



“He Has Sealed His Mission and His Works with His Own Blood”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

What really happened in the final days leading to the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum, and why does D&C 135 still strike with such power today? Dr. Keith Erikson explores the history, context, and the testimony behind Section 135, correcting common myths and setting the stage for the Saints’ response in Section 136.

Part 2:

Dr. Keith Erikson shows how Doctrine and Covenants 136 rose from the turmoil to guide the Saints west, clarifying the succession crisis, correcting pioneer myths, and showing prophets not as superheroes but God-led stewards in the ongoing Restoration.

Timecodes:

Part 1 -

- 00:00 Part 1 - Dr. Keith Erikson
- 01:45 Episode Teaser
- 03:58 Dr. Erikson bio
- 06:53 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 08:17 Background to Section 135
- 13:37 The Saints didn't retaliate
- 15:25 A clear thesis
- 19:09 No limits on this dispensation
- 22:49 Pacific Islander Saints
- 24:35 Tribute to Hyrum
- 29:04 Hyrum served Joseph throughout their lives
- 31:53 Lucy Mack Smith's losses
- 35:22 Willard Richards' firsthand account of the martyrdom
- 39:11 Willard Richards' record
- 41:12 John Taylor's watch—fact or fiction?
- 46:36 No one convicted of a crime related to Carthage
- 47:12 The fates of the mobsters
- 50:44 Oaks' and Hill's *Carthage Conspiracy*
- 52:21 Joseph Smith Papers *The Road to Carthage*
- 55:56 Governor Ford's greatest fear
- 58:12 *Boston Globe* was totally wrong
- 1:02:14 Phoebe Woodruff's account of Carthage
- 1:04:10 Dr. Erikson's thoughts about Joseph Smith
- 1:11:58 End of Part 1 - Dr. Keith Erikson

Part 2 -

- 00:00 Part 2 - Dr. Keith Erikson
- 01:10 Brigham Young's background
- 04:42 Brigham's preparation for leadership
- 08:39 Brigham as peacemaker
- 12:49 The burden of struggling Saints
- 14:25 Brigham commits to no one being left behind
- 15:56 The Vanguard Company
- 18:17 Crossing the plains as act of praise
- 20:15 Overland Pioneer Travel Database
- 22:25 400 pioneer companies
- 25:25 Pranks, dances, and fun as pioneers
- 26:04 How to teach Section 136
- 27:27 God calls His people to journey
- 29:25 President Hinckley's thoughts about pioneers
- 31:20 Questions of succession
- 34:49 James Strang

- 36:22 The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- 41:03 Does Brigham have a majority?
- 42:25 Antagonism to friendship
- 44:38 The expectations of prophets
- 48:20 Elevator shafts in the Salt Lake Temple myth
- 52:58 Prophets are a great benefit to the world
- 56:46 Dr. Erikson's thoughts on "ongoing Restoration"
- 1:01:59 End of Part 2 - Dr. Keith Erikson

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Biographical Information:



Keith Erikson is an author, teacher, and public historian who has published on topics including politics, hoaxes, Abraham Lincoln, Elvis Presley, and Church history. He grew up in Baltimore, served a mission in Brazil, and earned advanced degrees in history and business. He works for the Church History Department in efforts to encourage outreach and historical engagement.

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- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:00:03 Brigham looked up to Joseph, admired Joseph, followed Joseph. Brigham's first reaction is that he cannot comprehend that Joseph could be taken or what would happen. Then his third reaction is that quiet reassurance of the Holy Spirit that comes into his heart and mind, and he realizes, no, wait a minute. We have everything that we need. Joseph gave us the keys, the authority.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:34 Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith and I am your host. I'm here with my co-host, John Bytheway, who's words tend to edify. John that is section 136. We're getting towards the end of the Doctrine & Covenants here. That's verse 24. Let your words tend to edify one another, and John, I've known you for a long time. Whenever you're interacting with someone, I can see it. You want to build them. You want to edify.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:04 I learned her from you, Hank. Thank you.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:07 And your wonderful wife. Kim is not a wit behind you. She is a builder.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:10 Well, she's the best.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:12 What is it Mark Twain said, I can live for a few months on a good compliment. You both are that way. John we are very blessed today we have Dr. Keith Erikson joining us. Dr. Erikson. Keith, welcome.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:01:24 Thank you. I'm so glad to be here.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:26 This is an honor. I've listened to quite a bit of what you've done. I've seen you on the face-to-face videos with the church. John and I, we're gonna try not to be nervous here.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:01:36 Well, me too. It's exciting to be here.

Hank Smith:	00:01:39	This is gonna be fun. We're gonna start with a difficult section today, section 135. That's the martyrdom of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. We're also gonna look at Section 136, Brigham Young and the trek West. That's a lot. John, what comes to mind? What have you been thinking about as we've been preparing?
John Bytheway:	00:01:59	I think about Carthage Jail a lot. You know how you go to a place and a song runs through your mind? There's a heaviness there, but I also hear myself singing inside "millions shall know Brother Joseph again", how that has come true. Here we are sitting here today, almost a couple of hundred years later, and we're talking about that. Wow, here we are, and everything that I hold dear comes from the Lord through His church restored through His prophet. Well, that's what I think about.
Hank Smith:	00:02:31	I was thinking about Section 136, John, sometimes we get in our head, Keith can probably speak to this, that these people knew this was gonna work out. Oh yeah, we gotta move to the Salt Lake Valley now. Then we'll build the conference center and things will be awesome. They're heading out into the wilderness, fleeing a country. They don't know if they're gonna survive. They don't know if this is going to work. If you think in your head, oh, they know. Then you take away the pain, the difficulty that they must be facing as they head out towards the west and not knowing what's going to happen to them. Keith, as you've been preparing for our lesson here, where are we gonna go? What do you wanna do?
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:03:12	These are two really wonderful sections. I think we need to spend time in the text, maybe put it into context and take one in turn and they go different directions. They do point to our testimony, our witness of Joseph Smith and of Brigham Young. So I think after looking at each section, maybe we pull back a little and reflect about prophets in general. These two, what their missions and legacies teach us. What it means for people in the 21st century who are trying living in that same uncertainty. We have uncertainty about different things, but we still have a living prophet to guide us through our times of trouble, and that might be where we could go in the end.
Hank Smith:	00:03:58	Yeah, that's exciting. I think, John, as I was looking at these two sections and Keith came to mind, I thought, there's no one better who can do this. Now he won't agree. He'll say there's a lot of people better. Keith is in a wonderful position as a historian for the church to take a look at both of these great men and tell us about them and help us get into their hearts and their minds. John, there might be someone out there who

doesn't know who Keith is because I think you did a background check, a credit check.

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:04:28 My mom will be listening. She wants to know, what do you do?

John Bytheway: 00:04:33 She gave me a few pages here. So [Dr. Keith A. Erikson](#) is an award-winning [author](#), teacher, historian, who currently serves as the director of historical research and outreach for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He's also on the editorial board of the Church Historians Press and he's authored numerous [books](#) and articles on [topics](#) including politics, hoaxes, [Abraham Lincoln](#), Elvis Presley, and Latter-day Saint History. His work has been published in various scholarly journals, including the Journal of American History, the History Teacher, the Journal of Abraham Lincoln Association, the Oral History Review, and the Latter-day Saint History Journals. He possesses two decades of international management experience in this. I love this part, Hank. Library administration, higher education, scholarly publishing, and wait for it. Automotive manufacturing. Didn't see that one coming.

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:05:32 That's where life began. That's right.

John Bytheway: 00:05:34 He has bachelor's and master's degrees from BYU. A doctoral degree in history from Indiana University and an MBA from UTEP. He grew up near Baltimore, Maryland, but now lives near Salt Lake City with his wife and children, automotive manufacturing. How did you fit that in all the rest of that?

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:05:53 That's actually where it started. That was my first career. I started there just as a college student working summers. I served a mission in Brazil and came back, when my company was expanding into Latin America, they whisked me along. I went back to Brazil as now a expat worked there. We launched several plants. We built the seats for various companies, GM, Ford, whatever. But we were the seat manufacturer that they would then plug in as it came down the assembly line.

John Bytheway: 00:06:27 So you were fluent in Portuguese at that point?

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:06:30 Yeah, I learned new words as a missionary. I hadn't learned words like assembly line or other words, more colorful words, that you use to help employees behave.

Hank Smith: 00:06:45 That's great. Well, Keith, we feel privileged to have you here.

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:06:50 Well, I'm just honored to be here. Thanks for the invitation.

Hank Smith:	00:06:53	<p>We know you're very busy in your position with the church, and this is a blessing to us and our listeners. Let's get underway. I wanna give Joseph and Hyrum and Brigham and these incredible Saints a lot of time since we have you here. The Come, Follow Me lesson this week is entitled, "He Has Sealed His Mission and His Works With His Own Blood. It begins this way. The afternoon of June 27th, 1844 found Joseph and Hyrum Smith in jail once again accompanied by John Taylor and Willard Richards. They believed they were innocent of any crime, but they submitted to arrest hoping to keep the Saints in Nauvoo safe. This wasn't the first time that enemies of the church had put the prophet Joseph in prison, but this time he seemed to know he would not return alive. He and his friends tried to comfort each other by reading from the Book of Mormon and singing hymns. Then gunshots were heard, and within a few minutes the mortal lives of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum had come to an end. And yet it was not the end of the divine cause that they had embraced and it was not the end of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There was more work to do and more revelation that would guide the church forward. The end of the prophet's life was not the end of the work of God. A beautiful introduction. Keith, where do you want to go from here? Should we just take on 135 on its own?</p>
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:08:17	<p>Yeah, that makes the most sense. Spend a little time there that really sets the scene for that afternoon. There's maybe one other little detail from that day that's been really meaningful in my life. That morning Joseph dictated a letter back to people in Nauvoo with some instructions and things to do, but then he asked them to give him the piece of paper and in his own hand, he wrote a little note that morning to Emma. The note said, dear Emma, I am very much resigned to my lot knowing I am justified and have done the best that could be done. Give my love to the children. Those were the last words. That gives you a little window into his thinking. He had done what he could. His thoughts were with his children and family.</p>
Hank Smith:	00:09:15	<p>Now I'm resigned to my lot, meaning what's going to happen is going to happen. Yeah.</p>
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:09:21	<p>Yeah. I think the text picks up in the aftermath of the martyrdom. Word gets back to Nauvoo fairly quickly. I mean, we're still traveling over land at the speed of a horse, but certainly by the next morning June 28th, people are waking up and hearing this news. The immediate reactions are shock and mourning. We see this in all kinds of records from the Latter-day Saints from this summer of 1844. They write letters to each other. If you've heard the word in Nauvoo, you're gonna send a</p>

letter to your sister back in New England or somewhere. We see people in shock reporting on their feelings and the [loss](#) and disbelief. As the intro mentioned, Joseph had been imprisoned before and he had always come out. For some people there was a little sense, oh yeah, they can't do anything to him. This was a shock, a real disconnect that people also write in their journals.

00:10:30 They go to personal places to share their feelings or their distress or their wondering. In time, we start to see more creative and more public expressions. We mentioned already the poem that WW Phelps wrote that has been set to music is Praise To The Man, but poetry becomes a way. John Taylor writes a poem, oh, give me back my prophet, dear, full of that feeling of loss, and then editorials, they'll start to publish statements about the church or Joseph. That's where this text, that's section 135, emerges is in this moment trying to make sense of things. One thing we do in history, we look at little documents, little items, artifacts, and we try and understand bigger things that are significant. This one does illustrate that in a really telling way. One of the questions with Joseph's murder was, is it over? What will happen? Where will we go?

00:11:34 What is the future? One of the last things that was happening in Joseph's life was they were preparing a new [edition](#) of the Doctrine and Covenants. They had one edition [published](#) in 1835. That was a second effort at publishing the revelations. The Book of Commandments didn't come to pass in Missouri, but they do publish the Doctrine and Covenants. Since 1835 to 1844, there had been additional revelations and more things, and so they were working on a second edition and they were right at the final phase of that, just about ready to publish. Joseph is murdered. This text is prepared. It's inserted into the Doctrine and Covenants, and it's so late in the process. They have to print it in smaller font, so it looks different. You open your book and the whole book looks one way. This was clearly added right at the end, but I think that's an important part of the witness.

00:12:32 It is clearly added to the question of what will happen? Will the work go forward? Yes, the work goes forward and we add a last minute addition as the work continues to go forward. In many ways this becomes the most important published statement of Joseph's mission. It's in that moment of the shock of his death. It goes directly into our canonized scripture. From there, it has been a part of the text that we study and give us inspiration literally from weeks, moments after his death. This witness is what we think about as we think about his mission and legacy.

John Bytheway:	00:13:18	I love the idea that, let's insert this in there and we're going forth with the publication this is not over. This is going forward that they knew that. That's a great insight.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:13:31	It's kind of like the first little clue, oh, here we go. Here comes the Doctrine and Covenants. It's still on track.
Hank Smith:	00:13:37	You know, I was in Carthage Jail once with Alex Baugh , who is on our show this year. One thing he said that I'd never thought of is one of the greatest moments in Latter-day Saint history is when the people of Nauvoo do not retaliate. This is their prophet. They do have the Nauvoo Legion. They could have retaliated and they do not. I'd never even thought of that. What Joseph and Hyrum mean to them and the emotion that could have brought up, especially after having lived through Missouri. We're not gonna let this happen, and yet they do not respond in violence. It's pretty incredible, pretty remarkable.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:14:21	Well, let's maybe go into the text itself. The opening verse talks about sealing their testimony with their blood, and our lesson, we've hinted at pulls that imagery. I think it's interesting that it seals the testimony of the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon. They're both listed there. The Book of Mormon is the first book that launches the Restoration. The Book of Mormon is published in March of 1830 and the church is organized a few days later and then we've got the Doctrine and Covenants that will be published just a few weeks, this second edition. These books are also the book ends of his public ministry and bringing the word of God to us, his death becomes the seal that makes them binding or permanent or in effect. We have a couple of verses that narrate, that tell the story, that set the scene, the time and the mob size and the the final words.
	00:15:25	But then we get to verse three, which as I was reading it this time, it reminded me of my days as a university professor trying to help people write clearly and to have a thesis statement to present your claim and then to follow it with evidence in support. Verse three does this. It makes as a declaration the thesis that Joseph has done more than any living person save Jesus Christ. That isn't just empty rhetoric, it's followed with in this short space of his life. He's brought forth and translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God. He's published it. They've sent the gospel to the four quarters of the earth. This one is one that Latter-day Saints tend to forget. Modern saints often have a narrative that the church was kind of an American church for a long time. We went to Utah.

- 00:16:21 We hid for a while and then somewhere in the 20th century we kind of woke up and started going to the world. That is not at all true for the first generation of Latter-day Saints. They absolutely knew that the message of the Restoration was for the whole Earth. The Quorum of the Twelve is sent to England. Missionaries are sent to the Pacific. We have today eighth generation members of the church on Pacific Islands because the missionaries had been there that long. Orson Hyde is sent to dedicate the [holy land](#) in the early 1840s and comes back home through Europe. They have a vision. This tiny group of people have a vision that this is to go to the four quarters of the Earth and they're doing that work. The Quorum of the Twelve takes seriously their mission that they should be traveling, that they should be special witnesses of Christ to the whole Earth.
- 00:17:16 Verse three continues that he's published the Revelations and the Commandments and then the last piece of evidence is that he has [gathered](#) the Saints. They do that in the clearest expression of that is Nauvoo. The idea of gathering of course is around in Kirtland and in Missouri, but it really comes to bear in Nauvoo when now thousands of converts are coming from the British Isles. They're flowing in, they're building a temple. There is a literal people gathering and there's this bigger gathering of Israel. Joseph has received those keys. Those are becoming manifest in ordinances that we can do in the temple in Nauvoo. That's their thesis and the evidence that this work of bringing forth these messages, sending them to the whole earth, gathering the children of God is the most important thing that's been done since the mission of Jesus Christ.
- John Bytheway: 00:18:20 It reminds me of one of my favorite paragraphs from [Preach My Gospel](#). I don't have it with me, I'll just have to summarize, but it's something like throughout history, God has had a pattern of reaching out to his children through a prophet and throughout history his children have had a pattern of rejecting him. Amazingly it says they even rejected Christ and then this great sentence, consider our evidence that God has again reached out to a prophet. The prophet's name is Joseph Smith and the evidence is the Book of Mormon. This paragraph, I've thought of that I put it in my margin, the Doctrine and Covenants, many other documents, instructions for the benefit of the children. Men look at the evidence to back up that first sentence in verse three.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:19:09 And it's not ever a competition between prophets. I think if you sat them down, they would never do this, but I think they would also acknowledge that in past dispensations the work was geographically limited. They didn't have communication

methods or transportation methods to go to the four quarters of the earth in the time of Moses or Abraham, these past dispensations, so there's a geographic limit and we see over time there is a temporal limit. Ultimately, those dispensations pass away, their messages are rejected. This final dispensation has neither of those limits. It will go to all the earth. It will extend to all who have lived on the earth or will yet live, and the only temporal limit will be when the Savior returns to rule over the work that has been prepared.

- Hank Smith: 00:20:02 I'm guessing, John, our listeners are maybe tired of me saying this. Do you remember when 40 was old? You thought, man, that person is old, and then you hit 40 and you thought, I know nothing. I thought my parents knew everything at this point, and then you ask 'em and they say, yeah, we had no idea what we were doing. I remember being 38 and a half and going, this is how far he got. He was 38 and to me at this point, well, I'm 10 years older than that now. I look back at 38 and go, I didn't know what I was doing. I think John Taylor lists, this is what he did and this is enough for a lifetime. If he was 90 and he did this, it would be impressive. It's even more impressive that all this was done. He's a young 38.
- 00:20:46 We think of Hyrum as the older sibling. He's younger than all of us at 43. It's impressive to me, and I know I've said that multiple times that we've studied something like a section 42 or section 88 or section 93 and thought, oh yeah, this is pretty common for a 30-year-old farmer to be putting out this philosophy and light and truth and restoration of scripture. John, you and I were just talking with Dr. Dirkmaat. We hadn't hit record yet on one of our episodes with him. Do you remember what he said about the book of Moses? He just kept saying, this is 1831. He is giving us this in 1831, the book of Moses.
- John Bytheway: 00:21:29 For me, the Pearl of Great Price. You just read it and think the text itself is so beyond speaking of automotive manufacturing. You go to a Schwinn bicycle factory and out comes a Genesis GV 80 right? How did this come out of that. This frontier farmer. How did this come out of that?
- Hank Smith: 00:21:51 I like what you said there, John. It's remarkable. I wish I could somehow come up with the right words to describe the awe that I have for Joseph Smith. Whenever I try to put words to it, it doesn't seem to capture it.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:22:06 Well, and what I think is interesting is that same awe is in this text. This is coming from the people who were close to him. We don't exactly know who the author was. It's probably a couple

of people. Of course, John Taylor and Willard Richards are in the jail, so some of those details are definitely coming from their experience. There could have been others working in the printing, but these are people who've spent the better part of 10, 15 years with Joseph. They have that same awe. There isn't this sense of, oh yeah, he wasn't that great once I met him, this is their witness and the shocking moment of his loss. This is their witness.

- John Bytheway: 00:22:49 Going back a bit, I was listening to the Latter-day Saints channel the other day and somebody mentioned that they heard someone say they were a seventh generation member of the church and they were [Polynesian](#) and he was like, well, I'm fifth generation. My ancestors crossed the plains. How could somebody be seventh? But it goes way back to those islands. Where is it? Parley P. Pratt that went to Polynesia very early.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:23:14 Yeah. It's Addison and Louisa Pratt who take us into the Pacific in the early 1840s. [Parley](#) will get to Latin America and Chile eventually.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:24 Keith, I think I had it in my head. Oh yeah. We're pretty much a United States church. We're out in Utah. Then we go to the world. You're right, it's not just the United States and England. Isn't there a pioneer who's from India in [crossing the plains](#)?
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:23:43 That's correct. In the 1850s, a convert from India moves overland, eventually gets to Liverpool, then from there crosses the ocean and she ends up in the handcart companies, including the ones that have trouble, but she makes it. The four quarters of the earth. You're right on there. What's great is that God knew that from the first day in 1820 and Joseph in that first generation knew that. We are the ones who forget it a little and we just need to remind ourselves what they knew.
- Hank Smith: 00:24:19 What year was it, John? That they're in that little schoolhouse? This church will fill North and South America. It will go to all the earth. I think it's as early as 1831, in Isaac Morley's farm. Keith, let's keep going. What do you wanna do next?
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:24:35 Well, maybe it's worth the comment here. There's a really beautiful line, a beautiful tribute to [Hyrum](#) and it talks about how in life Joseph and Hyrum were not divided and in death they were not separated. In our memory of Joseph, we have put a little distance between them and part of it is our reverence and celebration as Joseph as a prophet. Part of it is just the way things unfold. For the first generations of saints, Joseph and Hyrum, the prophet and patriarch were [integral](#). They were

connected. They were always together. They were preaching together, teaching together. If you wanted to understand something that Joseph said, you could talk to Hyrum. Hyrum was also a speaker. Hyrum didn't keep a journal. He didn't keep the same records. He didn't have the whole office full of clerks that Joseph had. In some ways, we often forget Hyrum just because the records are silent.

00:25:39 In early memories of the martyrdom it's Joseph and Hyrum together, there are paintings, the early monuments that we build are of Joseph and Hyrum. There are [statues](#) on Temple Square or used to be of Joseph and Hyrum that were made in the early 20th century when they put up a monument at Joseph Smith's birthplace in Vermont. The original draft celebrates both Joseph and Hyrum, prophet and patriarch and then the monument that's actually there is just about Joseph and his birth. Hyrum gets celebrated nearby on a hill. Patriarch Hill gets named after him in some ways because he was removed from the monument, just in the planning phase. We have a few places. We have now some statues of Joseph and Hyrum on [horseback](#), a couple of images that bring them back. Do think this text is worth reminding us that these two were very closely connected and revered. The tragedy that people felt is for both, they've lost both the prophet and the patriarch.

00:26:48 That's a really terrible blow. Then I guess this text rounds out here with a clear verdict. They are martyrs, they are innocent. Those are really strong words, really powerful words, especially in the history of Christianity. Jesus is innocent of the things that he's charged with. There are other martyrs for the cause of Christ. Over the centuries, Joseph and Hyrum join a very select group of innocence and martyrs. The text ends with the invocation of a really powerful image. The image of blood. Blood has been symbolic throughout the history of God's dealings with his children. We see blood offerings in the Old Testament. We see Jesus instituting the sacrament to remind us of his blood. This tribute ends with the blood that we see that has been shed. There's literal blood. Then they take it to the heights that this will raise the church above earthly courts.

00:27:56 They cannot be impeached. Their blood has been shed in the United States. It will open the door to all of the nations. That blood joins with other blood, the other martyrs seen by John the Baptist that this big testimony crying out from the blood of the martyrs is both a condemnation of a ruined world. I think that's the phrase. The world is ruined and a plea that Jesus will return and of course when Jesus returns those prophecies or that he returns in red, symbolizing that he tread the wine press

alone, he has bled and borne our sins. That bleeder is the one who will return and redeem Joseph's blood, but also all of our sins and our blood. Ultimately, this blood is also a way symbolically we connect Joseph and Hyrum to Jesus and the witness that they bear of his ministry and his return.

- Hank Smith: 00:29:04 Keith, in your reading, I loved that you described Joseph and Hyrum's relationship. They're not apart a lot. I remember reading the [history](#) of Joseph Smith by his mother. You know when he has his surgery that Hyrum would squeeze his leg to give him some relief. All the children would help him get around and move.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:29:28 We have those stories of personal ministry, massaging, assisting and that's a very intimate service, physical touch and ministering to pain. Hyrum is present at many events, but not all of them. There are many significant events where John the Baptist appears to Joseph and Oliver and the revelation that's now section 76 is Joseph and Sidney and I think another interesting thing about Hyrum is he is very present, very central, but he's also not always the one right there. Hyrum too has to have a testimony come to him through the Spirit that, oh yes, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph and Oliver. I wasn't there. He has to gain that witness. We get a little sense of that seeking from Hyrum when he comes to Joseph before the church is organized and asks what he can do and Jesus answers and we often emphasize the second part of the answer.
- 00:30:33 This revelation is in section 11, and this was a scripture mastery scripture to seek first to obtain the word before you declare it and we emphasize that earlier in that revelation. Jesus also tells Hyrum that he needs to learn how the Spirit of the Lord works. He needs to put his trust in that Spirit, which leadeth to do good, to deal justly, to walk humbly. That is one of the things that Hyrum learns very well. He learns to have a witness of the Spirit, a testimony of Joseph and the great work, even though Hyrum is not in every occasion, Hyrum is there as part of the whole story, but he's there as someone who gets a witness from the Spirit. Now he is one of the eight witnesses, so he does get to have that experience, other experiences. He's just like you and I and other converts. He has to go to God and get a witness from the Spirit that these things are true and he gets it and he bears it and he is true to that witness to the very end.
- Hank Smith: 00:31:36 When you think of the love between those two and the entire first family of the church, they have sacrificed so much at every turn. John, I know you like to start your Book of Mormon class that way.

John Bytheway:	00:31:53	I did yesterday. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have Lucy Mack Smith be our guest today and she might say among other things, do you know what it cost my family to bring you this book? 'cause it cost a lot.
Hank Smith:	00:32:07	Yeah. She had lost her husband in 1840. Son Don Carlos in 1841 Alvin earlier in 1823 and now Joseph and Hyrum in 1844 and she'll lose Samuel right?
John Bytheway:	00:32:22	And then Samuel.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:32:24	Yeah, and after that is when she sits down to record her history . That is the moment in 1844, 45, 46 where her mind turns to telling the story of this family and they have challenges. They're not all perfect. William Smith causes trouble at various points along the way. Arguments among fam, disagreements. They work through all of that.
Hank Smith:	00:32:51	If you love the Book of Mormon, the Smith family comes with it, right? If you love the Doctrine and Covenants, it is a family. We often talk about Joseph and Emma and we should, they were all involved.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:33:04	The family is the first to hear the tidings. After Joseph has the first vision, we get a sense that he doesn't talk very much about it. He tells in his own history in the Pearl of Great Price that his mom asks him and he says, nevermind, I'm fine. I just learned your church is wrong. You know a great little quippy answer. He does tell it to the pastor and has that kind of chastisement, but he seems to have kept that experience to himself. The last piece of evidence for that is when Moroni appears to him a few years later, one of the things Moroni tells him is you have to go and tell this to your dad. This time Joseph resists and Moroni has to persuade him. No, your dad will believe you. Joseph tells him and his dad says, go and do that.
	00:33:56	That night they come back and the family is just thousands of questions what has happened and then they see that Joseph is tired and so they say, okay, everybody, he's tired. Let him sleep. He's awake all night, everybody, get up early tomorrow, do your chores and we'll come back tomorrow night. So it's that following night where Joseph gives his first testimony of Moroni and the book and the Nephites. Then Lucy will tell us that Joseph spent many nights telling them about the things that he would learn and the ancient people and their clothing and their warfare and their experiences. The Smith family is the first audience to hear the glad tidings from Cumorah.

Hank Smith:	00:34:41	Keith, and I'm glad that you're here to make sure we don't read over this and not feel that connection in the entire family and between these two brothers who loved each other. Would it be okay if I read a little bit of Willard Richards ?
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:34:55	Willard is our main source for the Joseph Smith manuscript history .
Hank Smith:	00:35:00	K. Then I can give the firsthand account.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:35:03	Since he wasn't shot, he's pretty good. John Taylor was kind of worried about surviving in that moment.
Hank Smith:	00:35:12	So he might not.
John Bytheway:	00:35:13	It's pretty interesting that the law of witnesses, Joseph and Hyrum, pair, and then Willard and John survive.
Hank Smith:	00:35:22	Keith, if it's okay, I'm going to read something I'm sure you've read countless times. This is Willard Richards firsthand account of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum. It's pretty remarkable that there are people to tell this story. You've got literally bullet after bullet after bullet coming into the room and two of the four survive. Willard Richards is not shot at all. John Taylor is quite a few times, Willard Richards is not shot and he's able to tell the story or we wouldn't know anything about what happened. I'll just read some portions of it. He writes, a shower of musket balls were thrown up the stairway against the door of the prison in the second story followed by many rapid footsteps. Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Mr. Taylor and myself who were in the front chamber closed the door of our room against the entry at the head of the stairs and placed ourselves against it.
	00:36:17	There being no lock on the door, no lock that was usable. It's interesting that the lock doesn't work in a jail. The door is a common panel and as soon as we heard the feet of the stairs, a ball was sent through the door, which passed between us and showed that our enemies were desperados and we must change our position. Joseph Smith, Mr. Taylor and myself sprang back to the front part of the room and Hyrum Smith retreated two thirds across the chamber directly in front of and facing the door. A bullet was sent through the door, which hit Hyrum on the side of his nose. When he fell backwards, extended at length without moving his feet. From the holes in his vest, pantaloons, drawers and shirt it appears evident that a ball must have been thrown from without through the window,

which entered his back on the right side and passing through, lodged against his watch.

00:37:09 As he struck the floor, he exclaimed emphatically, I am a dead man. Joseph looked towards him and responded, oh dear brother Hyrum, and opening the door two or three inches with his left hand discharged one barrel of a six shooter. Mr. Taylor rushed into the window, which is some 15 or 20 feet from the ground when his body was nearly on a balance, a ball from the door within entered his leg and a ball from without struck his watch, a patent lever in his vest pocket nearly the left breast and smashed it into a pie, leaving the hands standing at five o'clock and 16 minutes and 26 seconds. Joseph attempted as the last resort to leap the same window from once Mr. Taylor fell when two balls pierced him from the door and one entered his right breast from without and he fell outward exclaiming, oh Lord, my God. An instant cry was raised.

00:38:00 "He's leaped the window" and the mob on the stairs and in the entry ran out. [Willard Richards](#) then says he goes to the window and watched some seconds to see if there were any signs of life regardless of my own, determined to see the end of him I loved, being fully satisfied that he was dead with a hundred men near the body and more coming around the corner of the jail and expecting a return to our room, I rushed towards the prison door at the head of the stairs and through the entry from once the firing had proceeded to learn if the doors into the prison were open. When near the entry, Mr. Taylor called out, take me. I pressed my way until I found all the doors unbarred returning instantly caught Mr. Taylor under the arm. Can you imagine he's got broken bones and rushed by the stairs into the dungeon or the inner prison, stretched him on the floor and covered him with a bed in such a manner as not likely to be perceived, expecting an immediate return of the mob. I said to Mr. Taylor, this is a hard case to lay you on the floor, but if your wounds are not fatal, I want you to live to tell the story. I expected to be shot the next moment and stood before the door awaiting the onset.

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:39:11 [Willard Richards](#), we are so indebted to his record. As you mentioned, he's a witness. He is a member of the Twelve. He is also Joseph Smith's personal secretary. He is the church historian and recorder. He is the Nauvoo Temple recorder. He's also got a role with record keeping in the city of Nauvoo. Willard Richards is our records guy. He thinks about it. He spends his time doing records. He's in the room. He reconstructs this text, this timeline a little bit later and you can see him reconstructing it. He's piecing together where the balls entered John Taylor,

and this isn't him writing in the moment. This is him thinking about it and putting it together and feeling the burden that as a witness he needs to give the most comprehensive account that he can because future generations would need to know. We're so indebted to him. One of the things he records for us is that there is a prophecy that Joseph offers, that there will be a time when bullets fly around him and he will come out unscathed and this is that time he is preserved for other things, but especially to make this record.

John Bytheway: 00:40:32 That prophecy that you mentioned was so interesting that bullets will fly around you like hail. They won't pierce your clothes. I think was his ear nicked? Another thing talking about Joseph and Hyrum, I know that in Old Testament times, it seems like people's names sometimes indicated their mission. I remember Joseph Fielding McConkie. You guys remember him having us look up the name of Joseph, which he who adds, the name of [Hyrum](#) means my brother is exalted and I remember thinking, wow, that's kind of amazing.

Hank Smith: 00:41:12 John, I love that. And it goes right along with the end of verse three. In life they were not divided and in death they were not separated, they went together. Let's talk more about Carthage. Keith what do we know happens in the jail?

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:41:27 One important survivor story comes from [John Taylor](#). John is hit by several bullets, but he doesn't die and in particular there's one story that John will tell his entire life. He lives till 1887, so he's got more than 40 years to tell this experience. He will tell it often about how one of the bullets, a ball would've hit him in the heart, except it was stopped by his watch and if it had hit him he said, you know, I wouldn't be here. That's the the upshot of his witness. The watch had a glass face, the glass was shattered, but he kept the rest of the watch. Mostly what happened to it, it was compressed. It was smooshed together, but he would pull it out and show his children. He would show other people. This was an important part of his testimony and an important part of the testimony that he passed on to other generations.

00:42:28 And then a few years ago in the 1990s, there was some analysis that was one step removed from the watch itself, but it just said, you know what? If John Taylor's watch had really been hit by a ball, it would've been totally destroyed. One of the evidences they provided is that Hyrum Smith has a watch that's hit and it's blown to pieces. John Taylor's watch is just smooshed with a broken glass. There was this idea proposed

that well, maybe he wasn't hit by a bullet, maybe he just fell down or and smooshed it somehow.

Hank Smith: 00:43:08

Right. Hit the window sill or something.

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:43:09

Hit the window sill. That's a common way that they would talk about it. Well, that idea was articulated in the 1990s. It circulated around, we mentioned it in Saints volume one, that it was published in 2018. The idea was there and it was kind of nagging at us in the church history department. We actually did one of our most exciting historical studies. Most of the time when you do history, it's in the library, it's in the archive, but every now and then we get a study like this. We went out and we purchased several old watches. We also went out and purchased several old period guns that were functioning. A lot of the ones in our museum collection don't function anymore. Pulled together some forensic experts from modern law enforcement. We had a couple of different agencies who work with this kind of analysis of bullets and force and trajectory.

00:44:09

So we set up a couple of scenarios. Basically the research was we shot a lot of watches with old guns and we had multiple experts doing the analysis and they came back with some different findings. These were all published in BYU studies a little while ago. We concluded that just falling on the watch was not enough to crush it. The way it gets crushed, there are internal pieces of the watch that get pushed out and they cause indentations, so we get metal pressing into other metal. That doesn't happen when you just fall on a windowsill or on the floor. I think we've successfully ruled out that as a possibility and then we did find if you shoot a watch directly from close range, yeah you can blast it to pieces, but bullets are flying in every kind of direction. Some of them are coming right through the door, but there are also people on the outside of the jail shooting from a distance.

00:45:12

The damage in Taylor's [watch](#), we could replicate that with a bullet fired from like 200 yards. We could also replicate it on a ricochet. We had some sharp shooters. You would have to hit one thing and bounce off and hit the watch because of the loss of velocity. We could then replicate the same thing. At the end of the day, we had a bunch of shot up watches. I think we also shot up the windowsill theory. We also couldn't disprove John Taylor's witness or to say it the other way around. The experience that he narrates is entirely plausible to be in that setting. There are multiple ways in which a bullet could cause that kind of damage to his watch, but also not take his life. That was a fun afternoon.

Hank Smith:	00:46:04	As someone who loves to get into the details of things, I really appreciate that. That's fascinating.
John Bytheway:	00:46:12	And they weren't the way we think of bullets today, these were, they were just lead balls.
Hank Smith:	00:46:18	Like a marble almost.
John Bytheway:	00:46:20	Yeah, about the size of a marble, right?
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:46:22	Yeah. And then pushed through not the smoothest barrel always. So yeah, there could be all kinds of variations in the gun and the ball and the distance and the flight path.
Hank Smith:	00:46:36	Willard Richards, they don't come back. Obviously for him, he is not wounded incredibly, his first fear is that it was temporary. He wants to save John Taylor's life. I imagine then getting John Taylor out of the jail would be also pretty painful and difficult getting him to the hotel across the street.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:46:57	The murderers flee as murderers often do.
Hank Smith:	00:47:00	Yeah, to my knowledge, no one is ever convicted of a crime.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:47:06	That's right. No one's convicted. There is a trial . A couple of people are charged. They're all acquitted.
John Bytheway:	00:47:12	Keith, I'm really glad you're here because I know that there was a book going around about the fate of the persecutors of the prophet or something, which I've learned was just not really good history. Can you comment on that?
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:47:27	Yeah, I'd love to. It's terrible history. That's the quickest way to do it. This book was published in the middle of the 20th century. That is the title, the Fate of the Persecutors. And the main idea was that the author claims to have followed all kinds of people who persecuted Joseph from Missouri and Carthage and then follows them to the end of their lives and terrible things happen to them. Their eyeballs fall out of their sockets. They die these crazy deaths. The gist of it is that God got his vengeance on all of these people and that's kind of the way it's presented. The only problem is that it's not accurate. We face one major limitation and that is that in Carthage, the people in the mob blackened their faces because they didn't want to be identified. We don't know who most of the people are and you can piece together some, but that was the point.

	00:48:25	They didn't want to be known. So the idea that a hundred years later I'm gonna track them all down and prove that their eyeballs fell out is just absurd at the first level. Here's a second interesting angle. There was a book published in 1978 by a historian and a lawyer. The lawyer was just a young law professor at the University of Chicago named Dallin Oaks . I think he went on to do something, but little lawyer, Dallin was working on this project with a historian Marvin Hill, a professor at BYU. They write a history of the trial of the people who were charged with murdering Joseph Smith. So we've got half a dozen people or so who get charged and they're acquitted. The whole book is interesting. It's called Carthage Conspiracy about all the ins and outs of the trial and the legal maneuvers and that's a great read.
	00:49:19	They do pause at the end and they say, there is this book out there, Fate of the Persecutors. You can't track all, most of these people down because they're unknown. Here are six. Yes, they were acquitted, but there was enough information to make a charge. So let's follow these guys. And it turns out none of them suffer any ill effects. They go on in their careers, they get promoted, they get government appointments. One of them serves in the Abraham Lincoln administration. One of them becomes a postmaster, which was a position of esteem for those people. Tried and acquitted the most public facing people. There is no negative implication in their lives or their careers. They go on and do whatever they would do. The history, the evidence in the book is bad. I also think the rationale behind it, the idea that says that best way to bear testimony of Joseph is to go and show how God tortured other people. That is a wrongheaded way to think about prophets and our witness of living prophets too.
Hank Smith:	00:50:31	Right and we don't need to sensationalize a story like this. It is touching and inspiring as it is.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:50:40	And tragic and heart-rending and yes, all of those things.
John Bytheway:	00:50:44	That young lawyer, Elder Oaks and Marvin Hill, that book was called Carthage Conspiracy.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:50:50	That's correct. It's a legal history of the trial.
John Bytheway:	00:50:53	So that's one that you could read and feel some confidence in.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:50:58	Yeah, and depending on how much you like legal history, it is the ins and outs. But if you're a lawyer you might love it 'cause

they go deep into the maneuvers and how they admit evidence and how the prosecution moves and how the defense responds. And it's blow by blow. It may not even be as exciting enough for courtroom TV 'cause there isn't someone on the witness stand pointing, it's kind of dry legal history. But it's a very significant history that works through all of the aspects of what happened with him. President Oaks has since talked about his experience doing that research and one of the things he uncovered as that young lawyer were the court records from Hancock County. That's the jurisdiction. When he looked at them, he unsealed them. There's a way they would bind up the records to put them into deep storage. It was clear that those records of the trial had been recorded, but they hadn't been looked at for almost 140 years. He cracks the seals and blows off the dust and he has the excitement that scholars and researchers have when you are digging into a source that you know nobody's seen before. It's gonna bring insights that we haven't had. It's a significant book on lots of levels.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:52:19 | That's fantastic. Keith, verse four, I noticed talks about some days before maybe we could read that and have you comment. It says, when Joseph went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said, I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I'm calm as the summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward God and towards all men. I shall die innocent and it shall yet be said of me he was murdered in cold blood. Leading up to June 27th at five o'clock in the afternoon. How do they get there? |
| Dr. Keith Erikson: | 00:52:59 | Well, there's a whole bunch we could say maybe one thing I would share with your listeners is the Joseph Smith Papers team did create a podcast called The Road to Carthage. And it takes us through all of the different layers. There are political issues, there are religious issues, there are economic issues, there are cultural issues that bring us there in the immediate few days before at kind of a personal level, pressure has intensified in Nauvoo. Joseph escapes, he crosses the river to try and let things cool down. While he is there, Emma and others invite him to come back and they say, things are intense here, we need you. There is some sense that some people have said he's run away, he's a coward. Joseph does come back and he'll say things like, if my life is of no value to my friends, then it's no value. |
| | 00:53:57 | So he comes back knowing that the pressure has escalated to a conflict with the state of Illinois that they need to face that there's a personal layer here. The state of Illinois will charge |

Joseph with treason is a term that they use, but it's related to the destruction of a newspaper. It's interesting the governor of Illinois will tell Joseph, I think it's okay that you shut down the newspaper. This is the Nauvoo Expositor that had published things about Joseph. It was written by former church members who were angry about a whole bunch of things. And the governor in that moment says, I think it's in your authority to stop a newspaper. And they used a law at the time they declared it a public nuisance. Joseph is the mayor of Nauvoo. And so if there's a public nuisance, that's one of the things elected officials do.

00:54:51 The [governor](#) of Illinois also says, you didn't just stop the printing, you destroyed the press and the destruction of private property is a line too far. That's not how it works in America. And that's the charge that ultimately takes him to Carthage, which is the county seat, Hancock County seat, which means there can't be bail. So he has to stay there. They can't just have a quick hearing and get him out. It is interesting that same lawyer, Dallin Oaks would also look into that question. Early in his legal career, he wrote a legal article in one of the Illinois legal journals and he finds the same conclusion that the governor had. That shutting down a press is definitely within the purview, but destroying the press crossed a line. That's what brings Joseph back to Nauvoo and he's arrested and then taken to Carthage. He bids farewell from his family in Nauvoo and travels. It's about 20 miles from Nauvoo to Carthage.

Hank Smith: 00:55:56 It's interesting that you brought up [Governor Ford](#). He writes something in 1854, so this is just 10 years later that I found so fascinating. He's writing a history of Illinois and he mentions Joseph Smith. This is 10 years after Joseph has died. The Saints have moved to Utah. He says that he fears that some gifted person one day will make the name of the martyred Joseph stir the souls of men as the name of Christ himself. Listen to these cities. He names off Palmyra, Kirtland, Far West, Adam-ondi-Ahman, Nauvoo and Carthage Jail could become holy names like Jerusalem, Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives. And then listen to what he says. He's scared he's gonna be a villain. He says in that event, the author of this history, who is the governor, feels degraded that the humble governor of an obscure state who would otherwise be forgotten in a few years stands a fair chance like Pilate or Herod to be dragged down to posterity. Keith, what is his role? What would you say as a historian for Governor Ford?

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:57:13 Well, I would say he was a pretty good prophet in this case. Those places are well known. The story has been told and

Governor Ford doesn't come out shining in the account. We should say it this way. Like any person has multiple actions, some things he does are helpful to the Saints. Some are kind of neutral, some are harmful. And around this specific moment times where he's unable, for example, to protect Joseph and Hyrum in the jail, despite promises that nothing would happen, you're not gonna come out looking good in that history. And there are later times after Joseph's death, he continues as governor, Brigham Young and the Saints keep interacting and promises he turns back on and tensions escalate. And it's hard really to get by the fact that Joseph is murdered on his watch. The Saints don't forgive him for that. In the end, he comes out with a losing record in this history.

Hank Smith: 00:58:12

Yeah, that statement is pretty incredible, isn't it?

John Bytheway: 00:58:15

I wonder if at the time they thought, okay, that's the end of Joseph Smith and his movement. I've got a newspaper clip from the [Boston Globe](#) that says the blow that subdued Joseph Smith has palsied the arm of Mormonism. They will now scatter in the four winds and gradually merge into the great mass of society, which is totally wrong. And I have another one from the Cincinnati Gazette. July 3rd, 1844. So the martyrdom was on June 27th. This is verbatim: important from Nauvoo. Death of Joe Smith and Hyrum Smith. Terrible excitement at the west. We yesterday received by the western mail, the following particulars of the death of Joe Smith, the prophet and his brother Hyrum. They were both shot. There was a tremendous excitement at the West in consequence of their death a dreadful civil war was expected. And then this last three words, thus ends [Mormonism](#). I researched it and 11 years later, thus ends the Cincinnati Gazette. They're gone. I'm wondering, this is 10 years later when Governor Ford says that, has he noticed the church has not disappeared? Has he noticed the movement from what he's heard? And now he's going, oh great, now how am I gonna be remembered? I mean, they're really bad at prophesying some of these newspapers.

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:59:46

Yeah, and in some ways the idea was even more widespread. We do have these third party newspapers making those observations. We have avowed opponents of the church like Thomas Sharp and others in Illinois who say similar things. This will be the end. We've cut it off at the head. And you know those kinds of ideas. We talked earlier about some of the immediate reactions of the Saints. Some of the Saints have the same wonderings. It is not at all clear to them in the summer of 1844 what will happen, how it would unfold. Maybe this becomes a segue into our section 136. Brigham Young has the

same questions. Brigham is not in Nauvoo in Illinois when Joseph is martyred, he's in New England. Word comes to him a little bit later and he has three interesting reactions. The first one is he realizes that on the day of Joseph's martyrdom, he felt this profound depression and despair and didn't know why.

01:00:55 Now the news he realizes, oh, that's why I felt so terrible that day. The second thing he feels is that sense of loss and concern. Brigham looked up to Joseph, admired Joseph, followed Joseph. Brigham's first reaction is that he cannot comprehend that Joseph could be taken or what would happen. And then his third reaction is that quiet reassurance of the Holy Spirit that comes into his heart and mind. And he realizes, no, wait a minute, we have everything that we need. Joseph gave us the keys, the authority. Joseph taught us the ordinances. That third piece is the conviction that brings Brigham back to Nauvoo. He calls the other members of the Twelve are out, campaigning for Joseph and preaching the gospel as missionaries. Brigham calls them back to Nauvoo and and it'll take them about a month to get there and others will come sooner and later he does say, we need to come back Twelve and gather back to Nauvoo. So he has all of those reactions. That's Brigham Young, President of the Twelve. That first kind of knee jerk fear is, oh my goodness, what will happen? How can we do this without Joseph?

John Bytheway: 01:02:14 I love this part in [Saints](#) that describes what was going on. I'm starting on page 558 in the first volume. Phoebe Woodruff wrote her parents and described the attack at Carthage. These things will not stop the work any more than Christ's death did, but it will roll on with greater rapidity. Phoebe testified, I believe Joseph and Hyrum are where they can do the church much more good now than when with us. I'm stronger in the faith than ever she affirmed. I would not give up the faith of true Mormonism if it cost me my life within one hour from the time I am writing this for I know of a surety, that it is the work of God. As the letters of Mary Ann, Vilate and Phoebe traveled east Brigham Young and Orson Pratt heard rumors that Joseph and Hyrum had been killed, but no one could confirm the story.

01:03:03 Then on July 16th, a member of the church in the New England branch they were visiting, received a letter from Nauvoo detailing the tragic news. When he read the letter, [Brigham](#) felt like his head was going to crack. He had never felt such despair. His thoughts turned instantly to the priesthood. Joseph had held all the keys necessary to endow the Saints and seal them together for eternity. Without those keys, the work of the Lord could not move forward. For a moment, Brigham feared that Joseph had taken them to the grave. Then in a burst of

revelation, Brigham remembered how Joseph had bestowed the keys on the Twelve Apostles. Bringing his hand down hard on his knee he said, the keys of the kingdom are right here with the church. Interesting how it took him a while to, wait a minute, Joseph prepared for this.

- Hank Smith: 01:03:52 We have to remember they did not, this was a shock to them. To you and I we've known this story our whole lives. What you said earlier, Keith, he always comes back. Joseph has gone off to jail before and he'll come back many times.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 01:04:05 Yeah, this was different and personal and poignant.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:10 Keith, before we move on to talk about Brigham Young in section 136, which I'm excited to do, we haven't had a lot of opportunity to talk about Brigham this year, like we have Joseph. There may be a listener out there who has experienced the prophecy of Moroni, Joseph Smith History chapter one, verse 33, only one chapter, verse 33. Joseph says that Moroni told him that his name, Joseph Smith, should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds and tongues, or that it should be good and evil spoken of among all people. I can imagine Joseph saying, really me? I'm just a kid, you know, on a farm in New York, there is plenty of evil spoken of Joseph Smith today, 24/7 online. What would you say to someone who's listening who doesn't know if they can trust Joseph Smith? You're a historian of the church. You've done this for your career. How do you feel about Joseph Smith from all you've read and written?
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 01:05:13 Yeah, this is a really great question about Joseph Smith. More in terms of a relationship than in terms of a fact. Often we talk about things from history there about names and dates and facts, and we can memorize lots of facts about Joseph Smith. I don't know Joseph personally, but over the course of my life, I have had a relationship of learning about him. Some of it is personal. My grandfather, for example, was the caretaker of the Joseph Smith Birthplace Memorial in Vermont, so we would go visit there. I grew up in Maryland. We would visit and spend time with my grandparents, but it was also one of the things grandpa did was take care of this place. That's important for Joseph. There's a little bit of that that just kind of infused in to my life. I also had experiences testing the things from Joseph Smith, reading the Book of Mormon, praying, getting an answer, being a missionary, teaching people about his experiences.
- 01:06:28 I had other experiences where some of them are maybe too personal to share, but just times, there's one term from the

literature about historical commemoration that is that people want to get synchronized with the past. We might do this on the same date. We find a synchronization with the past because this day so many years ago, we also get synchronized in a place. We might go to a place and say, this was the place where something has happened, and I've had those kinds of experiences visiting other historic sites and feeling synchronized or in a connection with Joseph and his mission and his work. Maybe I'll share one last experience, and for me, often testimony is that it's experience. It's not facts. We often express testimony as facts. I know these things, but we gain testimony through experience. That's how you trust people. You asked about, you know, can I trust Joseph?

01:07:36 You trust people you've had experiences with. I can't give you facts why to trust somebody, especially in this age of misinformation. We trust God because we've gone to him and he's answered our prayers. He answered them then he'll answer them now. That kind of experience, I'll share one recent one. One of the things I like to do is ride a bicycle. A few months ago, I had the opportunity to do something I've wanted to do for a long time. That is to ride a bicycle from Nauvoo to Carthage. The old road is not there anymore, so we do have indications of where that was, but they, you can roughly approximate the ride, and one of the things I like about doing that, I've talked about synchronicity, is you do get to feel the lay of the land and you get just a sense of how things unfold.

01:08:33 The other thing I like about it is it's just time to think. I was all alone. It was a sunrise ride the way that it worked out, and so it's just time to think. One of the things, as I thought through Joseph and his witness and his legacy, as I got closer to Carthage, there is a spot where the old road runs along the river and it's still there, so I got to that point where I'm closest to the road. I'm not on a paved road that the farmers have added later. I'm down in the river. It's cool. You go up the bluff in Nauvoo, you're kind of on a plane, and I come down to the river. I just had this insight, this impression, come over me. Out of all of the things that Joseph did, I could do one thing that he couldn't, that's not the inspiration that you think to get the insight was you can go back to Nauvoo and bear your testimony again, and I did ride back to Nauvoo.

01:09:35 It was a loop ride, but the bigger insight was that was Joseph's final ride, his final moment. He went that path and he didn't come back. Thankfully, I am still around and I can share my testimony with my children, with my family, and we all, as members of the church in the 21st century have the

opportunity to continue to bear the testimony, as Joseph said, of Jesus once after the many testimonies which has been given of him this is the testimony last of all, or latest of all, the most recent one, hot off the press. This is my recent testimony, most recent of all, yeah, I had experience as a child, but my testimony most recent of all is that we can continue to do the work which Joseph started and which we celebrate in this tribute, in this revelation.

Hank Smith:	01:10:35	Thank you, Keith for that. We love the prophet here, on followHIM. I think everybody knows that John, anybody who's listened to us and as section 135 says his blood and his brother Hyrum's blood is an ambassador for the religion of Jesus Christ that will touch the hearts of honest men among all nations.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	01:10:56	Coming up in part two, half of the people who cross the planes are under the age of 21. We sometimes lose that from photographs of old pioneers, but this is like a giant YSA conference. People are falling in love. They're having fun. They're courting, they're teasing, they're enjoying. Sometimes the young men would take the axle grease and they would rub it on the beards of men who were sleeping.



- John Bytheway: 00:00:00 Welcome to part two with Dr. Keith Erikson Doctrine and Covenants 135 to 136.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:08 Keith, we now move to section 136, which is three years, almost three years later, two and a half years later. John, you might have to correct me here, but I think this is only one of two sections of the Doctrine and Covenants that don't come through Joseph Smith.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:28 And it's interesting too how many that came as a result of the answer to a question going through the JST for example. There's one that's kind of a funny thing happened on the way to buy wine from my enemies for the sacrament when an angel shows up. And then now here we have John Taylor and now Brigham Young. So boy, as we close up here, I can't stop thinking about what Keith said. We're gonna include this in the Doctrine and Covenants and there will be more. This work is gonna go on. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:03 So tell us about Brigham Young, Keith. I don't know if all of our listeners know a lot about Brigham Young. We've talked about Joseph Smith all year.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:01:10 Brigham Young is one of the significant figures in our history. He is an early convert. He's a couple years in, he's not one who's at the first meeting or right away, but a couple years in, he joins the church and he develops. One of the things he does as part of his conversion is he wants to meet Joseph. He wants to meet this prophet and shake his hand and talk with him. And so he does travel to Kirtland and meet Joseph there and that becomes part of a witness. Brigham is kind of outside of the inner circle. There's already a couple of years under the bridge. There's Joseph and Oliver and Sidney Rigdon and all of these leaders and Brigham is just a new guy on the side, but he's a talented person and a hardworking person, so he slowly comes into other contact with Joseph.

	00:02:08	The experience on Zion's Camp is a significant part where he'll spend time and work closely. Then Brigham is called to be one of the first members of the Quorum of the Twelve. The Quorum of the Twelve is organized in 1835 after the Zions Camp or Camp of Israel march. Brigham is in that group, the first Quorum of the Twelve. The first Twelve does not have a very good pass rate. Nine of them are excommunicated, many of them do return. The three who never waver are Brigham and Heber C. Kimball and then David Patten, but he will be killed shortly with the troubles in Missouri coming out of Nauvoo. It's really Brigham and Heber. Heber will become Brigham's counselor in the First Presidency, but Brigham is a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. They will shift around how they do seniority and who comes out, but the long story is that in the summer of 1844, Brigham is the senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve.
	00:03:17	He's now gained a lot of experience. Joseph has increasingly relied on Brigham for difficult things. Brigham is sent to England with the apostles while Joseph is imprisoned in Liberty Jail. Brigham is the one, and the Twelve, who coordinate the exodus from Missouri to Illinois. Brigham has had practical experience leading the Saints and proclaiming the gospel. He's had now as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve lots of council time with Joseph and seeing it in action. And so he is positioned in the summer of 1844 to pick up the work and carry it forward.
John Bytheway:	00:03:57	It's one of the things I love about church history was the British missions. I thought it was so brilliant of the Lord to inspire, to send as many of the Twelve as could go and to operate as a quorum without being able to text or email or call Joseph to be able to run independently as a quorum. I thought, oh, that was brilliant, so that they would know how to do that, how to act independently and if Joseph were a cult leader, he would want to control everything. But at a time in his life when he really probably would love to have help and friendly fellowship around him, he sends them all over to the British Isles. I just think that's a fascinating little part of church history.
Hank Smith:	00:04:42	In your studies, Keith, how was Brigham prepared for this? I don't think he thought this would ever happen 'cause you had Joseph and Hyrum and Sidney and all these other leaders, Edward Partridge and Newel K. Whitney, like you said, he wasn't there in the very beginning. What do you see in your studies of Brigham's life?
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:05:03	Yeah, one of the things you said I think is really important. Brigham never saw this happening to him. Brigham wasn't

aspiring for this. Brigham wasn't pulling the strings behind the scenes to make this happen. Brigham literally revered Joseph Smith. If you said anything bad about Joseph in Brigham's presence, you would have to deal with Brigham. He was a hundred percent loyal. He was a defender and in that reverence for Joseph, Brigham also saw himself as so far below or different. This continues to play out through Brigham's life. People will come to Brigham when he's President of the Church and say, how come you don't do translation like Joseph did? And he'll just say, I don't have that gift. Joseph was Joseph. Nobody is Joseph, I'm not Joseph. He had a, we might today call it an inferiority complex or imposter syndrome. Brigham is President of the Church and he will think about Joseph and think, I'm not him.

00:06:11 I'm not as good as him. I can't do what he did. And I think in many ways that is an important starting point for Brigham's preparation, is that he knew that he had to rely on the Lord because he just didn't see himself as doing those kinds of things. Then he does have those different experience that we mentioned in the quorum and as a missionary, but I think Brigham would be the first to tell you when he realizes that the Quorum of the Twelve need to lead, that he can't do it. [President Thomas S. Monson](#) would talk about whom the Lord calls the Lord qualifies. The inverse of that is when you are called, you don't feel qualified. Brigham would've told you that I can't do this. And in many ways that's the most important criteria. No, you can't do that, but God can do it. You've been called to be humble and to do that work, not because you can just do it.

Hank Smith: 00:07:13 I can't imagine being asked to fill that spot. There's tough spots to fill and then you know saying, please take over the reigns here. What happens between these two revelations? I noticed that they're two and a half years apart and Brigham is, I think at this point, isn't he the President of the Quorum of the Twelve still?

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:07:37 That's right. That [fact](#) also [illustrates](#) what we were saying. The first reaction of Brigham and the Quorum of the Twelve is there isn't another Joseph. There can't be another Joseph. And so in fact, the best way to do this is for the Quorum of the Twelve to manage the work. We mentioned earlier that there's not a whole plan. There's not a succession handbook that they turn to. They have to think about it, counsel together, and as they talk it through, that's their initial assessment. Joseph is Joseph. Praise to his memory, we are not Joseph, but as a quorum we can work in unanimity and we can. And so that works. They

keep things moving in Nauvoo, they publish the Doctrine and Covenants. They advance the work on the temple. They're managing the relationship with their neighbors. But those will continue to deteriorate. Tensions will escalate the following year and the summer of 1845.

00:08:39

Those tensions are escalating and there are some starting to be some conflict even to the point of armed conflict. And Brigham Young is interesting because he is in many ways one of the great peacemakers of our history. We've talked about how in Nauvoo, one of the things they don't do is retaliate. They also don't do that in Missouri. [Brigham](#) leads an exodus, not a counter attack, and as tension escalates in Nauvoo for a third time, Brigham chooses the path of peace and peacemaking. Right In the winter of 45 to 46, they finish the Nauvoo temple. Hundreds of Saints come into the temple to receive this ordinance. Brigham is there day and night. He's one of the select group of people who have learned the temple endowment and so they could administer it. They do that in January and February and then the first part of February, the first group begins to leave Nauvoo. That has even been exacerbated. The original negotiation was let us leave in the summer. The Hancock County residents don't even allow that. They crossed the Mississippi River in February, the first group. They will continue to leave over the coming months, but throughout 1846 they've tried to move across Iowa. And if we kind of imagine the geography, we've got Nauvoo and the Mississippi River. The immediate escape is across the river. But Iowa, even though on a map it looks like a tiny state if you're walking across it, it's a very long walk.

00:10:22

And it's a time of rain. This year 46 is particularly rainy and muddy. The Saints were not prepared for a major overland journey. One of [Brigham's](#) first inclinations was let's just leave Nauvoo and go. But he realizes they can't do that. They're bogged down, they're not ready. They're too slow, they're poorly organized, they're not prepared. By the fall of 1846, there are about 7,000 people who have made it across Iowa, and they're right on the border of another river with modern day Nebraska. They've made it there. They're in Winter Quarters. There's still another 3000 kind of spread across Iowa that haven't quite made it. We've got 10,000 people in the fall and by fall it's too cold. You can't cross where this is an overland journey. So they missed the summer of 1846, so that's where they are.

00:11:23

It's now, it's regroup in the winter. How do we get ourselves prepared for the coming summer? This revelation that's now section 136 comes in January of 1847. That's where we find

them expelled from Illinois straggling their way across Iowa. Trying to figure out how to get 10,000 people at this moment and in the end, many thousands more. But the immediate concern is 10,000. And these aren't a trained group of overland explorers. These are families and widows and children and the elderly and sick. Nobody else in American history is trying to move 10,000 people of all ages and health conditions. If you're gonna go to California for gold, you're going to be lean, mean gold digging machine and you're gonna go. But Brigham's problem is totally different. Some of these people are now two time refugees pushed out of Missouri, pushed out of Illinois, destitute, lost property, whatever investment they had in Illinois, they just left it there. That's the problem that Brigham has and this revelation is the answer to that problem. Kind of wrapping our head around the scope of the problem helps us realize what's at stake.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:12:49 | Can you imagine all these people looking to you? What are you gonna do? I don't think those of us who live in 2025 can even comprehend the gravity of that situation. You can't run down to the store. We can't go find hotel rooms. We're out in the weather in the mud when we can't go back. |
| Dr. Keith Erikson: | 00:13:15 | You don't just endure trek for three days and then you can go home to your warm bed. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:13:19 | It's an incredible thing and I imagine the stress was high and it would be a relief to hear from the Lord like you used to with Joseph. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:13:29 | I mentioned the British mission before and I've been thinking of this wonderful expectation of Zion and now what they're dealing with. This is not what I crossed the ocean for. And now we've got across the plains as well, the hardship of all of it. Hank, I know you love to talk about unmet expectations and how what a trial that can be. Also, here's Brigham, as you have said, not expecting to be the one to take and to lead this group of elderly, of babies, destitute people. How many did you say 10,000? |
| Dr. Keith Erikson: | 00:14:05 | About 10,000 in 1846. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:14:09 | And one of the questions that I had was, were there people hounding them to get out of Nauvoo? |

Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:14:15	Yes, there were threats and escalating tensions and violence. Definitely a push to get out and get out sooner rather than later.
Hank Smith:	00:14:25	Brigham, to my knowledge Keith, is committed to, nobody gets left behind. We have to work together. It is not gonna be an every family for themselves.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:14:36	Yeah. As Brigham leads people across, he's very often compared to Moses leading this exodus. But I think another important parallel to remember is Enoch. We learn about Enoch much more in the Joseph Smith translation of the Old Testament that come out in the Pearl of Great Price in the book of Moses. What a great prophet Enoch was. How he prepared his people to live in unity, that there are no poor and that he prepares an entire city that is taken up to God. That is Brigham's model. It isn't I'm gonna find 20 great people and we're gonna do it. It is the entire city. It's the entire community. How do we prepare an entire people, or in this case rescue them, not just keep them fed, but it's those big ideas in Zion that they are united, that they are one heart, that they are one mind, that they care for each other, that there are no poor. Those are really hard things that we still work on in the 21st century world, but those were his aspirations as a leader, avoiding the conflict and trying to build a community of peace.
Hank Smith:	00:15:56	Keith, I know we can't go through the entire Vanguard company and talk about every day, there's a wonderful book called We'll Find The Place by Richard Bennett , which really was an eye-opening book to all that they went through. In your study of the trek west do you have any highlights or anything you want to point out or talk about?
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:16:18	Yeah, I might start in the text of 136. That does become the foundation, but then I think we can see some threads. We can see through the Vanguard company and other companies that follow three important things come out in this revelation. The first 15 or 16 verses, we get instructions on organization. They're organized into companies. We get a structure, there's a group of 150 and 10 and that this structure is how we will make sure the poor and the widows will make it. Their first view is that the companies will be led by apostles. So they start setting out these companies and assigning different apostles to lead them. That's one of the things we've perpetuated in modern trek. The idea of companies and structure. I think there's an important insight right there in verse one that we miss in our modern cosplay reenactments that we do.

- 00:17:21 And it says in verse one that to organize into companies with a covenant. Today we often reserve covenant for something attached to an ordinance that I've done. I think there's a really significant thing here that these are companies with a covenant to each other that we will make sure all a hundred of us or 50 of us or 10 in whatever our structure is that we'll make it and also covenants not to leave. One of the things that happened in the first year is people were just wandering across Iowa at their own pace. And if the group you were with was kind of slow and you wanted to hurry, you would hurry. Part of the covenant was to say, I'm not leaving to a different company. I'm assigned to this one and I will stay. We'll make it through. A second thing I think that's really interesting is after the organization, the revelation gives a whole list of commandments.
- 00:18:17 I think this is part of that companies with a covenant, but there's don't covet, don't take the name of God in vain. No contention, no drunkenness. You've gotta edify each other. You have to return what you borrowed. That's an interesting commandment. You have to be a good steward. But it gives all the kind of the rules of how we're gonna be this covenant group, what we need to do together. And then the third thing I love about this revelation, verses, this is around 28 to 32, 33, it says, one of the things you need to do is praise God. Singing, music, dance, prayer, prayers of praise, learning by the Spirit. Learning is praise. But that this isn't just walk and walk and walk and walk. This is praising God for his deliverance, praising God for his protection, praising God for arriving in the place of safety and refuge.
- 00:19:19 But the act of crossing the plains is an act of praise. I think that's beautiful. Sometimes I wish we praised a little more in some of our experiences. I think our music could be a little more praiseful and a little less dreary. Sometimes a little more merry. The pioneers we will see in their journals, they do walk a lot, but putting that in context, if you stayed home, you would walk a lot. It's not like you were gonna stay home and drive your car, you're gonna stay home and walk. Walking wasn't so much the issue. And what would happen is at the end of the day, they would dance, they would pull out their instruments, they would dance, they would sing, they would play. One of the things we did a few years ago in the church history department, by a few, I mean like 40 years ago, our librarians, we would get so many questions about pioneers.
- 00:20:18 Was this person a pioneer? Was that person a pioneer? What did they do? Do you know anything? And so we started to build in-house a documented list of all of the pioneers that we knew.

Over time that grew and as computer technology came along, it turned into a database. Then in the early decade of the 21st century, we released this as the Overland Pioneer Travel database. So that was available online and it has now been so successful we've added other data sets to it. We just now have a biographical database, but all the pioneers are there and we've identified now more than 60,000 people who crossed the plains between 1847, this Vanguard company and 1869, when the Transcontinental Railroad comes through, then you don't have to walk anymore. You just get a train ticket. In those years, the journey decreased. As the train moved west, you would ride a train to the end of the track and then you would walk the rest of the way.

00:21:26 But that's the pioneer window. And so we have this data set of [pioneers](#) and now we can analyze it. We can say accurate things about pioneers and not just imaginary things, but one of the things that we can say from their records is they do praise God. They sing, they dance, they marry. Half of the people who cross the plains are under the age of 21. We sometimes lose that from photographs of old pioneers, but this is like a giant YSA conference. People are falling in love, they're having fun, they're courting, they're teasing, they're enjoying. We get accounts of people, sometimes the young men would take the axle grease and they would rub it on the beards of men who were sleeping, and so the men would wake up and have a greasy beard. We find pranks and fun and so I think this is an important part.

00:22:25 They were disciples of Christ. They were cast out and they were praising God and having a good time. We've identified about 400 pioneer companies that crossed the plains from this structure. The organization that comes in this revelation is replicated 400 times over the next two decades. For about a third of those, there's not a single death. One of the modern perceptions we have is the pioneers were all suffering in death, but for a third of the pioneers, if you get the chance to meet them in heaven and say, we're sorry everyone died in your company, they'll say, what are you even talking about? Nobody died. We got there. That was the goal. That was why we organized. Related to that, we found the mortality rate for the pioneers as a whole, the whole 60,000 of them was basically the same as the United States mortality rate.

00:23:31 You were just as likely to die staying home in Illinois as you were to cross the plains. It is risky. You are working with large animals and the dangers are sort of the same. Now that changes when we go down to a company level, the Martin and Willie Handcart

company level, they have about a four times mortality rate. So yes, specific groups suffer in different ways, but by and large what's laid out in this revelation to be organized and keep the commandments and praise God becomes a very effective way to move thousands of people across a continent.

- Hank Smith: 00:24:12 Yeah. It seems that those who come later benefit from those who come before. The early groups probably suffered more. I mean the handcart companies, those two are a little bit of an outlier, but Brigham, didn't he set up almost way stations along the way?
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:24:29 Yeah. It becomes a path, a rite of passage almost. Here's one of the ways I compare. A lot of times people will tell a story from their mission. They served at different times, but they'll have a same experience. The day I was dropped off at the MTC this happened and the first day I arrived in the field this happened. Even though we have a whole variety of experience, there's a kind of general path and we see that in the records of the Saints. When we got to Chimney Rock we did this, the first time we crossed the Platte River at the Lower crossing, we did this because they had structured it that way with a trail and a path and way stations and they could then talk about it in a shared way. Oh yeah, this is what happened when we were in Immigration Canyon or whatever. Well, when we were on Rocky Ridge, this is how it played out for us.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:25 Yeah. I like what you said there, Keith. I don't wanna say we overemphasize the death and the suffering, that needs to be talked about, but they had fun. They had dances, they had bands.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:25:38 Yeah. I think for me it just helps to remember they're young. You're not gonna have a dour group of 16 year olds. They're gonna find some way to pull a prank and have some fun and get their wiggles out. That's who we have. We have people that are happy and healthy and they want to enjoy what they're doing. And yeah, you have chores and yeah, you have to walk, but you still have fun when you go to work or when you do your chores, you can find ways.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:04 Yeah. Keith, if I'm a seminary teacher and I'm taking this on, this one's gotta be treated differently than Joseph's. They're not the same. It isn't like the Lord inhabits these people and speaks through them. Brigham's a different person. How would you describe this revelation? How is it different?

- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:26:24 Yeah. Brigham's a different person. The moment is different. This [revelation](#) is shared orally. People hear it, they listen to it. It's not one that they read. We had just published an edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. They don't publish a third edition until the late 1870s. This isn't at their fingertips for a very long time, but it is in their ears and it is in their memories. They don't sit around the campfire and ponder these words, but it does come to them as a blueprint, as a charge. Get organized, keep these commandments, praise God. Move across the plains. Make sure everyone gets there. That's the way that it's taken as their overview, as their direction. That's the experience that the pioneers have with this revelation.
- Hank Smith: 00:27:16 And there can be things that I can find in here that even though I'm not crossing the plains, I'm still a member of this church, I wanna help everybody along, keep your pledges to one another. Don't covet each other's things. Don't be drunk. Edify one another with your speech. Don't contend with one another. Don't speak evil of one another. This really is like a Latter-day saint survival guide to being a team.
- John Bytheway: 00:27:47 So many times throughout the history of the world, there are incredible journeys. The Jaredites, Lehi and his family, the children of Israel delivered from Egyptian bondage and it's such a great metaphor for life. So Hank what you're saying, this is our journey. Now we're staying in the same geography, but those same rules apply on our journey through the plans. I like the way you said that there.
- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:28:12 You know, I like a word that you used there John, delivered. This isn't a word we use often enough in modern Latter-day Saint speech. That is definitely the way that the pioneers experienced it, and we even see it in verse 40 of this revelation. It talks about you are being delivered as a witness. So I think that word connects us with the deliverance of the children of Israel that you mentioned. I also think scripturally this connects us with the deliverance that Jesus brings, the deliverance from death, the deliverance from captivity, and I think this deliverance metaphor is a very powerful one and I think there's a lot of deep meaning in there that would help us more often as we face the challenges of today. I want to be delivered from some of the things that are bombarding me every time I open my phone or whatever. This peace and deliverance is a way to see the pioneers differently, but it also reminds us as a way to see our relationship with the Savior. He's a deliverer who's delivering us from our afflictions.

Hank Smith:	00:29:25	Wow, that's really well said. I wanna read something to you both, and I'm sure you've both heard it. President Hinckley , we know, loved to talk about the pioneers. He loved to talk about that trek. I think he talked about his wife's ancestors coming across the plains. He said this, he said, today, facing west on the high bluff overlooking the city of Nauvoo and across the Mississippi over the plains of Iowa, there stands Joseph's temple, a magnificent house of God. Here in the Salt Lake Valley, facing east to that beautiful temple in Nauvoo stands Brigham's temple, the Salt Lake. They look toward one another as bookends between which there are volumes that speak of the suffering, the sorrow, the sacrifice, even the deaths of thousands who made the long journey from the Mississippi River to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. That's a beautiful picture. Bookends and thousands of stories in between of these incredible, incredible people. I have a chair here in my house that crossed the plains. 160 year old chair. It's just a chair, but it stands for something, for the faith of my pioneer ancestors.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:30:44	That's one of the ways you and your family can synchronize with the past. You've got an artifact that brings you together across the time and space.
John Bytheway:	00:30:56	I just love the next verse after that deliverance verse, verse 41. Now, therefore, hearken, O ye people of my church; and ye elders listen together; which reminds me of another section. You have received my kingdom. It's huge, the Lord to say that the keys are with you. Stay with the Twelve. You've received my kingdom.
Hank Smith:	00:31:20	Love it. Keith, my students frequently ask me about, I didn't know there were break off groups from the church. How many saints actually come west? Some don't. Some stay behind.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:31:34	Yeah, that's true. The first part of your question, how many, we don't have an exact number. Beginning around the 1920s, somebody published a figure of 70,000 over that whole two decade span. I mentioned we've been trying to document everyone. We've got to about 60,000, so we can definitely say 60,000 crossed. We continue to find new ones all the time. That's what makes research fun. But somewhere in there is the how many who crossed and your students are right to ask, there are others who stayed behind, who chose not to go. We tell this in our curriculum usually in a very oversimplified way. We'll talk about Brigham Young and the Twelve and we'll talk about Sidney Rigdon and his proposal to be a guardian for the church and he was serving in the First Presidency at the time. He was

also Joseph Smith's running mate. Joseph was running for U.S. president.

00:32:37 One of the rules was you and your partner couldn't live in the same state, so they moved Sidney to Pennsylvania. So Sidney comes back from Pennsylvania. His pitch is Joseph did everything. It's just perfect and my job would just be to guard it. That's the way we tell the story. If the story is only July and August of 1844, that is kind of the story, but [the story](#) is more than July and August. Over time there are three other ideas that emerge that become persuasive. There are people persuaded by Sidney and he does have a following to just keep the church the way that it was. The next one that emerges is from Joseph Smith's brother William Smith. William is an apostle and we've talked about William already a little bit of disagreements in some tough moments with Joseph and Hyrum along the way, but William makes a two-part claim.

00:33:40 The first part of his claim is that if Hyrum hadn't died, Hyrum would be the successor and he bases this off a revelation that did sustainings. This is now section 124 of the Doctrine and Covenants, but they lay out some sustainings and in there they sustain Joseph as president and Hyrum as patriarch and then they do the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve and all the other offices. William points to that and he says, look, that was the sequence in the sustaining. The prophet, the patriarch, and then the other things, so it should be the patriarch. Then the second part of his claim is the oh so humble part in which he says, well, Hyrum died. The patriarch is inherited in the Smith family. It was first my father Joseph Sr. Then it was Hyrum. I, William am the oldest surviving Smith member, so it should be me and I should be the successor.

00:34:39 The Smith family is actually persuaded by this right away in 44 in the summer of 44 into the fall. That makes the most sense. The patriarchs next, Smith family is the next one, and so it should be William. Second one emerges in those months into a little bit in the summer, but especially into the fall of 1844. There's a man named [James Strang](#). He is a convert, brand new. He was baptized in March of 1844. Joseph was murdered in June, so he is just around for a couple of months of overlap. Hyrum performs the baptism, James, he's living away. He comes to Nauvoo, he gets baptized, goes back home, but then after Joseph's death, James reappears with two things. One is a letter that he says is from Joseph Smith written in the Carthage Jail saying that James is his successor and the second thing James says is he's been visited by Moroni and Moroni has called him to

be a prophet and given him a book to translate and he's gonna have some witnesses.

00:35:49 Then he will go forward for the next two or three or four years. This idea is the one that is most captivating for many Latter-day Saints and it's the one that keeps Brigham Young up at night. If you think about this situation, everyone who's a member of the church is a first generation member and they have all been converted by the story that God picked a random guy out of this farmer in New York and sent him an angel and gave him work to do. James Strang is telling this same story, but now he's the random guy. The story is the same story and the logic is, yeah, this isn't all about structure and everything. It's whoever God calls, that's who it's gonna be. We talk about the Vanguard company. They crossed the plains to Salt Lake. Brigham only stays for a couple of days and then he goes back to Winter Quarters.

00:36:47 He's back in Winter Quarters by December of 1847. From there, he starts sending letters to the thousands of Saints who haven't crossed Iowa because Iowa's a muddy mess. He starts sending letters out and saying, come and gather with us. One of the things they do is they reconstitute the First Presidency at that time. Brigham's message is, we have the First Presidency, we have a gathering place. We've found a spot for a temple. Come and gather with us. He specifically sends missionaries and messages to Latter-day Saints who are trying to decide what to do. Some are persuaded and they go. Those become more of the numbers. Some are still dissatisfied and they stay. The third idea, or fifth in all, if we're keeping track of all of these will emerge a little bit later. That's the idea that it needs to be a direct descendant of Joseph Smith that emerges almost 15 years later, early 1860s.

00:37:53 The word they use, the concept they use is that at Joseph's death, the church got scattered. It got disorganized, so they need to reorganize. There are some significant players here. One of them is the stake president in Nauvoo, William Marks, but several of these early members and leaders say, we need to create the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They pull that together and then they approach Joseph Smith III, who now these years later is in now in his mid twenties. They say, you know, this is how it worked in the Bible, a prophet, and then it was inherited and so you should do that. Joseph Smith III's first reaction is, no, he didn't wanna do that. He was newly married, he was studying the law. He had trouble with all this religious stuff in his life and wanted to move on.

Hank Smith:	00:38:46	Yeah, well look what happens. Look at what happened to my father.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:38:49	Look what happens to his dad, to his uncle, to his family, to his friend. He does go away from that invitation and he has a personal experience with the divine and he comes back and says, no, I accept. This is what God is calling me to do. That becomes the largest group after the Saints who go with Brigham Young. The Reorganized Church, that's the name they're known by until 2002. They renamed themselves the Community of Christ. That's the name by which we know them today, but those are kind of the five main ideas that get contested. Maybe one more postscript we'll add, not known to the Saints in the 1840s and fifties, but James Strang I mentioned had a letter that he said came from Joseph Smith that ended up in the library at Yale University. It was analyzed in the early 20th century and found to be a forgery that was part of the story and the presentations.
Hank Smith:	00:39:57	Of the members of the church that are in that area in 1844 is there a percentage? Would you say 50%, 60.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:40:08	Yeah the hardest part is we don't know the denominator. We don't know how many Saints there were. There wasn't a census or an index. They don't all live in Nauvoo either. That's one of our misconceptions. They are scattered throughout Illinois. By the 1850s, there are more Latter-day Saints in England than there are in the US because the rapid growth that we have there, the estimates for the population around Nauvoo range, a low end is 12,000. A high end is 20, 22,000. We do have about the 10,000 that are crossing Iowa in that first year. It's somewhere in there. We don't have a really solid sense.
Hank Smith:	00:40:58	It does seem clearly that Brigham does get a majority.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:41:03	Yeah, the largest group go west with Brigham and especially over time, like I said, there are some people who will hang around with James Strang for a couple of years, but immigrants keep coming in 1853 and 57 and 64, there are people who will switch and it goes the other way. There's people who come to Utah and they don't like it and they'll go back and affiliate with the RLDS church. We at least know one case he goes all the way back to England and goes back to the Methodist Church. There's definitely movement, but yeah, the largest segment follows Brigham to the West and then the second largest group is that reorganized group that forms a decade and a half later and those become the two biggest poles. Then they do become polarized over time. They do, especially in the late 18 hundreds

when Joseph Smith III is the head of the Reorganized Church and his cousin, Hyrum's son, Joseph F. Smith is in the First Presidency and then President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. There is a lot of antagonism between those two cousins and their respective organizations into the early 20th century.

Hank Smith: 00:42:19 Yeah. Where does that stand today? Us and the Community of Christ, in your experience?

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:42:25 Yeah. Today though, that relationship is totally changed. The antagonism, especially the bitter rivalry and competition is definitely passed and interestingly, it has been over historical questions that we have found some ways to work together. We share interest in historic sites and historic documents and in our shared histories, there are gatherings of scholars that convene, adherence of both faiths into those conferences. We will work together, so like on the Joseph Smith Papers project, many of the documents were in the possession of the Community of Christ and they opened up their archive. We went in, they let us digitize the documents and post those online, and there have been in the last oh 15 years, some significant transactions in 2010 or 12 or so, Community of Christ sold to the Church of Jesus Christ, the Hauns Mill site, and the site of the Joseph and Emma Smith home in [Kirtland](#).

00:43:40 That's one that we have renovated and just opened a few years ago. That one's right up next to the temple, and then in 2017 they sold to us the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon, and then of course in 2024 we had the transaction that transferred stewardship of the Kirtland Temple and the properties, the Smith family properties in Nauvoo and some other historic documents. We have been in conversations church to church and you know different layers of leadership their Presiding Bishopric and our Presiding Bishopric worked closely in particular on the Kirtland Temple transfer, but I think that there's definitely an opportunity for more understanding. I think a lot of Latter-day Saints don't know much about these other religious cousins, and then we would do well to know more and understand better.

Hank Smith: 00:44:38 Yeah, be peacemakers. I love it. Keith, talk to us if you would, about prophets. You're a historian. People come in thinking of a prophet, I think with all sorts of expectations of this is what a prophet can do and can't do, and this is what makes someone a prophet or not. I'm sure you've had a lot of conversations like this. Speak to our listeners here. We've discussed Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. These are different people both receiving

revelation, but you can see the difference. You can feel the difference. How do you speak to that when you speak to groups and to individuals about prophets?

- Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:45:16 Yeah, I think you used probably the most important word, expectation. So much of the challenge I find that people have with prophets is because of their expectation. It isn't about the prophets. It's about what's in my own head, and if I have wrong expectations, many times, impossible expectations, and if I think the prophet is supposed to do that and he doesn't, then I'm all upset. Well, he's not a prophet or he is a fallen prophet, or he didn't do that, and this problem goes all the way back to Joseph Smith. We have stories of converts coming to Nauvoo and expecting it to be a big flourishing city and perfect and wealth and streets paved in gold, and they show up there and when Joseph will openly say to them, it's not that, you've expected the wrong thing. We could go and talk about a whole bunch of harmful expectations.
- 00:46:13 I was a university professor. My job was to talk. I know all about that. There was a guy in my ward in Texas, he came up to me and said, oh, you're a history professor. Will you tell me this thing? And I said to him, I actually teach a whole course on that question, would you like the 45 hour answer? And he said, no, no, no, I do not want the 45 hour answer. I have more than 45 hours on prophets. That's for sure. These expectations that we have become really crucial. Maybe one way to illustrate this and tease it out a little bit is with probably the most common story I hear about prophets, and when I say most common, let me give you some example. On this past Sunday, there was a lesson about temples. I saw people online and people wrote to me directly saying, in my class, we were talking about temples and people told this story.
- 00:47:16 This very morning of our recording, I was meeting with the young sister missionaries at Temple Square and answering their questions and helping them with the things that they present. They told me, we hear this story all of the time. Can you help us? The story is that when the Salt Lake temple was completed, the whole interior was done except for these random empty spaces that wind up every floor. Brigham Young told people to leave those open, and then later in the future, elevators were invented and the elevators were plugged right into those spaces. And see, here is the proof that Brigham Young is a great and mighty prophet because he prophesied that they should leave space for this thing that would come in the future. People will tell this story with tears. They'll tell it with conviction.

They'll tell it with all of this witness that they're so thankful for a living prophet.

00:48:20 Well, maybe it's appropriate to quote another religious leader. This is an elderly figure. I think his name was Elder G. Lucas Skywalker of the Seventy. No, I'm just kidding here, but I will quote Luke Skywalker, the old angry one. When people tell him a story and he'll say, that's interesting that everything you just told me is wrong. This story about Brigham Young and [elevator shafts](#), every single part of the story is wrong. First of all, elevators were invented a hundred years before the Salt Lake Temple was even under construction. There's no waiting for elevators to be invented. Second, Brigham doesn't do anything with the inside of the temple. It takes 40 years to build the temple. Brigham dies 16 years before it's done because of the way building works, they're just building the outer shell. They're stacking the stones on top of each other. It's gonna be in the 1880s, six or seven years after Brigham's death that the architects sit down and say, oh, what do we do on the inside of the temple?

00:49:35 And we get our first rudimentary blueprints in the early 1880s, and we get polished blueprints in the late 1880s. Those blueprints include elevators. They're written right into the blueprints. We have the receipts in the Church History Library for the purchase of elevators. On the day the temple is dedicated there are three functioning elevators in the Salt Lake Temple in 1893. We continue to tell it and people will share it, which has made me think about it and analyze why do we keep telling this story if we're a people who love truth? This isn't oh, kind of a story that's exaggerated. This is wholly, totally made up. And not only that, what's made up is so inconsistent with truth and reality, but we tell this story why? I think one reason is we don't understand history. We think old people in black and white photographs had no technology, so if they're dedicating the temple in 1893, it must have just been like the Stone Age.

00:50:39 They barely could do the, well in 1893, the temple has electricity, it has a telephone, it has the three elevators. It's a modern building. They build it to a fire resistant standards for the time. Those of course have changed. They build it sturdy. We're in the middle now of working on some of the earthquake resistance, but anyway, to the best of the modern construction abilities, they build it. It's a modern building. I think there's that general ignorance, but I think the other thing that's going on here brings us back to this expectations question, and it's that it's hard to bear an abstract testimony. We want a concrete testimony. You think I don't have a prophet? Here's proof. The

elevator. The elevator is the proof of my prophet, and that lines exactly with what God teaches. This is my work and my glory to save remanufacturing costs in a temple reconstruction.

00:51:45 No, that is not at all why God calls a prophet, but it's harder to say, well, I know he is a prophet because the heavens were opened, but why don't we say that? And I think they had it right. The hymn Praise to the Man, the opening line praise to the man, not because he foresaw elevators or, praise to the man who communed with Jehovah, and as our current church historian and recorder [Elder Kyle S. McKay](#) said a few years ago at General Conference, praise to Jehovah for communing with that man. That's what I'm seeking for a testimony of, there's another line in that hymn that says, ever and ever the keys he will hold. That's what prophets are for. They commune with God, they receive authority, they speak for God, they speak against evil. In the case of the revelation to Brigham Young, it's going to be don't covet. Don't be drunk, to return what you borrow. That's what prophets do for us. They don't help us with elevators, so we have to, I think, think about it differently.

Hank Smith: 00:52:58 Yeah, I love that. One of my favorite moments in the Book of Mormon is in Mosiah eight, John, you know this story where Limhi is asking Ammon, do you know someone who can translate? And Ammon says, yes, we have a Seer He doesn't say anything about elevators, but he does say God has provided a means that man through faith might work mighty miracles. He becomes a great benefit to his fellow beings. To me, the prophets I have listened to, President Hinckley was the first time I remember really sitting up straight and listening. President Monson and President Nelson have been a great benefit to me. A great benefit to me. Thank you for that Keith. We have to watch out for our expectations, don't we?

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:53:50 Well, and I like what you said about the benefits 'cause we could see Section 135 as that kind of testimony when they say he has revealed these two books of scripture. He sent the gospel to the four quarters of the earth. We're gathering to a city. That's that kind of testimony. That's why we have a prophet to do those kinds of things.

Hank Smith: 00:54:13 Be careful on your expectations. John it was you who said, don't put these people under microscopes.

John Bytheway: 00:54:19 It was in my stake. A member of the Seventy came and set apart our new stake president. He said to the congregation, now, don't put him under a microscope. He can't take it. Neither can

you, he said. And he said, if his children do something that makes you raise your eyebrows, put 'em back down, he said.

Hank Smith: 00:54:39 I like what you said there, Keith. We have unrealistic expectations.

John Bytheway: 00:54:42 We're just folks.

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:54:44 You know, in many ways, I think this is an influence of our modern culture. We often engage with people as celebrities or superheroes. That's what we expect for prophets. We imagine that they have a bat phone that goes straight to heaven, and anytime they need something, they just pick it up and God tells 'em what to do. But that is not how it works. They do have a gift, which is the same one we have. Jesus taught Joseph Smith, you're gonna translate the Book of Mormon when I, by me telling you in your mind and in your heart through the Holy Spirit, and Jesus gave away the secret. This is in Section eight of the Doctrine and Covenants. This is the Spirit by which Moses led the children of Israel across the Red Sea. That's it. That's what prophets have. The gift of the Holy Ghost, and Moses had to learn how to use it. Joseph had to learn how to use it. Oliver failed. He couldn't translate. We get that in the following revelation, but that's what they have. That is the gift. The channel. They don't have this special kind of thing or we imagine that they're infallible or all these kinds of things. They're not superheroes. They're messengers called of God. That's who they are.

John Bytheway: 00:55:57 I've heard a lot of young people pray and bless that we'll learn something new. Now, they don't say it that way, but a lot of times, can you just give us something new? And I love that Brigham Young is saying, hey, be honest with each other and pay your debts. It's nothing new.

Hank Smith: 00:56:13 Don't gossip.

John Bytheway: 00:56:13 It's keep the commandments. That's what we should expect. Now, President Nelson is amazing in how he can make these messages think celestial, so concise. Stay on the covenant path and be a peacemaker. These are concepts we've heard before. It's not something new.

Hank Smith: 00:56:34 They reiterate what God has told us.

Dr. Keith Erikson: 00:56:38 And then to add to that, President Nelson will say, I hope you're not missing the majesty of what's happening.

John Bytheway:	00:56:45	Beautiful.
Hank Smith:	00:56:46	Imagine the Saints hearing. Just one temple was a joyous miracle, and now 16, 17 in one session of General Conference, and it happens over and over and over. Keith, we're so grateful that you would spend your time with us. Do you have any closing thoughts for our listeners as they study these sections this week? The martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum and the trek west through the Prophet Brigham Young, and any closing thoughts?
Dr. Keith Erikson:	00:57:15	I really love a phrase that our current leaders have been using more frequently, and it's the idea of an ongoing restoration. Often we look back at the past and say, Joseph and Brigham did things, and they did, and we've talked about those kinds of things, but it's important to remember that this is ongoing. One of the things we make little kids memorize in order to escape primary is the idea that God will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to his prophets, but we never stop and think about what that means. Here's what it means. It means President Nelson doesn't know all of the stuff right now. If God will yet reveal many great and important things, it means he doesn't know all of those things. It also means that President Nelson knows more than Gordon B. Hinckley did, and he knew more than David O. McKay did, and he knew more than Wilford Woodruff did. Wilford Woodruff even said this at the pulpit in General Conference. They had ended the practice of plural marriage.
	00:58:22	They had also changed the way that we do sealings in the temples. There was some pushback, and Wilford Woodruff said, hey, I know more than Joseph and Brigham knew. I am the Lord's mouthpiece, and I'm telling you that this is what the Lord wants us to do. That's exciting as we go forward. It also opens up to change and ongoingness and line upon line, but it is many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Those are coming in the future, including the most exciting thing, which is when the Savior returns, he will bring us all of those glad tidings, these messengers. They don't teach us to follow them. President Nelson has put it in the pithy phrase, hear him, Joseph and Brigham and President Nelson. They all know that they are following Jesus and they're calling us to hear him and to follow him. We get in these sections glimpses in Joseph, Brigham, but I hope that's where we end up, that we'll say, I can trust that God is calling messengers.

Hank Smith:	00:59:31	Yeah. I think that's beautiful. The focus isn't on what I have seen as the prophet, but what you can see, not that I've heard him, but you also can go hear him.
John Bytheway:	00:59:44	I just love it. The Savior works through mortals. He has revealed himself. He has restored the gospel. It is a continuing restoration. I love that idea too, Keith. We keep seeing it. The majesty of it. Thank you for saying that. We get front row seats to all of this. It's amazing. My parents passed away. I'm just wondering what they're watching 'cause I wish I could talk to my dad about, can you believe what's going on? You know. He's got front row seats too I bet. So it's amazing.
Hank Smith:	01:00:17	We can finish where we started that Keith's words have tended to edify us and our listeners. Now I feel built. I know when I'm feeling the Holy Ghost, 'cause I'm excited, excited to have our listeners hear this, for I can share it with my family and with my children. Keith, thank you. Thank you for taking your time with us.
Dr. Keith Erikson:	01:00:37	Thank you so much.
Hank Smith:	01:00:38	It's been so fun. With that, we want to thank Dr. Keith Erikson for joining us. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and every episode we remember our founder Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're coming close to the end of the Doctrine and Covenants here on followHIM. Thank you for joining us on today's episode. Do you or someone you know speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French? You can now watch and listen to our podcast in those languages. Links are in the description below. Today's show notes and transcript are on our website. FollowHIM.co. That's followHIM.co. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Heather Barlow, Amelia Kabwika, Sydney Smith and Annabelle Sorensen.

followHIM Favorites



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| Hank Smith: | 00:03 | Welcome to followHIM Favorites this is where John and I share a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, the two sections of the Doctrine and Covenants we're looking at this week are sections 135 and 136. They're two and a half years apart. Section 135 is about the martyrdom of Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith. Section 136 is about the trek west. I have what I think is the perfect story for these two sections. Have you ever heard the name Dan Jones? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:31 | Yes. He was at Carthage in the jail at some point with Joseph. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:36 | Dan Jones was in Carthage Jail the night before Joseph Smith was killed. Now, Dan had immigrated from Wales in the UK. He was working on the Mississippi River as the captain of a steamboat when he joined the church, he was bringing a lot of Latter-day Saints to Nauvoo. Did you know that Dan Jones receives Joseph Smith's last recorded prophecy? Here's the story. The night before the prophet Joseph Smith was killed, he heard gunfire outside the window of Carthage Jail, so he chose to sleep on the floor. Near him was Dan Jones. The prophet asked Dan if he was afraid to die. Dan replies, has that time come think you? Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death would have many terrors, but then Joseph prophesied, you will yet see Wales and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die. The prophet's promise was fulfilled in 1845 when Dan and his wife Jane were called to serve in Wales. Dan used his talent for speaking to teach the gospel with great conviction. He was fluent in Welsh and English, and witnesses recorded that he spoke so captivating that he could hold his audience's attention in either language for hours. |
| John Bytheway: | 01:50 | Wow. |
| Hank Smith: | 01:51 | The story doesn't stop there John. Section 136 is about the trek west. Well, Dan Jones was also part of that group. He is crossing the plains in 1856 with some of these Welsh Saints that he had converted. He is part of the Willie and Martin Handcart |

companies, which most of us know were those two handcart companies that were stuck in the blizzards and had many people dying. They were starving. He says in his journal game soon became so scarce that we could kill nothing. We ate all the poor meat. One would get hungry eating it. Finally, that was all gone. Nothing now but the hides were left, the skin, we made trial of them. A lot was cooked and eaten without any seasoning, and it made the whole company sick. Many were so turned against this stuff that it made them sick just to think of it.

02:49 Things looked dark for nothing remained but these poor rawhides taken from the starved cattle. We asked the Lord to direct us what to do. The brethren did not murmur, but felt to trust in God. We cooked the hide. Then after soaking and scraping the hair off until it was soft and then ate it glue and all. This made it rather inclined to stay with us longer than we desired. Finally, I was impressed how to fix the stuff and gave the company advice, telling them how to cook it. For them to scorch and scrape the hair off. This had a tendency to kill and purify the bad taste that scalding gave it. After scraping, boil one hour in plenty of water, throwing the water away, which had extracted all the glue. Then wash and scrape the hide thoroughly washing in cold water, then boil to a jelly and let it get cold, and then eat it with a little sugar sprinkled on it. This was considerable trouble, but we had little else to do, and it was better than starving. And then he makes this statement, John, we asked the Lord to bless our stomachs and adapt them to this food.

John Bytheway: 03:57 Wow. Instead of saying, send us something better.

Hank Smith: 04:01 It wasn't change my circumstances, it was change me.

John Bytheway: 04:05 Could we have some manna? Could you send anything else down?

Hank Smith: 04:08 Please send us something else.

John Bytheway: 04:10 Wow.

Hank Smith: 04:11 How often do you and I, and I'm sure many of our listeners pray for our circumstances to change. When Dan Jones didn't pray for that, he prayed that the Lord would change him to adapt to the circumstances. John, we focus a lot on Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, these more well-known names, but people like Dan Jones, you can learn a lot from that. They went through it.

		They were there for the martyrdom. They went on this trek west, and there's thousands more just like him.
John Bytheway:	04:42	Yeah, and that's one of those, hmm I think I complain too much, type stories. Yeah, I need those.
Hank Smith:	04:47	I think I can make it. I think I can make it if the microwave breaks, I don't think I need to break into tears next time.
John Bytheway:	04:53	Right.
Hank Smith:	04:53	I think I can.
John Bytheway:	04:54	Right.
Hank Smith:	04:54	I think I'll survive.
John Bytheway:	04:56	If the wifi is down. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	04:57	Oh yeah. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're with a church historian this week. His name is Dr. Keith Erikson. He knows pretty much everything about Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and he walks us through these two sections. We hope you'll join us over there, then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.