

John Bytheway:	00:00:00	Hello everyone and welcome to followHIM. I was excited this morning to see on our master followHIM schedule, VOR, which to the old pilots listening means VHF Omni Range Radio, but to us it means Voices of the Restoration, and that means we get to talk to our good friend, Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat. Welcome back, Dr. Dirkmaat. Thanks for joining us.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:00:25	Well, thanks for having me. I apologize, I am not a radio frequency.
John Bytheway:	00:00:30	You are more exciting than the VOR of Old Pilot Talk. They have GPS now, so they got a much better acronym. We're excited today because Hank, we're looking at section 76, the Voices of the Restoration. Tell us, Gerrit, this is a huge pivotal revelation, wasn't it?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:00:52	Doctrine and Covenants Section 76 is arguably--obviously you'd find people that would argue with you--but it's arguably the most important revelation that Joseph Smith receives in the early days of the church. It is also a flashpoint that changes Latter-day Saint theology in ways that make it starkly separate from the rest of Christianity. That actually is going to be something that is a problem for some members of the church, because for a lot of members, early members of the church, they love the idea of Zion. Who doesn't love the idea that we're gonna build this city where there's no rich and no poor, and we're gonna be Jesus's people. That sounds amazing. The Book of Mormon, that's a pretty steep hill to climb, because after 2000 years of saying that there's no other scripture, but the Bible to say that there can be other scripture that is a pretty steep road to cross, but generally up to the time of the vision, many of the doctrines that are being espoused at least have some place in traditional mainstream Christianity.

00:02:07 Some of the more difficult ones to come to terms with are things like--that ordinances matter. Because if you're a Protestant, the entire point of Protestant theology is that works have no bearing on salvation. None. Of course, you get baptized because you love Jesus, but that baptism has no part in your salvation. That's actually a very difficult one for people to come to terms with, but Doctrine and Covenants Section 76 strikes at the heart of the primary question that every 19th century Christian has in the first place. That is, how do I go to heaven? What happens if I don't go to heaven? Who goes to hell? How does someone go to hell? Hell is the most prominent feature of 19th century Christianity, because almost everyone goes there. If you're having a conversation about heaven and hell, you can have a conversation about heaven, but it's kind of like having the conversation about what the 1% had for dinner.

00:03:11 It's great, but almost everyone else isn't going there. It's a powerful vision. In fact, I've mentioned this before, but in 19th century, Latter-day Saint writings, whenever you hear someone reference Joseph Smith's vision, it is almost never the First Vision. To us, if I were to read as a 21st century Latter-day Saint, I read someone's journal and they're like, Joseph's vision was so powerful. My first thought is gonna be, oh, they're talking about the First Fision. They're almost never talking about the First Vision. Almost never. In fact, Doctrine and Covenants Section 76 is so powerful that they give it its own name. It's called The Vision. That's how they reference this incredible vision that Joseph and Sidney have. When you think about it, there's a reason for that because the First Vision is very important and powerful, but "The Vision", Doctrine and Covenants Section 76 is everything the First Vision was, only on top of it is this massive expansion of our understanding of the eternities, of God, of salvation. It's a shared collective vision. It's not just Joseph saying, oh, this happened. It's Sidney also saying, I saw. You'll read people talking about Joseph's vision. For practical purposes, if you're a Latter-day Saint in 1833, you're trying to convince someone that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, you aren't going to say, Hey, you'll never believe it, 13 years ago, Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus. You're instead going to say, Hey, last week Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus. For practical purposes, of course you're gonna go to the more recent event and to the one that provides the most doctrine.

John Bytheway: 00:05:14 I love this distinction that this was The Vision. It was oddly later when the First Vision was talked about more, explained more, but Section 76 is The Vision.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:05:29	Yeah, titled The Vision. When you look at it in its manuscript forms, that's actually how people title it. Most of the time, they title it The Vision. It really is so transformative of Latter-day Saint Theology that even today, if you have a discussion, a friendly discussion, obviously, with a leader of another Christian faith group, it will likely come up as one of the doctrines that will be disputed by a traditional or mainstream Christian.
John Bytheway:	00:05:59	Is there evidence that some persecution was a result of, or at least in the timeline after Section 76 was given?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:06:10	It is certain that in the aftermath of Doctrine and Covenants Section 76, you have some high-profile apostasies--that trying to determine exactly why someone apostatized, it's like trying to figure out exactly which dinner I had that made me overweightl I mean, one of them probably There's a lot of reasons. You have limited information that you're going off of, but we have some high-profile examples. For instance, Joseph Wakefield. Joseph Wakefield is one of the early incredible missionaries in the church mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants. You've already gone over him here. In fact, he is the missionary that converts and baptizes the George A. Smith family. Joseph Smith's family-- his cousins, essentially, they are converted by Joseph Wakefield. What George A. Smith will later say is that it was The Vision that caused Joseph Wakefield to apostatize. He doesn't just apostatize, he becomes one of the leaders of the anti-Mormon committee in Kirtland.
	00:07:22	He goes from being the church's greatest missionary, well, one of them, to being the head of the anti-Mormon movement, at least according to George A. Smith. It was this doctrine coming forth from Doctrine and Covenants section 76. It's interesting because you have in the Voices of the Restoration there, some people like Wilfred Woodruff, this is the greatest thing that has ever happened. All of their questions about God seem to be answered by the fact that The Vision has fixed it all. As Wilfred says, at one point, before I met Joseph Smith, I didn't care whether his hair was long or short, the man who received that vision I knew was a prophet of God. I knew it for myself. For some people, the beauty of the doctrine is so incredible that it's actually why they believe. They hear The Vision and this is truth. Then you have for others, the stark difference from what traditional Christians believe is too much for them to handle. When we talk about Doctrine and Covenants Section 76, every lesson I've ever had in church about it devolves into someone writing up on the board: telestial, terrestrial, celestial. Then underneath you write what's getting you into each one? You can do your own like traveler's log, where am I right now? It

looks like I'm, what am I? Like? I'm halfway between celestrial and terrestrial. I need to kick it up a few notches.

John Bytheway: 00:08:57 I gotta up my game.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:08:59 We tend to focus on that aspect of it. The two things we focus on, usually when we talk about it, and again, everyone's different, so there's gonna be someone who emails you guys and says, I don't ever focus on that. Obviously, there's lots of different people that are listening, but generally we focus on two aspects. First, the incredible testimony of Joseph where he says, after the many testimonies have been given of him, this is the testimony lasts of all, which we give of him. That testimony, that modern witness, that Jesus is the Christ is rightly so. One of the things that we tend to focus on because it's so beautiful, it's so powerful, and then the next thing we tend to focus on is what are the requirements or what are the characteristics of people going into each kingdom? This is the celestial kingdom. This is the terrestrial kingdom.

00:09:53 This is the telestrial kingdom. It's clearly something that affects even Joseph in the sense of those requirements he sees as as hard and fast. Because one of the things Doctrine and Covenants Section 76 says is that in order to go to the celestial kingdom, you have to be baptized into the church of the firstborn. You have to be baptized by proper authority into the church in order to become a celestialized person. And the Lord doesn't actually provide explanations and caveats in that revelation. And we know that because of Doctrine and Covenants Section 137. That four years later, when they're preparing the dedication of the Kirtland temple, Joseph has a vision of the celestial kingdom again. Now in 1836, there's literally no one on earth who knows more about the celestial kingdom than Joseph Smith. He's received multiple revelations about it. He has seen it. He knows more about what the celestial kingdom is and how you get there than anyone on Earth, possibly than anyone who'd ever lived on it.

00:11:03 Maybe what he has seen is even greater than what Paul saw. I don't know. Yet, even though he knew more about it than anyone else on Earth, when Joseph sees his brother Alvin in the Celestial Kingdom in vision, Joseph's reaction is he's stunned. Stunned. I marveled as to how he had obtained a such a kingdom. Now, the sad part of that, the part of that discussion that we kind of jump over is that means if you asked Joseph Smith in 1835, is Alvin going to the Celestial Kingdom? What would he have said? He'd have said, well, he can't.

Hank Smith:	00:11:48	He wasn't baptized.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:11:50	He would've been quoting scripture. He been quoting D&C 76. Alvin's an amazing man, but it says in the revelation that you have to be baptized. In a lot of ways, 76 is so profound that you can see that it's even affecting Joseph in his personal understanding of his own personal familial relations. That cannot be an easy thing for Joseph to come to terms with. I don't know that I really want a lot of audio of me saying these words: Joseph was wrong. But it hadn't been fully revealed yet. According to what God had given Joseph, the only conclusion he could come to was that Alvin could not go to the Celestial Kingdom. Now that sounds pretty stark, pretty rough, but in the world that Joseph lives in, everybody's going to hell. I started off this discussion saying we focus on those aspects of it, but the part that Latter-day Saints apparently focused on the most, in their day, is not that there's three different degrees of glory, although that's impressive. It was the fact that the description of the lowest kingdom was a radical departure from Christianity.
Hank Smith:	00:13:19	Gerrit, as you were telling us that we point often to the testimony that Joseph and Sidney give. I thought how many critics I've heard of Joseph Smith saying when the First Vision, if he would've seen Jesus, he probably would've written that down faster. I've heard that about the First Vision. Oh, he didn't write it till 1832. You could follow up with this. Well, he saw Jesus and he actually has it written down as he's seeing Jesus. He was writing down these experiences at least later on.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:13:49	This is a tangent and an aside, but it's such a terrible argument in the first place. Someone who's making that argument has legitimately no understanding of any of the makeup of the New Testament gospels. There are no scholars who believe that Matthew is writing those things down as Jesus is walking around. Someone might say, well, if Matthew was really there, then why didn't he write it the second Jesus did it? Clearly, that shows that Matthew's a liar. I mean it's--a lot of times criticisms that sound like they're good criticisms are really just terrible.
	00:14:27	The worst part about it is, when people make those criticisms from an academic perspective, I'm making the argument that a historian would make, well, if you're making the argument that a historian would make, let's find one that makes that argument. Oh wait, none of them are because it's a terrible argument and you can find this among many religious figures. Ellen White does not tell anyone about the vision she claims to have that lead to her founding the Seventh Day Adventist. She doesn't tell anyone for years. Historians do not say, well,

obviously, Ellen White's a liar. I mean obviously 'cause she like didn't write it down, so she's a liar. She didn't like talk to anybody immediately. She's a liar.

Hank Smith: 00:15:08 Because I would, right? Because I would. I would do that. Yeah.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:15:12 That's always the best part too, is like I know that if God appeared to me, I would do this. You don't have any idea what you would do if God appeared to you. It's the element of hubris too, to say, well, I know that I would do this, and frankly, when someone's claiming to have had a religious experience, a historian simply says, this is what they said. A partisan, someone who's trying to prove an argument is someone who says, well, they should have said it like this.

Hank Smith: 00:15:44 Yeah, had it really happened, this is what.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:15:46 Yeah. A lot of times people are reacting to what they think are historical arguments because we're talking about a source in the past, but it's not a historical argument to say, well, I would've said this if it happened to me. That's a personal argument. It's not a historical argument.

Hank Smith: 00:16:04 Ah, you could go to section 76. Well, if you want him to write it very quickly after you could actually go here. He's writing it during. The other one, Gerrit, that I think we miss as Latter-day Saints because we grow up with this, is what the typical view was. You mentioned Wilfred Woodruff. I'm gonna read this from the Voices of the Restoration Manual. This isn't in the hardback manual, but it is online. I'm gonna read this and then Gerrit, why don't you tell us what's typical for a Christian in America in 1832? This is how it starts. This says, Wilfred Woodruff joined the church in December of 1833, nearly two years after Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received the vision recorded in section 76. He was living in New York at the time and learned about "The Vision" from missionaries serving the area. Years later, he spoke of his impressions of this revelation:

00:16:57 "I was taught from my childhood that there was one Heaven and one Hell, and was told that the wicked all had one punishment and the righteous one glory...When I read the vision..., it enlightened my mind and gave me great joy, it appeared to me that the God who revealed that principle unto man was wise, just and true, possessed both the best of attributes and good sense and knowledge. I felt He was consistent with both love, mercy, justice and judgment, and I felt to love the Lord more than ever before in my life. The 'Vision'[is] a revelation which gives more light, more truth and

more principle than any revelation contained in any other book we ever read. It makes plain to our understanding our present condition, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going to. Any man may know through that revelation what his part and condition will be. Before I saw Joseph, I said, I do not care how old he was, or how young he was; I did not care how he looked-whether his hair was long or short; the man that advanced that revelation...was a prophet of God. I knew it for myself."

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:18:05 Wilfred Woodruff always hesitant to tell people how he really felt about things. You can see how profound it is to him and why is it so profound to him? He says it right there. Notice he didn't say, well, because I learned that one of the requirements of the celestial kingdom was X. The radical nature of it was that the paradigm of heaven and hell was not accurate. It's important to understand that in the 19th century, most Protestant thought-in America at the time was Calvinist in nature. This would-be Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, Episcopalianism-to a certain degree-they would've all believed in Calvinist theology that essentially states, everybody deserves to go to hell. Everyone all are born sinners, left uninterrupted. Everyone would go to hell. Everyone deserves to go to hell. Everyone's a sinner and that God in his mercy decided to choose to save some of these people who don't deserve to be saved because no one deserves to be saved.

00:19:17 He decided to shed forth his grace and mercy on a few select individuals, not because they were good, not because they'd prayed to him. Because he chose to, that it was grace. In every sense, it was completely unmerited and it was completely freely given. That's very hard for a Latter-day Saint to understand because a Latter-day Saint understands their conversion process. As I studied the scriptures and I prayed and I felt the Holy Spirit speak to me or I chose to change my life. I chose to accept Jesus. For a Latter-day Saint, their explanation of how they gained a testimony is they are participating in receiving the grace of Jesus. Jesus is freely offering it, but we have to grab a hold of it. Everyone could be saved if they chose to accept it. That is very much a minority view among 19th century Christians.

00:20:27 Most Christians at the time, Protestants in America anyway, they believe that salvation is a predestined thing that God chooses to save you. The reason why you decided to start reading your Bible, the reason why you felt like you needed to live a good Christian life is because you were already saved. Because God chose to save you that salvation started to

manifest itself in you reading scriptures and helping old ladies across the street, but that had no bearing on your salvation. Even if you did embrace the fact that every person is a professing Christian is saved, you are still left with the fact that the vast majority of people on Earth currently and who have ever been on earth are all going to hell. Most people that God created, he created them to burn in hell. Another aspect of Christian theology for which Latter-day Saints have a very stark departure is the idea of a premortal life.

00:21:35 For a Latter-day Saint, we all believe that we lived with God before we came to earth. In fact, we all believe that we all chose Jesus before we came here or we wouldn't be here. The only people you ever see here are people who chose Jesus before they came to earth or they wouldn't have come to earth. They would be cast out with a third of the host heaven. We have this belief that we're participating even in the idea of coming to earth, that we are eternal beings, that the purpose of coming to Earth is to become like God. Well, if you don't believe that, if you believe that God created everyone out of nothing, ex nihilo creation, that you didn't exist before you were conceived, which is the standard Christian belief at the time. God is all powerful. God knows everything. God knows that when he has me created because He is creating me out of nothing.

00:22:35 That because he's creating me to be born as a child in Indonesia in 600 AD, he already knows at the moment He snaps me into creation that I will never even hear the word Jesus. But at the same time, God who created me out of nothing gave me an immortal spirit. If he knew that I would never even have a chance to accept Jesus, that the punishment of not accepting Jesus was burning in hell forever, not a billion years or a trillion years. Forever. There are lots of questions that you can bring to this table. Often the response is going to be, well, everything was good. The problem is Adam and Eve ate the fruit, as I've said before on here, well, yeah, except that God created Adam and Eve knowing that they would eat the fruit. You are the one who decided that if anyone eats fruit thousands of years later, billions of people are gonna burn in hell because of it.

00:23:45 We didn't decide that we didn't exist. Why did you either, A, not build a better Adam and Eve or B, not change the consequences of the sin that you already knew was going to happen? Calvin theologians have wrestled with this. The conclusion they had to come to is if God is all powerful and God knows everything, then that means if God chose to, God could have saved everyone. Now we know he didn't because we know people burn in hell. That means that God never intended to save most

people. Already every Latter-day Saint sensibility you have is like, no, no, no, no. I get it. I get it. If you're a Latter-day Saint, no, no. He loves everyone. I know. I know. It's hard for me to even say the words, but if you take as a premise that you have to have faith in this life to be saved, there's no such thing as faith after this life.

00:24:50 God is all powerful and knows everything, so he already knows whether or not you're ever going to have faith in Jesus, but he created you out of nothing, regardless. Then God, at the very least, at the very least, through lack of intervention, never intended to save you. How odd would it be to say that God desperately wants to save everyone but just can't figure out how to do it. He's all powerful. He creates universes. He's the one who created us out of nothing. He's the one who created the terms of our salvation. What he wants more than anything in the world is to save us, but I just haven't found that equation yet. I want to, I mean let's make another giraffe, but I'm not sure how to, how would I save the creations that I made knowing that they'd never be saved? I mean the only logical conclusion that John Calvin came to is God must be doing exactly what God intends to do. Because when you're all powerful, everything that happens is what you intend.

00:25:57 When you say, well, why would God intend for most people not to be saved? The response would be that's the inscrutable will of God and who are you, sinner that you are, to question the goodness of God? As Jonathan Edwards said it, he explained it this way--and think of how starkly different this is from Latter-day Saint Theology. God created us to demonstrate his glory. Now, let's stop and think about this for a second. God created a world where he knew that billions upon billions upon billions of people would suffer horribly in this life. By the way, after they've suffered all the way through this, life will burn in the fiery pits of hell for eternity to demonstrate his goodness. I mean, part of the problem with believing God's all powerful is well, if God's truly all powerful, then I guess he can demonstrate his goodness without the abject suffering of billions upon billions upon billions of people. Because if you're all powerful, I can demonstrate my goodness to you without the horrific suffering of others.

John Bytheway: 00:27:07 What I like about this discussion is we can look at section 76 and say, oh, this tells us where we can go after, but it also is telling us more about the character of God. It's what is God like? The beautiful statement of Wilfred Woodruff that Hank read, Wilfred Woodruff said, I felt he was consistent with both love, mercy, justice and judgment. I felt to love the Lord more than

ever before in my life because all of a sudden there's a lot more things that make sense about what God is like. Because a God that created you specifically so that he could burn you forever. It just doesn't sound right.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:27:50 It requires you to say that what we consider justice in mortality is somehow more just than the great God of the eternities is. In mortality, if we saw someone who was forced to suffer forever for something that they did not do, we would say that is unfair. I understand that their dad was a terrible person, but the baby wasn't a terrible person. You don't make the baby suffer. We would see that as horrific injustice. You're required essentially to suspend disbelief. God is all loving except almost everyone's going to hell. God is all caring except he created almost everyone to burn in hell. Even the fact that hell exists. Well God created everything. Why did he create hell? Why is the plan to create beings out of nothing and give them eternal spirits that can never die when you already know the plan is almost all of them ride in the agony of hell forever?

00:28:57 It's time for a better plan. If your plan is nearly everyone I create is gonna burn in hell forever. Now, the Calvinist response to that would be no one deserves to go to heaven. Everyone should go to hell. Every one of us is evil. Every one of us should go to hell. How great is the glory of God that he saves any of us? Because he shouldn't save one of us. You're worried about the fact that he's not saving more of us. He shouldn't save any of us. He should send us all to hell and stand on his justice, but because he's so merciful, he saves some of us even though he shouldn't. That still doesn't answer the question of why. He created everything. He created time and space. In traditional Christian theology, literally everything that exists God created including time and space, including matter, including everything.

00:29:50 Why when you're starting from scratch is your plan, one that you know from the time you begin it, will involve you creating billions of spirits out of nothing that you know have no chance but to suffer for eternity. That's the plan. People blame Adam and Eve, but when you're God--again Orthodox Calvinist theologian would say there is no possible way of getting away from the fact that God intended the fall because he created everything. And in fact, I listened to one very prominent theologian who admitted it, said as terrible as the fall seems, as horrible, as horrific as the consequences are, there's no way of getting around the fact that God must have intended it. If God must have intended it, then there must be something good about it because God only does good things. I was super impressed with his intellectual honesty. I can't just razzle dazzle

		my way around the fact that almost everyone's suffering because of this divine decree.
	00:31:04	He was like, there must be something that is good about it. And I was sitting there thinking oh, there's lots good about it. In fact, let me just tell you more, but then he'd probably condemn me to hell for being a Mormon. As Jonathan Edwards continues in this line of reasoning, he says, God created people that he knew would not be saved to demonstrate his justice. He's telling it directly. God creates this woman, creates this man, creates this child knowing that they will ride for trillions upon trillions of years in agony to demonstrate his justice. That makes for a nice pithy quote from Jonathan Edwards, but it is staggering in the face of what we say we want to believe God is.
John Bytheway:	00:31:58	That's why I like this because we learn so much more about his character. I heard a response once, guys, that was, well, it must be a different kind of justice. I'm like, well...
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:32:10	It's the kind of justice that isn't very fair.
John Bytheway:	00:32:12	Yeah.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:32:13	Look, in North Korea, they have justice. You walk on the wrong side of the sidewalk and you're executed. It's justice.
John Bytheway:	00:32:21	That's justice. A different kind of justice.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:32:23	It's a different kind of, yeah. The kind of justice we're talking about is actually--if that's God's justice, it's actually more horrific than any earthly justice because there is--as inhumane as dictators and evil judges or whoever all throughout the history of the world have been, none of them have had the ability to inflict that punishment for eternity.
John Bytheway:	00:32:44	The worst thing I can imagine, I shouldn't say this out loud, but is to burn to death. The way hell is described in traditional Christianity is you burn to death forever.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:32:55	Yeah, forever. Your flesh regenerates just so it can burn off again. The description is poignant in his famous sermon, sinners in the hands of an angry God. You understand just how stark the theology was between Joseph and the rest of the Christian world. What Joseph would've heard growing up going to the Presbyterian church with his mom, God abhors you. That's how Jonathan Edwards starts that sermon. God hates you. He hates you. I mean that's very different from what we hear. Qe go to

church. All you hear is how much God loves you. Jonathan Edwards is saying, God hates you. He hates you 'cause you're a sinner. God hates sin as he goes on to describe what happens when you go to hell. It would be dreadful for you to suffer the fierceness of the wrath of the Almighty God for one moment, but you must suffer it for all eternity.

00:33:52 There'll be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts and amaze your soul. You will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages in wrestling with this almighty merciless vengeance and then when you've done so, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that that is all but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite.

00:34:47 The most prominent feature of 19th century Protestant Christianity is hell and it's the most prominent feature because almost everyone's going there. Unlike any suffering that can take place in this world, it's suffering that's forever. That leads to the radical part of Doctrine and Covenants section 76 that causes Wilfred Woodruff to leap and causes Joseph Wakefield to fall. If you go to the discussions about the telestial kingdom, the lowest kingdom of glory that's spoken of there. When you get the description, and so these are the best things to write on the board. This is verse 103: "These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers and whosoever loves and makes a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God."

00:35:52 Right up to this point, it's sounding very Jonathan "Edwards-y" right up to this point. It's like, okay, we just extended sinners in the hands of an angry God, but as verse 106 continues the most radical aspect of Doctrine and Covenants, section 76 is the very next phrase: "These are they were cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until"--that until is one of the most radical things that Joseph Smith will ever receive. It stands in such stark contrast, that believing members of the church apostatize over it, because that can't be. Now some, like Wilfred Woodruff says, I have always struggled with the fact that God's sending everyone to burn in hell forever. He hears this and he says, God isn't sending everyone to burning hell forever? It's the greatest thing he's ever heard. To complete 106: "...until the

fullness of times when Christ shall subdue all enemies under his feet and shall have perfected his work". Now as Latter-day Saints, because the whole world around us has hell as such a prominent feature, we're always trying to fit in.

00:37:13 It's actually a very funny aspect of Latter-day Saint culture, that you don't have to even be kind to a Latter-day Saint as a non Latter-day Saint publicly for us to love you. You just have to not hate us totally. To the point where if you're on a podcast and Latter-day Saints come up and you say something like, you know Mormons aren't all bad, we now we want to carry you on our shoulders. We want to throw garlands at your feet because everyone hates us so much that anyone who's even willing to be like, well, they're not that bad. This is the greatest person who's ever lived. Because hell is such a prominent feature for the Christians around us and probably 'cause so many of us have been condemned that we're going there by all of our Christian brothers and sisters, we try to invent our own hell.

00:38:04 You hear people all the time trying to say that the Telestial kingdom is hell. Well, you go to the telestial kingdom, that's our hell. Well, I mean, the revelation doesn't say that. The revelation says, and thus we saw in heavenly vision the glory of the telestial, which surpasses all understanding. No man knows it except him to whom God has revealed. The Telestial Kingdom is so great and so glorious that you actually can't understand a description of it. You could only understand if God were to open up the heavens to you like he did to Joseph and Sidney and show you the glory of that kingdom, then you would understand it. In 1843, Joseph rewrites D&C 76 as in poetic verse to be published as a poem in the Times and Seasons. In that poetic re-rendering, the way that he renders these verses is, and thus I beheld in the vision of heaven, the telestial glory, dominion and bliss. Surpassing the great understanding of men, unknown say revealed in a world vain as this. Boy, bliss is a pretty powerful word.

Hank Smith: 00:39:29 For hell.

00:39:33 This is the Telestial Kingdom. Yeah. We've already talked about Doctrine and Covenants section 19. Obviously, people are going to suffer for their sins that they don't repent of. This is not a question of whether or not people are going to suffer for their sins, but the primary feature of hell, as we just learned from Jonathan Edwards is that it's forever. That's the entire point of hell is that the punishment and the suffering is forever. Not for a while, not for an hour, not for a thousand years. It's forever. When Joseph reveals that even the worst of the worst people

		who are going to absolutely suffer, because they refuse to repent, they will eventually obtain a kingdom of glory that is described as a kingdom of bliss. When that is spoken, it is so hard for people to come to terms with that. People like Joseph Wakefield apostate.
John Bytheway:	00:40:35	We have talked about this with Dr. Fluhman before, but this idea right here in verse 105 before the one you read, these are the who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. And eternal, ever since Section 19 has a specialized meaning, doesn't it?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:40:53	It's the punishment of God, not the punishment of forever.
John Bytheway:	00:40:58	Yeah. A type of suffering, not a duration of suffering.
Hank Smith:	00:41:02	Our theology should make our missionary work a little more difficult, where you say you better repent or you're gonna go to heaven.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:41:10	It is tough. It's one of the funny aspects, like if you talk to an average Christian, they will say things like, I know that they should be referring to us as members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but you know, spoiler alert, they're not. They will say something like, well, you Mormons believe that only Mormons are going to heaven. It's legitimately literally the opposite. We literally believe everyone's going to heaven. We literally believe everyone's going to heaven. We're just talking about the difference between salvation and exaltation, that in order to be exalted, there are certain things that you have to do, but the idea that people are gonna be writhing in the eternal hell forever. It's a false belief, but very hard for people to come to terms with because it was so stark. This is what George A. Smith said about Joseph Wakefield, the missionary who baptized him.
	00:42:09	He had been taught about the hell which Presbyterians had taught him to expect, he says. The cause of his apostasy was the vision. He was raised to believe that all mankind would be damned for all eternity except for the Presbyterians. When he got a hold of the vision in the Book of Commandments, he found that God had devised some other plan. He was so offended to think that all mankind was not going to be damned to all eternity except the Mormons, he apostatized. For him, this idea that salvation coming from hellfire, that people weren't gonna burn in hell forever, that it was extended to everyone was was too much for him to handle. He couldn't accept it. Like I said, he becomes the leader of the anti-Mormon

committee in Kirtland, driving some of the persecution of the Latter-day Saints. He's gonna die very shortly thereafter.

00:43:07 We won't get to see exactly how everything plays out for him, but here's at least one instance, and we know that it was troubling in many other instances. Joseph has a letter that he writes to a branch of the church in New York where one of the problems they have, this is 1833, just a year after the vision is received, they have a problem because there's a prominent member of that branch who absolutely refuses to accept that the vision is from God. D&C 76. He refuses to accept it. They've counseled him on it. They've talked to him about it. It doesn't matter. It's a very interesting thing to read because if we can use some personal application here, you find the arguments that are being made by this man very similar to the arguments people make today when they, for whatever reason, say, well, I know that President Nelson said that, but I don't feel like I have to follow that.

00:44:10 I know that that's the church's, but I don't really think so because of X, because of Y, because of this. This is the letter that Joseph writes. We've been informed that--there were missionaries that visit him--when these two brethren visited you, previously having authority from us to teach you the doctrine of this church and to expound the revelations in your understanding, they learned that a brother, Ezra Landon, did not believe all of the revelations which had been delivered to this church by inspiration, by the appointment of heaven. Our brother, Orson Pratt, while reading the vision to a certain brother, while in Brother Landon's house was threatened with being turned out of doors except he should descend. Think about what's going on here. They're in a member's house. Orson Pratt, who's kind of a big deal, is reading the vision. As he's reading the vision, Ezra Landon, who's a member of the church, he's reading scripture. Ezra Landon, he starts reading the vision. He says, if you don't stop reading that, I'll kick you out of my house. If you don't stop reading the scriptures?

John Bytheway: 00:45:22 The scriptures?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:45:25 If you don't stop reading these revelations from God, which is what you expect, if you're in a Presbyterian's house, but not so much what you expect when you're a prominent member of the community of their house. He goes on to say, they call the council of high priests to labor with Brother Landon who when on the point of being cut off from the church, said that he believed the vision and that he would teach it to the church. They're like, look, you're gonna get excommunicated if you keep

saying this is false 'cause it's not, and so he is like, okay, okay, fine. On the return of the said brethren from the east--they leave, they come back. They learn that brother Landon did not teach neither believe in the vision. At the point of excommunication, he's like, okay, fine. I'll believe it, and then as soon as they leave, like, no, that's garbage.

00:46:16 It's false doctrine. We've also learned from others that he does not walk worthy in his high calling before the Lord and without speedy repentance and deep humility, he will have his office and his membership in this church taken from him. We want you to understand, dear brethren, that the conduct of our Brother Landon, has greatly grieved us in this church. We want you to understand that we hold no communion, nor have no fellowship for those who do not believe the Book of Mormon and the revelations which God has given us in these last days. There are people who want to discount revelations given to the prophet Joseph Smith, revelations that have given been given to other prophets, and they want to discount them for various reasons. Well, that's not what I think. Well, I think that revelation's wrong. Well, I think eventually the brethren are going to change that revelation because that's not what I think should be in the revelation.

00:47:13 You will hear that. Those are used as justifications to not follow, teach or believe the revelations as they are given. Here Joseph Smith makes it pretty clear. The requirement of being a member is believing that the Book of Mormon and the revelations are the word of God. That's the baseline requirement. If you don't believe that, you certainly can't be teaching other people, like Ezra Landon was, that those things are false. He goes on to say, we are informed that our Brother Landon endeavors to excuse himself for not believing The Vision, saying that it's not really a revelation but a vision. How similar is that to people who excuse themselves from prophetic utterance by saying those things. Joseph goes on to say, we want you to understand that we pronounce such teachings the works of the devil, and they are calculated to ensnare the souls of the saints.

00:48:23 When someone's trying to pick apart what part of prophetic utterance they have to follow and what part they can denigrate and say, well, that just isn't because of whatever. We plainly declare and as men that expect to and must be judged by the searcher of all hearts, that those who do not believe all the revelations and visions given to this church, that do not believe the Book of Mormon, consequently have no fellowship with us Here, they have to make a baseline. Look, you don't get to pick

and choose which revelations are from God. The revelations are from God. You may not understand them. Great. There's lots of things we don't understand, but there is a very big difference between, I just don't understand Doctrine and Covenants section 76 and that's not really from God, and teaching other people that, which is a really interesting position.

00:49:23 I don't really understand it, but I know for certain that it can't be from God because it's not what I already thought. It's such a crazy dynamic for Latter-day Saints, that it's the first thing we would explain to someone else about why our faith is different. If someone said, what do you Mormons believe that's so different? In some way, our response would be, we believe in modern prophets. In some way. We might say, well, we believe in the Book of Mormon. Well, where'd you get the Book of Mormon? Modern prophets. Well, we believe the families can be together for eternity. Well, where'd you get that idea? Modern prophets. And essentially every answer we give would we believe in modern prophets, but actually most Latter-day Saints, they would say that in part of their response. What makes you so different? Well, we believe God has called prophets in our day.

00:50:06 It is, even to us, the most treasured feature of our religion. That God is revealing more things to us. Why I say it's so odd, is that while it's the most treasured feature of our religion, the moment that prophet teaches something that we didn't already believe before he said it, we lose our minds. The entire point of having a prophet is to teach us something that we don't know. Or we wouldn't otherwise believe. The second he does it, we're like, no. No, that can't be true because in Isaiah it says this. I mean we start quoting scripture back to the prophet when the entire point of having a prophet is to expand upon what it is that God has given us.

John Bytheway: 00:50:57 I think I'm quoting him correctly that Brigham Young had said, I do not reject it, but I don't understand it.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:51:03 That is Brigham Young on this revelation. As to other revelations that hadn't been accepted. Yes. In fact, we talked a little bit about even John the Baptist coming. Giving authority to Joseph Smith and declaring that baptism was essential for salvation, struggles to accept because the idea that baptism is required for salvation, that authority is passed hands on head. You have to actually have authority. You have to actually be baptized, not just because it's a good thing, but in order to be saved. Samuel Smith struggles with and has to go have his own spiritual experience out in the woods before he finally comes to terms

with the fact. Okay, that's true. Doctrine and Covenants section 20. This is the one where Oliver Cowdery writes the letter to Joseph and commands him to change some of the words in the revelation because they clash with his understanding of Protestant salvation.

00:52:03 That can't be true. The words, at least from Joseph, is I command you to erase those words that there be no priestcraft among us. Oliver's using pretty strong words there. And that requires Joseph to come and wrestle with the Whitmer family, a great deal verbally before they finally come to terms with it. In this Protestant culture that they have, nothing beats the written word of scripture. And everyone who has a Christian friend right now knows that. Everyone who has a Christian friend who's ever tried to share the gospel with them has almost immediately been met with this question. Well, can you show me where it says that in the Bible? Because if you can't show it to me in the Bible, then I'm not gonna entertain this conversation. When you have modern prophets, if they are going to reveal anything, reveal it, then that means of necessity, it is not entirely spelled out in the existing scriptures.

00:53:02 As you said, the inspiration for the vision is they're trying to understand. What does this mean, the resurrection of the just and the unjust. It's a great question to sit back and think and ask yourself. In a traditional Christian thought world, why is there a resurrection at all? If when you die, you immediately go to heaven or hell, and when you're in heaven, you are immediately in the greatest wonderful, most wonderful place that you could ever be with as most happiness as you could ever have. You're gonna like pull me down out of heaven to resurrect me and then to put me back up into heaven. Okay, why? Well, because that's what he said he would do. Okay. I mean, I get it. So, it's just that he said he would do it, but there's no explanation for that.

00:53:50 But let's take it to the other way. I'm writhing in hell for a thousand years. You're gonna pull me up out of hell to resurrect me, to give me a body to send me back down to hell. I guess during the resurrection, you know, that's great because I'm like, not writhing in this moment. It's like a little bit of a time out. 30-second time out while we get your body back together and then we're gonna send you back down to hell. Does that mean that the hell I was in before I got my body back was not as horrible as suffering as it would be afterwards? Because if I was already in hell, is there like a pre hell? There's all kinds of questions that arise with that traditional idea. That's why they ask the question. They receive this glorious vision that provides

gradations of heaven, but the most radical part being that eternal hell does not actually exist.

00:54:53 That is very hard. You referenced Brigham Young's thoughts on it. That's a great place to look at his reaction. This is what he says. He says, you can understand with a few remarks that I make with regard to the gospel, whatever was revealed through Joseph, a great many things was revealed. When they was first revealed, they came in contact with our own prejudices. I know we use the term prejudice today to usually mean like bigotry, but he means we had already prejudged something we already thought we knew. They came into contact with our own prejudices. We didn't know how to understand them. I refer to myself for one instance, I could never fix up in my mind a God sending everybody to a lake of fire and brimstone to be cooked over for a little sin that you'd committed whether you were a sinner or not.

00:55:47 For Brigham Young, one of the hardest parts of his Christianity was knowing that almost everyone burned in hell. It was already hard for him to come to terms with it before he became a Latter-day Saint. He's affiliated with Methodists who, unlike Calvinists--who believe that God intends almost everyone to burn in hell--Armenian theology believes that we are participants in salvation. That Jesus died for everyone. That he's got his hand extended out for everyone. That you have to grab that hand in order to be saved. Already, he's believing a doctrine that's more radical than most Christians around him, in the sense that everyone could be saved now. They're not going to be because you still have to have faith in Jesus to be saved and almost no one has faith in Jesus. But God wants them to be saved. They're just not going to be saved because you didn't get on a boat and go to China and go preach to people.

00:56:39 They're gonna go to hell because you're lazy, not because God doesn't want to save them. Already this idea of the ability for everyone to be saved is an important part of what Brigham Young believes. He struggles with his own Christianity. Man, almost everyone burns in hell. God is good, but almost everyone burns in hell. I don't understand. He struggles with it, but this is the great part. My traditions were such that when the vision was given, that when that first came to me, it was so directly contrary and opposed to my education and tradition. Says I wait and I didn't reject it, but I could not understand it. I could then feel what tradition had done for me. Suppose it was true. If it was true, then all I had ever read from my priests or parents all along the way who taught me to read the Bible and understand is diametrically opposed to it.

00:57:48 Here's this fascinating thing where Brigham Young has always struggled with the idea that so many people go to hell, but when he gets the answer that they don't, that in fact there isn't a hell, not an eternal hell. It's so opposite of everything he's ever been taught. Even though he's finally got the answer to his question, he can't quite bring himself to believe it. You can see him working through the thought process. If that's true, then my parents were wrong about hell. My grandparents were wrong about hell. Every pastor I've ever had is wrong about hell. Every Christian who's ever taught anything from the Bible is wrong about hell. If that is true. But notice he says, I didn't reject it, but I couldn't understand it. One of these great humble moments that so affect Latter-day Saint history. Because Brigham Young could have gone Joseph Wakefield real quick. He could have "Wakefield" it.

00:58:56 Where he's an intense believer then sees that and goes, nope, that is not in the Bible. That is not what Christians believe. Joseph's a false prophet, and instead Brigham Young says, says, I wait and I didn't reject it, but I couldn't understand it. I would think and pray and read and think and pray and reflect until I knew and I saw it for myself by the visions of the spirit that actually came in contact with my own feelings. For Brigham, it sounds like it was possibly a years long effort to come to terms with it. What did he do? He didn't sit back and be like, well obviously, Joseph's wrong about this, because says right there in the Book of Mormon, people going to hell. I mean, he could have found all kinds of reasons to flippantly reject the vision. To "Joseph Wakefield" it or to "Ezra Landon" it.

00:59:51 Instead, Brigham Young said, I don't understand this, but I know Joseph's a prophet. I'm gonna keep praying and reading and praying and reading and praying and reading until I do understand it. Because what can't change is that Joseph's a prophet. And I feel like that's a useful tool to anyone listening. You are not going to make it through your Latter-day Saint life without having prophets and apostles teach something that doesn't in some way go against what you personally want to believe, what you politically believe, what you socially believe, what your friends believe, what your traditions believe. You aren't going to make it through life without at some point hearing a prophet teach something where you're like, wait a minute. That's not what my friends on X say about that. Then we have to decide, are we Joseph Wakefield, who believe in the Book of Mormon and believe this is the kingdom of God on earth, these revelations are all from God, and Joseph saw God, and this is God restoring things and Peter James and John and John the Baptist.

	01:01:06	Hell doesn't exist? No. That's a bridge too far, Joseph Smith. You're not going to claim that hell doesn't exist. Are we, Joseph Wakefields, where we're all in on everything as long as that everything is what we already want to believe. I always say it, you don't need a prophet to tell you to stay in Jerusalem. You were already living in Jerusalem. You were always going to stay in Jerusalem. Of course, you weren't gonna leave your money and your house and your friends and apparently Ishmael's daughters and go into the wilderness. You were never going to do that. A prophet tells you to do what you otherwise wouldn't believe, what you otherwise wouldn't do. The whole point of having a prophet is to teach you things that you would not otherwise believe. To determine if prophets and apostles are speaking the truth--the worst way is to ask yourself, did I already believe that? Does my social group already think that? Does my political party already endorse that? Because that's the entire point of receiving prophetic utterance, because you wouldn't believe otherwise.
John Bytheway:	01:02:24	I grew up with section 76, but without having all of those years of that, if I was given the choice, do you want to believe this or this? I would gladly say, I'll take 76, please. This is such a happy, hopeful, beautiful-makes God just and merciful as we've talked about. I would rather believe this, wouldn't you?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:02:45	There are people who do want people to suffer forever. When I damn my neighbor to hell, I expect him to be there. You know? I mean, part of it is cultural because hell is eternal for everyone else. What makes us different to not believe it, but some of it comes from a place of people who have been horrifically wronged, who have been so maltreated that they have a hard time coming to terms that their vicious abuser, that they could ever find any piece ever at all. Some of it comes from that place, but I think a lot of it comes from a place of, Latter-day Saints, they fear if you preach that eventually everyone will go to heaven, that people will stop trying to go to the celestial kingdom. Well, first of all, whether we preach that or not, if they're not doing anything, that they're going to telestial kingdom.
	01:03:39	You know? Welcome to the telestial kingdom. You don't have to preach to get anybody there. But second of all, this church is about bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of mankind. The point is exaltation. That's the point. I want to share something from Brigham Young, because he is the one that struggled so mightily with his belief in this. Because this was so far beyond what he thought you could believe in 1860. He gives a sermon on April 6th, actually in 1860. The true

expansive nature of this salvation is really front and center. It's an understanding of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

01:04:30 We learn from the vision just how all encompassing that atonement is. That it is so great that it is going to eventually save even those who did terribly in their second estate. On the basis that they accepted Jesus in their first estate. Through the atonement of Christ, they will eventually obtain a kingdom of glory. This is what Brigham Young says. The Lord has revealed His will from the heavens and has brought forth his holy priesthood and bestowed it upon the children of men. We've been made the happy partakers thereof. Those that are assembled here in the morning, most of them have felt the heavenly influence of the Holy Ghost shed forth into their hearts and awake them out of their sleep and ignorance and to begin to teach them eternal things. This work is true. The Lord has bestowed the holy priesthood upon the children and men by which alone can prepare the people to enter into the celestial kingdom of our God.

01:05:39 I can say this, it is a source of as much comfort, consolation, and gratification to behold the goodness and long suffering, the kindness and the parental feeling of our Father and our God in preparing the way and providing the means to save the children of men. And not you and I alone, not the Latter-day saints alone, not those who have the privilege of the gospel exclusively, but to save all. A universal salvation, a universal redemption. When we inquire who will be saved? The answer is all will be saved except the sons of perdition. If you inquire where and will they be saved and how? In a very few words I can tell you, they will be saved through the atonement and their good works according to the law that was given them. Will the heathens be saved? Yes. Will they that have died without law be saved?

01:06:46 Yes. Those that have never heard of the Savior be saved? Yes. This priesthood, that the Lord has bestowed, is for the express purpose of preparing the portion of the people all that will receive the first principles pertaining to the law of the celestial kingdom. If you and I abide this law and preserve it in violet within ourselves and live according to it, we will be prepared to enjoy the blessings of the celestial kingdom. Will any more people? Yes, thousands and millions of the inhabitants of the earth who would've received and abided the law, that we preach, if it had been preached to them, if they'd have the privilege of being saved. The Savior will come upon Mount Zion and will save all of the sons and daughters of Adam that are

capable of being saved by administering for them. Is not this pleasing and glorifying?

01:07:43 Is not this a soul consoling feeling and influence upon the mind of every intelligent being? When we contemplate our former teachings that we'd received, a faith that a very few of us was going to be saved but come to damnation. This is not so. All of the inhabitants of the earth will be saved in kingdoms somewhere. Joseph Smith's vision of the kingdoms is the greatest vision I ever knew delivered to any of the children of men. It incorporates more in a few pages than any other revelation I have any knowledge of. This is the gospel of salvation. This is our testimony, so says Joseph and Sidney. The heavens were open and the Lord showed to them the inhabitants of the earth would be saved. Will the Methodist be saved? Yes. There is a chance for those who have lived and two for those that live now, the gospel has come truth and light and righteousness.

01:08:50 The Lord has sent it forth in the world and those that receive it will be saved in the celestial kingdom, and those that don't receive it through ignorance, tradition, superstition, the precepts of their fathers, many of them will get a good and glorious kingdom and they will enjoy and receive more than ever entered into the heart of any man unless he had revelation. My heart is comforted. You can see, you can feel how much Brigham Young loves this revelation. That it was always the issue to him before, that so many people burn in hell. Here he is saying something from a pulpit in 1860 America. Good luck finding someone else to say the words, that the heathens will be saved. The definition of heathen, someone who does not believe in Jesus. Will the heathens be saved? Yes. What about the people who've never heard about Jesus?

01:09:55 Yes. And he says, how are they going to be saved? Through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Part of what I love about Doctrine and Covenants section 76, is it is an expansion of the miraculous atonement of Christ that we don't have to believe that people are burning in hell for eternities. You are going to suffer for sins you refuse to repent for, but because you accepted Jesus, the atonement of Jesus Christ will at some point deliver you to a kingdom of glory. As Brigham says, you will receive more than ever entered into the heart of man. It is a plan of mercy. A plan of mercy. It so outweighs the pendulum of justice.

John Bytheway: 01:10:52 I love what you've done, Gerrit. A long time before this: I don't reject it, but I don't understand it. Now, fast forward 1860, I

		have wrestled with it. Did he say I've received my own vision by the spirit?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:11:06	Yep. He said, I received his own vision.
John Bytheway:	01:11:08	Now I get it. I rejoice in it. I love that. I feel like King Benjamin gave us a tiny section 76 in Mosiah 3:11: "For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam" then "who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them or who have ignorantly sinned." To me that opens the door for, wait a minute, what?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:11:41	It does, there are other precursors too, not just in the Book of Mormon, but also in Doctrine and Covenants section 45. That's already been received. So, Doctrine and Covenants section 45 is talking about the Second Coming of Jesus. It's giving all these things, describing it. What's gonna happen in verse 54? It says: "And then shall the heathen nations be redeemed, and they that knew no law shall have part in the first resurrection;"
John Bytheway:	01:12:11	You're like, what?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:12:11	The first resurrection is who we say is going to the celestial kingdom.
Hank Smith:	01:12:15	Yeah.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:12:17	The Lord is, I don't know if he's dropping breadcrumbs here for Joseph moving him along the line. He is certainly providing this idea. Doctrine and Covenants section 19 is the starting point of this. Hey, when it says eternal punishment, it doesn't literally mean for eternity, but then doesn't provide a description of that. Doesn't explain why. They have to move along for another three years before they get to Doctrine and Covenants section 76.
	01:12:48	Then they have to move along for another four years. Even when Doctrine and Covenants section 137 is received. Even when Joseph has that vision, God doesn't explain the contradiction. Joseph sees Alvin there, goes that's not possible, Alvin was never baptized. And the Lord says all those who would've accepted it, they will also be saved in the celestial kingdom. Now in 1836, you have to believe a contradiction. You have to believe that you absolutely have to be baptized to go to the celestial kingdom except when you don't, which is apparently most of the time. You have no explanation of how both things are true. It appears to be a stark contradiction, but

it actually wasn't ever a contradiction. God just hadn't yet revealed baptisms for the dead. Once he revealed baptisms for the dead, something that looked like a contradiction--there is no way that Alvin could go to the celestial kingdom and baptism is essential. Except there is a way.

Hank Smith: 01:13:51 Yeah.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:13:52 It just hadn't been revealed yet. I think that's an important thing too, for members who are struggling with certain doctrines or ideas. I want to know what family life is like in the next life. I want to know this. Things that haven't yet been revealed. What God has demonstrated is that over the course of time, questions do get answered, but they don't get answered immediately. I think of Elder Uchtdorf's talk he gave shortly after he became an apostle. It was a talk on the word of wisdom. My favorite talk he ever gave was the one where he read the Grinch Who Stole Christmas. That was the greatest talk ever, because there's something about the German accent: <speaking in German accent>. There's something about that spoke directly to my Dutch soul. He talks about the Word of Wisdom, in this sermon that he gives, but he talks about how when he first came to terms with the Word of Wisdom, how it was not what he thought it would be.

01:15:03 Because he grows up in Germany--if you had to pick a country where no part of the Word of Wisdom was in any way followed, it would be that. They drink both coffee and tea. When he grew up in Germany, legitimately every person smoked. Like if you found someone who didn't smoke, it'd be like, why don't you smoke? Oh, you currently have emphysema? Oh, you're still smoking. Okay. I mean everybody smoked in the 1950s. I mean everybody did. The entirety of everyone 1950s and sixties in America too. I mean smoking was a, was such a huge part of culture. I mean it is the country that has a month dedicated to alcohol. I mean Oktoberfest, you can only imagine if you are Elder Uchtdorf growing up as an extreme minority, as a Latter-day Saint. He never interacts with anyone else who's a Latter-day Saint. What's the most salient feature of Elder Uchtdorf?

01:15:59 Well, he doesn't drink and he doesn't smoke. He talks about how when he goes into the military, because there's compulsory military service at the time. When he goes into the military, they start doing the calisthenics. His assumption is, I am going to dust these people like crazy because I don't drink and I don't smoke and I'm gonna run and not be weary and I'm gonna walk and not faint. Elder Uchtdorf explains his shock, because his expectation that the way that this revelation is

gonna be filled is is one thing. He says, as I was running, I began to notice something that frankly troubled me time and again, I was being passed by men who smoked, drank, and did all manner of things that were contrary to the gospel and in particular the Word of Wisdom. Here he is this Latter-day Saint youth who has through great sacrifice kept all of the Word of Wisdom.

01:16:57 When he gets tossed into this realm of service men,, who don't have the same moral background that he does and certainly don't agree with the Word of Wisdom, he's troubled by the fact that I should be the most physically fit of any of them. What about the promise of the revelation? He says, I remember thinking, wait a minute aren't I supposed to be able to run and not be weary? But I was weary and I was overtaken by people who were definitely not following the Word of Wisdom. I confess it troubled me at the time I asked myself, was the promise true or was it not it? What's really interesting about this is Elder Uchtdorf gives us an insight into his teenage soul that I don't know if you wanna call it a faith crisis, but you certainly had a place where he had an expectation of what God would do for him or what a revelation meant.

01:18:03 Life did not meet that expectation. It troubled him. What's interesting about that is he doesn't follow it up with, but you know that night I prayed and everything was great. He follows it up by saying the answer didn't come immediately, but eventually I learn that God's promises are not always fulfilled as quickly or in the way that we might hope, but come according to his timing and his ways. Years later, I could see clear evidence of the temporal blessings that come to those who obey the Word of Wisdom in addition to the spiritual blessings that come immediately from obedience to any of God's laws. Looking back, I know for sure that the promises of the Lord if perhaps not always swift are always certain. Here's another example of Elder Uchtdorf did not storm out of the calisthenics exercise saying, obviously, the church is false because that guy who's a three pack a day guy dusted me like I wasn't even running, right?

01:19:13 This person who's a sinner went past me. He didn't give up on the rest of the doctrine because it wasn't what he intended. Instead, he says it took a long time for him to really understand the blessings of the Word of Wisdom. I think we have an example of both with Elder Uchtdorf, with Brigham Young, that it takes time sometimes to fully understand revelations from God. So that's normal and natural. If someone listening is like, well, I don't really understand this, welcome to anyone who's ever been a member of the church. Look, Brigham Young is the

most devoted person to Joseph Smith and to God that you are ever going to find. This is someone who the worst thing you could ever do in Brigham Young's life, is say one negative word about Joseph Smith.

01:20:09 That is the number one thing that you could do that's a problem. When Sidney Rigdon is claiming that he should be the leader of the church. Brigham Young and the 12 meet with him over and over and over again begging and trying and talking, trying to find a way to make things right. Right up until Sidney Rigdon says, this is in the immediate aftermath of Joseph being murdered. Sidney Rigdon says that the church has not been led by the spirit for a long time. Meaning when Joseph was leading it. At that point, Brigham's like, full stop. If you don't believe that Joseph Smith lived and died a prophet, we are done here.

Hank Smith: 01:20:50 We are at an impasse. Yeah.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:20:54 We have come to the end of our attempts because if you don't believe Joseph lived and died a prophet, then... In fact Brigham will say that it is an article of our faith, in the conference following Joseph's murder, to believe that Joseph Smith lived and died a prophet of God. And in fact, says, I don't want anyone who doesn't believe that to be a member. If you don't believe that Joseph lived and died a prophet of God, then please go follow someone else. I don't want anyone in this church saying that Joseph Smith's a fallen prophet. For someone like Brigham Young, who is so adamant at Joseph's prophetic ministry, even he really struggled with how radical the revelation was. But there's nothing wrong with you if you don't fully comprehend revelations and doctrine the moment that they're given. Of course, it's going to take a long time to fully understand, to fully gain a testimony of various doctrines of the gospel.

01:21:57 The difference is what do you do with it? Do you react like Joseph Wakefield--immediately lash out and say, there is no way that's true. The prophet must be wrong. If he's wrong about that, he must be wrong about this. Or do you with humility like Brigham Young, or like Elder Uchtdorf say, this is not what I thought would be the case. I don't understand this. In fact, I don't even understand how that can be the case, but I'm gonna read and pray and read and pray. I am going to say to myself, wait, I don't understand it, but I'm going to eventually figure it out. The one is exercising faith and hope, resting on the the things you do know that are true. The other is simply a rash judgment that in fact the prophets couldn't possibly reveal to you things that you don't already believe.

John Bytheway:	01:23:01	This always reminds me of the New Testament story of Jesus saying, except you eat my flesh and drink my blood. And right in Deuteronomy, he said, don't drink blood. This is that point where some walked no more with him. Will you also go away? Maybe in their minds with something like, one day I'm gonna understand this or He will give us more later. I think there was a lot of that going on here. He's going to give us more later. Gerrit, we have another Voice of the Restoration here in Phebe Crosby Peck, do you know much more about her background?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:23:39	She's gonna marry into the Peck family. The Peck family is one of the founding families of the Colesville family. These are people who have made the greatest sacrifices of the early church. These are people who are being horribly persecuted when they were in Colesville. These are people that are coming to God asking for some kind of relief for the persecution. What God tells them is leave everything behind and move to Ohio. And as soon as they get to Ohio, having left everything behind, they start to settle, but they settle on land that was initially consecrated to the church, but then that consecration was rescinded. But within weeks of arriving, setting up their new farms and their new houses, they are again being told to leave this time a thousand miles away to Missouri. That Colesville branch sacrificed a lot early on. The Peck family is one of the rocks of the church, from those early days
John Bytheway:	01:24:43	In that digital manual where you'll find this, this is what it says: "When Phebe Peck heard Joseph and Sidney teach of "the vision", she was living in Missouri and raising five children as a single mother. The vision so impressed and inspired her that she wrote the following to share what she had learned with her extended family..." Sounds like a letter. I love the first line: "The Lord is revealing the mysteries of the heavenly Kingdom unto his children." It reminded me of the visions and blessings of old are returning--from the hymn. The Lord is revealing mysteries of the heavenly kingdom unto his children. "Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon made us a visit last spring, and we had many joyful meetings while they were here, and we had many mysteries unfolded to our view, which gave me great consolation. We could view the condescension of God in preparing mansions of peace for his children. And whoso will not receive the fullness of the gospel and stand as valiant soldiers in the cause of Christ cannot dwell in the presence of the Father and the Son. But there is a place prepared for all who do not receive, but it is a place of much lesser glory than to dwell in the Celestial kingdom.

01:25:53 I shall not attempt to say any farther concerning these things as they are now in print and are going forth to the world. And you perhaps will have an opportunity of reading for yourself, and if you do, I hope you will read with a careful and a prayerful heart, for these things are worthy of notice." Understatement of the earth. "And I desire that you may search into them, for it is that which lends to our happiness in this world and in the world to come." When I was a teenager, I have to add this. It finally dawned on me the word receive means accept those that did not receive the gospel. It means they didn't accept it. They had a chance. It's not they never heard it. They heard it but they didn't receive it. Receive is an action word. Accepting. She's getting that testimony from them on a visit they made. This idea of receiving, accepting the gospel some, as we've talked about Gerrit, like your example of 600 AD in Indonesia never had an opportunity to receive it. Not only didn't hear it but couldn't receive it 'cause they never heard it.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:27:01 In modern times, this has been recently expounded by President Oaks in General Conference. In his talk, The Divine Love and the Father's Plan. He says this, a common misunderstanding of the judgment, that ultimately falls mortal life, is that good people go to a place called heaven and bad people go to an everlasting place called hell. This erroneous assumption of only two ultimate destinations implies that those who cannot keep all the commandments required for heaven will necessarily be forever destined for hell. A loving Heavenly Father has a better plan for his children. The revealed doctrine of the restored Church of Jesus Christ teaches that all the children of God, with exceptions too limited to consider here, will finally wind up in a kingdom of glory. In my father's house are many mansions, Jesus taught. From modern revelation, we know that those mansions are in three different kingdoms of glory.

01:28:06 In the final judgment, each of us will be judged according to our deeds and the desires of our hearts. Before that, we will need to suffer for our unrepented sins. The scriptures are clear on that. Then our righteous judge will grant us residence in one of those kingdoms of glory. Thus, as we know from modern revelation, all shall be judged and every man shall receive according to his own works, his own dominion in the mansions which are prepared. I was thrilled when I heard President Oaks give this talk for that very reason. That statement, a loving heavenly Father has a better plan for his children--what we talked about earlier on. The revealed doctrine of the restored church of Jesus Christ teaches that all of the children of God, with exceptions too limited to consider here, will finally wind up in a kingdom of

glory. All of the children of God will finally wind up in a kingdom of glory.

01:29:04 That is radical, radical theology and brings us back to the point of people will say, Latter-day Saints believe that only Mormons are going to heaven. When the reality is, actually we believe everyone's going to heaven. It's the exact opposite of believing that only Latter-day Saints go to heaven. We believe everyone's going to heaven. I feel the way I feel about this revelation is it is near and dear to my soul. It means that God is actually a just God. Not just we say the words just. Not that we say, oh, God's loving. How does he show his love? He has you burning in hell for eternity, because he's so filled with love that he just can't wait to create you out of nothing to have you ride in the agony of eternal hell forever. What a loving person. I mean, we don't have to believe that contradiction.

01:29:55 We don't have to believe that somehow God is all loving even though almost everyone burns in hell. We can believe that because people kept their first estate, everyone will eventually have suffered enough for their sins that they will enter into a kingdom of glory. As Brigham Young says, this comforts my soul. It is the beauty of the atonement of Jesus Christ. That suffering of all kinds eventually has an end. Joseph Smith referencing the fact that everyone is condemning him to go to hell he says, I have no fear of hell fire that don't exist, because he knows from Doctrine and Covenants section 76. Like, well, look, you guys can condemn me to hell all you want, but I hate to break it to you, there isn't one.

01:30:54 In fact, Joseph will say, God has made a provision for every spirit in the eternal world and the spirits of our friends should be searched out and saved. Any man that has a friend in eternity can save him if he has not committed the unpardonable sin. He cannot be damned through all eternity. There is a possibility for his escape in a little time. If a man has knowledge, he can be saved. If he's been guilty of great sins, he's punished for it, but when he consents to obey the gospel, whether alive or dead, he's saved. That's pretty awesome. Then he goes on to say, I have no fear of hell fire that don't exist. He goes on to explain what it takes for someone to commit the unpardonable sin. He says, for a man to commit the unpardonable sin, they have to receive the Holy Ghost. All will suffer until they obey Christ himself. Even the devil said, I'm a Savior and I will save all, and he rose up in rebellion against God and was cast down. Jesus Christ will save all except the sons of perdition. There you have Joseph being as direct and as clear as he can be.

John Bytheway:	01:32:03	That's the exception, too few to mention.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:32:06	Joseph explains, what must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin? They must receive the Holy Ghost. They must have the heavens opened unto them, know God and then sin against Him. In other words, they have to essentially become like the spirits who rejected Jesus in the premortal life. It's not a matter of they didn't know who the Father was. They were there with the Father. It wasn't like, oh man, if only I'd heard Jesus's argument, this would've been a lot better. I would've gone the other way. They have a perfect knowledge and with that perfect knowledge chose Lucifer over God. What Joseph was saying is that to become a son of perdition, you have to have the heavens open to you. You have to know who God is. Knowing who God is, would still reject him. Just like people who rejected their first estate, there's probably a reason why there's not very many.
	01:33:03	He goes on to say in the same sermon, what have we to console us in relation to our dead? We have the greatest hope in relation to our dead of any people on earth. We have seen them walk worthy on earth. Those who have died in the faith are now in the celestial kingdom of God. They have gone to await the resurrection of the dead to go to celestial glory. While there is many who will die will have to wait many years, but I'm authorized to say to you, my friends in the name of the Lord, that you may wait for your friends to come to meet you in eternity in the morning of the celestial world. Those saints who have been murdered in the persecution shall triumph in the celestial world, while their murderers shall dwell in torment until they pay the uttermost farthing. Until, it is so radical that it is used as fodder. Even today, it's not the primary argument that an antagonist of our church makes theologically, because the low hanging fruit is always things like, well, what about polygamy or how can you believe the Book of Mormon? It's not in the Bible. But in larger debates there will be people who will say that. Who will say, well, you Mormons believe that eternal hell doesn't exist. That's blasphemy. It's certainly not what's taught by traditional Christianity. It certainly seems more to be in line with what we claim the nature of our God to be.
John Bytheway:	01:34:30	Thank you because here's Elder Patrick Kearon who says God is in relentless pursuit of you. Contrast that with Jonathan Edwards.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:34:42	God hates you. He doesn't want to look at you. You're horrible. A lot of this we really undersell our premortal life. The understanding of a premortal life, it transforms our relationship

with God. It transforms our relationship with this world. The purpose of this world, even the traditional Christian explanation of the purpose of this earth for the glory of God. God did it for his glory. Okay, is there a way for God to have glory that doesn't involve everyone's suffering? Seems like there's gotta be a better way for God to demonstrate his glory rather than the abject suffering of people in mortality. Right now, in mortality, there are thousands upon thousands of people who are suffering, who are in sickness and disease and poverty and dirty, filthy water. No prospects for the future, and they suffer their whole lives. Even when they get past that life.

01:35:40 Now you gotta go to hell and you get to suffer there for even more eternity because you were in a country where Jesus wasn't preached. It is so central to my testimony. It's one of the reasons why I believe Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Because the God that Joseph Smith preaches about, the Heavenly Father in Jesus revealed to Joseph Smith are who I want God to be. It's who I believe God to be. Someone who isn't just saying, I love everyone, someone who actually made provision for everyone. Someone who isn't just saying I am just, but is demonstrating through his actions, through his revelations, that he desperately loves all of us. We all still have agency. We might reject God for as long as we decide to reject him, but the very fact that we all accepted him in our premortal life means every one of us is destined at some point to a kingdom of glory, but that's not what this is about. What it is about is exaltation. The church exists for the exaltation of mankind, not the telestial kingdom. You don't have to try to get into there. We're not worried about that. Yeah. That's the default position. We believe that there's something far greater than just the traditional Christian concept of heaven. That is truly obtaining the fullness of the Father as Jesus promised, being a joint heir with Christ, becoming like them.

Hank Smith: 01:37:24 I have a quick thought I'd love to hear both of you comment on. Before section 76, a very small portion of the human race is going to go to heaven and the vast majority is going to go to hell. After section 76, the vast majority of human beings is going to go to heaven. A very small amount will go to hell and that almost sounds like they choose to. Then, we hit this earlier, as Latter-day Saints, we sometimes we're uncomfortable with that, so we switch it back and we say the highest degree of the celestal kingdom, that's heaven. Everywhere else, well, it's kind of heaven, but really you'll live in regret for your entire life, so it's kind of a version of hell. Why do we do that?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:38:11	I think some of it is just from tradition in the sense that we're afraid that if we say that everyone's going to heaven, that the reaction of the person hearing you is gonna be, well, I'm not gonna try at all then. Because holy care, if I'm going to heaven, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow, we die and it shall be well with us and God will beat us with a few stripes and the last will be saved in the kingdom with God. Part of it is that fear, except the problem with that is, well, if that's your fear that you teaching true doctrine that Jesus will save everyone in a kingdom of glory eventually. If your fear is that someone hearing that will make them go, well, let's go fornicate. If that's their reaction. I got news for you. They weren't headed for the celestial kingdom anyway. If they were on the precipice of desperately finding any way they could to commit sin without having a judgment on it, they weren't loving God more than they love themselves. They weren't loving the Lord with all their heart, might, mind and strength. Look, we're all sinners. As Jonathan Edwards makes it very clear, we're all sinners. None of us are perfect. All of us have to have the grace of Christ, all of us, but the mentality that someone has of what sins can I get away with is not a celestial mentality, anyway.
John Bytheway:	01:39:42	That's not a changed heart at all.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:39:44	Yeah. We're afraid of something that isn't really a fear. I'm afraid if we broadcast church worship services, that it's gonna make people not come to church and to stay home because why would they come to church? It's a lot easier to stay home. This is someone who's already not coming to church. Well, I know that if they don't hear any of the worship service, that they're certainly not going to change. I know that, as John just said, their heart is already not changed. You're worried about the wrong thing. Someone who is looking for a license to sin, magically is able to find that license. They don't need you to spell it out for them. They can figure it out on their own, but a celestialized person is someone who's not asking, what do I want? They're asking, what does God want when what God wants is not what I want.
	01:40:41	They say, okay, well then, I'm gonna change what I want because what I want needs to be what God wants. If anyone listening is making the decision between being a terrestrial kingdom person or celestial kingdom person right now on the basis of whether or not they could eventually be saved in the lowest kingdom, you're thinking about the wrong thing. As John said, you need to look for a mighty change of heart where your desire with King Benjamin, the people. Your desire is to do good. Of course, you're going to sin. My desire is to do good

		continually, and I constantly sin on the daily, even though my desire is to do good. If you aren't even at the point where your desire is to do good, whether or not you think you're getting a free pass into the telestial kingdom, that's not the thing that's concerning. The concerning thing is I want to follow Jesus. I fail at following Jesus, but if I don't even want to follow Jesus everything else doesn't even matter.
Hank Smith:	01:41:47	Yeah. There's the element of some of the parables in the gospels, the parables of the laborers in the vineyard, you mean everybody gets the blessing? I hate that. The prodigal son returns. What? I've been the good guy, right? Yeah.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:42:02	He spent his money. You haven't even offered me a kid. Yeah. You killed the fatted calf for him. There is something to that. There are people who feel like, I have sacrificed so much. I shouldn't have to share my celestial kingdom with someone who sacrificed nothing. To me, I think that's an expression of a heart that's not fully changed because I think hearts that are fully changed are so grateful that they have received of the atonement of Christ that they desperately want everyone else to receive it. They don't start counting beans and being like, now, wait a minute. You were a profligate sinner for 60 years, but you're going to the same place I'm... I've been.
Hank Smith:	01:42:50	That's not fair. Yeah.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:42:53	I haven't had any alcohol yet. How could that possibly be fair? We do get caught up in this idea of fairness, but it's an inward-looking fairness. It's, I deserve more because I've done more things. Of course, the head of our church is the Lord Jesus who didn't deserve any of the treatment he received, who didn't deserve any of the suffering, and he wants us to be like him. I mean, as Joseph said, how do you know whether or not you're close to Jesus? It's the greatest indication that you are willing to grab people up in their sins and cast their sins behind their backs and carry them.
John Bytheway:	01:43:37	You look with compassion on perishing souls.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:43:40	Yes. If you start seeing people the way God sees people, and that is in relentless pursuit. If you see them as God loves them so much, if there was any way to get them into the celestial kingdom, let's get them in there. That demonstrates a changed heart where maybe I'm not there yet. Maybe it'll take me a long time to get to the point where I have a changed enough heart to where I'm not worried about whether or not someone else has

		suffered as much as I have. I'm more worried about accepting the suffering the Lord has done for me already.
John Bytheway:	01:44:22	Nicely put. Hank, such a good question. In both the prodigal son and the laborers in the vineyard, it's that sideways comparison. Look, if you look at it with justice and mercy, it's like, I want mercy for me, but I have a list of people I'd like to get some justice. A nice helping for this guy over here. I love Alma to Corianton: Hey, son, let these things trouble you no more. Let me get my own act together. Then when mercy is extended to me, blessed or the merciful, they obtain mercy. When you obtain it, you want it for others. Like you said, Gerrit, if I need mercy, it takes the sword of justice out of my hand. I say, I trust the Lord so much. I'm gonna let him sort out the justice and mercy. I just gotta get my own act together. Right?
Hank Smith:	01:45:16	John, do you remember Danny Ricks a couple of weeks ago? He said, can you imagine someone's standing at judgment and Jesus is in front of him? You tap Jesus on the shoulder. Right? Hey, I got a couple thoughts about this guy you're gonna be interested in.
John Bytheway:	01:45:29	Yeah. I have a friend of the court briefing I'd like to hand you on this guy.
Hank Smith:	01:45:33	Hey, before you make a judgment, I think you're gonna want my input on this one.
John Bytheway:	01:45:39	It's so nice that Jesus knows hearts from the outside. We see a little bit, but I want the Savior to see me fully. He sees others fully. I totally trust him. Who else are you gonna trust?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:45:53	One of my favorite talks of all time, one that pierced me to the center of my soul, which he had a great ability to do, was from President Faust in 1997. It was a talk called The Weightier Matters of the Law. It speaks directly to this idea. He says; indeed, moral standards must be maintained in large measure. Those who are disobedient punish themselves. As the Lord said through Jeremiah, thy own wickedness shall correct thee and thy backsliding shall reprove thee. Those entrusted with judicial responsibility in the kingdom of God must see that the church remains clean so the living waters of life flow unimpeded. However, true religion is not looking primarily for weaknesses, faults, and errors. It is the spirit of strengthening and overlooking faults, even as we would wish our own faults to be overlooked. When we focus our entire attention on what may be wrong, rather than what is right, we miss the sublime beauty and the essence of the sweet gospel of the Master.

	01:47:05	Judgment, the weightier matters of the law mentioned by the Savior cannot be separated from the other two: mercy and faith. Shakespeare wrote of “the quality of mercy.” Speaking through Portia, he said, “We do pray for mercy; / And that same prayer doth teach us all to render / The deeds of mercy.” I am frank to admit that when I say my prayers, I do not ask for justice; I ask for mercy. I can still hear him saying those words when I first heard them, that when we're on our knees, we are always begging for mercy. No one's ever begging God to meet out to us the justice we deserve for our sinfulness. We're asking God to say, please overlook how horrible I am. Grant me grace that I don't deserve. I always think when we judge other people, we want to judge them by their worst day. That's what we want to do. We want to say; this person did this. That's who they are. This person got mad at me in a basketball game. That's who they are. They are this person. They are this jerk guy shoved me or whatever. What we want God to do is we want God to judge us by our best day. We want God to forget all the bad days, the day that we were the closest to God. That's when we want God to say that that's who you are.
	01:48:47	How great is the mercy of our Lord Jesus that He is willing to overlook the horrible days, the bad days, the sin filled days, the days where we fall short because God cares much more about who we are going to be tomorrow than who we were yesterday. I am frank to admit, like President Faust, that when I say my prayers, I ask for mercy and not justice.
John Bytheway:	01:49:21	This is amazing. I'm feeling like there's this line of revelations one after another, but 76. You have to go, whoa. This is the vision. As we talked about it today, I'm thinking, this is glad tidings. This is good news. The synonym for glad tidings, good news is gospel. This is the joyous gospel of Jesus Christ right here. The Wilford Woodruff statement that we read at the beginning. I feel to love the Lord more than ever before in my life. He probably wrestled with some of that stuff that he had learned all his life. Thank you for spending this time with us today, Gerrit. Hank, you have any last lines for us?
Hank Smith:	01:50:08	With these Voices of the Restoration, Alvin keeps coming up, here's this family, the Smith family restoring the gospel, Joseph and his family. You think, well, Alvin didn't get to pay a part in that, but he kind of does.
John Bytheway:	01:50:22	Wow. That's an awesome insight.

Hank Smith:	01:50:24	Joseph is pushing these questions of, well, how? It's Alvin, who seems to be on his mind. It's fascinating that Alvin's playing a part in the restoration.
John Bytheway:	01:50:36	I wonder if when he saw him in section 37, did Alvin wink at him?
Hank Smith:	01:50:41	Hey.
John Bytheway:	01:50:42	Did Alvin, give him a nod of do you see what's going on here? Do you see how awesome this is? All who would've accepted it had they given a chance? Oh, what great words those must have been too. We'll look forward to that one. I'm happy to wait. I trust him. I trust that it's coming. I trust that I don't have the full story right now, but that I will.
Hank Smith:	01:51:05	Gerrit doesn't Joseph say at one point, I wanna teach you more, but you just fall apart.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:51:11	But yeah, when he tries to teach people, they fly apart like glass. Because he actually has this happen over and over and over again. When he receives revelations, people leave the church. When he teaches Doctrine and Covenants section 76, people leave the church. When he teaches baptisms for the dead, people leave the church. We think of baptisms for the dead as like, how could anyone have a problem with this doctrine? But, you only have to talk to anyone else who's not a Latter-day Saint, they will have a problem. They'll let you know that they have a problem. And you even see this with all of the apostate groups that break away after Joseph's murdered. All of them are coming from a background where Joseph loves baptism for the dead. He is talking about it all the time. He's preaching about it all the time. They're building a temple with a font in it because he cares so much about it.
	01:52:05	People are performing them. He's sending letters to the church telling them how to do it and what's important about it. It is clearly a very big deal to Joseph. Yet all of these apostate groups that break away, immediately start rejecting the doctrine of work for the dead--temple work generally. Why is that? Well, it's not because it was super popular. It's because it was super unpopular, because the fundamental principle of Protestant theology is you have to accept Jesus in this life to be saved. Baptisms for the dead says, except you don't. I have to change everything I believe about Christianity to believe that someone can be saved who didn't accept Jesus in this life. Some people, that's too hard to do. It's much easier to try to, or at least you think, it's easier to convince people by not teaching that radical

		doctrine. You can see those doctrines of temple ordinances work for the dead. The fact they are cast aside so quickly by people like Sidney Rigdon when they are clearly so central to Joseph Smith, demonstrates how unpopular those things were in the wider culture.
Hank Smith:	01:53:22	Yeah, and we have a Voices of the Restoration on that.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:53:26	Oh, well, I intend to be back and provide more insight on that.
Hank Smith:	01:53:30	Yeah. A little teaser.
John Bytheway:	01:53:31	You mentioned briefly the Premortal existence. I just am thinking of Elder Maxwell's phrase that it was a wonderful flood of light. The same is true of Section 76, a wonderful flood of light and knowledge. To go, whoa, I'm seeing a bigger, brighter, more beautiful picture than I knew--than I ever saw before. That's how we love to look at it.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:53:58	That's how I feel when I read Doctrine and Covenants section 76, especially the more that you study what people believe before it and what most Christians continue to believe today. Boy, when I see people casually give away their faith, I'm thinking, so you are leaving the faith that proclaims, that Jesus literally saved everyone for one that says he literally saved almost no one. I understand that there are questions that we can't answer. I understand that there are difficult aspects of history and theology. People have very different experiences in life. Faith is complex. But I'm not willing to give up my belief that God saves everyone. That's what I'm forced to do. The moment I say that Joseph Smith's not a prophet, I have abandoned forever that doctrine.
John Bytheway:	01:54:57	I feel people that think they wanna leave, but I'm okay. What are you gonna do with some of these beautiful doctrines? Are you gonna throw Eve under the bus like most of the world has?
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:55:12	If you're a Christian, you're gonna say, Eve destroyed the world. If you're a Latter-day Saint, you're going to say she created the entire purpose of the world.
John Bytheway:	01:55:22	Go back to 137. I saw our glorious Mother Eve.
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	01:55:26	Yep. It is a stark, Latter-day Saint distinction. All of the Christian world hates Adam and Eve because they believe, erroneously so, that Adam and Eve destroyed the world. That the world was perfect, that the intent of the creation of the world was us living

		in paradise and then Adam and Eve ate the fruit. Because they ate the fruit, we all now suffer. They hate Adam and Eve because Adam and Eve destroyed the world for everyone. We believe that Adam and Eve fulfilled the purpose of the world, the whole point of the world. You couldn't be further apart. I mean, they believe Adam and Eve destroyed God's plan. We believe Adam and Eve were God's plan. The plan was so that people would have a mortal experience. I go back to that theologian I was talking about earlier. You can see him wrestle with this in his writings and in his speaking.
	01:56:24	The very first thing God did with mankind was a cosmic disaster? The very first thing he did was an utter failure that destroyed all of mankind. That's why he had to conclude, look, could God have changed that outcome if he wanted to? Of course, he could. He's God. God must have for some reason wanted that outcome, even though it appears terrible. And it appears terrible because this Christian brother of ours doesn't know that there's a preexistence. He doesn't know that the purpose of the earth was for already existing eternal spirits to come to earth, to progress and grow and to become like God. When you don't know that there's a premortal life, Adam and Eve appear to be a cosmic disaster. But when you know that that was the plan God wanted in the first place, that we all shouted for joy over, suddenly it stops being a disaster and it starts being exactly what the plan was from the very beginning.
John Bytheway:	01:57:35	So good.
Hank Smith:	01:57:36	So much left to talk about. Sounds like we ought to have him back.
John Bytheway:	01:57:40	We would like to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorenson. As Hank always says, we always remember our founder Steve Sorenson. Thanks for joining us on this Voices of the Restoration edition of followHIM.