

## **Follow Him**

### **Episode 1**

**Guest: Dr. Anthony Sweat**

**Doctrine and Covenants 1**

**“Hearken, O Ye People”**

### **Show Notes**

### **Podcast General Description:**

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

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

### **Podcast Episode Description:**

#### **Episode 1:**

While most of us have read the Doctrine and Covenants, we may not be as familiar with each Section's context and history as we would like. Did you know Section 1 wasn't the first version of the section? How do Pinterest and ESPN apply to your *Come, Follow Me* study this year? Dr. Anthony Sweat, author of *Seeker's Wanted: The Skills You need for the Faith You Want* is an Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. Join Dr. Sweat and hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they delve into Doctrine and Covenants 1 and teach us how to effectively teach and study.

### **Timecode:**

- (00:07) *Introduction*
- (01:38) *Guest Introduction*
- (02:36) *Why We Should Love the Doctrine and Covenants*

- (06:17) *The Book of Mormon leads you to Jesus Christ--the Doctrine and Covenants will lead you to the Father.*
- (08:07) *Section 1--Origins and Revelations: A Process*
- (15:21) *Types and Revelations & Sections*
- (18:30) *The Language of the Spirit and Scriptures*
- (23:40) *Content, Original Intent, and Application*
- (24:09) *Revelations in Context: A Resource*
- (25:26) *Who Wrote the Preface*
- (32:43) *Who, What, When, Why, Wherefore, and That*
- (36:12) *Ten Reasons for the Restorations from D&C 1*
- (38:42) *I've Got Good News and I've Got Bad News*
- (39:05) *Joseph's Promise*
- (41:05) *The Church is True and Living*
- (49:56) *Many Great and Important Things*
- (55:32) *The Lord's Timing*
- (58:19) *Testimony of Jesus and Joseph as His Prophet*
- (1:04:54) *Stand By My Servant, Joseph*

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*D&C 3:4 "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, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him."*]

## Biographical Information:

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Anthony Sweat is an Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. He received his bachelor's degree in painting and drawing and his PhD in curriculum and instruction. He is the author of several books, most recently *Repicturing the Restoration*. Anthony is a regular speaker at Latter-day Saint events and conferences. He and his wife, Cindy, are the parents of seven children.



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- [Hank] Welcome to follow Him. A weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come, Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.

- [John] And I'm John Bytheway.

- [Hank] We love to learn.

- [John] We love to laugh.

- [Hank] We want to learn and laugh with you.

- [John] As together we follow him.

- Hello my friends and welcome to the first episode ever of follow Him. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with my co-host John Bytheway. Welcome John.

- Thanks, this is gonna be fun. We are nervous and we are excited. I'm excited to just learn together with you. Our hope is that you and your family are sitting around the table with your scriptures open and you are excited and ready to learn.

- That's right. We're gonna laugh and learn and we'll feel some joy. Let's put it that way.

- I'm really excited to study the Doctrine and Covenants this year. If there's someone sitting at home saying, I want Come Follow Me to come alive in my life, I want the vision of Comen Follow Me. I want President Nelson's vision to be my vision but yet here I am and it's just not working. Well John and I are here to help. Now this year we are studying the Doctrine and Covenants. And we have, I have a number of friends that teach the Doctrine and Covenants, and so I thought who do I want? Who do I want on our very first episode? I went through the list and a lot of people said no. And so I finally got to the, you know the 10th or 11th person on the list. No, no, not at all.

- It's probably true.



- No I... The very first person I thought of was the very first person who said yes. His name is Dr. Anthony Sweat. Welcome Tony, if it's okay if we call you Tony Dr. Sweat.

- Of course if I can call your Hankster.

- Yep .

- That works.

- I think back in high school Hunter high school his friends called him T-dog if I-

- Hey that's the only for those that grew up on the West side baby.

- Right the West Side Salt Lake. Now Tony the reason I invited you is because you have taught the Doctrine and Covenants for I think over 20 years. I hope that doesn't age you at all.

- I was gonna say does that mean I started teaching when I was 10? What's going on there.

- Yeah 'cause you're just a youngster. You have been doing this a long time. And for me, someone who doesn't teach the Doctrine and Covenants I want it to come alive for my family this year, Doctrine and Covenants and Church History. How can we make this come alive for us Tony. What should we be doing this year? I bet you're excited for Come, Follow Me this year.

- I'm giddy with excitement. I'm hoping the entire church collectively just discovers the power and the love. And you know it's appropriate that we love and emphasize the Book of Mormon, don't get me wrong. That is the Keystone. But as President Benson said the Doctrine and Covenants is the capstone of our religion. It really is the pinnacle. And I hope the collective church is just by the end of 2021 says I love the Doctrine and Covenants like I love the Book of Mormon. Without getting too serious up front remember in section 1:35 that eulogy is written to Joseph Smith's death. It says that "The reader will be remembered "that this book of Doctrine and Covenants "and the Book of Mormon cost the best blood "of the 19th century." It's out of the mouth of two witnesses. You'll gain a witness obviously that Joseph is a prophet from the Book of Mormon. and that Jesus is the Christ but you will double that witness as you study the Doctrine and Covenants. I just can't wait for the collective church to feel the power of this book.

- You know it's something I just thought of so often Church History becomes quote unquote, "controversial for people." Some people who study church history and they're online, they're on Google and they wanna know what's going on here. Yet a lot of them and I just realized this 'cause I've done this myself, we don't open the Doctrine and Covenants. We go to Google. I wanna know what Joseph did here or what Joseph did there, yet we never crack the Doctrine and Covenant sometimes.

- Yeah and it's like a play-by-play of what was going on. I mean and we'll talk about this today. But it's mostly chronological but sometimes it isn't especially today. But to hear, this is when John the Baptist came and this is when Peter, James, and John came. And this is here, this is during the translation of, you know the creation of the Joseph Smith translation and everything. And it's kind of fun to kind of witness the idea of continuous revelation and the evidence of that as the Doctrine and Covenants.

- I personally I'm excited to further my knowledge of church history this year. I personally, John, I think you do too. When we teach, we teach mostly out of the Book Mormon, out of the New Testament. But we've perused the Doctrine and Covenants once or twice in our life. But to have someone like Tony here who has spends his life teaching the Doctrine and Covenants, this to me is is just gonna be a treat. Tony, if you were sitting across from my family or a family like mine and you wanted to convince them that the Doctrine and Covenants is where it's at. Give us a little bit of background of why do you love it and how it was put together in the first place? How do we even have the Doctrine and Covenant?

- First of all, if I was sitting across from your family I'd take a photo 'cause they're so darn beautiful.

- No yes tha-

- That's the first thing I would do.

- My kids got their looks from their mother.

- That's right. I was gonna say the same thing. When I was a kid, I don't know about you guys, but when I was a kid our family used to have this red-letter Bible. If you know what a red letter Bible is, it's where every time Jesus spoke the words were highlighted in red. If it was a direct voice of the Lord. And I remember looking at it and asking my mom and dad what it was and they told me and I remember thinking oh, look for all the red. The you know, the red's important. If the Doctrine and Covenants were turned into a red letter book of scripture the entire book would be red, nearly. President Nelson has repeatedly admonished the church to learn, to hear the voice of the Lord. And there's no better book of

scripture to go than the Doctrine and Covenants. That's the first thing I'd say is if you wanna learn to recognize and hear the voice of the Lord read the Doctrine and Covenants. Because you'll get more direct words of the Savior first person spoken than in any other book of scripture. It's powerful that way.

- If there's anything I want for my teenagers, my young kids is learning that voice. They're gonna go off to college. They're gonna go on missions. They're gonna be... And they're gonna need to know this voice.

- And then the second thing I'd say too is you know, the Book of Mormon when we say it's the Keystone, remember a Keystone leads us through an archway you know, and it is. We appropriately use the Book of Mormon for missionary work because that is the witness that God called Joseph to be his servant in this dispensation. And we hand that to people and they read it and they know that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph is his servant. And it brings them to the church. But when we bring people to the church where's the next place we wanna take them. Well, we wanna take him to the temple. I would say the Book of Mormon will bring you to the church, the Doctrine and Covenants will ultimately bring you to the temple. The Book of Mormon will bring you to Jesus Christ and the Doctrine and Covenants will bring you to God the Father. It's so that God can teach you, the Father can teach you about the covenant. It's the next step. It really is the next step.

- All right so let's jump into section one. So I'm sitting at home with my kids and then I'm like, you guys section one is so good, you're gonna love it but it's completely out of order. You would think that, hey let's go through this chronologically. But section one comes in 1831, section two comes in 1823 that's eight years earlier. So where does section one come from? And how can I get my family to be excited about it? I've got a 16 year old teenager who would rather watch a TikTok videos on YouTube because they're so funny, she says than read Doctrine and Covenants, section one. Which I think is so funny.

- Well, that's the answer there Hank. You just need to make a TikTok video of you teaching Doctrine and Covenants more.

- And section one, yeah. Maybe that is the answer. I'll meet her where she is, right? I mean that's-

- Right.

- Verse one TikTok video. So how do you get... You have teenagers Tony, how do you get them excited about not just the Doctrine and Covenants but section one?

- Well getting teenagers excited is a whole another discussion for a whole another day.

- All right then.

- And you guys are the pros at that so I'll leave you to that. But about section one as a whole, it does come out of order and it's coming in November of 1831. Joseph Smith has already received roughly 70 revelations at this time.

- Book of Mormon has already been printed.

- The church has been organized for a year and a half roughly. And there is a conference held that the question is should we publish these roughly 70 revelations that Joseph has received? To us it's obvious like yeah, publish everything. But I do think there were some questions by the church of like, I don't know like do we create another book of scripture? Can we do that? Should we? There's some private things in here. I mean you've got the Lord calling Martin Harris, a wicked man. Martin should we publish these revelations. And Martin's like-

- Leave that out.

- I've got some hesitations. You know there's some private things in there dealing with finances. Maybe the first written revelation where Joseph gets the Lord speaking to him through the Urim and Thummim and he writes it down is actually section three of the Doctrine and Covenants. That section is a rebuke of Joseph Smith. I mean it's like, Joseph you don't listen to God. You give in to peer pressure. You boast in your own strength. You've sat at not my counsels. If you're not aware you're gonna fall. And so I think Joseph was even like, I don't know are these revelations meant to go to the whole world? And so that's their question?

- What were missionaries taking with them? Was it exclusively the Book of Mormon? 'Cause I think I read that you know, they wanted to have some of these with them but they'd have to hand copy them.

- The Book of Mormon was the missionary tool from the very get-go. That's what they're taking out. But remember there's also like Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants is our articles and our covenants kind of like our church constitution. So let's say that we baptize a bunch of people and we organize this branch. Well, what do they use to govern the church on, what's their Handbook of Instructions? Well they need Section 20. How do we get Section 20 to them? Well, let's print it in our church's newspaper

and we can give them some newspaper copies. That's kind of what they're doing originally. And so there is also some need to say, hey you need these revelations that Joseph has received to help you guide and govern the church also in different places. So there's some needs like that too John.

- It's brought up a question that I've never even thought of, but as Joseph writes these down who's... Is it just the church's story and hanging on to 'em. They've one copy, they got the original, that's it. If you say to the average person, how did we get the Book of Mormon? They're like, well Joseph had the plates and he translated them by the gift and power of God. And as he dictated it his scribe wrote it down and we know this story. And then we sometimes assume that's exactly how the Doctrine and Covenants came.

- That's what I would assume I think, yeah.

- Maybe we picture God speaking to Joseph and Joseph dictates it and a scribe is following him around, writing everything down. That's how we get some of them. But the Doctrine and Covenants is a much more eclectic book. Some revelations come from you know, the voice of the Lord to Joseph's mind and he dictates it. That's actually how section one comes. You know Joseph's like the Lord is speaking to me, Sidney write this down.

- Write it down .

- And Joseph dictates a line. Sidney writes it down, reads it back to Joseph. Joseph says good dictates the next line. Section one comes that way. Section 88 comes that way. But there's also revelations in there that are visions where Joseph sees a vision and then describes the vision.

- And someone's writing that down.

- And someone writes that down or they sit down later and try to write down what they saw.

- Oh, okay.

- Sometimes Joseph actually gets revelations through Urim and Thummim. He's looking in his seer stone and words are appearing on his seer stone and Joseph writes it down. One time actually Orson Pratt when he's only 19 converts to the Church goes to Joseph and says, what's the Lord's will for me? Joseph

pulls out his seer stone and says to Orson, write this down. And Orson is too nervous to. He's like, ah, I can't write down the word of God. And John Whitmer sitting there he's like, I'll do it. And so Joseph dictates that become Section 34 of the Doctrine and Covenants and Joseph dictated it word for word. But then there's also nonconventional sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. We literally have some sections that are minutes from a meeting. We have some of them that are notes that people took during a sermon that Joseph gave. We have some journal entries of Joseph Smith that get extracted and made sections. We get some of them that are from the history of the church as that's being written by like James Mulholland and others that that wording gets extracted and made. That's how we get section 13 which is John the Baptist and the Aaronic Priesthood that comes right out of the history of the church and Orson Pratt extracts that.

- So as a student of the Doctrine and Covenants I've got to get used to some ambiguity on how some of this came out you know, just some variety I guess.

- Don't get in your mind that every single one of these is God speaking to Joseph word for word and he's saying, this is the exact word that God gave me. That's really important to understand to also grasp that Joseph doesn't view the Doctrine and Covenants as set in stone. Like during different printings of it, he will modify it. He'll clarify things. He'll add things. He'll go like well, I've been given a little more so let me add this in there. Let me clarify that phrase. That's not quite what we meant by that when we said it that way so let me amend that. I think Joseph used the Doctrine and Covenants as a malleable book also.

- He can update it and change it whenever he wants.

- Yeah exactly.

- I think that's one of the things that and Hank I think alluded to this earlier about well how come it's like this in the Book of Mormon and how come it's like this in the JST. And I always liked to tell my students one of the main parts of textual criticism they call it which sounded when I first heard it like you're criticizing somebody but it's of taking it apart and everything is that the earliest is the most accurate. But what if you have a prophet that can go back and say let me make that a little clear. And so here it's not that one's wrong it's that this has a certain level of light and knowledge but here's Joseph a prophet saying I'm gonna give you a little bit more and it's really helpful to think of it that way.

- And so like a good example of that section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants where the original one says that we're supposed to partake of the sacrament the flesh and blood of Christ. Well later Joseph has that amended to partake of the sacrament the emblems of the flesh and blood of Christ. And I don't know why he does that but he changes it to clarify like this is not transubstantiation going on we're taking things that represent his flesh and blood. So Joseph sometimes we'll clarify like that.

- It takes a degree of spiritual maturity to start to be like okay, I'm okay with different ways of receiving scripture. I'm okay with Joseph coming in and amending things and changing things rather than well if this is the Lord's way, it's gonna happen right the first time and-

- You know when you go get your patriarchal blessing for example, that patriarch is going to receive a revelation from God for you. And interestingly by the way in the early Doctrine and Covenants there's a lot of sections that feel like patriarchal blessings.

- Right.

- Because people would go to Joseph and say what's the Lord's will for me. And then Joseph would say here it is. Well in 1834, we actually call a church patriarch--Joseph's father. And then from then on out when people need to know the Lord's will he says go talk to my dad. So about midway through the Doctrine and Covenants you quit seeing these personal revelations that are more patriarchal blessingish. That's just a fun little aside. But to the point, when you go get your patriarchal blessing that patriarch is going to receive revelation for your life but he is going to phrase it in words that are understandable for you. And he's gonna phrase it in his own language. You know, you and I could get the same revelation for the same person and when we express it we might express it a little differently even though we're getting at the same ideas. You have to see that the Doctrine and Covenants is a lot that way. One time Orson Pratt said, God gave Joseph the body of the revelation but Joseph had to clothe it in his own language that was suitable for the time. One of my kids got a patriarchal blessing and the patriarch said, I in essence give your kid two blessings. And I thought that was interesting. I said, what do you mean? And he goes, I'll give the spoken blessing but then I'll sit down and when I'll listen to the recording and I'll write it down. But then by that same spirit of revelation I'll try to clarify what I meant by that. And even myself one time my wife and I were wrestling with a real difficult question in our family in our marriage and in our life. And I was out of town at the time I was sitting in this little chapel in Kirtland, Ohio and this little youth speaker got up and gave like one of the best youth talks I've ever heard. And it just unlocked like an answer. Literally, like I felt the answer just come into my mind. It was so potent that I pulled out a little scratch note, piece of paper and I started jotting down what was coming to my mind. I mean it was so powerful you guys, that I stepped out of the meeting and called my wife and said I think I just got an answer to what we're wrestling with. And I wrote it down and he said, send it to me. And so when I got back to my hotel I sat down on my computer, pulled out my little chicken scratch and started writing it down. And what do you think I started to do?

- Yeah you started clarifying, you started to add in.

- To edit it.

- I started adding and editing because I knew when I sent it to my wife, it didn't have the same context as in my mind. And I wanted to make sure she understood it. Don't get lost on the idea that revelation from the Lord has to be phrased or said or expressed only in one way. If you have your scriptures with you go to Section one that was one of the questions that the church was wrestling with when they went in to publish these revelations, is they're like, now is this God's voice or is this Joseph's voice?

- And some didn't like it, right? Some were like, oh, it needs to be more refined, it needs to be more, yeah.

- And people are like, I don't know. I don't know if this is the most eloquent. You know, your elocution here, your diction your... You have some dangling modifiers here. Look what the Lord says in Section 1, verse 24, "Behold I am God and have spoken." I love that like I did speak, these are my truths. "These commandments are of me." But then notice the Lord starts to clarify "And were given unto my servants in their weakness, "after the manner of their language that they might come to understanding." The Lord wants us to understand if he speaks to you as a teenager, I'll tell your teenager he's not gonna show up and start laying out ancient Greek. He's not gonna speak to you even in King James English 'cause you're gonna be like what the. The voice of the Lord comes to us in ways that we understand and is expressed in ways for us to understand. It's not set in stone. That's just a big idea to grasp.

- Yeah it is a big idea but it's an important one because you know, when we think of their language people will think oh, that's English, Chinese, Spanish. That God's gonna talk to me in my language. I feel the spirit through study. I love to just study, right? But some people love music and they feel that spirit and they learn through music. God speaks to you through art, right? Tony you're an artist. And you're such a good artist that you're a professional teacher but-

- That's right.

- I love that joke. To me you know, God's gonna speak my language. I'm a little bit sarcastic and I like humor and God speaks that language.

- I don't know if it's 'cause I grew up playing sports but I often hear the voice of the Lord in my mind that he speaks my last name. He doesn't call me Tony, I hear Sweat. Especially when I'm being rebuked. I almost hear it like a coach like "Sweat, stop it." That's my language. And so when you read that verse in verse 24 that he speaks after the manner of their language you could almost rephrase it. Like he speaks after the manner of their phraseology or their way that they're gonna get it. Just because I hear Sweat stop it. And not Anthony Ross Sweat, wherefore I say unto thee thou shalt-



- Cease and desist.

- Cease thine behavior. Both of those are God speaking to me.

- I love that because then I can say well, God can speak to you through Pinterest. God can speak to me on Instagram, right? God can speak to me in these different languages that I speak. I really like Twitter, I know that not a lot of people do but I really like Twitter. I think that God can speak all those languages. He speaks teenager.

- He does.

- He's an 11-year-old boy.

- You have to remember Joseph's time was very steeped in King James language. Like that was the voice of God to them. And so it doesn't surprise me that when Joseph dictated it he dictates it in King James-style language 'cause that is how they recognize God's voice. It's kind of like today and I don't wanna be too, like hard with this, any church video where you hear God speak he always has a deeper really masculine sounding voice. But that's just a style that we recognize. So some people might be like well then why isn't it written more modern? Well that's where we come in. Our job is to go in there and figure out what it is saying to us in our language, our way of understanding. But that is the kind of language and style and phraseology that jives with scripture. It makes it so that we can go into the Book of Mormon and the Bible and connect these books. And it's also the language of God, the voice of God that Joseph's time recognized.

- This brings up an interesting point here is that I've often seen myself as a scripture teacher to sometimes be a translator and parents can do this as well where we can read a verse of scripture and then rephrase it in our kids' language. That's okay to do, right? Rephrase it in a way they understand. And maybe when I read it to my students, I'll read "And the voice of warning shall be unto all people." And so God's like saying, everybody listen up that's gonna be a kid's language and that's still the revelation all right. I'm just doing a little modern day translation.

- Yeah I would say to all you teens and all your parents out there with all your kids, do that with them as you study the Doctrine and Covenants. Get a journal, get a notebook, tell them to reinterpret or to rewrite, to rephrase, to reword one or two or three verses in the sections that you're studying.

- In their language.

- In their language, in their way. It's not inappropriate. As a matter of fact I think God would want us to do that. We get a little intimidated by the word translation maybe think of it as interpretation. Your job as a parent and as a teen is to go in there and interpret it into your language so that you can come to understanding verse 24 of section one is telling you that's what God would want you to do.

- See I love that 'cause I remember being a kid and hopefully my parents will never hear this but we sat and read and we would read five verses each but we never translated it. We never said here's what this means to us today. And my parents were doing their best, right? We'd read our five verses. I looked ahead five verses listening for and thus he died. All right that's my key phrase. So I'd close my eyes and then I hear and thus he died I'm like, that's me. All right, here we go. And I'd read my five verses. But how much better to read those five verses and then say, okay let's rephrase that in our own language. Let's rephrase that. I call it 2020 language, 2021 language. Let's rephrase it in our own language. All of a sudden you see eyes light up like oh, that's what that meant.

- That's part of pondering. A couple of terms that we've used like, what's the difference between the interpretation of scripture and the application of scripture? Because a lot of times in teaching with young people we are doing a kind of more application than interpretation.

- I think we jump very quick in the church we read a verse and we say, what does that mean to you? Which that's an appropriate question I shouldn't have said that in a condescending voice. I apologize but-

- I was like, I've done that.

- I've done that like as a teacher 20 million times. But what I might say to any listener, what's challenging about the Doctrine and Covenants. I like to give people a three step process. Number one, you have to learn the background 'cause there's no storyline to the Doctrine and Covenants. 'Cause if they're like where do I get storyline? Here's some places, Come, Follow Me manual, use the section headings, use on your Gospel Library app there's a wonderful part in there called Revelations in Context.

- I'm holding it up right now.

- And the Church has published it in a book. Use that resource. Number one, get the context. Number two, I say read it for original intent. Try to read it as though you are Emma Smith. What did this mean for Emma? What did this mean for Orson in their context in their time? So I like to actually say to people delay application, wait. Because the better you can do step one and two the better you and I get context and then try to read it for original intent the more clearly we will see the third step which is to identify and apply truths. So then we can start to interpret and then we can start to apply but don't jump to step three right away. Do step one and two first.

- Let's say I'm at Section 1. You've told me that they're gonna print the Book of Commandments. I know just a little bit from my background is that this becomes like an introduction. This is what the Lord wants people to read before they read the revelations of Joseph Smith. And it is a revelation of Joseph Smith but it's specific to, here's this book, all right. So I'm a dad and I wanna make section one exciting. So maybe I'll say something like they didn't know if they should print these things or not. They didn't know what they're supposed to do but oh, all of a sudden they kind of come together and say nope, let's do this. Let's print the com... Let's print the revelations of Joseph Smith. And then what Joseph says well we better have a introduction or does it just come, what happens?

- Well what's kind of fun is I would say you know, you guys know this John and Hank have written some books like your first words are important. Your opening lines, your opening chapter, your opening like, hey here's why I wrote this book. And what's funny is when they're like okay let's print it. Like everything in the church, they say let's form a committee. And They form a committee and its William McLellin, Oliver Cowdery and likely Sidney Rigdon. William McLellin thinks he's the smartest person in the entire church. Sidney Rigdon knows he's the smartest person in the entire church. And Oliver Cowdery is the smartest person . And so they kind of sit down like they're Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. And they're like, let's draft this bad boy, you know? And they actually draft a preface. William McLellin remembers that they take it back to the conference and the conference just rips it to shreds. They're like, this is terrible. And they kind of turn to Joseph and say ask God what we should do then. And the Lord basically says, "This is my book of scripture, let me give you my preface to it." And then the Lord reveals to Joseph, this Section One as the preface from the Lord, not William, not Oliver, not Sidney. This is the Lord saying, here's what I want you to know about this book. So it's kind of cool. It's the only book where I think Jesus himself wrote a preface for it. That's what I was saying.

- I'm reminded of just a formula I've heard for years that tell him what you're gonna tell them then tell them, then tell them what you've told him. And to put this at the front it's kind of like here I go Book of Mormon. But Moroni I wrote the title page, right? So Moroni is like, here's what I'm gonna tell you and the last page is here's what I just told you. But here's the Lord saying, "I'm gonna tell you what I'm gonna tell you." And I... It's section one is like just a powerful conference talk. Like there's it's broad and there's so much in it and it's perfect preface. But Tony tell us how, wasn't he by the window and then he would say, was it Sidney, Sidney write that down and then repeat it back or something.

- Yep exactly. And after every line Sidney would go yeah this is way better than what I wrote. Yeah, that's exactly what he did. For your listeners jump into verse six and highlight that. It's in verse six, the Lord says "This is mine authority and the authority of my servants and my preface on mine unto-

- My preface.

- "Book of my Commandments." So just highlight that in six which is this my preface to this book as a whole.

- I just wanna do a little application here. I think it's important that they tried, right? Like they're gonna they didn't just expect the Lord to do it for them, right? They're like okay, we need a preface let's write one up. And the Lord's like, hey good. That was good. We're not gonna use that but that was good. I think the Lord likes a little gumption, little effort.

- I'm gonna get really meta with you right now. Do you see what you just did Hank? Like we just gave the background and the context we just talked about what it meant for them and then we just jumped to what are some insights for us. Like that's just a natural way to study this book. Just like that.

- I think when you have those ideas 'cause I'm sitting here going you know what, I'm glad they gave it a try. Because my first thought was well, if they tossed out my work I'd be like well, that took me a long time. Why do I even have to do anything if the Lord's gonna come in and do it for me? Well because I think the Lord's like, good job, good effort. Now you can see the difference between your words and mine.

- Because this language is just awesome you know. The lesson they must've learned like, okay yeah this really is a revelation .

- That's a great application. But you see Hank too why don't get like don't go, I hate history. I hate context. That's nerdy. Without this context you would not have drawn that application right there Hank.

- Never.

- This is why context is important and why you shouldn't skip learning the background of the sections. Because you'll be able to draw lessons out like that where the Lord says, I do want you to try and I do want you to fail so that when you succeed you can better recognize my hand in the process.

- And I might do a little, this might be a little pep talk for parents out there. But I have noticed in my Come, Follow Me studies with my family, when I try to take the easy way, when I try to just show up day of and expect a great you know, Come, Follow Me 10, 15 minutes at night, it doesn't work. It doesn't work 'cause I put in zero effort. I just am showing up. 'Cause I'm like, I teach the Book of Mormon, how hard can this be, right? I can figure this out. But so maybe that's a great lesson for us in Come, Follow Me. Moms and dads those of you who are listening let's put a little effort into this and try to, you know to give the Lord something to work with, right? As we say okay, what am I gonna do tonight with my kids for Come, Follow Me. I'm gonna dedicate 15, 20 minutes here today to figuring out before I just show up and go well, here's section one. Can I just... I'll be totally honest you guys, you're both much more righteous people than me. I'm a show up and I hope this works out kind of guy. Like let's just make this work. And it rarely works. It rarely works if you don't come to the Lord with something.

- You're just talking to parents with teenagers. And I've done this in Book of Mormon class before just because it's kind of fun and it may seem trivial at first but it isn't. Find the pages with the most footnotes. If I've done my counting correctly it's in, one page is in Mosiah 3--King Benjamin speech and one is in 2 Nephi 9, Jacob's awesome letter there. But look at Section 1, there, this is even more. The second page and you can't do this if you're on your phone. But the second page is I think I counted 31 lines of footnotes, all printed up. What does that tell you? What does that mean? What could this possibly mean? About a dozen verses on page two there.

- As a dad, I can't read the entire thing with my kids. If I read all 39 verses with my eight year olds they'd be done. So give me as I'm going through this, we wanna help our parents out here or our Sunday School teachers or our Seminary Teachers or whatever. Give me an overview. What should I finish with? And then give me some highlights that you'd say don't miss this.

- Well first of all, let me give an overview. Like this is a logical section that has a logical flow. I break it down into this. Who, what, when, why, wherefore, that. So who, who is verse one to six and it's he said, I'm speaking to all. And that's audacious in November of 1831 with the church about the size of your ward.

- I'm speaking to everybody, the whole world.

- I'm speaking unto the ends of the earth. I mean-

- Yeah, that's-

- Talk about vision. So who, is everybody, verse one to six. What, this is verse 7 to 10. And in essence, it's destruction. It's like, you need to be prepared for the Second Coming and the calamities that are gonna be associated with it. And the challenges of the last days, the sins, the wickedness of the world, that's seven to 10. And then he's like, when, when will this destruction and this happen. Verse 11 to 14 are all about the Second Coming. It's the Lord coming again to recompense everybody. That's why in verse 12, "Prepare you for that which is to come for the Lord is nigh." Well why? Some of you guys are like, this is mean. Why is verse 15 to 16, the Lord is really tired of wickedness. That's the why behind it? You know, it's kinda like as a parent where your kids are fighting a little bit and you're like, hey stop it, stop it. Okay stop it, okay. And then after about the fourth time, you're like, stop it I'm serious. And your kids can see the look in your eyes. I think the Lord's getting the look in his eyes pretty soon. And he says in verse 15, the main thing he's upset about is they've strayed from the ordinances. They broke the covenant. Verse 16 everybody wants to just walk in his own way. I mean if that does not describe today with our modern you do you culture, hey whatever makes you happy. The Lord's like, no don't you do you, it's like you do Jesus.

- Don't do that, yeah.

- Yeah stop it. The Lord is saying, stop it. You do you is terrible. And so you get that in verse 15, 16 and then parents if you wanna pivotal verse it's verse 17 wherefore. And a little hint with the Doctrine and Covenants, John and Hank know this in the Book of Mormon the phrase is and thus we see. The phrase that I want you to point out to your kids and I want you kids to look for is anytime in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord says wherefore. When he says wherefore and therefore it's like here's the lesson or here's the point. They'll often go da da da da da da, wherefore or therefore and then pay attention.

- It's like the "thus we sees" in the Book of Mormon I'm watching for those. I see a wherefore I'm like, ooh.

- I'm like ooh yap, here's the lesson.

- Here's the point, yeah.

- Wherefore I the Lord knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth called upon my servant, Joseph Smith Jr. and spake to him from heaven and gave him commandments. That's just like, to me that's like this key pivotal verse.

- Oh yeah.

- Of .

- I mean for the whole book. For the whole-

- For the whole book.

- 'Cause it's a book of commandments, right?

- Exactly.

- First 16 verses are like really bad. We're all done. It almost feels like an Alma the Younger get to the darkest point of the story. And then the Lord's like, okay, now you know how dark it really is. Let me bring you out of that.

- So I mean yeah, now some good news. The wherefore is verse 17 to 18 so then 19 to 39 the rest of the section is now the good news. It's the that. So I did who, what, when, why, wherefore so that what. And the that is so that we can be blessed and prepared in the last days. Maybe you can set up those who, what, when, why with your kids quick. But then get them to the wherefore, like God knows what's going on. He knows what is gonna go on wherefore he called Joseph he has also called Russell M. Nelson, we have prophets so that and then I would list out there's 10 reasons, 10 reasons for the restoration in verse 18 through 28. I'll just summarize 'em. Verse 18, so that what was written by the prophets can be fulfilled. Like everything God's promised will be fulfilled. Verse 19, so that weak things can break down mighty ones. Verse 19 and 20, so that man quits counseling his fellow man with really, really dumb advice. And quits trusting in the arm of the flesh but so that we learn to rely on the Lord and speak in his name. That's verse 19 and 20. Why else did he give this restoration speech to Joseph. Verse 21, so that faith can increase. Verse 22, a huge one. If the everlasting covenant was broken is so that the covenant can be re-established. That's really what this restoration is doing is re-establishing the covenants of Abraham and the covenant of salvation. Verse 23, so that the gospel can be proclaimed to the whole world to princes and poppers, kings and rulers high of high and low of lows. Verse 25, so that as we air it

can be made known. Maybe we're doing things wrong and we just don't realize we're wrong. Verse 26, so that we can gain more wisdom and instruction. Verse 27, so that when we do wrong and are sinning, rebelling, we can repent. And in verse 28, so that we can be strengthened and receive knowledge. Talk about 10 great reasons for the Doctrine and Covenants and the restoration as a whole right there in section one.

- And for a prophet as well.

- That would be a fun thing to look for. Okay let's find the reasons here. That's really great.

- If you're a parent, you might wanna set that up and go, okay hey kids in 18 to 28, I want you to look for the reasons for the Restoration. And you find some things about the reasons why we have prophetic revelation and let them find phrases that speak to them.

- That's fantastic. I would start this with that common phrase, I got good news and I got bad news. Which one do you wanna hear first, right?

- I love it.

- Like which one do you want first? And the Lord gives the bad news first and the good news second. So .

- I'm gonna end on a better note here.

- On a high note.

- And I think that's how I would want it. If you came to me John, I got good news and I got bad news. Which one do you want first? I'll be like give me the bad news.

- We've got to end with this one last one. You've got to get the verse 37, 38. Search these commandments. And remember, in this context they call it the Book of Commandments. So you could translate that, interpret it as search the Doctrine and Covenants is what that phrase is saying. For they are true and faithful and the promises and prophecies which are in them shall all be fulfilled. Now before I go on to 38, I just wanna pause for a second. So when Joseph published these revelations look



what he says and tell me if this doesn't have a familiar ring. Quote "Search the scriptures, search the revelations which we publish" that would be the Doctrine and Covenants, "And ask your Heavenly Father "in the name of his son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth "of it unto you. "And if you do it with an eye single to his glory, "nothing doubting, he will answer you "by the power of his Holy Spirit. "You will then know for yourselves and not for another." End of quote. Doesn't that sound just like Moroni's Promise in Moroni 10. I like to call that Joseph's promise with my students.

- Yeah that sounds exactly like it.

- And I say to them, if I grabbed a hundred random Latter-day Saints and asked them how many of you have taken up Moroni's promise and read the Book of Mormon and ask God to manifest. I would venture that the vast majority have done that or at least attempted it.

- Right.

- But if I took a hundred random Latter-day Saints and said how many of you have done that to the Doctrine and Covenants and have taken up Joseph's promise and specifically read these revelations and ask God if the Doctrine and Covenants is true. I don't have statistics on it but the answer would be-

- I can't imagine it will be very high.

- A lot less. That would be a challenge I'd throw up front to all your listeners, to parents, to kids. As you study the Doctrine and Covenants this year take section 37 and just say I'm gonna take up Joseph's promise this year. And as I search these revelations as I search the Doctrine and Covenants, I'm gonna ask God, if this is his voice. If this is his word. And Joseph promises you that the Lord will speak to you, this is his word. And I think it will help ground you in the restoration much, much more deeply.

- He'll also teach you how he's gonna speak to you. I think of like section eight when he teaches you how to feel the Holy Ghost, right? So he gives you early on, yes I can fulfill this promise. Let me first teach you what the Holy Ghost feels like, right? So you know the answer when you hear it, right? You won't recognize it if you don't. Earlier you said, okay let me give you an overview and there's two things you can't miss. One I'm guessing was the 37 and 38.

- One of them was 17 and then one of them was 37, 38. The wherefore and the promise, the challenge.

- One thing I thought of with Section 1 is that you can teach your kids is the Lord sees a different church than the church of November of 1831. When he gives this, he sees the church of 2020. 'Cause you can tell he's... The Lord is going big here. I'm speaking to the whole world.

- Oh yeah.

- And I wonder if they looked around at each other, he's speaking to the whole world? I mean, there's only 80 of us here.

- Yeah, they're like we've only been to four States in the US so far.

- I think the same thing with section 20 as well is that the Lord's got a big idea in mind and our patriarchal blessings can be kind of like that. That the Lord not only sees us as we are but sees us as what we're going to become. And he speaks to us as if we're becoming that. One topic that I'd like to throw out at you and discuss with you is verse 30, same verse. The Lord says, "We're gonna bring this thing out "of darkness. "The only true and living church upon the face "of the whole earth." We as Latter-day Saints have coined the phrase, the church is true. And I think that phrase that we've picked up I know the church is true, comes from Section 1, verse 30.

- It does.

- But I'd like to remind people that's not exactly what the Lord said. He didn't say the only true church on the face of the earth. He says, " It's the only true and living church." I would love us to pick up on that idea as well more. I know the church is true and living. Now that would throw me in a testimony meeting when someone stands up, I know the-

- Maybe that'd be fun.

- Church is true and living.

- In the next testimony meeting, somebody doesn't just say, I know the church is true. They stand up they say, I'd like to bear my testimony. I know the church is living.

- Well that would be a totally different thing. So why do you think the Lord used that phrase? The only true and living church upon the face of the earth.

- My thoughts on that are number one, that is the voice of the Lord that's his declaration. But we have to look at what do we define, how do we define the word true and how do we define-

- Right, what is true and living? What do they mean.

- And living. So true, I like to think of the word true like, his aim is true or you're on a true course.

- Right, I've heard that on a bicycle the wheel is true if-

- Good, aligning right.

- It's trained.

- It's aligned. In a broader discussion what I've noticed is that sometimes people set up certain premises for the church to be true and their premise isn't true. So they build up a certain premise that if the church is true then this will be the case. But then time and history and evidence shows that that premise doesn't hold up. And so then they say well, then the church isn't true. When really the only thing that's not true is the false premise they've set up, an assumption. So for example the church can't be true based off its organization. I don't like that discussion. When people say you know, this church is organized exactly like it was in the New Test... I don't think that's true. Yeah we have apostles and prophets and teachers and deacons and... But did we have high counsels in the New Testament? Did we have Teachers quorum presidency-

- Primary.

- Primary, were the 70s and who acted as General Authorities over the Church. Were there Area Presidencies? Don't get lost in that because here in Section 1, we barely got our first Bishop by the time section one was out. We still don't have the Quorum of the Twelve when Section 1 was given. We still don't have the Quorum of 70. So the Church can't be true based off the organization. Also don't say the Church is true because of that it has every answer. Because one of our Articles of Faith is we believe there'll be yet be many great and important things. The Chrch can't be true because it's never made any

mistakes. Goodness gracious. The Restoration kicks off with Joseph Smith losing 116 pages of sacred scripture.

- This is all about mistakes, all about-

- Like mistakes are part of learning and growth. And so what I'm trying to say is don't set up these false premises as to what the church being true should mean.

- I think as a parent, with my at least my older two, right? I got a boy who's 14 almost 15, I got a girl who's almost 17. This is a discussion I need to have. What does the word true mean? When the Lord says this church is true, let's define that word because if we don't you might have some false assumptions coming in and you're gonna get rocked.

- The word I use is authorized. The Church is authorized. What is it authorized to do? Well, and this is why the Church being true comes back to priesthood keys. The church is authorized to dispense or to give the covenant's of salvation and exaltation. The church is authorized to govern the kingdom of God on the earth. Angelic messengers authorized Joseph Smith and that authorization has been passed down today. If we can grasp that the Church being true means it's authorized that solves a lot of problems. And it gives a lot of clarity because it ties into living as well. It's revelatory. It's guided by these priesthood keys of revelation.

- I think in a lot of people's minds, true means flawless.

- Flawless, yeah.

- It means flawless. That's a dangerous way to go. And when we talk about bad assumptions, I think and I don't wanna put words in his mouth but I think is this is what President Uchtdorf meant when he said 'Doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.' I think in a way he's saying, analyze your assumptions.

- Your assumptions.

- Analyze your expectations. 'Cause you could have been way far off. I always use Luke 24 for this because these Apstles, Jesus dies and they said, oh we thought he was the Messiah. Obviously he's not because he died and he wasn't supposed to die. And Jesus responds to their assumption with you fools,

you fools. You have bad assumptions. He outlines their assumptions, he starts in the Books of Moses, right? And he just says, let me correct your assumptions. I love that we're talking about this. I wanna go to this word living because I think the Lord says the only true and then he adds the word living as if he wants us to use both, true and living. Because he could just have said the only true church upon the face of the whole earth with which I the Lord I'm well-pleased. But he added these two words and the living. What does that do to the phrase in your mind?

- Something that's living is flexible. It's expanding. It's like my waistline around Christmas. It's something that we can't get too rigid, we've got to really be careful as a church. If we learn from the past, Joseph Smith despised the creeds of Christianity. And that's not too strong of a statement. He called them an "iron yoke, a strong band" the very fetters and shackles and chains of hell. It's like tell us how you really feel Joseph. And it's not the creeds themselves. Like I think the Apostles Creed is beautiful. Any of our creedal friends out there don't get upset. Joseph said, it's the spirit of the creeds. And the spirit of the creeds is that you have to and can only believe this. It's very narrow. It's very restrictive. And Joseph said that Mormonism shatters creeds. We have to stay as a dynamic, living, moving faith under a prophetic head. Don't don't ever get too rigid of, this is the only way. I mean other than like Jesus says I am the way. But beyond that let's not get overly rigid on how something has to be done. Just look at everything President Nelson has changed just in the last two to three years. Like as a small example, I remember I called the temple one time and I wanted our priest to do baptisms for the dead in the temple. The temple worker said, oh no, no, all ordinances in the temple have to be done under the Melchizedek priesthood. You have to hold the Melchizedek priesthood. And I said, well that's strange because you know women officiate in temple ordinances in the temple and they're not ordained into offices of the Melchizedek priesthood. And he goes-

- Tony is going after the temple.

- I did. I mean, it was funny.

- Temple going .

- He goes, well that's a good point. He goes, I just know that that's the way it has to be done. And then President Nelson comes out and says and the 12th and the First Presidency in a united voice, no, we can let our priest baptize in the temple. Let's just not get too rigid. Like living means dynamic and flexible.

- You already quoted Article of Faith 9 which I love to bring in here because I don't think the Lord has rescinded it, right. We believe in what's been revealed. We believe in what's now being revealed. We believe that there will yet be revealed many great and important things. I've never heard any prophet

say, well the great and important stuff is out. Now we're gonna fill in the you know, the little stuff. It's semi-important.

- Yeah many great.

- I love that this new phrase I mean, I don't think I heard it before President Nelson but was the, of the "continuous restoration." That things are still being restored. And I like to tell my Book of Mormon class sometimes look, this book's relatively new as far as religious texts go. We are still learning about our own book. There were a lot of people who thought Lehi and Sariah and everybody on the boat were the only ones here. Well, the Book of Mormon never says that itself. In fact, there's evidence the Book of Mormon says the opposite. But people thought that and so we had to change the introduction, you know. And so we're still learning about our own scripture even. And, but we're a living church because Christ is the author and the authorizer and he's guiding living prophets. I like to use that author word again that you use Tony.

- This podcast what we're doing here is we wanna save faith, right? We wanna build faith but we wanna save faith as well. And if someone's listening, maybe breathe a little easier going, whoa, maybe it's my assumptions that are off not necessarily the church.

- There's so many things we could talk about here. I think of my own experience of receiving my mission call from President Spencer W. Kimball, okay this is endating me 'cause how many members were there, 3 million at the time. And it said 24 months. And then right after I got it they made a change and said 18 months for elders. And once in a while I'll bump into people that or were you one of those that did the 18 months, you know? And then they changed it back. I'd like to use this as an illustration well, did the Lord get that wrong or was it the Lord servants going to him and saying we would like to try this and the Lord saying, go ahead see what you learn and coming back and saying that didn't work very well. We wanna go back to this. Maybe that's an example of being that kind of a living thing. My mission president used to say the Lord gets the work done through his people and he gets his people done through the work. And so-

- I like that.

- We're learning and making mistakes and then... But we, the Lord allows us to make some decisions and learn from 'em.

- I just got to say one important thing with this too is one time I was teaching this concept and there happened to be an emeritus member of the 70 sitting in the front row, which was intimidating. When I

got done with this idea, he came up to me and I was so grateful that he said this. He said you know, there are mistakes in learning and growth both individually and as a church as a whole. But then he said something important. He said, but who gets to determine what is and isn't a mistake for the Church. He said, is it us or is it Jesus? And I was grateful that he said that because sometimes we're prone as people to say like, we know what's wrong with the church. We know-

- That was a mistake.

- And that was off. And we've got to be careful with that. We've got to have a little humility. Using an analogy of teenagers who are still listening right now. My wife and I have certain rules with cell phones and what apps they can and can't use, social media. Because from our perspective as parents we wanna help them grow into that and not just get destroyed by it. And so one of our girls said to us like, and I quote, "You don't understand, "you are destroying my life. "You don't know." Quote, unquote, "You are the worst parents ever." I hope parents out there can empathize-

- You are making a mistake, right?

- Yes, yeah.

- You are destroying my life .

- Here's what's funny is that now we're starting to hit that next phase of life where our oldest kids now, our oldest daughter's married and our second old is on a mission. But we still have one younger daughter who's just 12 years old and we were talking to her about cell phones and different things and we said, no, this is the rule. And one of the very daughters that said we were ruining her life said to my wife and I, thank you so much for having those rules in place for me when I was a teenager. It saved me in so many ways. So at the time she was convinced we were wrong. We were off, we were making mistakes. And surely we do as parents, we do make mistakes. But I just share that story to say like, let's have a little humility that if there are mistakes we don't determine it in the Church the Lord determines it through his servants the correct thing.

- It reminds me of a quote from Brigham Young. He said someone asked him about Joseph's mistakes and he said, "surely Joseph made mistakes but I never thought it was my place to talk about them." He's the Lord's prophet, not mine. If the Lord is seeing the church make mistakes let the Lord do the correcting. He'll for sure do it.

- And he'll do it.

- Yeah, we can see it in the Doctrine and Covenants over and over.

- About that 18-month mission that I and a bunch of my... I think I extended one more so it was 19. But that I'd never had viewed that as a mistake. In fact the way that my life and the timing unfolded was so perfect for me that I think it was a learning but I really liked that. Who gets to decide what's a mistake. That just, it's kind of like who gets to decide who is a Christian that the same type of the thing that it ought to be the Savior in both cases.

- One last idea from verse 12 the Lord says, section one verse 12, "Prepare ye for that which is to come for the Lord is nigh." This is 1831. I mean, I guess what I'm trying to say is the Lord has a different view of time than we do. And sometimes we want problems fixed today, right now, right away, tomorrow, which is understandable. We want answers given today, right now. We want the solutions. We want the testimony. We want, I don't know God seems to have a different view of time than we do. And his view seems to be a much longer and slower view and don't get me wrong, it doesn't mean that things can't accelerate and that we're not on this kind of exponential path toward the Second Coming. But just ask any kid around Christmas-time like time is relative and Einstein never found out a truer maxim than that. A truth is that when the Lord says it's nigh, his coming is nigh and we need to be prepared but let's not misinterpret that as it might be tomorrow or next year or even five or 10 or 20 years, there is a lot of work to do. And there's a lot of things to happen in the ongoing restoration. So let's give the Lord his space and his time too and not put demands on him that he's not going to abide by. Let's just do our work that we can do in the time we're given.

- I love the idea of the Lord's timing is different. It makes me think of a section 1:21 when the Lord tells Joseph, "It's a small moment." Right, what you're enduring is a small moment. And Joseph's like, it doesn't feel like it's not a sm-

- It doesn't feel like it.

- It doesn't feel like a small moment was like trust me, it's a small .

- The Lord's working on a different timetable than we are.



- Yeah and that's... It's the same way with our individual lives, right? That what did, is it elder Maxwell who said, faith in the Lord is also faith in the Lord's .

- In his timing, yeah.

- So Tony just tell me, I've read your books by the way those of you were with us we should have said this earlier but Tony's, you can look up Tony's stuff, mostly Deseret Book, Seagull Book, Amazon, wrote a book called "Seekers Wanted" that I think should be a required reading for members of the Church. I would go through it with my teenagers. I've had my teenagers read it and they loved it. Tony's just got a great voice for... To speak not just to you know, the gospel scholar but also to the you know, the gospel youth. I think he gave a talk called "The Ten reasons Joseph Smith is a prophet. And I could just feel your love for him. So I you know, I'm not asking you to bear your testimony here in the standard you know, testimony meeting way. But I just wanna hear Tony Sweat tell me what he thinks about Joseph Smith and the Restoration.

- Yeah, I would say like find me anybody that measures up to him. Like just I'm serious. It's easy to criticize Joseph. He has the unfortunate pleasure of being the only prophet to come about in a modern age. When you know, there's something I guarantee if we lived with Moses we would have some issues with Moses, Holy cow! Or Peter or Paul don't even get me started on Paul. The reason why I say that is because Joseph gets more criticism 'cause he's more recent but Joseph is a prophet among prophets. You show me anybody who can produce things like the Book of Mormon. I mean, we've all written stuff. If anybody's wondering seriously just to start reading the Book of Mormon and read those 500 somewhat pages and ask yourself where did this come from? Like somebody wrote, "I Nephi, having been born a goodly parents and the subsequent 500-some what pages and you'll really only have two options either Joseph made it up or maybe there's three. Joseph made it up then it's a fraud which some tried to say. But evidence over time has said that doesn't hold up. There's no real evidence to support that. Or now people have moved to this kind of like, he's a religious genius. He's like a... He's just like a Mozart that did a religious performance. And if that's the case, so at least their short of saying he's a genius 'cause he deserves that. But that's not how Joseph described it. That's not how his own wife describes him when she says he couldn't write and dictate a coherent and a well-worded letter. That's an exact quote.

- Right and I've read some of the stuff he wrote in the late 1820s, early 1830s. It's, I've never criticized the prophet. I mean, I don't I... The only reason I spell things correctly is because I have spell check but it surely doesn't match the Book of Mormon.

- No.

- The cadence, the beauty of .

- It doesn't. I mean, where did phrases like "wickedness never was happiness." "When you're in the service of your fellow beings you're only in the service of your God." "Come into Christ and be perfected in him." "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded me." I mean, on and on and on and on and on. "For it must needs be, there's an opposition in all things." Where is this coming from? So number one, I would say that. And Joseph doesn't describe the Book of Mormon as a religious performance. He says no, God led me to a hill, I found ancient plates. He gave me through revelation the interpretation and I dictated the interpretation. And to me, that's the most plausible story. And then you add on top of it the Doctrine and Covenants, the theology of everything. I mean, so not only has he produced scripture like the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. He's giving purpose to life that resonates with millions of people. Of where we come from, why we're here, where we're going. He's laying down theology that any Harvard theologian would give his or her right arm to do. That God was once a man that we can become like God. Let me talk about intelligence, let me talk about growth and progress. Let me divide a sunder ideas of like, who gets saved. Let me cut right through Calvinism and Arminianism and reveal the three degrees of glory that balances justice and mercy. God saves everyone, but there's greater degrees. Let me lay down ideas about agency. Like the Christian world has been wrestling with forever. If God is the creator of everything, did God create evil and is God responsible for the evil and mistakes of the world? And if that's the case, how is he loving. Joseph solves it with agency and opposition. And I mean, just all-

- These questions that have been asked since the beginning of thought and this farm boy is gonna answer 'em?

- Richard Bushman said in one fell swoop over and over and over again, Joseph Smith cuts Gordian knots. That theologians have been wrestling with forever. So I don't know just to me when you put that all together and in his short life-

- He's younger than all of us here, right?

- Yeah.

- I remember when I was 38 and I was like this was it for him. I had done nothing. I had done nothing at 38 and that was it. That's where he kept out. I can't imagine if he would've kept going, right? If he could've-

- I know. I mean let alone reveal rituals and ordinances like the temple. Like sometimes I sit in the temple and I'm like I can't even write a book that people wanna read or-

- All the way through.

- All the way through.

- Let alone twice, three times, four times, every year. I'm gonna read it every year.

- And I look around the temple sometimes I'm like and Joseph initiated these rituals and ordinances and ideas that give so much meaning to millions. Let's stop with this nonsense of Joseph being some sort of a religious charlatan who's just a huckster from the backwoods deci... Let's stop that nonsense. At minimum if you don't believe he's a prophet at least give him the credit that he is a once in a millennium or two kind of an individual with what he's done and with what this work will be doing. And my testimony is he's a prophet. He's not just a genius. He, I think he is a genius but I believe with my whole soul he's a prophet. And the theology, the rituals, the ordinances the scripture, the doctrine, the purpose of life I mean everything in my life when I think like my life has so much purpose.

- You know one of my favorite quotes John, you've heard me say this before is it's good to be faithful, it's better to be faithful and competent. I think that's kind of what we're after here with our podcast, isn't it John. We want to produce faith. We want to help people be more faithful but we also want people to be more competent. And when competency and faithfulness come together, it's powerful. Just listening to Tony I'm going-

- Yeah and when people can hear that, yeah consider this, consider this, consider this and can feel this foundation of not just a feeling but listen to these facts about what Joseph accomplished. I mean if you get on a bus and a kid next to you says hey in 200 years, everybody in the world's gonna be talking about me, you might not believe it. But here's Joseph saying, well this angel told me that my name would be heard for both good and evil among all nations in kindred's and it's happening. I mean, that's incredible. And he said that.

- Your name is Joseph Smith. I mean your name. I'm a Smith you guys, I know how not unique this is. Yeah he's not Joseph Sweats. Now people be like well, you know-

- People are like, "that's even worse."

- I think John, I think you're exactly right. And one thing I wanted to do on this podcast is you said that John is there's plenty of people speaking evil about him. That's been fulfilled. But what about there's gonna be lots of good spoken about him. I think that's our job, isn't it? That's our kind of our duty to step up and say no, you're wrong he's... I'm gonna speak all this good.

- If I can have one more kind of tagline. It's come a sections later in Section 6 of the Doctrine and Covenants when Oliver Cowdery meets Joseph Smith for the first time. I love the... There's a line in there where the Lord says to Oliver Cowdery quote, "Stand by my servant, Joseph faithfully." I just love that. And then He says, "In whatsoever difficult circumstance, he may be in for the word's sake." And Joseph is in a lot of difficult circumstances because of the word sake. I just kind of feel an internal something impelling me to say, I'm going to stand by Joseph faithfully and whatsoever difficult circumstance he's in, I'll defend him.

- And publicly.

- Publicly, we would do well as a church to kind of take that tagline too to say like as church members to say, he's not perfect and this is not the church of Joseph Smith. We need to be careful, you know as we're entering into the church history and we'll talk more about Joseph. One scholar that I admire his name's Adam Miller, he gave a phrase that stuck with me. He said, you know, "Joseph Smith waves smelling salts under my nose and woke me up to Jesus." And he said, "When my eyes opened there was the face of Jesus smiling." As we honor Joseph one of the reasons why I honor him so much is because he has opened up God and the plan of salvation and our Savior on a level that is unmatched from other people anybody else that I know of modern or recent history. So let's stand by Joseph faithfully because Joseph opens us up to stand and understand Jesus and the Father so much better. Which is just one of the reasons why I just I just love him with my whole soul.

- Yeah wow, Tony, that was just absolutely beautiful. For me personally the Holy Ghost, I feel very edified, I feel very excited when I feel the Holy Ghost. I feel like I've been uplifted, I've been edified and I wanna go do something. To me that's my burning in the bosom. That's my language of I'm edified, I'm uplifted, I wanna go onto my Facebook page and say Joseph Smith and Jesus, they're the best. And you, ah right. I wanna announce it to the world. So thank you. Thank you so much. And we're gonna have Tony back on. I mean-

- Happy to.

- Yeah, I think we would definitely have to have him.

- I'm honored to be with you good brothers.

- All right, John episode one is in the books.

- So loved the who, what, when, why, wherefore, I've been scribbling notes over here. I think that'll bless a lot of people. You get them fired up about this. And I think that's a good word fired up. And I just always have those words come back to my mind from the hymn, "Millions Shall Know Brother Joseph Again" and maybe this year we can accomplish some of that. Maybe they know about him, but know a little bit more and appreciate this work in pointing us to Christ.

- All right my friends join us on our next episode. I'm sure we'll learn a lot about podcasting and recording and audio and-

- We're a living podcast.

- We're a living podcast that is going to evolve and change and learn from its mistakes. But for now we're gonna sign off telling us we love you. And we hope that your Come, Follow Me studies are fantastic this week and we'll see you next time.