



- John Bytheway: 00:00:03 Hello everyone and welcome to followHIM. This is our last of our Voices of the Restoration episodes that we've had all year. What is it, number 13 or something, Hank, or number 12?
- Hank Smith: 00:00:13 Number 12.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:14 Number 12. Like 12 is a good number for church stuff.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:00:18 It probably feels like 13, 14 or 15, but it's only been 12. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:22 We're so happy to have Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat back. We have too much fun. With some pre-show prep we have to tell each other. No, we've gotta hit record and start. We're having so much fun talking. Gerrit has a podcast we want you all to know about called Standard of Truth. You've got like 250 episodes, don't you Gerrit?
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:00:42 We've been going for four and a half years or so and we do a couple a week, so we've got a lot. It's very low quality compared to this podcast. If people go there, they're gonna be like, well, how come it's not as polished and that posts are worse and the content's worse. It's a step down. It's a step down, but when you've binged on all the followHIM that you can get, then it's like, well, when you've got nothing else to do, it's okay.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:09 See, right there you know enough to know, I think I would like that Standards Of Truth podcast.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:15 John, I've talked to a number of people who all have said the exact same thing, almost word for word. Hey, I love your show. I'm like, Hey, thank you so much. I know this is gonna be kind of weird, but I love your show because you introduced me to my favorite show. Standard of Truth.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:30 That's right.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:01:31 Luckily It was only three or four people. I think those are our three or four listeners. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:01:37 Yeah. You're like, we noticed that we doubled our numbers that week.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:01:40 Yeah, we had a giant spike in numbers, but we, I appreciate that. I mean, we answer listener's questions about church history topics and we talk about early church history. I'm on there with my friend Richard LeDuc. He has a Ph.D. in business so you know, you're getting a different view of someone who's not really studying history. We try to take listeners' questions and provide what the original sources were for. You know, someone might say, well when did someone say this? Or did Joseph actually teach that? And we can go through it to try to provide answers.

Hank Smith: 00:02:09 It's wonderful. It really is. That's my go-to podcast, especially if you've got a long drive. You wanna laugh.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:02:16 Oh, I was gonna say, if you want to fall asleep, don't do it when you are driving. Yeah. We should put a disclaimer actually on the, you know, when someone tunes in like, warning you're driving a car.

Hank Smith: 00:02:26 Yeah. Non-prescription sleep aid. Yeah.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:02:28 Yeah, yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:02:29 Do not listen while operating heavy machinery or your driving.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:02:32 Unisom is is suing us currently probably. But yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:02:36 Much competition. You're such a trustworthy source. People need to know that. This is somebody you wanna know about Joseph Smith. You wanna know from a source you can absolutely trust. Gerrit.

Hank Smith: 00:02:49 Exactly how he is here is how he is in person. He is genuine, he is fun, he is smart. Gerrit, we can't thank you enough. You've given us a lot of time.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:02:58 Thank you. I want you to speak at my funeral. That'd be great.

Hank Smith: 00:03:02 I think there's gonna be many people from history that are excited to meet Gerrit. The day Gerrit dies, the spirit world's gonna be like, he's here. He's here. It's finally happened.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:03:13 Yeah. Well I hope so. I hope someone's there.

John Bytheway: 00:03:16 They're gonna say stuff like, tell me what I said that time because you tell it better than the way it happened.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:03:21 Yeah. That's actually a big fear you have as a historian, you can only go off of the sources that exist and you're like, he wrote a letter saying that he wanted to be there by September and then you go to the next life and he's like right after that I wrote four letters saying I wasn't gonna be there till October. What? I didn't have any of those. I only went off the one letter that existed. There's a great fear that essentially everyone you've talked about in the next life, they're gonna be like, totally missed what I said in my journal. I don't have your journal. Why didn't you bring it to me? That would've been a much better experience.

Hank Smith: 00:03:55 I bet as a historian you're going, I have to meet these people one day. I better be gentle.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:04:01 You do think about it. You do think like, well, I mean we believe in the afterlife. For some people, I'm not worried about it at all. Like if I didn't fully understand what a dirt bag Doctor Philastus Hurlbut was and I said things about him that were over the top, I've been, I'll be fine with it. If I see him in the next life, that means I've probably done a lot of things I shouldn't have either. So, I mean I guess we'll commiserate together as we're in prison.

John Bytheway: 00:04:26 Well, speaking of the next life, our topic here on Voices of the Restoration is baptism for our ancestors. A glorious doctrine, and I'm looking forward to this because it is a glorious doctrine. It's fun to see how excited the saints were about it and this is only on the digital version of the Come Follow Me. Read what some of these early saints said when first hearing about the doctrine of baptism for our deceased ancestors. You could feel their excitement.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:05:03 You put yourself in a box, you're like, what are some of the most important doctrines of the restoration? Obviously, the atonement of Jesus Christ is the center of everything in the gospel. That is the central thing that matters. You also end up inside of Christianity having all kinds of questions surrounding the atonement of Jesus Christ. You have wings of Christianity that believe that Jesus only died for a very small select group of people, that God already decided that he was going to give the gift of faith to before he ever created them. Salvation is completely, it's nothing of yourself, it's only of God. God

controls everything. God chose to give you grace and to save you through faith he shouldn't have because you deserve to burn in hell. But he decided to give it to you as a free will gift. One whole of Christianity believes that salvation is literally nothing of yourself.

00:06:02 Praise God. Give God all the praise because no one deserves to be saved and only the very few people that are given this gift of grace are saved. And then on the other wing, essentially you have this argument that Jesus actually did die for everybody. That he wanted everyone to be saved. And that's why missionary work is so desperate because the reason why that person on an island in the sea is going to go to hell is because they haven't heard the gospel. If they heard it, they could be saved. God wants to save them, but I'm too lazy to get on a boat and go preach to them and so therefore they're going to go to hell. Well, so within Protestantism itself you have this gigantic range of what the belief about the extent of Christ's atonement are. That either almost no one is saved and it's completely from God or everyone could be saved if they were preached to.

00:07:03 The problem is, while those are a very big range. I've got my hands up here only for people who are watching this on video. If they're just listening, they're going to be like, boy, it'd be great if he had some visuals. With this very wide range, in the end in Joseph Smith's time, essentially whether you believe that Jesus could save everyone if they accepted the truth or whether you believe that God only intended to save a few people who were then given the truth. In the end, it's still the same very small number of people that are actually saved because in order to be saved you have to have faith in Jesus Christ before you die. This is an understanding among all Christians in Joseph Smith's life as Joseph's growing up. You see how big a deal, this idea that you are saved by faith alone, how big a deal it is in the early revelations that Joseph receives. I know, as a callback that your listeners will have to go all the way back to the early revelations.

00:08:10 They'll get to D&C 20 and 21 and 22 and 74. Some of those earliest revelations are all about trying to figure out, what do you mean baptisms essential? Because all of the Protestant world was teaching salvation is by faith alone. Sure, you get baptized but you aren't getting baptized because it saves you. Faith saves you and nothing else. You get baptized because Jesus told you to. It's a sign that you have faith, but it has no bearing on your actual salvation. Well then Joseph Smith translates the Book of Mormon. Well the Book of Mormon makes it pretty clear that it is not just a, if you feel like it kind of

thing, that baptism is essential for salvation. Then Joseph Smith receives revelations that make further this declaration Doctrine and Covenants section 20. One of the first questions that happens in the early church is D&C 22 where there are people who have already been baptized, probably Baptist themselves, who've been baptized as adults.

00:09:22 The idea that you would need to be re-baptized is seen as an error by most people. That's an idea that, well baptism isn't a saving ordinance. Your baptism, that's part of this profession of your faith, but it doesn't do anything. It's an example that you have faith. Joseph, very early on has people that say, I shouldn't need to be baptized. I've already been baptized. And Doctrine and Covenants section 22 is received saying no, you could be baptized a hundred times, you could be baptized a million times. If you're not baptized by proper authority and in the proper way, then it doesn't go towards your salvation. The fact that Latter-day Saints believe that baptism is essential at all, is already at variance of the entire Protestant Christian world. Already. The very fact that we're saying that when Jesus said you need to believe and be baptized, he meant it.

00:10:20 He wasn't just saying, you know what? If you feel like it, if you get around to it, if the water's warm, if you can find a nice font, if you can make a baptism, destination baptism and go to Hawaii to do it. I mean, that it's an essential part is already a problem. And you see that in the early church because the first question is, well what if I've already been baptized? Then the next question, we don't know exactly when, but sometime right after that is Doctrine and Covenants section 74. What about babies then? Do we need to baptize our children? What's one of the reasons why infant baptism was seen as essential in the early churches after the Apostasy? Well, if you have to be baptized to be saved and many infants die in their childhood, well then, we need to make sure they're baptized.

00:11:09 Doctrine and Covenants section 74 refutes that idea. That little children are holy because of the atonement. Of course, the Book of Mormon refutes it as well. Already as a Latter-day Saint, whether you are coming from being a Methodist or an Episcopalian, whether you are a Baptist or you are a congregationalist Presbyterian, whatever you are, before you convert, you've already made a gigantic change in your theological beliefs because you are affirming that baptism is essential. Well that leads to other questions because if baptism's actually essential, there are not very many people that are gonna be going to heaven. If baptism by the proper authority--so not just baptism by anyone--baptism by a Latter-

day Saint elder in 1833. If that's the only way that you're going to be able to go to the celestial kingdom, it is going to be a lonely place. It's gonna be like my podcast. Four people there.

00:12:17 Not that I would make it, I'd be on the outside looking in. Then starts to become these other questions. When you study the doctrine of baptism and salvation, it's powerful, at least to me maybe because I'm a nerd, a history person. To see God, reveal line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there little. So he teaches them that baptism's essential. Then he teaches them in Doctrine and Covenants section 76, that there are multiple kingdoms, but in order to enter into the highest you have to become a member of the church of the firstborn. You have to be baptized into the church and he doesn't reveal any other information after that. So, you go to Doctrine and Covenants section 1 37, which I know you haven't quite covered yet. Fast forward, replay this some other time. We know that Joseph is completely stunned by that doctrine.

00:13:17 In 1836, there he is in the temple. He has this vision of the celestial kingdom and he sees his brother Alvin there. Now the fact that Alvin had never been baptized by proper authority by other accounts, it's actually a big deal that Alvin had never really been baptized at all because according to one account, it's the excuse that the Presbyterian minister conducting his funeral sermon uses to say that Alvin was not saved. Now you might be thinking, why in the world would a Presbyterian who doesn't believe that baptism's essential for salvation, why would he say Alvin's not saved because Alvin wasn't baptized? Because again, baptism is a sign that you have been given the gift of faith. So it's hard to argue God gave you the gift of faith and you were a true Christian, but you were an adult and never once felt compelled to be baptized. So, the baptism doesn't save you, but the baptism is a demonstration that you must not really have had the gift of faith because if you had it, you would've asked to be baptized.

Hank Smith: 00:14:30 And God didn't choose you. Yeah.

00:14:33 I don't know that I would book him at my funeral sermon. Not giving as much comfort to the family as you could by leading with, well we all know Alvin's in hell, what are we having for refreshments? I don't know if that's the best way to deal with a grieving family. I bring that up to show, that the idea of baptism and who is saved and who isn't saved is something that is on Joseph's mind long before there is a church, long before the Book of Mormon is published. On Joseph's mind, heavy is the fact that his brother that he revered is going to hell. That's what

every Christian tells him. Every Christian tells him, oh, if Alvin's an adult and he never felt the need to be baptized, clearly, he is never given the gift of faith. Obviously, he is not saved. But then even as God reveals the real truth to Joseph, as the restoration has unfolded because it's coming in fits and starts and bits and pieces, Joseph still doesn't have the full picture.

00:15:42 When Joseph has this vision and sees Alvin in the celestial kingdom, we get an insight into what Joseph thought Alvin's eventual end was going to be by Joseph's reaction. I marvel that he had obtained as such a kingdom. That means if you would've asked Joseph in 1835, can Alvin go to the celestial kingdom? Now Joseph learned from Doctrine and Covenants section 76 that Alvin wasn't gonna be burning in hell forever. I'm sure that was comforting because he learned, actually there is no eternal hell and everyone's going to a kingdom that's far so great and glorious that you can't comprehend it and those good people of the earth who just don't have the truth, they're going to this great and glorious kingdom. But that revelation did say that you had to be a member of the church of the firstborn to go to the celestial kingdom. So, if you ask Joseph, in 1835 can Alvin go to the celestial kingdom, he would've probably not been very happy.

00:16:48 He would have been quoting scripture, quoting Doctrine and Covenants section 76 and said, well he can't because that's what God said. Then with D&C 137 with that vision, he sees Alvin there and what does the Lord tell him? All those who would've accepted the gospel, they also are saved in the celestial kingdom. It must have been one of the greatest days of Joseph's life. For essentially 13 years, he has had this constant millstone hanging over his head that his brother, that he desperately loved, couldn't actually obtain the celestial kingdom, or even be saved before he had DNC 76 revealed. So, the interesting part is as God's laying this out, line upon line and precept upon precept, he doesn't tell Joseph how, because now Joseph in 1836 has to believe an absolute contradiction. You absolutely have to be baptized by the proper authority in order to go to the celestial kingdom except when you don't, which is apparently whenever.

00:18:05 So do you have to be baptized to go to the celestial kingdom? Yes. What about people haven't heard? Except for them. Do you have to be baptized to go to the--no, no, you do, you have to be baptized to go to the celestial kingdom except when you don't. I think sometimes we get worked up because we can't figure out exactly how things are going to play out in the next life. So, we invent in our minds, well it must be like this and if it's like this

then that's gonna be a really hard time because without revelation we start trying to fill in the gaps and without revelation those gaps won't fill the right way. It just becomes speculative, especially when we're speculating we fill in those gaps of doctrine sometimes with emotion and feelings rather than what the Lord has revealed. Joseph, and frankly every member of the church, in 1836 had to believe an absolute contradiction. They had to believe that baptism was essential for celestial glory and also it wasn't essential for celestial glory and it appeared to be a ridiculous contradiction. I mean it does. I mean...

00:19:17 Right.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:19:18 No, you absolutely have to be baptized except when you don't and it looks contradictory, but it was never actually a contradiction and that's what I hope we can take away from this. Sometimes we see things and we think, well if this is the church's doctrine on this and this is the church's doctrine on that, then there's no way that this could--well, you don't actually know that. Joseph Smith himself, the prophet of the restoration, who knows more about how someone's getting to the celestial kingdom than anyone who has ever lived. I mean, maybe brother Jared, so I don't know, but I mean he is, he is as informed as anyone ever and he doesn't know. They don't know that four years later God is going to reveal how it's possible. All they're told is that it's possible. All those who would've accepted the gospel, they can be saved. Okay, but you also told us everyone had to be baptized.

Hank Smith: 00:20:18 He's like, I know.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:20:19 All right, so I guess maybe they don't have to be baptized. I mean I don't really understand. It was actually never a contradiction is my point. It appeared to be a contradiction because there was more revelation that had to come. That doesn't help you though in 1837 if your brother died before he could make it to Kirtland to get baptized. It doesn't help you then to resolve the contradiction when it's your family member who you just lost. For whatever reason, God waited to fully reveal that. We have some indication that the doctrine of baptism for the dead was a pretty difficult thing even for members to accept.

John Bytheway: 00:21:00 Like section 76.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:21:01 Like section 76. Now we don't have as many stark examples where someone like apostatizes over it, but you certainly have

even Joseph, the letter that he writes to the Quorum of the 12 in England explaining it to them. We assume that before this, the doctrine of baptism of the dead has reached your ears. As controversial as a lot of Latter-day Saint doctrines are, one of the ones that becomes even more controversial is this one. And that's because in either Protestantism or Catholicism, for every church in Joseph Smith's day, there is one unifying factor that they all have. Catholics and Presbyterians aren't exactly hanging out in Joseph's day. They're not getting together for a Sabbath day brunch, but they would all agree on one thing and that is if you have not accepted Jesus Christ and then die, you go to hell,

Hank Smith: 00:22:04

Death is the deadline.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:22:04

Yep. You don't pass go. You don't collect \$200, you go directly to hell. If you have not accepted Jesus, it doesn't matter why you haven't accepted Jesus. Latter-day Saints have already hurt the Christian concept of the afterlife by saying hell itself, eternal hell, look, suffering exists, but the tonality of hell, the suffering forever for trillions upon trillions of years, no end worm die if not--that doesn't exist. Already, Latter-day Saints have said, the hell part is not true. God will eventually save all of his children in some kingdom of glory. Well, now with baptisms for the dead, it went to the other side of that. That now, not only is it that people who haven't accepted aren't actually going to roast in the fires of hell that doesn't exist. Now people who haven't accepted actually have an equal full opportunity to obtain the same blessings as anyone who had the opportunity to hear the gospel.

00:23:23

So, it is seen as super controversial because across all of Christianity there is one demarcator and that is you accept Jesus while you're alive. It begs the question, even right now in the world, the majority of the world isn't Christian. Christianity's the largest world religion, but the majority of the world isn't Christian. Right now, there are billions upon billions upon billions of people.

John Bytheway: 00:23:56

No exaggeration.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:23:59

No exaggeration. And now we go backwards to all the billions of people who lived before. They cannot go to heaven. Now sometimes in today's world people really soft pedal hell, because no one wants to preach it. Not everyone's Jonathan Edwards, they will say, look, there's only two places. There's only heaven and there's only hell. You're going to one of those places and you can't go to heaven if you haven't accepted Jesus before you die. You might find someone who says, well I don't

think we really know what happens to people who haven't accepted.

00:24:30 You're like, yeah, but you immediately go to heaven or hell, right? Well, yeah. So what if someone doesn't have faith in Jesus? I mean we don't really know. I think we kind of do know. You just don't wanna say. That if you have to have faith in Jesus in order to go to heaven and you have to have it before you die, then that means the majority of all of the people that God ever created and not just ever created is creating right now. While we've been talking how many tens of thousands of spirits, according to Christian theology that God has created out of nothing, knowing that they would never have faith in Jesus, but giving them an immortal spirit even though He knew that they would never have faith in Jesus, he knows that they're about to be born to atheist parents in North Korea and he won't even hear the word Christian in his entire life, but he makes an immortal spirit for him anyway, just so he can writhe in that agony of hell when the time comes.

00:25:31 The problem with saying that the only chance people have is in this life, is that God goes from being merciful kind and just to being a majority of the time, arbitrary and judgmental. It's the reason why people like John Calvin are going to come to the conclusion that God never intended to save most people. Because, if you are an all-powerful God, guess what you get to do? Whatever you want to do. If God wanted to save most people, God would've saved most people. We throw a lot of things back on the fall and I get why. We understand that, yeah, by the fall came soon into the world. I mean, we agree on a lot of those points. God perfectly knew that the fall was going to happen and to say that God didn't say that, God's not all powerful. For Latter-day Saints who've already had this huge expansion in what their understanding of the purpose of this life is, an understanding of a premortal life, an understanding of our relationship to God, how great and glorious the afterlife is going to be, even to people who don't accept the gospel, baptisms for the dead--it is the culmination of everything that Joseph was teaching.

00:26:58 There's a George A. Smith sermon in the Utah period where he basically says that, you know, Joseph is getting things line upon line, culminating this idea of baptism for the dead and other work for the dead. That every single person can have this opportunity. It is the part of Latter-day Saint theology that I want to just shout from the rooftops. Every time I see a disaffected Christian say something like, look how horrible things are, look how many people are burning in hell. I mean, if

God is just, he wouldn't allow this. You wanna just say God has a plan for everybody.

00:27:38 God actually didn't create people just to burn in hell. God does want us to be happy and it provided a way for us to be saved. One of the cool parts about the Voices of the Restoration, the accounts that you have here, is most of these are women that are writing to their husbands because their husbands are actually on their mission in England. So, if you look at like Phebe Woodruff or you look at Vilate Kimball, they're letting their husbands know about this glorious doctrine, but you know they learned it first. You are, these guys are out there, they're trying to preach, they're trying to spread the word and they get these letters that say things that are incredible because again, to a Latter-day Saint, we don't realize how radical it is. We don't understand the concept because you've always grown up, if you've been a Latter-day Saint your whole life, believing that God would provide an equal opportunity for everyone. It is radical. It is 2000 years of Christianity. Well, 1800 years of Christianity turned on its head that everyone has an opportunity.

John Bytheway: 00:28:44 Some critics will say, oh, he was reading First Corinthians and he saw that obscure verse or something, but where did it first come from? And this is one of the things I, one of the things I loved about these quotations was a statement that Joseph Smith made about, I can taste the principles of eternal life. When something tastes good, you go, ooh, I've never heard that before. But I love that. And that's what these responses sound like. Can you tell us how it first came to him? What was the setting when this idea first was articulated as baptism for the dead?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:29:21 Unfortunately we don't have the sermon. We don't have a record of the sermon itself that he gives. What we have is lots of records that it was at the funeral sermon of Seymour Brunson, who was a young elder who had passed away relatively untimely. Joseph himself when he writes to the 12, that's what he says.

John Bytheway: 00:29:45 I've learned from Gerrit that some of these letters went across the Atlantic Ocean before Joseph officially announced the idea of the doctrine

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:29:56 Before Joseph sent his own letter to the Twelve. Because he does announce it publicly at the funeral of Seymour Brunson. The 12 aren't at the funeral of Seymour Brunson. Joseph takes a little bit of time before he writes a letter explaining it all, but

their wives, boy, they're all right on that because they all realize this is incredible. Yeah, it's one of the first things they're gonna, they're gonna hurry and write because this is not just like, oh, Joseph said we might build another cabin down by the river. No, this is a titanic shift in an understanding of how salvation can come to people. You have Vilate Kimball and you have Phebe Woodruff writing to their husbands, who are on their mission in England, telling them about it before Joseph even sends a letter saying, hey, just so you know, this is a new doctrine that we're teaching.

- John Bytheway: 00:30:49 Funny thing happened at the funeral.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:30:51 The other day, I just so happened to say that every single person has an opportunity to be saved.
- John Bytheway: 00:30:57 For those of you looking at the Voices of the Restoration, the digital excerpt or the digital part of the manual that has these quotations, it's really fun to read and feel the excitement. Hank, do you want to read the excerpt about Phebe writing to Wilfred Woodruff?
- Hank Smith: 00:31:12 Absolutely. Phebe and Wilfred Woodruff and right below that is a picture of Orson Pratt. So, I'm not quite sure why that's there, but, here's what it says. Phebe Woodruff was living near Nauvoo when Joseph Smith began teaching about the possibility of being baptized for those who had lived previously. She wrote about it to her husband Wilfred, who is serving a mission in England, and this is the quote: "Brother Joseph ... has learned by revelation that those in this church may be baptized for any of their relatives who are dead and had not a privilege of hearing this gospel. Even for their children, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, uncles and aunts. ... As soon as they are baptized for their friends, they're released from prison and they can claim them in the resurrection and bring them into the celestial kingdom--this doctrine is cordially received by the church and they're going forward in multitudes, some are going to be baptized as many as 16 times ... in one day." Wilfred Woodruff later said of this principle: "The moment I heard of it, my soul leaped with joy. ... I went forward and was baptised for all my dead relatives I could think of. ... I felt to say hallelujah when the revelation came forth revealing to us baptism for the dead. I felt that we had a right to rejoice in the blessings of Heaven."
- John Bytheway: 00:32:31 Yeah, I think if there were any emojis in that letter, there would've been lots of smiley faces and...

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:32:36 And you can tell from the rest of Wilfred Woodruff's life is an absolute devotion to the idea that you can perform sacred ordinances for people that have passed on. He is a very firm believer in it. In fact, when you get to his later journals, many of those pages are filled with how many baptisms and how many endowments, and he is dedicated to the idea of temple work. She writes that letter to him in October. I mean, I don't know exactly when he gets it, but it's going to be a couple more months before Joseph writes to the Twelve in England and lets them know. You think he'd like send like a quick little letter, hey, about to preach a radical new doctrine that will change everything, just so you know, FYI. Instead they're hearing it from individuals who were at this funeral sermon and have heard Joseph talk about it in other places since that time.

00:33:37 So Joseph is going to write a pretty lengthy letter to the Quorum of the Twelve. In fact, it's one of the more difficult letters to read. I mean not that any 19th century handwriting is like super amazing. When you're sending a letter a long ways, when you're sending it to England, it's very, very, very expensive. So, you get charged per page. For every page, you're gonna have to pay more money for the letter you sent. You could just pony up and pay more money or you can do what they do with this letter and that is you write the letter, you go down the lines and then you turn it sideways and you write another page going the opposite way. I'm sure if you have the actual letter in your hand, you can probably figure out how to read it, but in actuality to a historian, it's the worst invention that's ever occurred.

00:34:28 Try to figure out what that word is because something's overlaying it. But Joseph has a lot to say in this letter. He's counseling them a great deal. He leads into it this way. He says, the work in which we are unitedly engaged in is one of no ordinary kind. The enemies we have to contend against are subtle and well skilled in maneuvering. It behooves us then to be on the alert to concentrate our energies and that the best feeling should exist in our midst and then by the help of the Almighty, we shall go on from victory to victory and from conquest to conquest. Our evil passions will be subdued. Our prejudices depart.

00:35:16 We shall find no room in our bosoms for hatred. Vice will hide its deformed head and we shall stand approved in the side of heaven and be acknowledged the sons of God. Let us realize that we are not to live to ourselves, but to God and by so doing the greatest blessings will rest upon us both in time and eternity. That's what he says right before he says, I presume the

doctrine of baptism for the dead has ere this reached your ears. And he is right, because Phebe and Vilate were quick to the trigger. There they were like, yeah, and they got it off. Even the way he writes this, he knows that they are gonna get that and go, what? To us it's milk toast. It's the run of the mill. We've always thought. To them, the concept that anyone could be saved who did not accept Jesus, there is no Christian who believes this and suddenly Joseph reveals it. He says, I presume the doctrine of baptism for the dead has ere this reached your ears and may have raised some inquiries in your mind respecting the same. Well, you don't say?

John Bytheway: 00:36:29

You think?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:36:30

It's possible that, you know, let me remind you first that we're all united in this great wonderful cause. Because, Wilfred Woodruff has an amazing response to it. There's no guarantee that everyone is, because it is brand new. I cannot in this letter, give you all of the information that you may desire on the subject, but aside from my knowledge independent of the Bible, I would say that this was certainly practiced by the ancient churches and St. Paul endeavors to prove the doctrine of resurrection from the same and says else, what shall they do who are baptized for the dead? I first mentioned this doctrine in public while preaching the funeral sermon of Brother Seymour Brunson and have since then given general instructions to the church on the subject. The saints have the privilege of being baptized for those of their relatives who are dead, who they feel to believe would've embraced the gospel if they had been privileged with hearing it, and who have received the gospel in the spirit through the instrumentality of those who may have been commissioned to preach to them while in prison.

00:37:47

Without enlarging upon the subject, you will undoubtedly see its consistency and reasonableness and presents the gospel of Jesus Christ in probably a more enlarged scale than some have received it. As the performance of this rite is more particularly confined to this place, it will not be necessary to enter into the particulars. At the same time, I always feel glad to give all the information in my power, but my space will not allow me to do it. One thing that Joseph is saying is that while we're teaching this doctrine, we're not teaching you to go do it in England. They don't yet have a temple. They can't, in 1840, go do this in the temple. Joseph's going to receive Doctrine and Covenants section 124 that's going to explain the necessity of doing this in the temple, but it's not something that's just supposed to be. Now Wilfred Woodruff heads down to the Thames and starts baptizing for the dead. That it's contained there in Nauvoo.

00:39:01 He gives him that information with the idea, you know, I'll be able to give you more when you get back. Some of the other information that Joseph gives on it, he says, I've spoken on this a few times. It actually is gonna become one of Joseph Smith's favorite doctrines. It's obviously for good reason, but he will preach on baptism for the dead a lot. He will spend multiple sermons talking about it in the same way that he first wrote to the 12. He'll give a sermon in 1842. This is Wilfred Woodruff writing in his journal recording this. He says, Joseph the seer made some edifying remarks concerning baptism for the dead. He said, the Bible supported the doctrine. Why are you baptized for the dead if the dead rise not? If there is one word of the Lord that supports the doctrine, it is enough to make it a true doctrine.

00:39:55 Again, if we can baptize a man in the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost for remission of sins, it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of--the phraseology clearly in 1842 already part of the phraseology--for and in behalf of our dead kindred who have not heard the gospel or its fullness of it. Joseph, you can almost feel the emotion in what he has to say. He is going to bring it up in one of the last sermons that he preaches. His 12th May, 1844 sermon that he gives. He is going to reference baptism for the dead. He's going to say, in my father's house, there are many mansions, in my father's kingdom are many kingdoms in order that you may be heirs of God and join heirs with me.

00:40:55 I do not believe the Methodist doctrine of sending honest and noble minded men to hell, along with the murderer and the adulterer. Joseph has always struggled with it. I mean, one way that I feel like my heart is united with Joseph's is Joseph feels keenly. This idea of unfairness, he feels it. Obviously, some of it's part of what's been revealed to him about things like Zion and our equality before God. But it is something that clearly has bothered him all the way back to when a preacher is telling him that his good, kind, wonderful brother, Alvin, is burning in hell. I think for Joseph, it's a big deal when he says that, you know, I do not believe the Methodist doctrine of sending honest and noble minded men to hell, along with the murderer and the adulterer that they may hurl all their hell and fiery billows upon me for they will roll off of me as fast as they come on it.

00:41:56 Again, I know that Latter-day Saints are often really troubled when some of our Christian brothers and sisters are quite vocal in letting us know that we're going to hell, that we're going to roast there. That we, you know, I mean, I know that can hurt

and that can be troubling and I think it's part of the reason, not in this sermon, but another Joseph, you said that I have no fear of hell that don't exist. Saints in Joseph's time are being told the same thing. You believe false doctrine, you are going to hell. You are terrible people. Joseph is responding to it. They will roll off me as fast as they come, but I have an order of things to save the poor fellows at any rate and to get them saved for I will send men to preach to them in prison and save them if I can.

00:42:51

There is baptism, et cetera for those who are alive and baptism for the dead. All who died without the knowledge of the gospel. I'm going on in my progress for eternal life. It is not only necessary that you should be baptized for your dead, but you'll have to go through all the ordinances for them, same as you have to save yourself. So, at this point in 1844, Joseph has already started to reveal the other saving exalting ordinances of the temple. Washings and anointings, endowments, sealings. Joseph declares in this public sermon. All of those things are going to be essential for celestial glory. You're going to do all of them for these people. Now, not quite yet, but he's telling them and they're--when Brigham Young reestablishes temple work and people begin doing work for the dead, he's not inventing that.

00:43:50

This is not something where Brigham Young's like, I don't know, I mean, maybe we could even do endowments for people. What do you guys think? Joseph has already stated and right before he died, weeks before he's murdered, you are going to have to do ordinances for everyone. When critics of the Latter-day Saints say, well, why are you wasting all this money building all these temples everywhere? Look at how many poor people you could feed. Why are you building a temple here? Why are you wasting all your time with these temples? Well, because work for the dead is core theology for us and it's not invented. It's not because President Hinkley said, you know what? What if we built some smaller temples? It is from the beginning, from the time that doctrine is unfurled, the prophet of the restoration has said that it's essential. They without us cannot be made perfect. We without them cannot be made perfect.

00:44:48

Temple work, it's not a sidelight of what Latter-day saints believe. It is what we do. The church exists to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man, and exaltation comes by accepting and keeping these temple ordinances. Most people, almost everyone who's ever lived won't have the opportunity to do that in this life. Everyone who's ever lived is going to have the opportunity to do that in the next life. That is so transformative. I don't know how anyone, as you brought up

before, how they can't taste this and it tastes like eternity. It tastes good to believe that we don't have to just say the words that God loves everyone and then in our mind be like, I mean he loves everyone but he shouldn't because everyone's a sinner and everyone deserves to burn in hell and most people will burn in hell. But yeah, God loves everyone.

00:45:49

That's why he keeps creating them out of nothing is because he's so excited to burn them in hell, when they burn in hell because they're gonna burn in hell because he already knows that when he creates them. Instead of having that like inner monologue, we can actually say God actually does. Through God's works, by your fruits you shall know--God has designed the plan where there is no arbitrary condemnation, there's no arbitrary exaltation. There is choice, there is freedom, and there is knowledge in this life or the next. He doesn't have Joseph F. Smith's vision yet of how work's gonna be organized in the next life. I mean, I'm sure you guys will refer to this again when you get to D&C 138, but I can't hardly talk about work for the dead without just being excited. It makes me love God so much. That while the rest of the world is trying to tell me that God created all of these precious people all over this world, he created them knowing that they would suffer forever.

00:46:57

We don't believe it because we believe in a God who's made a provision for every spirit in the eternal world. Not just, well, I guess hell won't be as bad as we thought it was gonna be. No. An actual opportunity to actually accept and become like our Father in Heaven. Not lip service. I'm not any better than someone born in Myanmar 400 years ago. I don't deserve salvation anymore. They're gonna have an equal opportunity to be saved. It is the doctrine we should shout from the rooftops. And even though people aren't super happy when we do. You'll have to go through all the ordinances for them the same as yourself. An innumerable host that no man can number Oh, go forward. Go forward and make your calling and your election sure. And if any man preach any other gospel than that which I have preached, he shall be cursed.

00:47:53

And some of you who now hear me shall see it. In regard to the law of the priesthood, there should be a place where all nations shall come up from time to time to receive their endowments. And the Lord has said this, this will be the place for baptisms for the dead. Every man that has been baptized and belongs to the kingdom has a right to be baptized for those who are gone before. And as soon as the law is obeyed here, the Lord has administrators there to set them free. A man may act as proxy for his own relatives. The ordination was laid out before the

foundation of the world. Those who we have much friendship for, it must be first revealed from God. Lest he should run too far. As an Adam, all die. So, in Christ shall all be made alive.

00:48:43 All shall be raised from the dead. The lamb of God have brought to pass the resurrection so that all shall rise from the dead. God almighty himself dwells in eternal fire. Flesh and blood cannot go there. All corruption is devoured by the fire. Our God is a consuming fire. When our flesh is quickened by the spirit, there will be no blood. Some dwell in higher glory than others. Those who have done wrong always have a wrong gnawing at them. Immortality dwells in everlasting burnings. I will from time to time reveal the subjects that are revealed to me and all the lies that are now hatched up are of the devil and all of the influence of the devil will be used against the kingdom of God. The servants of God teach nothing but eternal life. By their works ye shall know them. A good man will speak good things.

00:49:36 I feel in the name of the Lord to rebuke all such bad principles, liars, and look out to who you are going after. I exhort you to give heed to all virtue and teachings, which I have given you. You cannot go anywhere but where God will find you out. All must rise, all must enter into eternity. In order for you to receive your children to yourself, you must have a promise, some ordinance, some blessing. I could go on and on. It's a beautiful, beautiful sermon. It's also the same sermon where Joseph says, I never told you I was perfect, but there is no error in the revelations which I've taught.

John Bytheway: 00:50:16 I love that.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:50:17 Yeah, Joseph's not a perfect man.

John Bytheway: 00:50:19 Your eyes have been upon Joseph and his imperfections you have known and his language, you have known. Look at the revelations.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:50:26 I mean.

John Bytheway: 00:50:26 ...righteousness in them.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:50:29 It's certainly a doctrine that someone might say Joseph uses the Bible to prove it. John, you were saying that you've looked up, how do other Bible commentaries, how do they explain that explanation?

John Bytheway:	00:50:44	<p>One time we had somebody recommend that Harper Collins Study Bible on First Corinthians 15:29, where else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead is referenced. This is what their footnote says. Why the Corinthians practice baptism on behalf of the dead is unknown. Okay, that's all they've got there. Here is an NIV study Bible. They say--they're a little longer here. They said the present tense suggest that at Corinth people were currently being baptized for the dead. But because Paul does not give any more information about the practice, many attempts have been made to interpret the concept. Three of these are: one, living believers were being baptized for believers who died before they were baptized so that they too in this way would not miss out on baptism. Two, Christians were being baptized in anticipation of the resurrection of the dead. Three, new converts were being baptized to fill the ranks of Christians who had died. At any rate, Paul mentions this custom almost in passing, using it in his argument, substantiating the resurrection of the dead, but without necessarily approving the practice. Now the last sentence says, this passage will likely remain obscure. They've never listened to follow HIM .</p>
	00:52:08	<p>Here's one more from the Halley's study Bible. It may be that some of the Corinthians had for some reason been baptizing on behalf of others who had died without baptism.</p>
Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat:	00:52:21	<p>It may be, I mean, it would be kinda weird for Paul to use that as a as his evidence though, right? Like Right, right. Look, I'm trying to prove resurrection to you. Why would anyone get baptized for the dead if the dead don't rise at all? I mean maybe. Maybe someone's doing it. Maybe Paul's just inventing all kinds of things. You could tell how hesitant they're trying to be because they don't wanna say what the text says. The text clearly is saying someone's doing baptisms for the dead.</p>
John Bytheway:	00:52:48	<p>You said a minute ago, earlier in first Corinthians, it stuck out to me this time as in Adam all die, even so of Christ shall wait. How many be made alive? Oh, it may be that some of the Corinthians had for some reason been baptized on behalf of others who had died without baptism. Thanks for the honesty. He makes the point that their own actions are inconsistent with their beliefs. There would be no point in doing anything for the dead if there's no resurrection. It's interesting to see what they're saying. I feel like a lot of this is going to have to be millennial work because of the absence of records. For how many people? I mean, I can go back to a few generations on my genealogy. How many, worldwide, can even do that?</p>

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:53:37 Yeah, I would say that even when people are like, oh, I can trace myself all the way back to King Henry. I mean, that's great. Think of how small that is in the span of the entirety of the world. Once you get into the years before the Renaissance, you are lucky if you have names and you're actually getting back to where there aren't even very many surnames anyway, so it's like there's John, it's just John. Not John Bytheway, just John, and there's only like 47,000 other Johns named that, at the same time. Clearly a great deal of this work is going to be done when we have full access to an understanding and what greater time than in the resurrection because you'll be able to have a conversation with folks and you'll be able to say, hey, who are your parents? Let's get this work done because they'll be able to tell you. So, I think multiple prophets have outlined that there will be all kinds of temple work

John Bytheway: 00:54:44 In the millennium.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:54:46 In the millennium, yep. That Jesus will reign over the saints and come down to direct and instruct is what Joseph says. Jesus will obviously have the ability to give us the information that we need in order to make sure everyone has that opportunity. That might make someone say, well, there's no point in even going to the temple then if it's all gonna be done in the millennium, I'll just stay on my couch and watch Monday night football. Oh, well the temples are closed on Monday night. Anyway, so that's not even a very good example. But that's frankly the reality with everything. I mean, I don't share the gospel because if I don't share it, then that means the person I don't share it with, that that person now has no chance of being saved. I know because of Joseph's revelations that everyone is going to have an opportunity.

00:55:36 My sinful inability is not gonna be the deciding factor in whether or not somebody is going to heaven. So why am I sharing the gospel? If it ultimately isn't going to be the deciding factor in whether or not that person gets a chance? Why am I spending time? Why are we on this podcast? Why are we even talking about it? If in the end, God is going to make it available to everyone, and that's because when you have the good news, you can't help it. Once you know the happiness that comes. I don't want to make someone have to wait another five, or 10, or 20, or 300, or 2000 years, or however long it is for to know that they are a child of God. That they are loved, that there's a plan for them, that this seemingly arbitrary and capricious world is in fact designed for exaltation. If you feel that love of your savior, you want desperately for everyone else to have it. Why do I go do temple work? Because it sure matters to those

people that I go and I do temple work for now. And, yes, there are gonna be lots of people that have to wait, but that doesn't mean that I shouldn't be anxiously engaged in trying to help those on the other side.

John Bytheway: 00:57:02 And what's the scriptural passage? I can have joy in this life and eternal life in the world to come. There's a joy in this life that's possible.

Hank Smith: 00:57:13 Gerrit, just our discussion of this process Joseph Smith goes through has really blessed my life this year with my students. I frequently get questions about what does the next life look like for such and such situation. My parents were sealed, they divorced, my mom remarried, my dad left the church. Okay, well, you know, what does that look like in the next life? My go-to answer for a long time has been, well, we know God loves us, we know agency is eternal, very important doctrines. Now I've been able to at least share this example of Joseph Smith had that same question in 1823. What does the next life look like? And it took 19 years for him to come to a place where he went, I think I get it. Then I can say, okay, what does that mean? And it's like, it means I'm probably gonna have to be patient. It means you're probably gonna have to be patient.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 00:58:08 When Joseph is talking about the next life, when he is talking about eternal progression, it's also where he says, it will take a long time after this life for you to fully understand it. That means that you are never going to get to the point when you completely have every answer for every situation and every-- what does the church teach? The church teaches and has repeatedly taught that we don't know exactly how every sealing is going to be adjudicated. We don't know exactly how every familial relationship is going to be healed or what it's going to look like. We trust in the same loving and just God who told us that these things even exist at all, that there's not gonna be misery in the next life. You'll sometimes hear critics say things like, well, the very fact that Latter-day Saints teach that you can be sealed, all that does is destroy families and make them feel like they're gonna be separated.

00:59:15 Well, first of all, the very fact that we're saying that no one is arriving in the agonies of hell forever is already a pretty big win for most people and most families. Okay? Second of all, we don't understand how the judgment is going to work. Oh, a lot of us really think we do. I mean, a lot of us are very certain that we know because it's what I think that the church says. We don't understand how the nature of some of those sealings are gonna be adjudicated in the next life. We can work ourselves up

into a frenzy because we don't understand it. So, we say, I'm doing my family history and I come to my great grandma and she was married to three men in her life. So, we seal her to all three of her husbands. So, what great grandma now has three husbands in the next life? So, she's just gonna be married to all three of them?

01:00:10 I mean, is that how her next life is gonna? And I might actually be so troubled by that that I might go well, but she was only married to the first one for like two years. We probably shouldn't even have sealed her to him. And, and then she was married to the second one for 25 years and that's who she had most of her kids with. But she was married to this other guy for another 15 years. I mean, we start to work ourselves up into a frenzy because we don't know how that's gonna look in the next life. And the worst part about that is, the only reason I have a question about who great grandma is married to is because Joseph Smith is a prophet of God because there ain't no Presbyterian who's wondering who she's married to in the next life. Because the answer is nobody.

01:01:01 There is no marriage in the next life for all other Christians. They do not believe that marriage exists in the next life. It's important that we don't allow the fact that not everything's been revealed about work for the dead or sealings or how the next life is, or how the spirit world is, that we don't allow the fact that we don't have every answer to undermine the faith in the glorious doctrines that have been revealed. The same God who in contravention to all established Christianity, is revealing that every single person is going to be saved from hell fire, that every single person is going to have an opportunity at exaltation. That same God is probably working on a plan for the next life that is as loving and fair and amazing as you could possibly...If when Joseph is shown the telestial kingdom, his response is for that lowest of all kingdoms, that it's so great and so glorious that you can't comprehend it.

01:02:14 You can bring up whatever words you want. You can't understand how great and glorious the lowest kingdom of glory is, unless God opens the heavens and shows it to you. So, probably your Father will take care of things. Rather than work yourself up, rather than say there is no possible way that this is gonna work right for me, trust in God, trust that your father who loves you, who loves your family, is going to provide you with joy in life. That's what he's promised. And when you say, well, yeah, but it won't really be joy because I won't be happy without my brother and he's apostate. I mean, and you start trying to--just trust that God means what God says when he

says it is everlasting joy and everlasting life. Don't try to outthink the room and try to figure out how it works because what if Joseph had done that?

01:03:17 What if when Joseph was told that Alvin was in the celestial kingdom, Joseph went full-on apostate. Joseph went, there's no way. No God, I saw the vision of the kingdoms. I'm the one who saw it. We wrote it down, me and Sidney, we stopped to write it down. We saw D&C 76 and it said, you cannot go there if you aren't baptized. Now you're saying that he can? I mean, nope, this must not be true and frankly, unfortunately, because when we're talking about things like our loved ones, our spouses, our parents, our kids, these are super personal emotional feelings. Because of that, we can get worked up in a hurry. When if we hear, what prophets are saying, they're saying to trust in God. And when you say, well, well, what if it, what if it works out like? You don't know. No one knows. It hasn't been revealed, but the same God who created this plan, the same God who is demonstrating his mercy in ways that can't be described, in ways that cause us to be heretics to the rest of the Christian world, that same God is working for your eternal joy.

01:04:36 It's hard to not know and to just trust in God. That's what every iteration of believers in God and believers in Christ have had to do throughout the history of the world. You don't know why you need to look up at the brass serpent, but you do. There's not an explanation of the reason why you have to do it. There's not an explanation of why Abraham is to sacrifice Isaac. There's not a long detailed theological explanation of how, why he needs to it. It's simply because God commanded it, and I know that that makes people feel uncomfortable. People want to have an answer for why they do and believe everything. Yet there is no evidence in all of holy scripture that that's the case, that you can't find a prophet who knows everything. Instead, what you find is prophets who reveal doctrine, but even they don't know.

01:05:38 Joseph, multiple times in his life, I've been begging God for this answer and God won't give it to me. If Joseph the prophet doesn't know everything. If previous prophets don't know everything. I mean, I know we joke around about it before. It's like Nephi, you know? I mean, knowest thou the condescension of God and Nephi, I know he loves his children. I mean he answers a different question because he doesn't know. He doesn't know. Even though Nephi's a prophet, even though Nephi's seen visions, Nephi's done all kinds of great things, but he doesn't, he doesn't understand. Joseph wasn't some kind of bitter apostate because he thought Alvin wasn't gonna go to the

celestial kingdom in 1835. It hadn't been revealed yet. I would urge everyone listening if there are particular points of doctrine that you struggle with, if you find yourself saying, I don't know how sealings are going to work.

01:06:34 I don't understand how salvation's going to work. I don't understand. What about the judgment for someone like this? What about my son who deals with this? Or my daughter? I mean, I understand that those are very personal, very private and very powerful feelings and questions. We all have them because we all love people and we have questions, but don't allow the fact that you don't have answers cause you to stop believing that there are answers. Don't allow the fact that we don't have everything revealed, cause you to reject the great glorious truths that have been revealed. I, I don't know how sealings work, but I know they work because God said they did.

John Bytheway: 01:07:23 The scriptural phrase, trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Do you trust him? Do you trust based on everything you know so far? I think he's trustworthy. I think those things will be figured out and not forced on anybody. I think the agency is an eternal principle. I love, boy, Pearl of Great price. What is it? Abraham 3, will prove them now herewith to see if they will do whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them even when they don't have all the reasons. If I can add to it, that was Adam, why are you offering sacrifices?

Hank Smith: 01:07:55 I don't know.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:07:56 And that's tough because especially in the secular world that we live in, we feel like if we don't have a scientific explanation for the reason why we believe and do everything that we do, that we're somehow lacking, but that's not what faith is. Even if we go back to the resurrection of Jesus, you can't scientifically demonstrate the resurrection of Jesus. You can't prove it. You can't go to a lab and create some kind of null hypothesis and an experiment that demonstrates resurrection. You don't believe that Jesus was resurrected because you can prove it. You believe it because it's true. Now, how resurrection takes place, what the molecular exchanges are, we don't know. The fact that we don't know how it works should not cause us to say, I just don't believe it does at all. If I can't demonstrate through a formula exactly how it happens, then I'm not gonna believe it.

01:09:02 Well, there are many great and wondrous miracles that God has done for the children of men. What makes them miracles is they aren't explainable. That's why they're incredible. The resurrection, the atonement, Jesus walking on water, we can't

explain any of them. We can't through scientific principles say, well, actually as Jesus's feet hit the water it displaced enough that--we have no ability to explain it other than by the power of God. Most of us don't lose sleep at night. Most of us aren't sitting on our bed crying. I, there's just no way Jesus walked on water. I can't explain it. There just is no way. Instead, we look at that as a faith promoting thing. I believe because I can't explain how someone can walk on water. I can't explain how someone raises someone from the dead three days after the fact. I can't explain it.

01:10:06 That's why I believe. Well, hopefully we can take some of these questions we have and focus back to the doctrine that's making us ask the question in the first place. Well, I don't understand how sealings work in the next life. You're right, you don't, but that they work. That's the key factor. How the resurrection happened. That'll be great in some celestial jeopardy game that we play sometime in the celestial kingdom. You know when you put it in the phrase of a question of, oh, what is the resurrection? But that it happened. That's the essential part. How sealings will be adjudicated, how all the work for the dead will be done. How everyone can have an equal opportunity. I don't know. How could I possibly know that?

John Bytheway: 01:10:55 I remember one time trying to teach in the Philippines. I still remember I was on Quirino Hill and I remember we had a guy who was really antagonistic and he knew all of the talking points that people have and I remember leaving and looking at my companion going, I don't think that was his chance to hear the gospel. If I believed about us, what he believes about us, I wouldn't wanna get anywhere near us either, he's not even right about what he believes about us. When we have been talking today about people who will have their chance, I think it's going to be a good chance it's going to be they're gonna hear correct things.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:11:40 Yeah, it it'd be tough if someone's chance was just one anti-Mormon meme they saw on the internet like, nope, that was your chance.

John Bytheway: 01:11:47 That's not the God that we believe in. It'll have a full hearing. They'll get to really understand it. That too gives me hope because that just makes sense. That that's the way God is. When I was a kid before both of you were born, I can even remember Saturday nights going with my ward to the temple to do baptisms for the dead. I remember getting a certificate that said you did 35 names tonight or 40 names tonight. One of the

things that has changed so beautifully is I can get on my phone and say, give me a family member of mine.

- Hank Smith: 01:12:22 Yeah. Oh.
- John Bytheway: 01:12:23 Give me a family member of mine. Sometimes they're names that I have a connection to and I love President Nelson's excitement in announcing the temple in northern Utah that had two fonts because the youth are getting into this so much and gathering their cousins is the coolest thing. It changes the whole experience just to know. I've had experiences like this where I know somebody's backstory and it's not just a name anymore. It's a thrill, a spiritual thrill to go and do something for them they can't do for themselves. That's why I love that that's happening. Now we can go and gather our own immediate family in a way.
- Hank Smith: 01:13:12 Gerrit, in Nauvoo, do they just run out to the river and get started?
- John Bytheway: 01:13:17 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 01:13:18 And I'm sure Joseph is like, whoa, whoa, hold on.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:13:22 It is not as organized as it could be, which is why Joseph has to send some letters to the church saying, hey, you probably need someone there to record it, you know you, you may need people there as witnesses and what if we had men baptized for men and women baptized for women?
- Hank Smith: 01:13:44 Right.
- John Bytheway: 01:13:46 Yeah.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:13:47 Those are things that seem again, trivial to us or, or like, well of course that's what you should do. But again, they don't know. They only have revealed to them that it exists and it does show the excitement. I mean, imagine you have come to find out this is true. You've gathered with the saints, you've read the Book of Mormon. You are there in the presence of the prophet at times and you know this is the truth and all you can think is, my mother was the greatest christian I ever knew. All she ever did was help everyone and she died two years before I converted. My mom would've embraced this. She would've loved it. If that's the feeling that you have, and then suddenly like a thunder clap, the prophet of God says, actually your mom can

have it. You better believe people are running to their nearest body of water.

01:14:52 It's really a demonstration of their belief that this is true. I know a lot of times we go to the temple because we're supposed to, you know, President Nelson keeps telling me I need to go to the temple, so I guess maybe I'll listen to him once. But, it really is a demonstration of an act of faith on our part when we go. When we view our temple service as an extension of serving other people, of sharing the gospel, it can become much more meaningful. I thought maybe I'd share with you another testimony of this. This is from a woman in Nauvoo who's had a pretty rough go of things. Her and her husband, they joined the church, they move to Nauvoo. Well, when the Saints leave Nauvoo, there are certain members of the church who stay behind. Why? Well, because there's still poor people that are gathering there from England and from other places around the country.

01:15:57 That way they can be outfitted to go to Winter Quarters and then also they're still trying to sell some of the church's properties. We left in a hurry, almost like we thought an army was coming to kill us. Almost like Governor Ford said, an army's coming to kill you, and so we left in a hurry. We left earlier than we wanted to, but because of that you couldn't get everyone out all at once. This woman's name's Emmaline Anderson. The mob, when they realized that not all of the Latter-day Saints had left that there were still several hundred in Nauvoo, they began making threats against Nauvoo. They began threatening that they will enact violence if the saints didn't leave. The few saints that are left there, they organize in companies to try to defend themselves. They keep telling them, well look, we're going to leave. You just gotta give us time to sell our stuff and get out of here. We're leaving. But the Warsaw Signal had said something to the effect that every saint needed to be driven from the county.

Hank Smith: 01:17:08 Good old Thomas Sharp.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:17:09 Oh yeah, Thomas Sharp. What a great guy. Look, sometimes you aren't as happy with Latter-day Saint doctrines. Sometimes you're like, you sure that hell doesn't exist, like for some people?

John Bytheway: 01:17:21 Do you wanna submit a list?

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:17:23 Yeah, I mean, oh, I've got a list. I've got a list. We've got some Doctor Philastus Hurlbut, John C. Bennett on there. This mob

violence, the threats become more and more and more until eventually a huge mob force with cannons and guns attacks Nauvoo.

John Bytheway: 01:17:46

Cannons.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:17:48

They're shelling Nauvoo. There are canons shot into Nauvoo. Again, not against some kind of military. This is random shooting in there. I mean the few saints that are there, they try to defend themselves and Emma Anderson's husband and her son William and Augustus, they go to join the saints. In fact, what her son says to her right before he leaves is, I've gotta go defend you mother. And he's only 14.

01:18:27

Well, her husband and her son are both killed in the battle of Nauvoo. Now they're not in Nauvoo because they just don't know how to follow a prophet. They're in Nauvoo because they're doing what the prophet told them to do to help other people come. Her husband and her son are going out to defend the other saints from these murdering pieces of garbage that are trying to kill them and drive them off of their property. There she is without a husband, without a son, because they followed the prophet that could make someone lose their faith and testimony. And because of what happened, they're put in horrible financial position. Eventually they're all driven out, so they move out to Iowa, but it's years before she's able to actually immigrate and make it to Utah with the rest of the saints. She writes a letter to her family members and they have not joined the church.

01:19:37

So this is from 1849. She's writing it to her, I believe it's her brother. It's actually hard to determine exactly who it is as we track it down, but she writes a letter and she tries to convince them of the truth. She's trying to tell them that they need to believe, but of course you know you can tell that they don't. She talks about how much she's suffering. I live in a little house of my own with my two children and they have to suffer many privations in this life. And she talks a little bit about the death of her husband and son. I have not married since the death of my William and I feel that as though I could not live without him--I think what she means to stay there. She goes on to say, my two children, we suffer many privations in this life, but it will be made up to me in the next.

01:20:34

Then she says, one particular and important request I make of you. So, this is someone who's not a member. After she talks about this horrible life that she's going through and how difficult things are, she says, one request I have to make of you

and I beg it of you to grant it this one favor that one of you take and find out the names of all of our progenitors as far back as you can and send it to me in a letter. Do this and God shall reward you for it. I will write you every particular when I can hear from you again. She believes in work for the dead to the point where having gone through this horrific loss, having lost all of her material goods in a suffering condition, she wants names because she wants to be able to have the work done for them. Emmaline Anderson is not someone that we talk about really in church history, but boy, you read that letter and you come away going, yeah, maybe I can make time to go to the temple on a Tuesday night.

01:21:50 Maybe my trials aren't so hard. Maybe I can just have faith. You know, I've said this before and since it's my last hurrah, probably on the podcast period, not even on the Voices of the Restoration. This is the last time. I hope that we can stand on the shoulders of women like Emma Anderson and Phebe Woodruff and Amanda Smith. The men and women who came before us, they suffered a great deal so that we could have truths that we often casually take for granted. I implore everybody listening, do not casually give away your faith. Do not allow some internet personality, some anti-Mormon subreddit, some uncle who's apostatized, allow them to poison your faith and casually give it away. Because you are standing on the shoulders of men and women who some of them gave up everything so that you could believe. We owe them to treat our faith seriously.

01:23:07 We owe them to actually, actually do everything in our power to believe, to not casually go down the rabbit hole of unbelief, but instead to desperately do what President Nelson urges you. Take responsibility of our own testimony and seek out truth from these best sources. That doesn't mean you're not gonna have questions. Everyone has questions. Joseph Smith had questions, but what you do with those questions is entirely up to you. You can choose to have faith even in the midst of questions you can't answer. You can choose to have faith even in the midst of problems that seem too hard to bear and that's what these men and women did.

John Bytheway: 01:23:55 We use that phrase eternal perspective pretty casually, but how do you do what Emmaline Anderson did, unless you really have that eternal perspective and you get it? Sherry Dew said once, the gospel reaches across the street, across the world and across the veil, when you get that, maybe you could power through stuff like Emmaline Anderson did.

- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:24:24 I know for me, when I read the faith of men and women who came before me, it helps me recenter myself. It doesn't mean that my problems go away, I'm still living in them, but it helps me recenter. It helps me say, hey, other people have had courage and gone through far worse circumstances. It doesn't mean I'm not suffering, but it does mean there's an end to suffering. It does mean you don't have to lose your belief. You can, even in the most trying circumstances, you can still believe. We shouldn't be embarrassed by doctrines like work for the dead. We should be shouting them from the rooftop that God has declared, that everyone is actually loved, not just saying the words loved.
- John Bytheway: 01:25:13 That's good. In Luke 15, we learned that those who repent here can cause joy in heaven. I love the idea that something we do here can cause a stir. On the other side I have, this is from the Journal of Horace Cummings. This is from Truman Madsen's book Joseph Smith, The Prophet. Horace Cummings recorded, concerning the work for the dead, Joseph said that in the resurrection, those who had been worked for would fall at the feet of those who had done their work, kiss their feet, embrace their knees, and manifest the most exquisite gratitude. And then he said the prophet added, we do not comprehend what a blessing to them these ordinances are. Sometimes I go for selfish reasons. It's a really nice quiet place.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:26:07 Feel free to go for selfish reasons.
- John Bytheway: 01:26:09 Yeah, yeah, yeah. You see some of those folks that are there all the time, it seems like they're gonna be gang tackled in the next life. For thousands of people that they have done things for that they couldn't do for themselves. I mean, it's an exciting idea.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:26:30 When we go beyond the veil, I think that there's gonna be a lot of things that are familiar to us that we don't think would be, that we're not thinking of. And there'll be a lot of things that will surprise us too. Part of this life is really believing that there's an afterlife. That's why we do what we do. There's no greater testament to believing that there really is life after this life than going and doing work for those who are who've passed away. What greater way can you demonstrate? I believe that God has a plan and I believe that those spirits are still alive. How do I, how do I demonstrate I believe that? I go and I do work for them because I believe they're there.
- Hank Smith: 01:27:14 Every temple, every temple, which is a huge investment, is a witness. We believe, we believe this.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:27:23 A temple is this physical declaration that the afterlife exists.

John Bytheway: 01:27:29 One of the greatest experiences I ever had on my mission was me and Elder Warren having a man in his seventies put his hands in his face and started to sob and said, I've been looking for this for 30 years. I didn't even know what I had at the time. What a glorious doctrine. And we're not done Hank. Because we're gonna look at 137 and 138.

Hank Smith: 01:27:54 It's almost as if all these great and important things are still coming.

John Bytheway: 01:27:58 It occurs to me that in an earlier episode somebody mentioned Jesus in John chapter six saying, you have to eat this flesh and drink my blood. And that people going, wait a minute, in Deuteronomy, you can't do that. And they walked away and Jesus said, will you also go away? Peter says, where would we go knowing that hey, there's probably more to this. I'm gonna trust him that it's coming. I don't know when, but I'm gonna trust him that more clarification on this is coming. That's kinda what you taught us today, Gerrit, about how are those family arrangements gonna be? Hey, it's coming and it'll be wonderful.

Hank Smith: 01:28:41 I can just see Peter like, I don't know why you do these things, right? Like, but I'll stay. I'll stay. We had a good big group of people here by the way, and now yeah.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:28:53 And they're all gone now. It's a great example that the people that were seeking after him, they were seeking after him because he had just fed the 5,000. He had just performed a miracle that in the ancient world when when everyone is on the edge of starvation always, here He provides bread out of nothing. That's what they want. All they want is what God could possibly provide them in the temporal, in the here and now. When Jesus tries to teach, look, you know your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and they're dead. I mean, you can get miraculous bread, but that's not what actually matters. What actually matters is, is truth. It's such a beautiful thing that Peter recognizes that. It's such a tragic thing that for them it's like, look, if you can provide bread, fine. But if not that, that's what I care about.

01:29:48 This idea that whosoever eateth and eat of this flesh and drink of this blood shall never die, I mean that I don't understand, but what I want is bread and Jesus is trying to give them more than bread. Bread's great, but that is temporary. I love Peter's faith that you know, we know and are sure that thou art the Christ. I'm sure Peter didn't understand what Jesus taught. Peter

demonstrates throughout much of his ministry, he still doesn't understand what Jesus taught. But Peter, understanding what Jesus taught has no bearing on whether or not he believes Jesus is the Messiah, because that's been revealed to him by God. I mean it is a great example, honestly, that I don't know everything. Peter didn't know everything and that doesn't affect whether or not he believes what he believes. He doesn't know everything and still believes Jesus is the Savior.

- John Bytheway: 01:30:43 It's just that great comment. Well, where else would we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life and to paraphrase a little bit, and it's almost like Jesus looks both ways and says, I could give you bread that if you ate it, you would never die. Wait, wait what? Give us this bread.
- Hank Smith: 01:31:01 Stick around.
- John Bytheway: 01:31:01 And I am the bread.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:31:03 It is a big doctrine. I mean in the other part of that letter that Phebe Woodruff wrote, we read, part of it is in the manual, but she says, how can a spirit be baptized? Why not deputize a friend on earth to do it for them? John Wesley, who's the founder of Methodism, Phebe's family, comes from a Methodist background. So, this is what she would really recognize as him as a great Christian. John Wesley can receive this work, but how can his spirit be baptized in water? It is the privilege of the oldest one in the family to be baptized for their friends if they desire it, but they can give it to another if they choose. Brother Joseph makes this doctrine look very plain and consistent. He has been bringing strange things forward to the church this season. Strong meat. He's delivered a course of lectures this season, which were very interesting.
- 01:31:56 I could not only attend part of the time, but often wish you could be present. He says that the throne of God stands on earth like this earth and he goes on telling others. It's cool in this sense that she recognizes, look, this is a big deal. This is very difficult for some people to accept, but also how incredible it is. I no longer have to believe that John Wesley can't go to the celestial kingdom because he died before the gospel was restored. Now, I can believe he has every opportunity at the celestial kingdom that anyone ever had. The second half of this. I mean, it's not just his wife writing to him in 1840 saying, you know what? Someday John Wesley could get baptized. What you have as the capstone to that is that in the well-known account, Wilfred Woodruff will have many great leaders, teachers, philosophers, politicians and presidents of the United

States from the past. He will have a vision of some of them at the very least. But in any case, he will perform the work and in in concert with other people, perform the work for many of these people in the past, including John Wesley.

- John Bytheway: 01:33:11 Which is amazing.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:33:12 That circle will keep turning. John Wesley needs to have a friend in this life do it for him. Well, there's Wilfred Woodruff, friend in this life doing it for him. I think we have many evidences of the truthfulness of work for the dead. Many visions, many experiences, and I think all of us actually even know people who've had experiences that have seen beyond the veil and know that these spirits are real, that they are around us, that many of them are anxious for the work to be done and others are anxiously engaged in doing the work on their side. It's a beautiful part of the plan of salvation.
- John Bytheway: 01:33:52 Gerrit has taken us out of podcast purgatory. We've been purged. Wow. This is something that I think we could all talk about for a long time. And like you just said, Gerrit, we all know people, maybe hundreds of people who have had experiences in the temple by taking a name and having some experience and some touch from the other side of the veil that makes them think, whoa, this is real. And these aren't just names on a piece of paper. These are people which makes it such a thrill to be able to do that. If you have a tough time connecting with actual mortals.
- Hank Smith: 01:34:34 You can go get some spiritual friends. I love that.
- John Bytheway: 01:34:37 And go make a whole bunch of friends who will form your welcoming committee.
- Hank Smith: 01:34:42 Yeah, you just wait, I'm gonna be really popular.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:34:47 I'm building my celestial following.
- John Bytheway: 01:34:50 Yeah. Welcoming committee. I hope our listeners will go read the account. And we've heard many different names of how Heber C. Kimball's wife's first name is pronounced. We've heard Vilate, we've heard Vi-late, we've heard Violet, we've heard Sister Kimball.
- Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:35:09 So that's the safe one. Sister Kimble is super safe.

John Bytheway: 01:35:14 Go read what she says and go read what Phebe Chase says and go read what Sally Randall says about this amazing doctrine that gives us such hope and joy and some real expectation for when we go to the other side. I mean, it's kind of fun to think of it with that eternal perspective.

Hank Smith: 01:35:35 Gerrit, it doesn't feel like we've sat here 12 times to do this, honestly. I just don't know how to express my love for you. My gratitude for you, for your expertise, your friendship, your personality, your wife, Angie, your kids. This has been a special thing this year and we're grateful the Sorenson's allowed us to do this. This is something that I approached them about at the end of last year and said, hey, we've got these Voices of the Restoration. What if we were to bring on our friend Gerrit and do all 12 together and they were all for that. You know, it's an expensive thing to put this show on. It has turned out to be everything I thought it would be and more.

John Bytheway: 01:36:18 Yeah. For me, I don't know everything about Joseph Smith. I haven't read every word he's ever written, but I do know someone who does, who knows so much more than I do and he is a faithful stalwart, delightful man. And that's Gerrit who even takes my calls at night. So, we love this man.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:36:42 Well, thank you so much. It's been so awesome to be on. Like I said, I'm gonna miss it. Hopefully I still get a chance to come up with a lot of Joseph Smith, Old Testament things next year. But, um.

Hank Smith: 01:36:52 This isn't the last we've seen of you, Gerrit.

Dr. Gerrit Dirkmaat: 01:36:56 I'm grateful for all that you guys do and I know that you're reaching people with the gospel and this is the great work of mortality, right? To share the gospel of Jesus Christ and his atonement and the love our father has for us with everyone. And I'm just grateful that you guys have allowed me to be part of it.

Hank Smith: 01:37:15 I feel like we fulfilled Moroni's promise to a degree that good has been spoken of.

John Bytheway: 01:37:22 And please, if you feel like you would like some more Gerrit Dirkmaat, go find his podcast Standard of Truth. 250 episodes I saw when I checked this morning, so I have some more to catch up on. We love you.

Hank Smith: 01:37:35 Yeah.

John Bytheway:

01:37:35

Brother Dirkmaat, our dear friends. Thank you. Hasn't it been fun going through church history? Please join us again on another episode of followHIM.