. And it came to pass that he did as according to the Lord commanded him and they departed out of the land into the wilderness, and as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord, they were led by many preachings and prophesying. So again, the people have to make this step of faith to follow the prophet, and when they do, they then get further details and they were admonished continually by the word of God, and they were led by the power of his arm through the wilderness until they came into the land, which is called the land of Zarahemla, and they discovered a people who were called the people of Zarahemla. Now, there was a great rejoicing among the people of Zarahemla, and also Zarahemla did rejoice exceedingly because the Lord had sent the people of Mosiah with the plates of brass, which contained the record of the Jews.

01:02:28

Behold, it came to pass that Mosiah discovered that the people of Zarahemla came out from Jerusalem at the time that Zedekiah King of Judah was carried away captive into Babylon. At the end of this prophetic journey they don't just find other people, they find other Israelites who had also been brought out of the land of Jerusalem. This is going to be the focal point now of the entirety of the rest of the Nephite civilization surrounding this land of Zarahemla where Mosiah and his followers, because they were faithful, because they heeded the

word of God, end up in this place where they are far more supported, where they're far safer from the Lamanites. And also where they are able to make massive conversions to the church of God because the people of Zarahemla didn't take plates with them. Not only had their religion become corrupted over the 300 years, their language had become corrupted.

01:03:35 They had to teach them their language in order for them to be able to communicate with one another. And I don't know how difficult a process that was, but you can find a linguist who will explain to you that over the course of 300 years in isolation, a language will change pretty quickly. It introduces this, we often call them Mulekites, these people that come out from Zedekiah. The first inklings we have also of the Jaredites is the Book of Omni. It is the spoiler alert central of the Book of Mormon. It just starts dropping bombs about things that you're going to be spending most of the rest of the time in the Book of Mormon because it talks about Coriantumr who had been with the people of Zarahemla and that he was the last of that Jaredite civilization that we don't really know anything about yet, but we're going to learn a whole lot about going forward.

01:04:28 The foreshadowing there is great, and then of course you get this introduction to King Benjamin. This is an important introduction in part because we don't get an introduction of King Benjamin from the Book of Mosiah. The book of Mosiah starts off in the middle of a story, and I'm sure your next guest when they talk about the book of Mosiah will say that Mosiah is the only book that starts in the middle. It doesn't say, "Let me tell you about Benjamin." It just starts with Benjamin being the king. Omni and Words of Mormon give you this lead-in of who King Benjamin is that we frankly wouldn't have otherwise. I love this parting words that Amaleki is going to give. He says, "And now my beloved brethren, I would that you should come unto Christ who is the holy one of Israel and partake of his salvation and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him and continue in fasting and praying and endure to the end. And as the Lord liveth, ye will be saved."

01:05:39 That is a beautiful summary of how it is we can follow that plan of salvation, this idea of enduring to the end, this idea of offering our whole souls, of being willing to give up everything to Christ. Well, maybe he's not one of the more well-known prophets in the Book of Mormon doesn't even have a book named after him, but what he has to say is very powerful.



John Bytheway:	00:01	Welcome to part two with Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: Enos through Words of Mormon.
Hank Smith:	00:07	Gerrit, as we move forward, there's something my son noticed the other day. He said, "Dad, in Omni, the chapter heading puts the years about 323 to 130 BC. Then you get to the next book, Words of Mormon, and the heading says 385 A.D." He went, "Wait, we just skipped ahead 500 years." Can you explain what's happening here?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:32	Boy, this is seriously one of the most fun parts of studying the Book of Mormon for me. You have to remember that I am a history nerd, which you already know if you're listening to the podcast at this point. You're thinking, "Yeah, this has been the most painful thing I've ever experienced.
	00:52	One of these fascinating aspects of the demonstration that this record is an actual record that actually exists, the All-Knowing author here, Mormon, is providing this interjection into his record, because I can only imagine what it was like when you were reading the Book of Mormon for the first time or when Joseph was translating it.
	01:18	When you're reading the Book of Mormon for the first time, yeah, you go from, "Oh, let's learn more about this King Benjamin person," and the very next words on the next page are, "And now I, Mormon, begin to deliver up the record," which I have no idea who Mormon is. Suddenly we went from Benjamin to this Mormon guy, and Mormon is explaining a lot about how this book came to be. That's why this is such a precious part of our understanding of the plates: because Mormon explains his process.
	01:49	Now, we get a little bit of this from the book Mormon in the Book of Mormon. I don't know a very clean way of saying the Book of Mormon in the Book of Mormon. That sounds like

we're opening a Pandora's Box or looking in a lot of two-way mirrors.

02:02 The reality is, in Mormon's own book that he writes later in the book, he provides a history of how it is that he came to be given these records, how he came to be the one who was abridging these large Plates of Nephi and creating the book that we now call the Book of Mormon in general.

02:23 This explanation that he has given here is to describe what records you're reading. And talk about a spoiler alert. Boy, Mormon, in verse two, he's going to let you know exactly what's about to happen. If you're holding off on waiting on that series before you find out, you don't want to talk to Mormon, he's going to let you know.

Hank Smith: 02:43 Yes, skip this one if you don't want to know ahead.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 02:45 Right. He says, "I have witnessed almost all the destruction of my people, the Nephites". We just found out that there's a whole bunch more Nephites, that Zarahemla and them, that they got together and they've learned about the Gospel and it's the greatest thing ever, and the very next words you're going to read are, I've witnessed almost their entire destruction 516 years later, and it is many hundreds of years after the coming of Christ.

03:08 Now, we've had prophecies that Christ was going to come, but we know He came now, because Mormon just said he came. "It's many hundred years after the coming of Christ, and I deliver these records up into the hands of my son, and it supposeth me that he will witness the entire destruction of my people. But may God grant that he may survive them and he writes somewhat concerning them and somewhat concerning Christ, that perhaps someday, it may profit them."

03:33 And then he's going to go on to explain why. This is like an explanatory note that's put in for the reader. He's made his record up to this point by abridging what was on the large plates of Nephi. Again, we talked about this a little bit with both Jarom and Omni, how they keep referring to these small plates, and the small plates we're just supposed to have the prophesyings on them, and the larger plates were the ones that were supposed to have the larger history on them.

04:00 He says that "I'd made an abridgment from the plates of Nephi," and there he's talking about these larger plates. He has gone

through the heavy duty ones that talk about everything. He's made an abridgment of it.

- 04:13 One thing you'll start to notice at this point in the Book of Mormon: Mormon is a great omniscient third-person author there, where he will interject himself and provide commentary. You'll read about something and be like, "Oh, and thus we see the hearts of the children." He can't help himself but tell you the story, and then sometimes add in a little bit of commentary on his own because he's the one who's abridged this and put it together.
- 04:40 That commentary is totally valuable because it helps us understand why he thought this part was valuable; but it's also the reason why most of the Book of Mormon is in third person, which is something I'm sure you've already talked about.
- 04:55 He is taking these records and he is abridging them or he's rewriting them. He says he can't even include a hundredth part. He's taking bits and pieces of it from different authors that are there in the Plates of Nephi. He's trying to create a story for us that includes all of the things that the Lord is inspiring him to put in there.
- 05:20 Mormon, to me, is the first Mormon historian. He's the first Latter-day Saint historian, but there's, of course, no Latter-day Saints at the time. He's taking records of other people and he's using those sources to create a narrative that's source-based to try to tell people what happened, and this is exactly what Mormon has done.
- 05:41 The worst thing that can happen to a historian is they finish writing something, and then the next day, they find another source that's totally important that you would've written about the entire time, but you didn't have.
- 05:55 I had this experience a little bit on my dissertation because I was writing about the Latter-day Saints being expelled from the United States. I knew the Council of Fifty existed and that minutes of the Council of Fifty existed, but they also weren't public. No one had access to them.
- 06:12 So I had to write my dissertation, da, da, da, da, da. And wouldn't you know it? I go to work on the Joseph Smith papers, and five years later, well, now the Council of Fifty minutes are accessible. It would change a lot of the things I say in my dissertation had I had those.

- 06:27 Anyone who's ever written anything has, after it's been published, said, "Oh, man, I should have included this. Why didn't I include this?" And Mormon has the same experience.
- 06:37 "After I had made an abridgment from the Plates of Nephi down to the reign of King Benjamin, of whom Amaleki spake," so he's referencing this, there. "I searched among the records which have been delivered into my hands and I found these plates," so a different set of plates, "which contained this small account of the prophets from Jacob down to the reign of King Benjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi."
- 07:03 He's already done the abridgment, he's already written what he's going to write up to that point, and then he finds the small Plates of Nephi. Unlike the large plates, where he's essentially rewriting what's there, he's creating his own narrative, he's cutting things out, he's adding things in; here, he says that he's going to simply put them with the other plates.
- 07:27 This is verse six: "For behold, I shall take these plates which contain these prophesying and revelations and put them with the remainder of my record; for they are choice unto me and I know they will be choice unto my brethren."
- 07:44 I don't know if he pops open the three-ring binder there of the Gold Plates, has to re-smelt the ore, or what he's doing, but he doesn't edit these Plates of Nephi; he simply puts those plates in with the other plates.
- 08:01 He says, verse seven: "And I do this for a wise purpose, for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord, which is in me, and now I do not know all things, but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come. Wherefore, He worketh in me to do His will."
- 08:20 Mormon could easily be asking the question, "Thanks for helping me find these after I was already done with my abridgment," and the last thing you want to do is include it in your book, because then everyone knows you missed it. He feels inspired that these need to be there.
- 08:37 Now, there's all kinds of other records. I think it's important at this point to jump back to 1 Nephi 9 to find out where these plates even come from in the first place. Go back to 1 Nephi 9. They're in the valley of Lemuel. They haven't even come to the new world yet.

	08:54	He says, "And now as I've spoken concerning these plates." This is Nephi looking back, because he's giving the narrative up to the time when they're there, and now he's looking back sometime in the future. He says, "And now, I have spoken concerning these plates. Behold, they are not the plates which I make a full account of the history of my people; for the plates upon which I make a full account of my people, I've given the name of Nephi, wherefore they're called the plates of Nephi, after my own name; and these plates are also called the plates of Nephi." So Nephi really hurt us, here.
Hank Smith:	09:27	Super helpful.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	09:28	"I made two sets of plates and I called them both the plates of Nephi." It would've been great had he called one of the plates something else, but this is where we get this terminology of the large plates of Nephi and the small plates of Nephi. He's already making these larger plates. That's already going on.
	09:47	Nevertheless, verse three: "I received a commandment of the Lord that I should make these plates." Now, these are the small plates. We know that because 1 Nephi is from the small plates, "That I should make these plates for the special purpose that there should be an account engraven of the ministry of my people."
	10:07	He goes on to say, "The other plates are going to have more stuff in. It's going to be about the wars and contentions. This one's especially going to be focused on the prophesyings." And verse five, he says: "The Lord commanded me to make these plates for a wise purpose in Him, which purpose I know not. But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, He prepareth the way to accomplish all His works among the children of men. For behold, He hath all power unto the fulfilling of all of His words."
	10:36	First of all, Nephi who's already doing obviously a gargantuan job of keeping the record on the other plates, is told by God, "You need to make an entirely different set of plates." Okay. And God doesn't tell him why. God doesn't say, "Well, this is going to be essential." God just says, "You need to do this." And Nephi's response is: "The Lord knoweth all things."
	11:01	And you know what's really interesting? It's essentially as if Mormon, who has searched that record, is quoting those verses from Nephi, quoting what Nephi had to say, because he says, "I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth unto me according to the workings of the Spirit, and the Lord is in me,

and now I do not know all things, but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come."

- 11:28 Now go back to 1 Nephi 9:6: "For the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning and He prepareth a way." I don't know if Mormon here is quoting what Nephi said. We know that he's read this because he just said, "I read it and I loved it, and that's the reason why I'm putting it in here."
- 11:45 But both of them are doing something that is extra work for them. That isn't what they were first commanded to do, and neither one of them is given any explanation from God about why they're doing it. They're just told, "You need to do it."
- 12:04 So you have Nephi creating the record and then you have Mormon finding the record and putting it with the other plates, even though this doesn't really make sense. "I've already abridged all of this. I'm now just adding even more to this? I thought you wanted this record to be small. But hey, whatever. I guess I'll just put it in there."
- 12:24 Why does this matter? Now, I apologize for how excited I am. It matters because the Lord does know all things from the beginning. It matters because in June of 1828, Joseph Smith is translating the gold plates with Emma helping him, with Martin Harris helping him. They're making some headway, but things are rough: Joseph's super poor; his father-in-law, not terribly fond of him; and Emma is actually pregnant with their first child.
- 13:03 And in the summer of 1828, Martin Harris, who has been just thoroughly harassed by his wife and his family because he's essentially the only person outside of Joseph's family who believes that Joseph Smith has plates. He's the only person in 1828 who believes Joseph has plates and that Joseph saw an angel, and every other person that Joseph has told that story to has attacked him, has mocked him, has made fun of him, has claimed that he's a liar, except for Martin Harris.
- 13:36 Now, Martin Harris is a well-off guy. Joseph Smith comes from the bottom rung of society. His family's so poor that while they're translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph's family is going to lose their home. Joseph himself with his farm down in Harmony can't make the payments on it.
- 13:53 Martin Harris is a well-off guy, and the Lord has commanded Joseph to bring forth the Book of Mormon to the world. There is no discernible way that Joseph can do that.

- 14:05 To give you an idea: when Joseph finally gets the quote on how much it is to publish the Book of Mormon, and by the way, he's got to pay upfront, it is \$3,000. Now, that sounds like a lot if you're a BYU professor, but for a lot of people listening, \$3,000 doesn't seem like a whole lot maybe in our world. But in their world, the average person makes somewhere around \$200 to \$250 a year.
- 14:37 Joseph bought a farm in Harmony that was almost 14 acres with a farmhouse on it, and apparently some other outbuildings and a well, the trees are already cut down on a lot of it, so it's already farmable. He buys that 14-acre farm and house for \$200.
- 14:58 The cost of printing the Book of Mormon is 15 times Joseph Smith's entire net worth if he did own his home, which he doesn't, because he can't make the payments on his own home. To put that in our perspective today, the Lord is essentially saying that you need to come up with, in a lump sum, 15, 16, 17 times the amount of money you make annually. That seems impossible. To me, it's impossible. I would have to have an angel come to tell me to believe that I could do that.
- 15:37 Martin Harris not only is the only person who believes Joseph: he's the only means whereby Joseph can even perceive that there's any way this could possibly be published.
- 15:52 When Martin Harris comes down in June of 1828 and says to Joseph something to the effect, "Joseph, my wife, she's relentless. She won't stop. She doesn't want me supporting you. My friends and family. I'm a prominent guy in the community. Just let me take the pages of the translation. Just let me take the pages. I can prove to them. They'll know once they read it. They'll know this comes from God."
- 16:21 Now, it's not the first time Martin Harris has done this. Martin Harris already had the characters from the plates and had a copy of those characters who, according to Lucy Smith, he would show these characters to different people to try to prove, when he said, "Joseph has gold plates." "Oh, he doesn't really have gold plates." "Well, look at these characters. Where do you think these characters come from?"
- 16:43 It didn't convince anybody, but as pressure continues to mount more and more and more, Martin Harris comes down and says, "I need to take the translation to show people what's really going on. If they see this, they will know this has to come from God."

- 17:01 And Joseph of course asked the Lord, and is told flatly, "No, he can't take them." And Joseph asks again. "No, he can't take them." And then Joseph asks a third time. Finally, the Lord says, "Okay, but you have to make a covenant that you'll only show them to these specified people," which Martin Harris makes that covenant, makes his oath, and then he trundles off to Palmyra from Harmony with those pages.
- 17:33 Now, Joseph, he's a little out of sorts for a few weeks because right after Martin Harris leaves, Emma goes into labor, and the delivery is incredibly difficult. Joseph's firstborn child dies immediately after birth and Emma nearly dies. Joseph is, according to Lucy, again, hovering by her bedside for weeks trying to nurse her back to health.
- 18:01 To make matters worse, Emma was the primary scribe for most of that early portion of the translation. Emma will prevail upon Joseph to say, "Where is Martin? He was supposed to make a quick run up, show people the pages and come back, and he's not back." I won't tell the entirety of that story here, but suffice to say someone steals the 116 pages from Martin Harris. They're stolen.
- 18:34 We don't know who steals them, but that is often called the Book of Lehi, and likely it's called that because that's how Mormon titled his books from his abridgment: usually based upon the first prophet who speaks in that book. And then he provided a little bit of a heading and said, "This is an account of..." You go look at the book of Helaman, go look at the book of 3 Nephi. You'll see how Mormon gives his titles and gives his little summary about what the book is about.
- 19:02 The first part that they had translated, 116 pages and months and months and months of work. Not only is the work arduous, affording the ink and the paper is expensive. Paper's not cheap then. They actually have to have the paper given to them in order to be able to continue the translation because they are poor. Emma and Joseph and Martin have spent months and months and months on this, and it's gone.
- 19:31 Now, Martin finally tells the Smith family up in Palmyra, "It's gone. It's gone." What he says is probably pretty indicative of what he thought at the time. He says, "I have lost my soul. I've lost my soul." And Joseph asked him, "Have you brought condemnation upon me and you because you broke your oath?"
- 19:54 Of course, Martin had. Not only was Martin supposed to take care of the pages, he was only supposed to show them to

certain people, and he ended up showing them to other people. He'd broke his oath. And you know what? Nobody, not one person got converted because Martin Harris showed them the pages.

- 20:16 Those pages are gone. We don't know everything that happened with those pages, but what we do know is that the people who stole them stole them with the intent to try to destroy the Restoration of the Gospel, to try to destroy Joseph Smith, and to try to destroy the Book of Mormon.
- 20:34 Just as a small tangent here, we all know the end of the story. Like I talked about before, it's so easy to study the past because we already know what happens. We know God as a loving God, who is our Father, who desperately wants to forgive us of our sins. We know that because of the Restoration. We know that because of the revelations that Joseph received.
- 21:07 That is not the world that Joseph and Martin live in. They live in a world in which the majority of Christian denominations believe that there are very, very, very few people that God has chosen already before the world existed to save; that only those people are going to be saved; and that God is a vengeful God; and that once you are out of His grace, you are out forever.
- 21:36 When Joseph goes back to Harmony to tell his ailing wife, "You know the months that you spent on this? You know the sacrifice that you made being alienated from your family, being ridiculed by everyone because of these plates, because of this calling I was given by God? I just threw it all away. I didn't listen to God."
- 21:57 He already knew that things were bad because he doesn't just lose the plates and the interpreters; because the pages are lost. After he makes the third inquiry, he has them taken from him. He already has taken from him the plates because he continued to pester God about it.
- 22:21 Joseph goes back to Harmony to tell his ailing wife, "I've lost my soul." And for all I know, Joseph really does believe at this point that he's going to go to hell. He doesn't know what we all know about the Restoration. It hasn't been revealed yet.
- 22:40 And as he's walking outside of his property, an angel of God appears to him, and this is where you get Doctrine and Covenants 3. This is actually the earliest recorded revelation of Joseph Smith. I know that section one and two come earlier, but this is the first recorded revelation of Joseph Smith.

- 23:00 The angel appears to him and hands him the Seer Stones, the Urim and Thummim stones, the Interpreters, whatever you want to call them; and he receives this revelation. And it starts out with this: "The works and designs and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught; for God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth He turn to the right nor to the left, neither doth He vary from that which He has said." Verse three: "Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men."
- 23:34 He goes on to chastise Joseph pretty severely. Because Joseph had made this covenant and he'd broken it. And why had Joseph broken it? In Joseph's world, he couldn't possibly see any way that he could maintain the publication of the Book of Mormon without Martin Harris.
- 23:54 That is impossible. And it's not like I've got people falling off the back of milk wagons everywhere believing the things that I'm saying. No one is believing me. Outside of my own family, who have no money at all, no one believes me at all. No one. I have to do this for Martin or I won't even be able to do what God wants me to do.
- 24:18 The Lord says, "For although a man may have many revelations and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength and sets at naught the counsels of God," the counsels of God told him multiple times not to take them, "and he follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires," this is not a reference to Joseph carnally wanting something sinful. Carnal as in earthly.
- 24:46 Your focus was, how could I possibly pay for this? I understand why you have that focus, and as God, I told you not to have that focus. Carnal desires. "He must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon you. Behold, you have been entrusted with these things, but how strict were your commandments; remember also the promises that you've made: that if you did not transgress them," and then probably the biggest stinger, "Behold, how oft have you transgressed the commandments and laws of God and have gone on in the persuasions of men?"
- 25:23 Boy, at this point in Joseph's life, it took him four years to get the plates because he just couldn't overcome all of the pressures of the world around him; and then he finally gets them and those pressures of the world are still there.
- 25:39 Verse seven: "For behold, you should not have feared man more than God. You should have been faithful, and He would

have extended His arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary, and He would have been with you in that time of trouble."

- 25:57 So after this pretty severe chastisement, again, Joseph's still probably thinking that his soul was lost, has the Lord say to him in verse 10, "But remember, God is merciful. Repent of that which thou hast done, which is contrary to the commandment which I gave unto you, and thou art still chosen, and thou art called to the work," where Joseph learns from the mouth of the Lord he is not cast off forever.
- 26:35 Even though he has made an enormous transgression, even though it seems the entire work of the translation of the Book of Mormon is ended and it's over and the Restoration comes to a full stop because of Joseph's actions, God is merciful.
- 26:55 The first thing that he told him is that it's men's ways that are frustrated; not God's. Now, to get the full understanding of what God has to say about that, we have to jump to Doctrine and Covenants 10. The first part of this, or at least portions of this, are probably received at the same time in 1828, we don't know exactly, the remainder of it in 1829, where God explains exactly what's happened with those pages.
- 27:20 That book of Lehi that Mormon has crafted with precision, that he has spent his own time on, carefully trying to get what portions need to come forward, that entire holy righteous book that is now gone into the hands of wicked people who didn't just steal them to get rid of them, they didn't just steal them to burn them; they have a plan, a plan to destroy Joseph Smith.
- 27:46 Go to Doctrine and Covenants 10, and we'll start with verse one, because he's recapping here to the Lord of what's happened: "Now, behold, I say unto you that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate by means of the Urim and Thummim into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them."
- 28:06 This is interesting. This is actually one of the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants that Joseph will expand upon. In the original version of this, it just says, "Which He'd given unto you to translate," and then later in 1835, Joseph wants to reiterate that it's by the means of the Urim and Thummim, or the Lord does, and so that's added. "Into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them. And you also lost your gift at the same time, and your mind became darkened."

- 28:35 We always talk about Liberty Jail being the lowest point of Joseph's life. Man, I have to believe the summer of 1828 is giving it a run for its money, where he doesn't yet know enough to know the God that he's even dealing with, because the Christian world around him is teaching him false things about that God. He hasn't received those revelations yet.
- 29:00 "Nevertheless, it is again restored to you." We quote this scripture all the time, but this is the context in which God gives the scripture: "Pray always that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work."
- 29:17 It's a great quote generically, right? It's important to pray. And by the way, Satan is trying to destroy you. In this case, this is specific. There literally are servants of Satan who have deliberately stolen these pages with the sole purpose of destroying Joseph.
- 29:36 The Lord explains that they have altered the word, so they steal the pages, 116 of them, and then they start changing words in it. "They've altered the words which they read contrary from that which ye translated and caused to be written; and on this wise, the devil has sought to lay a cunning plan that he may destroy the work; for he put it into their hearts to do this, that by lying, they may say that they've caught you in the words that you've pretended to translate. Verily I say unto you that I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil designs."
- 30:10 One of the most fascinating aspects of Doctrine and Covenants 10, Doctrine and Covenants 3, Words of Mormon, to me, is the plan of these satanic individuals is that Joseph could retranslate word for word 116 pages that he had just lost.
- 30:32 Anyone who's copied anything ever knows that in a highly literate person, copying a page of the Bible, if you were to copy a page of the Bible, you will make at least three errors per page. Now, maybe they're minor. Maybe you accidentally write a word twice. Maybe you leave out a line. Maybe you leave out a whole verse. There's all kinds of things.
- 30:53 But the reality is, you don't need to alter any of the words for it to read differently if Joseph's just copying this off of some manuscript somewhere. Or if he's just making it up and just rewriting it, well, of course it's not going to be exactly the same.

- 31:08 But these people are almost acknowledging the prophetic power of Joseph Smith because they anticipate that he is going to bring forth the exact same words, which, even if Joseph was copying from a fake manuscript that he had, he couldn't possibly have done that; and yet, that's what they anticipate.
- 31:35 It is a crazy thing that, in their attempts to alter the pages, to destroy the work, they're essentially acknowledging that Joseph has this gift to do it. They're acknowledging the miracle, like Caiaphas saying, "Because of the miracle, that's why we're going to destroy him."
- 31:55 It's not that they don't believe in the Sanhedrin that Lazarus was raised from the dead. The problem is, "What do we do because everyone believes Lazarus was raised from the dead?" And he explains that their hearts are corrupt. Satan has great hold upon their hearts and stirs them up to iniquity against that which is good.
- 32:15 "They love darkness rather than light. He stirreth them up that he may lead their souls to destruction. He saith unto them, Deceive and lie in wait to catch that ye may destroy. Behold, this is no harm. And thus he flattereth them and telleth them that it is no sin to lie; that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him. And he flattereth them and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell."
- 32:42 Joseph then receives in Doctrine and Covenants 10, the explanation of how all of the work that they've done is not lost forever to the children of men; that you can't retranslate that portion that's gone, but that there is going to be a way that God can still bring it forth.
- 33:06 This is verse 35, we can go down to verse 38: "Verily I say unto you that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands, is engraven upon the plates of Nephi." He's talking now about the small plates of Nephi.
- 33:20 Joseph would've known that there's multiple plates because I'm sure that in the Book of Lehi, there's a conversation about, "Oh, I'm writing plates. I've got larger plates here and I've got smaller plates," so he would've known that there was two sets of plates that are going on.
- 33:34 And apparently one of the things that was in the lost 116 pages is an explanation of the smaller plates, because Joseph is told here that "You remember that it was said in those writings that

a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi." Joseph, in his translation, already knows about the small plates and he already knows that they are more geared towards prophesying, because that's part of the translation that he's already received.

34:01 "And now because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi is more particular concerning the things which in my wisdom I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account; therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi down until you come to the reign of King Benjamin or until you come to that which you have translated and which you have retained. And behold, you shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus, I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work. Yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil."

34:46 They've only got a part or an abridgment of the account of Nephi. "Behold, there are many things engraven upon the plates of Nephi which do throw greater views upon my gospel; therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi and send forth in this work."

35:05 All the way back to 600 years before Christ, Nephi is inspired by God to make another set of plates. You fast-forward to almost 400 years after Christ, and Mormon is inspired to take that second record and to put it with this larger work that he's done. And neither one of them is given any explanation about why.

35:36 We, as rational creatures, desperately want to know the why for everything. But the reality is, having faith means stepping into that darkness, because you know the person who's calling you is the Savior. Knowing the voice, you step forward. And it doesn't make sense, and it doesn't equal out, and maybe it seems contrary to everything that we want to do.

36:09 We see prophets all the time get told to teach and to do things, and they don't even know why. If prophets themselves don't have all of the answers, how could we possibly expect to have them all? I'm so grateful that God has called prophets so that I am not left rudderless to try to figure everything out on my own. I know that revelation to the church, to the world, only comes from one place: it comes to the prophet that God has given the keys to that revelation.

36:45 So when I have a great question about, "How are things going to go? Should I do this? Should I do that?" I don't have to come up

with the answer myself. I can hear what President Nelson has to say, and then that can become my answer.

- 37:00 As I give up my carnal desires to follow a prophet of God, this incredible two millennia in the making, Jesus knows more than 2000 years later Joseph's going to sin and that people are going to steal those pages because of his sin and he's going to prepare a way that we still have the Book of Mormon.
- 37:28 But we just sit back and think for a minute: we are all of the time feeling lost and lonely and worried, and, "I just don't know if God really recognizes me," this is the same God who planned more than 2000 years in advance for a sin Joseph was going to commit so that we would all still have the words of Nephi.
- 37:57 I know I'm a little too excited about the Words of Mormon, but it is such a powerful testimony to God having His hand in things to all of us having the necessity of putting our faith in the Lord. I know we don't have answers to every question, but we have answers to the most important question: who is my Savior? What is His church? And all the other questions will eventually be answered.
- 38:27 I love Words of Mormon. I love it.
- Hank Smith: 38:30 Gerrit, we had our own little mini version of this, and as you were talking, I thought, "Who was it?" I honestly did not remember this, and I don't know if you did either, but I thought, "Who was it over two years ago who joined us for Section 3 and Section 10?" So I'm like, "I can't remember," so I went back just briefly and looked it up, and it was none other than Gerrit Dirkmaat. You were our fourth guest.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 38:52 When you're a one-trick pony, you do the trick all the time. When you have a very limited skill set.
- Hank Smith: 39:00 We'll have to link people to that, because I'd love to hear more about this from Gerrit. Well, actually, we planned on this two and a half years ago.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 39:07 Yeah, there you go. You already knew.
- John Bytheway: 39:08 Or someone did.
- Hank Smith: 39:08 We already knew. And Gerrit, I think the question from Joseph Smith, and maybe from some of our listeners, Joseph Smith might say, "You knew? You knew so far in advance? Why didn't

you just stop me? Why didn't you stop me from making that mistake?" What do you think the Lord would say?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 39:29

I think He would probably say, "The entire purpose of the creation of this Earth is that as sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother, we made an active choice to come to a world that was filled with sin and sorrow and sickness and horror, and some happiness and joy, too, sometimes, so that we could become like our Father in Heaven."

40:01

The entire point in the creation of the world was so that there would be a Fall so we could progress through adversity to become like our Heavenly Father. I don't want to put too many words in Joseph's mouth, but you know what Joseph Smith doesn't do going forward after 1828? He doesn't ask God three times anymore. He doesn't have an answer and he just does it.

40:32

Could Joseph have gotten to that place without having gone through that? I believe that if God could make us all like Him without us suffering and going through adversity that He would; but we have to become like God the same way God became God: and that is through a mortal experience where there is suffering and there is trials.

41:01

To the people listening who are thinking, "Well, why didn't God stop me from making that terrible decision?" That's the agreement you made when you came to Earth: that you would, through your agency, make great decisions and poor ones; but when you make the poor ones knowing that there is a Savior who will atone for your sins.

Hank Smith:

41:21

I've had some fun with this with my kids, one, to show them that Mormon clearly didn't know his first 116 pages, however many it was, was going to be lost, because he writes Words of Mormon as if the reader knows who he is: "And now I Mormon, about to deliver up the record which I have been making," and us the reader going, "I've never heard of you. What do you mean you've been making the record?"

41:45

I've toyed with this fun idea with my boys. Can you imagine Mormon talking to them, "I loved your book." He's like, "Yeah, I loved Alma. I loved 3 Nephi." And he says, "What did you think of Lehi? What did you think of Lehi?" "Oh, there's no Book of Lehi." "What do you mean there's no Book of Lehi? I worked really hard." "Yeah, there isn't one."

	42:03	He goes to his son Moroni. "Why is there no Book of Lehi?" Moroni says, "I think you've got to go talk to those two over there."
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	42:13	"Look, I told him not to."
Hank Smith:	42:15	"I told him."
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	42:17	There would be a lot of shifting of blame. The one nice thing that Mormon could take away from it is Joseph and Emma and Martin Harris, in the translation of that, did learn things from the Book of Lehi that at least Joseph learned, we know that from Doctrine and Covenants 10, that we don't have them, it's a great tragedy, obviously; and yet, we still have what we need in the Book of Mormon for it to be another testament of Jesus.
Hank Smith:	42:48	When I was younger, I remember thinking, "Oh, no big deal. We already have enough scripture, anyway. I'm glad they lost it. I don't have more to read." But now as I've come to love these books of Mosiah and Alma, I'm like, "What did Mormon say? What was he teaching? What would we know?"
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	43:05	You can only assume that he's interjecting the same way that he is in Alma, where he provides this commentary. Mormon's almost providing application throughout. "Because of the exceedingly great length of the war, there are many people that have fallen away; and then there's other people who got closer to God." He's providing this application in commentary all throughout.
	43:23	I would love to have heard Mormon's commentary on Laman and Lemuel. It would've been the greatest. When the angel appears and tells them to go back, and the first thing Laman and Lemuel say is, "How is it possible that the Lord will deliver Laman into our hands? He is a mighty man. He could command 50."
	43:43	I can only assume at that point, Mormon interjects the record and like, "He can command 50, really."
Hank Smith:	43:49	"Thus we see."
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	43:50	"Thus we see how vain and foolish the hearts of the children of man."
John Bytheway:	43:56	I love the fact that we can apply this to when we don't understand something, but we can say, "If I'm being asked,

there must be a wise purpose." That's a great application for this.

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| | 44:08 | And then I love that even when we mess up, Section 10:45, Well, get the Plates of Nephi. They throw greater views upon my gospel, that you can mess up and the Lord will, even after that, give you something even better, which is a great lesson. |
| Hank Smith: | 44:23 | What a blessing, all that teaches us about the Lord. "I want you to go through this learning process. I'm not going to save you from it, but I can create a way that your mistakes become your blessings." |
| Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: | 44:36 | It really is a good analogy to the Atonement. God already knows by the virtue of the fact that we're coming here that we are going to sin. He doesn't stop us from sinning, He doesn't force us to not sin; but He provides a way through the atonement of His Son that, even though we have sinned, we can still become like Him. |
| | 44:59 | It's wonderful, as Elder Holland has said, to be on God's side, we're on the winning team, that we don't have to wonder whether or not things are going to work out in the end, because we know they will because of God. And Joseph needs to learn things are going to work out because God is the one in control. |
| Hank Smith: | 45:20 | I have this thought from President Eyring written in my scriptures, this is from a BYU-Idaho devotional back in 2005: "The Lord really knows us. He knows the future. I don't know how He knows it in such detail, but He knows the future. He knows every challenge ahead of you. He knows every opportunity ahead of you. He knows your power and wants to lift you to every opportunity and to be able to go through every trial that is ahead of you." |
| | 45:49 | If we look closely what you've taught us today, Gerrit, it tells us quite a bit about the Lord, His nature. It never says the Lord's nature, but you can see behind it this background of a very loving teacher. |
| Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: | 46:03 | The reality that's going to become clearer and clearer to Joseph as he lives throughout his life as the Prophet of the Restoration is the essential nature of mortality as a learning place, and that that's the purpose whereby we can progress to become like God. |

	46:22	It is incredible and beautiful and terrifying, and knowing that God knows everything that's going to happen, it sometimes can make us almost paralyzed with fear. If He already knows, then He already knows how to best help us when we are struggling.
John Bytheway:	46:37	What you're saying reminds me of Moses 6:55: "They taste the bitter that they may know to prize the good." Such an interesting verse. And Joseph going through this knows now, "Hey, if God asks, now I know," like you said.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	46:53	It's a powerful thing. Joseph is going to be totally devoted to God going forward. It wasn't like he was rebelling openly against God, but Joseph, from the time that he was trying to get the plates to the time that the Book of Mormon is published, is always struggling with the fact that he can't seem to see how things are going to work out; and if he can't come up with a plan of how it's going to work out, then how could it possibly work out?
	47:19	And the Lord keeps having to just tell him, "I'm going to take care of it. Just trust Me." It seems to be really hard. And in fairness to Joseph, his family is utterly poverty-stricken. Like the people in the ancient world who were looking for bread, all they do all day long is work like crazy and sit there and try to figure out how they're going to pay their debts because they can't.
	47:45	When something involving money, like this massive outlay to publish the Book of Mormon, I don't blame Joseph that all he can think is, "There's just no way. If Martin loses faith in this, then that's it. We're done." And instead of thinking, "If Martin loses faith, the Lord's going to provide some other way, because this is the Lord's work, and His work will not be frustrated."
	48:11	And Joseph does feel more like that going forward, where he's just going to trust that, somehow, someone's going to show up with some money for the Kirtland Temple, and they will.
Hank Smith:	48:23	The Come, Follow Me Manual has a great question in this section: "When have you seen God working through you or others?" This isn't about Mormon, Nephi and Joseph Smith and Martin Harris and Emma. This also can be about us as we look back in our life going, "Oh, wow. That did work out well."
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	48:41	The one thing you'll never really know in this world, maybe not til after this world, maybe God will keep it from us even after this world, is what other people think of you when they think of you. We don't know who it is we've impacted somewhere along

the way. Maybe we've impacted them for ill, maybe they have a negative thought about the gospel because of something stupid that I said or did, which is entirely possible.

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| Hank Smith: | 49:07 | Probable, actually. |
| Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: | 49:08 | Probably. Very likely. Certainly. And maybe on the other hand, that our actions have made a huge difference. I know in my own life that there are people who have, without knowing, intervened in my life to talk to me, to comfort me, to just spend time with me, who couldn't possibly have known what I was going through, but the Spirit did; and the Spirit spoke to them, and they followed the prompting of that Spirit. |
| | 49:46 | Hopefully one of the applications we can take away from this is: live so that when the Holy Spirit impresses you to reach out to someone else who's struggling, who you may not even know is struggling, that you can be that person who's that change point in someone's life. And you may not even know it. You may not find out for years, but the Lord knows. The Lord knows all things. |
| Hank Smith: | 50:12 | Gerrit. What a treat it has been to have you with us today. We've missed you. It's been too long. John, what a great day to bring in some church history, which I know you love, here to the Book of Mormon. |
| John Bytheway: | 50:24 | Yeah, really helpful to understand this; Words of Mormon, especially. Hopefully a lot of people are going, "Oh." |
| Hank Smith: | 50:31 | We want to thank Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat for being with us today. We hope everyone will go check out the Standard of Truth Podcast. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen; our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen; and always, every episode, we remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. Join us next week. We're jumping into the book of Mosiah on followHIM. |
| | 50:53 | Before you skip to the next episode, I have some important information. This episode's transcript and show notes are available on our website, FollowHim.co. That's FollowHim.co. On our website, you'll also find our two books: Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, and Finding Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Both books are full of short and powerful quotes and insights from all our episodes from the Old and New Testaments. The digital copies of these books are absolutely free. You can watch the podcast on YouTube. Also, our |

Facebook and Instagram accounts have videos and extras you won't find anywhere else.

51:27

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President Russell M. Nelson: 51:48

Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to Him. Follow Him.

I AIN'T LYIN', LET'S BE ZION



- Hank Smith: 00:03 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we're in Enos, Jarom, Omni, Words of Mormon. Tell me a story.
- John Bytheway: 00:15 Oh, it's hard to choose something, but I love the story of Enos, especially the order in which he prays for things. He loses all interest in hunting. He says, "I prayed for my own soul, my soul hungered," and then as he hears the Lord says, "Thy sins are forgiven." How is it done? Because of their faith in Christ. Then he says, "I begin to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren," and he prays for them, and then he says, "I prayed with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites." So it goes from himself to his brothers, to the Lamanites, even the enemies at sometimes, and then he prays for the records, and I just think that progression teaches us something.
- 00:55 And it reminds me of one time I was at a youth conference and I remember there was a backstory going on, which one of the leaders shared, there was a rift with the youth in this particular ward or stake, I can't remember which. It was a problem. We had a really good youth conference and this young sister got up, probably 15 or 16 years old, and I will never forget this, Hank. She got up in the testimony meeting and she said, "You guys, we've been talking about Zion in seminary and it sounds to me like we're supposed to be friends," and the most wonderful spirit came into that meeting. She got teary and people in the audience put their heads down and then one after another, these kids started coming up and they started saying, "If I've offended anybody, I'm really sorry," and that became the whole thing, "If I've offended anybody, I'm sorry." And there was this very Zion-type one heart, one mind feeling that just entered that room.
- 01:59 It was exactly what happened to Enos. Suddenly there were no enemies, just my brother, and we were all brothers and sisters, and somehow they realized it isn't us versus you, this is the adversary versus all of us, and we have got to be friends, and

they did it. I used to love those youth testimony meetings when things like that would happen.

Hank Smith: 02:20

I think we're supposed to be friends.

John Bytheway: 02:22

I think we're supposed to be friends. And it was beautiful, and I thought, "Wow. That's what happened to Enos." Suddenly, there were no enemies, it's my brethren and the Lamanites, and preserve the records in the latter days so people can read this, and I bet you've had that happen to you too.

Hank Smith: 02:38

Yeah, absolutely. What a difference one brave teenage girl can make to an entire stake, sounds like.

John Bytheway: 02:47

Yeah, took some courage, but she said it and it changed the whole spirit of the whole youth conference, really. It was healing. It was awesome. I still remember her getting up, "It sounds to me like we're supposed to be friends."

Hank Smith: 02:59

Man, I love it. I love it. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. And these small little books are the Book of Mormon. We're with Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat, and he is quite a guy. He is brilliant and he is funny. So come join us on our full podcast and then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.