

- John Bytheway: [00:05](#) Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
- Hank Smith: [00:08](#) I have a question for you, Scott, as a historian, someone might say, "Well, how come they took five years to record this? How come it took whatever amount of many years?" And then they assume that if something like this happened to them, they would write it down immediately. And I think sometimes our assumptions about what we would do if we were in this situation can get in the way of us kind of trying to put ourselves in their position. What would you say about that? As a historian?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [00:39](#) We ought to be really careful not to apply a 21st century perspective or assumption on how we might act on individuals in a very different time and place. We don't always know that the events that are happening in the instant are going to be impactful in our future. Obviously one would expect, "Well, gee, that was a visit of an angel. How could you not know?" Well, there's reasons they record what they do record and reasons they don't record what they don't record. A quick example, I'm a terrible journal keeper. I could be better at it. I need to be better at it. When I was a college student, the only time I wrote in my journal was when I broke up with somebody. It was therapeutic. It was whatever. And I had some spectacular breakups about which to write.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [01:27](#) And so that's really not an accurate reflection of my life as a college student. If my posterity were to ever read that journal and think, "Wow, dad just moved from one breakup to another." I really didn't. But then fast forward, I didn't write a single contemporaneous reference to dating my wife. Why? We never broke up. I had no reason to write about her. And so it was after we were married actually, after we were married that I realized, "Oh, gee, I probably should have written something down." And so I tried to go back and recreate the event. My wife knows this. I had to look at her journal to see when we got engaged so I could write about it in my own. And so we're critical of Oliver or Joseph who write down things after the fact. Well, guilty as charged.
- Hank Smith: [02:20](#) We do the exact thing, I think back on my journal. I think if you were to read my journal and you'd think I just went from trial to trial, because I think that's the only time I wrote in my journal. When things were really hard.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [02:31](#) It's therapeutic.

- Hank Smith: [02:31](#) That's when I wrote in my journal. Yet, that would not be an accurate view of what I actually experienced.
- John Bytheway: [02:39](#) So you're saying the assumption is that you would cover every event. You make a bad assumption, that you would cover every event equally the same way. I mean, I'm already going, I've made an assumption that, and I don't know, maybe somebody does, did he write this in 1834 and tuck it away? Or did he publish it in 1834 and write it right then? Was it something he recorded at the time and, "Hey, let's publish this," a few years later, do we even know that?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [03:07](#) I think he is actually telling it is what he's doing in this time period. Oliver Cowdery is acting as a missionary. And Oliver Cowdery is talking to individuals about the need for authority and his source for authority. And I think that's what sparks a desire to, "Let's write this down and publish it in a church-owned newspaper so that more people know the origins of our authority." So that's the 1834 account. Then the 1838 account Joseph Smith's history, borrows some of the language. And then I believe Joseph Smith expands that language. So you'll notice that Oliver Cowdery's account in 1834 doesn't preserve the full language that we have in Doctrine and Covenants 13, from John the Baptist. It's only a shorted version of that phrase.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [03:54](#) And in Joseph Smith's history, and then later in 1876, when the church chooses to canonize that particular verse and make it into section 13, they've taken what are Oliver's original, Joseph's expansion and fully canonized it. So I think a lot of that's going on, John, there's some reasons why Oliver chooses to publish it and then the church chooses to use it in 1838 and later when it's canonized as a section. But I do look at the differences. The differences I think are important. It's in the second to the last paragraph of the Oliver Cowdery account.
- John Bytheway: [04:31](#) The sons of Levi?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [04:32](#) Yes. It says, "Upon you, my fellow servants in the name of Messiah, I confer this priesthood and this authority." You notice it doesn't discuss what the keys are, "Which shall remain upon the earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer nothing under the Lord and righteous." And that changed from that to until is an important one. I don't think we need to necessarily imply that the day is coming someday when the Aaronic priesthood's no longer on the earth. These are just different people remembering what they recall the words to be as late as five years after the fact or nine years after the fact.

- John Bytheway: [05:06](#) We probably have people listening who are driving very carefully with their hands at 10 and two, please do that, we encourage that here at the podcast, but it's only one paragraph. Could I just read the whole section 13?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [05:20](#) You're talking section 13? Please do.
- John Bytheway: [05:22](#) Yeah. So, okay, "Upon you, my fellow servants in the name of Messiah, I confer the priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels and of the gospel of repentance and baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. And this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again, an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [05:46](#) You know, some of our listeners may remember years ago, President Hinckley in a priesthood session of general conference had all the young men stand and try to recite from memory section 13. You can imagine how miserably that would have gone. And then he charged them. He says, "This is the charge and charter of the priesthood you hold. I challenge you to go home and memorize it." And so I love to hear those words read. It is what the Aaronic priesthood is supposed to do. We are to be about calling people to repentance. We have the authority to baptize. We have access to the ministering of angels. I find that one intriguing because here is an angel saying that the Aaronic priesthood holds the key to the ministering of angels. President Hinckley said, "As far as I'm concerned, that is literal."
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [06:39](#) We're not just talking, acting like an angel. And I think that that is one application, don't get me wrong. I think about what the Book of Mormon says of the sons of Mosiah when he says, "Our congress did view us as angels." That I think when we serve our fellow man, we can be angels, but President Hinckley and then later President Oaks in general conference, interpreted that in a more literal sense. I can read to you President Oaks' quote, President Oaks said this, "When I was young, I thought such personal appearances were the only meaning of the ministering of angels. As a young holder of the Aaronic priesthood, I did not think I would see an angel, and I wondered what such appearances had to do with the Aaronic priesthood. But the ministering of angels can also be unseen. Angelic manifestations can be delivered by a voice or merely by thoughts or feelings communicated to the mind. Most angelic communications are felt or heard rather than seen. How does the Aaronic priesthood hold the key to the ministering of angels? The answer is the same as for the Spirit of the Lord."

- Dr. Scott Espli...: [07:41](#) Then he quotes second Nephi 32, "'Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost, wherefore they speak the words of Christ.' Those who hold the Aaronic priesthood, open the door for all church members who worthily partake of the sacrament to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit of the Lord and the ministering of angels." I believe that angels are real and John the Baptist is a witness of that. And so when he brings back the key to the ministering of angels, he's giving us access to the means whereby he and his companions can communicate. And that's not always visual, as President Oaks said. More often than not, it'll be felt or heard rather than seen, but angels are real.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [08:22](#) This is Elder Holland, a talk Elder Holland gave a number of years ago where, let me see if I can find it for you.
- John Bytheway: [08:31](#) Give us the Oaks reference too.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [08:32](#) Sure. President Oaks reference is general conference, October, 1998. This is Elder Holland. One of the earliest talks I know that he gave as a new apostle. This is Elder Holland speaking at BYU in 1994, shortly after becoming an apostle.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [08:49](#) "May I suggest to you that one of the things we need to teach our students, and one of the things which will become more important in their lives, the longer they live, is the reality of angels, their work and their ministry. Obviously I speak here, not alone of the angel Moroni, but also have those more personal ministering angels who are with us and around us empowered to help us and who do exactly that. Perhaps more of us, including our students, could literally, or at least figuratively, behold, the angels around us, if we would but awaken from our stupor and hear the voice of the Spirit as those angels try to speak." Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost. Then he concludes, "I believe we need to speak of and believe in and bear testimony to the ministry of angels more than we sometimes do. They constitute one of God's great methods of witnessing through the veil."
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [09:37](#) Angels are real and the Aaronic priesthood, through its ordinances, especially the ordinance of the sacrament, gives us access to the Holy Ghost and angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost.
- John Bytheway: [09:49](#) Thank you. So did either of you see, is it Donald Perry's book on angels? I couldn't put it down. It was so good. So comprehensive about angels and all of these things. And I just wanted to add to that, that Elder Holland, in saying we should talk more of it there in the Come Follow Me manual. It says it

might be helpful to study some of the phrases you find in section 13. And it gave three bullet points, the keys of the ministering of angels. And it refers to a Jeffrey R. Holland talk, the ministry of angels November, 2008, which would have been then October conference [crosstalk 00:10:26].

- Dr. Scott Espli...: [10:26](#) Exactly. And you may remember that I think he tells the story of a boy, is that the talk... He tells a story of a boy being visited by person dressed in white, something like that?
- John Bytheway: [10:36](#) Oh, I don't remember the talk. I just referring to it here. I'd have to go look it up.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [10:40](#) Great talk.
- John Bytheway: [10:40](#) And then the keys of the gospel of repentance and they give the reference in the Come Follow Me manual to an Elder Dale G. Rendlen talk in November, 2017. So it would have been October, 2017 conference. And then the sons of Levi has those three phrases and invites you to look up guide to the scriptures on Aaronic priesthood and also under the topic of Levi. Anyway, the idea of angels is it's a fascinating one and I'm glad you said what you did about, I suppose there's different capacities and different times when even mortals can act as angels like the sons of Mosiah. But what a fascinating thought that, what did Elder Oaks say? Their communications are more often felt?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [11:28](#) "Felt or heard rather than seen."
- John Bytheway: [11:30](#) Yeah.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [11:31](#) And I also... Just your point's a really good one, John. We've recently changed the names of the ways we serve in the church to use that term "ministering" from home and visiting teaching. So this section, it talks about the ministry of angels. Well, I ought to be a ministering angel in that regard to those around me. But I do believe we're also talking literal here.
- John Bytheway: [11:54](#) Yeah.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [11:55](#) I love also the discussion of the gospel of repentance. We talk in class... I think when I, in my classes here on campus, when we talk about this section, most students readily associate the key to baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, with the Aaronic priesthood, I will always have a handful of students who maybe baptized someone as a priest or were baptized by an

Aaronic priesthood holder, but that middle one as well, "They hold the key to the gospel of repentance."

- Dr. Scott Espli...: [12:22](#) I think we sometimes think of the sacrament and other ways and things we do associated with repentance. But I would also remind our listeners. There is an individual in our ward, who is an Aaronic priesthood official who exercises the key to the gospel of repentance. The Bishop is the president of the Aaronic priesthood in my ward. And he and his priesthood holds the key to the gospel of repentance. When I need help with repenting, there are some times when that person who holds that key needs to help me. And that's a very literal way that we apply that key today. The Bishop holds the key to the gospel of repentance in my particular ward. And I'm grateful that he exercises that key on our behalf.
- Hank Smith: [13:09](#) Yeah. I've always told the youth that I've talked to that the Bishop is like, he's got super powers. There's sins that for some reason you can't get rid of sometimes on your own. They just do not let go. But man, you go in there with that Bishop and you started talking to him and you'll see those sins die so fast. There's a power in that gospel of repentance. I really like that you brought that up, Scott.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [13:37](#) The key to the gospel of repentance. He holds that.
- Hank Smith: [13:41](#) And we shouldn't be scared of our Bishop, right? John, you were served as Bishop. Don't be scared of the Bishop, right?
- John Bytheway: [13:47](#) I tell you. I love Elder Neil L. Anderson's new book about forgiveness and some of the things he said. And when I did act as a Bishop, I was more than once impressed with how forgiving the Lord is when I had guessed how things might go. I mean, and that's a testimony of experience.
- Hank Smith: [14:10](#) Good.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [14:11](#) I have a hard time imagining someone being afraid of John. You strike me as very approachable, John.
- John Bytheway: [14:19](#) I've tried to strike fear and dread. It just doesn't come across.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [14:23](#) It doesn't come across real well for some reason.
- Hank Smith: [14:25](#) Now, Scott, I have a couple of questions, and we'll get into this in later podcasts, so don't feel like you have to cover this in completely, but do you think... John the Baptist says, it says in

the heading of section 13, that the angel explained that he was acting under the direction of Peter, James, and John, the ancient apostles who held the keys to the higher priesthood, which was called the priesthood of Melchizedek. Do you think that Joseph and Oliver understand Aaronic/Melchizedek priesthood at this point, the way we understand it today?

Dr. Scott Espli...

[14:57](#)

No, not at all. Well, it's hard to say because what I don't know is you have a couple of cryptic phrases, things like in the account of the first vision where he says, "And he told me many other things, which I can't write at this time." Or the visits of Moroni that last all night and yet I can read them in about five minutes. And so it's hard to say what Joseph knows and hasn't told us, but in terms of the record, that survives, those terms, Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods don't originate here. They aren't used in this period of church history. I think they start to originate at 1835. Section 107 says that there are two priesthoods, namely the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. And so I think we're still a little bit ahead of time in terms of Joseph fully understanding, or at least Joseph fully revealing to us in the record, how the priesthood will function in terms of two priesthoods.

Dr. Scott Espli...

[15:55](#)

The 1838 account from which that section heading is drawn, so Joseph Smith history, it doesn't just say that they were acting under his direction. But if you go to verse 72, it says he, John the Baptist, acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John who held the keys to the priesthood of Melchizedek, which priesthood, he said, "Would in due time be conferred upon us. And that I should be called the first elder of the church." And he, Oliver Cowdery, the second. And so in the text in Joseph Smith history, it gives us a little more information. Not only is there a Melchizedek priesthood, but it would be conferred upon us in the future. And so that's the best I could give you. But again, Joseph's recording this in 1838 after he obviously clearly understands Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood divisions, but the visit by John the Baptist isn't just the words that John read, which are great, there also is apparently an indication that more is coming.

Hank Smith:

[16:55](#)

This is a crucial skill you're talking about here. And that's the ability... We want to make our listeners, at least little, tiny, mini historians, right? Where they have some basic skills of not assuming this is being recorded at the exact time. And so Joseph knows a lot by 1838 that he didn't know in 1829, and that's going to influence the way he tells the story, right? He's going to use terms that he might not have actually used in 1829, but he would use them in 1838 when he tells the story, right?

- Dr. Scott Espli...: [17:25](#) And his listeners would know those terms by 1838. 1838 is printed in the church's... Eventually later printed in the church's newspaper in Nauvoo. And so readers are going to be people who know the terms Aaronic, Melchizedek. And yet, in 1829, we've even, I've done it in this podcast. I've referred to Joseph Knight, in the section, Joseph Knight, being a great member of the church. There is no church in 1829. And so we slip into that, of applying language that we think would have used, that there is no church, there aren't two priesthoods quite yet, but there is a promise that more is coming. And we don't know all the details. Unlike the Aaronic priesthood where we have a fixed date, May 15th, 1829 on the banks of the Susquehanna River, Harmony, Pennsylvania.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [18:15](#) We don't have quite that level of detail for the Melchizedek priesthood. We do have some hints, some important hints. And you'll probably talk about this in future podcasts, but in section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants, this is in Nauvoo now, Joseph Smith reflects back on his previous experiences. And he tells us that Peter, James, and John came on the banks of the Susquehanna River between Harmony and Colesville. So that's where we know where the priesthood restoration, the Melchizedek... At least the visit of Peter, James, and John occurred is from section 128. But that's clear into Nauvoo and Joseph's remembering that. Then you have section 27 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which is again, 1830, where it speaks of Peter, James, and John having come in the past tense. So in verse 12, "And also with Peter and James and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be apostles and especial witnesses of my name."
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [19:15](#) This section is August and September of 1830. And so we don't have all of the detail about restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood that we would like. I would love to have more. I think we have plenty of evidence that it occurred. Joseph talks about it, who was involved, Peter, James, and John. Where it occurred, on the banks of the Susquehanna River between Harmony and Colesville. So then we try to triangulate and you figure out when was Joseph in that area, but we don't know the exact date and time. And I'm okay with that ambiguity, again, let's not apply what we think we would have done in those situations to what they may have done.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [19:58](#) And so just because they may not have written it down or may not have recorded it, well, that's a different time and place. And also I think I love what President Nelson has been helping us with to view the restoration as an ongoing event, that there's

more yet to come. Elder Uchtdorf has done the same. That are we sleeping through the restoration, that there's more yet to come. And let's think about the Melchizedek priesthood in that regard. Yes, Peter, James, and John came and brought back the keys of the apostleship, but they didn't bring back at least authorize Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to do everything with that priesthood yet.

Dr. Scott Espli...: [20:38](#) Moses, Elias, and Elijah still come in the Kirtland temple and bring additional priesthood keys. And so when we talk about restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood, which isn't the focus of section 13, of course, we should keep in mind that it spans multiple events with multiple participants across multiple periods of time in terms of getting back the fullness of those priesthood keys. Yes, Peter, James, and John brought back keys, but so did Moses, Elias, and Elijah in the Kirtland temple in April of 1836.

Hank Smith: [21:09](#) Yeah. I just think this skill that I think our listeners are picking up as we interview historians, history's a lot more complicated than we kind of assume. We kind of assume we're just taking a camcorder and we're watching events as they unfold, but there's a lot of dynamics versus memory versus time passed, things that you know later as you record past events. There's a lot that goes into this and we just can't... I don't know. We've just got to be careful with history, right? We've just be a little more careful with it.

Dr. Scott Espli...: [21:40](#) You know, some students will ask at the end of section 13, "The sons of Levi do offer an offering again unto the Lord in righteousness." And they'll say, "Well, what does that mean?" Well, here's another skill that we should consider. It may have meant different things across different time periods. There are references by Joseph Smith to a time when maybe he thought in a literal sense this way, that as part of the restoration of all things, the sons of Levi would offer an offering again, unto the Lord and righteousness. And there's a quote by Joseph Smith about that later on in Nauvoo in section 128 of the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph Smith writes a letter while he's in Nauvoo to the saints. And he interprets it very differently. In verse 24 he says, "Let us, therefore, as a church and as a people and as Latter-day saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance."

Dr. Scott Espli...: [22:41](#) And so this idea that that even a phrase could be reinterpreted prophetically by the same person across time is a skill we need

to understand and be comfortable with. That Joseph will learn more and add more insight and give us different interpretations across time.

- John Bytheway: [22:57](#) I love to tell my students relatively speaking, we're a young church. We're still becoming acquainted with our own scriptures. We've made assumptions about the Book of Mormon that later on we're going, "Hey, where did we get that from?" For example, did we always think that Lehi and Sariah were the only ones here? Well, the book doesn't say that. Why did some assume? Things like that. So with these people too, I just love Elder Holland saying, "All that God has ever had to work with is imperfect people. It must be incredibly frustrating but he deals with it." And then added, "And so should we." These are just folks, they're simple folks trying to do the best they can and we shouldn't be mad if they remember something differently, a little later, whatever.
- Hank Smith: [23:49](#) I've always said too, it's easy to critique people who are dead because they're not here to defend themselves. Right?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [23:56](#) How will we be critiqued when this podcast that is now recorded and locked in in a certain way, five years from now 10 years from now, when we have new additional light and understanding?
- John Bytheway: [24:08](#) Maybe we got something wrong.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [24:08](#) Sure. And I'm not actually saying, and I know you're not either, John. I'm not saying Joseph got either wrong. Another possibility is that both are right. Maybe there's both. And maybe there's a third and maybe there's a fourth. Maybe there's something we haven't even considered yet. And I love that, that things can have multiple interpretations and multiple applications in this ongoing restoration.
- John Bytheway: [24:30](#) In section two, where would the earth be smitten with a curse or would it be utterly wasted? Well, maybe they're both true on a different level. And the way the Moroni said things a little bit differently, to me, he added a little bit more. He gave us a little more light, so it's not one's right and the other's wrong. Scripture is dynamic, it's not static. A prophet can come and add something and clarify something if he wants.
- Hank Smith: [24:58](#) Yeah. One thing I think that I've been impressed with so far this year in Come Follow Me is we get to watch Joseph Smith grow in understanding who he is, what the church is, what his role is

in that church, what everyone else's role is in that church. And it's so fun to get rid of the idea that he knew how this was going to turn out where it was going to go. You know, we got to get to Utah to build the conference center. Instead he is, I don't want to say they're winging this, but the Lord has definitely not thrown out the entire plan in front of them. They're picking this up piece by piece and we are the same way in our life. I know that's how I am with parenting in my own career as a religious educator. I'm kind of winging this with the light and knowledge that I have, and I'm moving forward with what I have hoping and knowing that I'm going to get more as I move forward,

- Dr. Scott Espli...: [25:58](#) You know, back to the story of the restoration of the Aaronic priesthood. That's exactly what Joseph Smith says. After they had been baptized, after they ordained each other to the Aaronic priesthood, verse 74, "Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of." All of a sudden things were opened up to them they had never seen before. And that's how it happens in our lives.
- John Bytheway: [26:31](#) Where did you just read from, Scott?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [26:33](#) That's verse 74 of Joseph Smith history?
- Hank Smith: [26:35](#) I know that my 14-year-old son is going to be like, "Hey dad, who are the sons of Levi? And what are they going to author?" Is there a little bit of background there? Just give us a little bit of Old Testament background to how would I give my son a two minute, three minute answer on that and not sound like I don't know what I'm talking about?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [26:55](#) And I apologize now, as you've referred to, I am a church historian so I apologize for any of my Old Testament colleagues if I get this wrong.
- Hank Smith: [27:04](#) Okay.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [27:05](#) Levi is the brother of Joseph in the Old Testament. One of the 12 tribes. And the Levites were charged with administering ordinances in the priesthood. The sons of Levi in a literal sense would be those of the tribe of Levi. But I think we need to be careful as we've discussed. I'm not sure we have to read it literally. Go to section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants where

it says... We refer to this, as you both know, as the oath and covenant of the priesthood. In section 84, it talks about, this is where I was in my mind thinking Aaron, Moses. Look in verse 33.

Dr. Scott Espli...: [27:44](#) And actually, if you want to go up a little bit further, verse 31 refers to the sons of Levi, "The sons of Moses and Aaron," who are of the tribe of Levi, "offering an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the Lord in a temple that will be built in the future." That's verse 31, but then verse 33, "and whoso was faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken. And then magnifying their calling are sanctified by the spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham and the church and kingdom and the elect of God." As I obtain both priesthoods and magnify my calling, I can become a son of Moses, a son of Aaron. And so I think we assume that the sons of Levi are, like I said, one of the tribes, a brother of Joseph and the other brothers, children of Jacob or Israel, but Doctrine and Covenants 84 doesn't have to make it that literal.

Dr. Scott Espli...: [28:38](#) Anyone who obtains the priesthood and faithfully serves in that priesthood can become a son of Moses, a son of Aaron. And will they then offer sacrifices in the temple like verse 31 says? And again, like we looked at in section 128, the sacrifices when you get to 128 seemed to be work for our dead. The sacrifices we make in serving our ancestors in performing ordinances. So in answer to what would I tell my 14 year old son? Or your 14-year-old son, my son's 12, I would tell him, as you go and perform ordinances in the house of the Lord you have the priesthood, you are acting as a son of Levi, and you are performing sacrifices by missing out on watching a basketball game, a baseball game, doing things with your friends, to go serve in the house of the Lord. And you're offering an acceptable offering, is what section 128 says, worthy of all acceptance. And so I think that has a little more application than literally [crosstalk 00:29:45].

Hank Smith: [29:44](#) So do I. I really like what you said there. And I think you'd agree with me that I could do that same thing for my daughter, as well as you take part in these.

Dr. Scott Espli...: [29:53](#) Oh my, yes. We need to emphasize that our daughters, our wives, women in the church, as has been clearly taught, exercise priesthood authority in the house of the Lord. So yes, in answer to your question, who are the sons of Levi, one of the 12 tribes, a brother of Joseph, brother of Reuben, Simeon, Issachar, Naphtali and everyone else that's in Joseph and

Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat. But this section gives me other options besides that.

- Hank Smith: [30:23](#) Yeah. Oh, I really like how you opened that up. I'm going to enjoy teaching that, I think, to my kids, instead of being a little nervous about it. I'm going to say, "Oh, look at how this may be understood today as all of us." Mike McKay said, that I really liked is, and this fits into it perfectly, is these things that Joseph Smith are restoring, are very service-oriented. It's giving to others. It's always giving to others, not taking. And the restoration of the priesthood is yet another time where the Lord says here is something for you to give to others.
- Hank Smith: [30:59](#) The Lord is...
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [31:00](#) You can't lay hands on your own head.
- Hank Smith: [31:01](#) Yeah. You cannot give yourself these priesthood blessings. So sometimes when we talk about priesthood, it seems quite exclusionary when it really is not. It's an inclusionary thing because the Lord is saying, in order for you to actually use what I'm giving you have to have other people involved because this won't work without others. So do you have any thoughts on that idea of Joseph Smith is always restoring things that do not serve him, but always create more opportunities for him and us to serve others?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [31:38](#) Let's go back to the language that John the Baptist used. "Upon you my fellow servants." We've emphasized that word fellow for a minute, but he used the word servants. He didn't say upon you my fellow directors, on you my fellow...
- Hank Smith: [31:53](#) Leaders, executives,
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [31:55](#) ...leaders, heads, executives. We are to be servants. "Upon you my fellow servants in the name of Messiah, I confer the priesthood of Aaron." The Aaronic priesthood, and by association, the Melchizedek priesthood, brings with it a clear expectation that this is to be used to serve. And John the Baptist, I think, said that in the words he chose to say, when he restored that priesthood, "upon you my fellow servants."
- Hank Smith: [32:26](#) I really liked that. Thank you.
- John Bytheway: [32:28](#) The very first lines that Oliver gave in that little summary after Joseph Smith history, I just love the phrase, "These were days never to be forgotten." And I'm thinking about President

Nelson, who told us that 2020 would be unforgettable and that we can help make these days never to be forgotten. When we try to do what Joseph Knight was told to do, seek to bring forth and establish Zion, and get that same Oliver Cowdery-type excitement that he had, that is reflected in what he wrote, and try to make these days that would never be forgotten. I love the spirit of that, and kind of the charge that was given to Joseph Knight, who we became acquainted with a little bit today.

Hank Smith: [33:21](#)

Yeah.

Dr. Scott Espli...: [33:21](#)

That's great. John, thank you. I love that idea that these days we're in the middle of a pandemic, we can't associate in person with each other, but these can be great days, too. And 1834 wasn't always perfect for Joseph and definitely 1838 wasn't perfect for Joseph, but man, these were days never to be forgotten. And so were our days. And so will our children's days. I have a daughter who's getting to that age. Our oldest is 13 and she's getting to that age where she starting to worry, just anxieties as Joseph describes using that phrase in the first vision account. And I want her to know, your days are going to be great days that you can have a bright and glorious future that there is hope and goodness ahead, and you don't have to be worried about, "Well, what if we're getting closer to the second coming and things look scary then and things look difficult and dark." Well, yeah, but they also look glorious and these can be days never to be forgotten for all of the positive things that can occur, not just the negative ones.

Hank Smith: [34:32](#)

Scott, I can't thank you enough for all you've given us today. I have a question for you that I'd like to finish with. You know this church history as well as anyone. And I know you're going to say, well, there's others who know it more than me. And I know that there isn't a ranking of church history who knows more among you and your peers, but you know as much about the history of the church, especially during this time period, as any critic would know. You spent, what, almost, I would say, how long has it been? Three decades, two and a half decades of your life teaching this, studying it.

Dr. Scott Espli...: [35:15](#)

Thank you for just dating me.

Hank Smith: [35:17](#)

Sorry about that.

Dr. Scott Espli...: [35:18](#)

As if the gray hair doesn't already do that.

- Hank Smith: [35:21](#) So I would love to hear, and I'd love for our listeners to hear, your personal thoughts on Joseph Smith, the restoration, and what it's done for you personally. Yes, you're an academic. Yes, you are what I would describe as brilliant, but what has done for you personally?
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [35:40](#) Thank you, Hank and John, and before I say that, thank you for letting me be with you today. I've really enjoyed and learned from both of you. So thank you. I tell my students sometimes everything I hold dear, the things I most cherish. Yes, I've studied the prophet, Joseph. Yes, I've studied our history in depth. And the more that I learn, the more that I love Joseph Smith and the restoration that God accomplished through him. But in terms of an answer to your question, everything I hold dear. The priesthood we've discussed today, that I'm blessed to be ordained to, the blessings that priesthood has brought in my life, the ministering of angels, the gospel of repentance, the blessing to be baptized and receive a remission of sins and gain entrance into the kingdom of God.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [36:45](#) And then we didn't even talk about it, but the blessings that the Melchizedek priesthood has brought in my life. The family that I love that can be together forever because of the powers associated with those priesthoods. The job that I adore, we have the world's greatest job. I get to teach and testify of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ on a daily basis. The mission that I serve. John in his introduction went way back to a long time earlier in my life and the mission that I served. Everything that I hold dear, the people that I associate with in my ward, the people that I get to serve with and serve through my calling. All of that somehow ties to the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The fact that we have a living prophet on the earth today. The fact that we have mouthpieces that speak on behalf of God.
- Dr. Scott Espli...: [37:47](#) To use the phrase of Oliver Cowdery, these are days never to be forgotten. And we live in a time that I hope I never forget a time in the gathering of Israel, the ongoing restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And so I love it. Everything I care most about connects to this, the things we've been talking about today. I love the people in church history. We've talked about Joseph Knight. I resonate with the Joseph Knight characters. I love the lesser known individuals. I feel like them. And I find role models in them. And so I'm grateful for the restoration. I am grateful for its ongoing impact in my life.

John Bytheway:

[38:34](#)

Just so many take-aways today and so many notes I've scribbled. What a blessing. I'm just happy to be here. Thanks guys.

Hank Smith:

[38:43](#)

Yeah and I can tell that I'm feeling an increase to the Spirit because I'm excited to share this with my family. I'm excited to talk about these things with others. I think there's something about the Holy Ghost, at least for me personally, my language is kind of the language of excitement. Thank you, Scott, so much, Dr. Esplin. Thank you for being here and to you, our listeners. Thank you so much for listening and we hope you'll join us on the next episode. We also want to thank our producer, Steve Sorenson and our production team, David Perry and Lisa Spice. Join us next time for another episode of Follow Him.