

Follow Him Episode 13 Part I

Doctrine & Covenants 29

Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:01</u>	Welcome to Follow Him, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their come follow me stuff. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:09</u>	I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:10</u>	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:11</u>	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:12</u>	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:14</u>	As together, we follow him.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:22</u>	My friends, welcome to another episode of Follow Him. I'm here with my incredible co-host, John Bytheway. Hello, John.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:31</u>	Hi Hank, how are you?
Hank Smith:	<u>00:00:33</u>	I can't tell you how excited I am for today because this is our first returning guest, our returning expert. Who's with us today?
John Bytheway:	<u>00:00:41</u>	Lots of people are excited because we have Tony Sweat back with us again.
Tony Sweat:	<u>00:00:45</u>	I'm going to interrupt real quick and just say you guys are doing such great work with this. You want to toot your own horn but you guys are killing it with this podcast. You're doing such great work. I just love you both and thank you for the great work you're doing to bless so many lives out there.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:01:02</u>	Tony, we love you. The Follow Him podcasts are big supporters of Tony Sweat and his work. John, tell us about Tony.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:01:09</u>	Anthony R. Sweat received a BFA, which I think means Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and drawing from the University of Utah, a masters in education and a PhD in curriculum and instruction from Utah State University. Before joining the religion faculty at BYU, he worked for 13 years with seminaries and institutes. He centers his research on factors that influence effective religious education. As a practicing artist, his painting center on

previously and depicted important aspects of church history to promote visual learning. Anthony's wife, Cindy, are the parents of seven children and they live in Springville. And recently, Tony had this book published, Repicturing the Restoration. Beautiful watercolor thrill that you are doing this and that you're letting people see your art about the restoration.

Hank Smith: 00:02:02 I love that you've said, "Listen, I have this art thing going on, and I just kind of kept it going. It wasn't a huge part of my life but I kept it going. I kept it going." The chess pieces moved together for this book.

Tony Sweat: 00:02:18 Yeah. I could show you many journal entries that sound exactly like a frustrated artist because that's exactly what I was. But if there's one thing that this has taught me... It's taken about 20 years to kind of find the window or the avenue or the outlet for my art. And sometimes, it just takes a little patience, little time to let things come together. We live in an instant society. We want instant answers. We want two-day delivery. If it takes seven, we're upset. We'll probably talk about that a little bit in Section 29 today. The Lord's timing is often different than ours and we need to trust his timing as Elder Maxwell says along with his will.

Hank Smith: 00:03:07 Our entire lesson this week is one section of the doctrine covenant, Section 29. It's listed as September of 1830. The church is just about six months old. They've recently gone through this a little bit of not a crisis maybe with Hiram Page, but a situation with Hiram Page that's kind of sensitive. Now we get to Section 29. Can you tell us what leads up to this revelation? What's life like for Joseph Smith and his contemporaries?

Tony Sweat: 00:03:36 The Hiram Page incident is a major incident and it actually bleeds a little bit into Section 29. Although we don't know exactly what Hiram Page was writing on his revelations that he received, we know that some of them dealt with the up-building of Zion, maybe even guessing where the city should be built. You're going to see some themes of that come through in Section 29. John Whitmer in Revelation book one when he recorded this revelation of Section 29, I have his quote here, he writes down a revelation to six elders of the church and three members that they understood from holy rip that the time had come that the people of God should see eye to eye. He's quoting Isaiah 52:8, "See eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion." They're seeing somewhat different on the death of Adam which is another part, but the whole Hiram Page Zion, where are we going to build Zion? As Joseph translates the Book

of Mormon, it talks about building the New Jerusalem, a literal City of God, the city of Zion.

- Hank Smith: [00:04:38](#) Book of Ether, right?
- Tony Sweat: [00:04:39](#) Yeah, Book of Ether talks about it very directly. That's one of our articles of faith. That Zion, the New Jerusalem, will be built up on the American continent. They want to know more about that. That's on their mind and that's a little bleed over from Section 28 from Hiram Page. Back John Whitmer, he says they also saw a little bit different upon the death of Adam about his transgression. Therefore, they made it a subject of prayer and inquired of the Lord and thus came the word of the Lord through Joseph the seer. So they have some questions about Adam.
- Tony Sweat: [00:05:15](#) Then a major third historical thing is Joseph Smith has started his Bible translation in June of 1830. So now, it's September of 1830. Joseph has probably translated up to close somewhere around chapter five, so Moses one to five. This is really big. I'd say this to your listeners, if you want to get a lot out of Section 29, study Moses chapter two through five because Joseph is translating those Moses chapters right around the same months as he gets Section 29. You're going to see direct bleed over between the two. You can see parts of verses from the book of Moses that are informing the revelation even further in Section 29.
- Tony Sweat: [00:06:04](#) There's this really cool quote from Robert J. Matthews who's one of the great scholars of the Joseph Smith translation. He said this, "The Doctrine and Covenants and its relationship with the Joseph Smith translation are not two entirely separate books. They are interwoven." It's really just a great thing for listeners to understand that idea, that a lot of the Doctrine and Covenants revelations are springing either directly or indirectly from Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible at this time.
- Hank Smith: [00:06:35](#) I've often said that to my students where I think my students when we come to the Bible, when I teach the New Testament, they'll look at the JST and they'll say, "Joseph Smith corrected this verse or corrected this verse." They'll have it in their mind that the purpose of the Joseph Smith translation was to correct the Bible, which in part it is. But wouldn't you say, Tony, and what do you tell your students, wouldn't you say that part of the Joseph Smith translation project was to restore the gospel to get Joseph Smith asking the right questions?

Tony Sweat: 00:07:02 Almost definitely. I like to say that the Joseph Smith translation was a springboard for revelation for Joseph. It acted as this catapult into celestial spheres for him where he was just grasping concepts that I'm not sure he had ever thought about. This could be a misread on my part. So it's just conjecture. I don't know of any historical documentation that would support this. But I'm not certain Joseph Smith has ever read the Bible cover to cover at this point.

Tony Sweat: 00:07:32 If we ask most 24 year olds out there, have you read the Bible Genesis to Revelation? Most of them even within Bible believing Christians probably haven't by the time they're 24. I know I've asked my BYU students before, and a high majority have raised their hand and say that they've never done it cover to cover. Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy, one time said that Joseph was not given to doing a lot of reading. He was more given to deep thinking and pondering. So even though he grows up in a believing family and in a Christian community, there's no indication that he'd ever read the Bible cover to cover. So it's also probably the first time he's doing this intently and it's just causing all these revelations to come as he does it.

Hank Smith: 00:08:20 I automatically start thinking personal application there that we can have... Not do our own Joseph Smith translation, but the idea is get into the scriptures and let them be a springboard for revelation.

Tony Sweat: 00:08:31 I think I mentioned this before, I think, but now that Joseph Fielding McConkie used to say when Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, he got Gospel 101, first principles. When he did the JST, went to graduate school. That's what Joseph McConkie said. Here it is. Like things that he hadn't even thought of before perhaps are being revealed through doing the JST. I like that we are talking about all the stuff that was going on. Most people wouldn't know. I don't know when he was doing the book of Moses. But to see that as an unfolding, I love what President Nelson has called it, a continuous restoration. To see it unfolding here, that's helpful, thank you.

Hank Smith: 00:09:16 Tony, you said this I think on our first episode if I remember. You said the Book of Mormon will take you to Jesus. The Doctrine and Covenants is going to take you to the next level. It's going to take you to the temple and to God the Father. Is that something you teach your students?

Tony Sweat: 00:09:30 Most definitely. You want me to say it again?

Hank Smith: 00:09:33 Let's do it.

Tony Sweat: 00:09:36 My big tagline is the Book of Mormon is the book of salvation. It teaches us the gospel of Jesus Christ more purely and clearly than any book I know of. I say that with love and respect to the New Testament. But the Doctrine of Covenants is the book of exaltation. The Book of Mormon brings us to Jesus and the Doctrine of Covenants brings us to the Father. The Book of Mormon will bring us into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Doctrine of Covenants will take us to the temple. It is the book that is meant to take us into the fullness of the Abrahamic covenant and the blessings of exaltation. It's a beautiful book.

Hank Smith: 00:10:15 It's a beautiful idea of, "Here's step one, here's step two."

Tony Sweat: 00:10:19 Yeah. And it's appropriate that our missionaries use the Book of Mormon because it brings people to the church. It's interesting that we don't have our missionaries walk around handing people copies of the Doctrine of Covenants. Not that they couldn't, not that wouldn't help, but the Book of Mormon has its role. But it's just so important for all of us to know that the Doctrine of Covenants has its important role also.

Hank Smith: 00:10:41 I think this year, I personally... John, I know you've said this a couple of times, I'll never look at the Doctrine and Covenants the same way again. At least these first 28 sections that we've gone through. Hey Tony, I wanted to ask you something. Isn't September of 1830 a conference?

Tony Sweat: 00:10:55 Yes. Second conference of the church.

Hank Smith: 00:10:57 Okay. What does conference look like versus 2021 general conference?

Tony Sweat: 00:11:03 Yeah. It looks like getting a few families together from your neighborhood versus gathering a global church. The first conference of the church I believe is in June. The second conference of the church is this September, end of September conference of 1830. I don't know the exact numbers offhand, but we're talking a hundred-ish people maybe.

Hank Smith: 00:11:30 A brunch.

Tony Sweat: 00:11:32 It's a brunch. It's the Whitmers, it's the Smiths, it's the Knights and-

Hank Smith: 00:11:39 I've said this before, yeah. Porter Rockwell's the one young man.

Tony Sweat: 00:11:43 Yeah, exactly. It is a brunch. So these conferences are important, but we're gathering a hundred-ish people together. It's not even the entire church. Often, it's a conference of elders. They're only bringing the men together at this time.

John Bytheway: 00:11:59 It's kind of incredible to think that because then you read the language of the section and it's huge, it's grandiose, it's world. This is who you are and there's only a hundred of them sitting there?

Tony Sweat: 00:12:11 Yeah. Isn't that crazy?

John Bytheway: 00:12:13 That's one of the things I enjoy about this. I mean, Come Follow Me reminded us last week that nobody's been a member of the church for six months yet. That's what we're seeing here too, is the church hadn't been established.

Hank Smith: 00:12:28 That tells you the vision of the Lord. That He knows this is bigger. I've often said in the Book of Mormon when the Lord visits the Nephites that he has a dual audience in mind. He's one of the only people I think that can speak in Scripture and speak to multiple audiences. Do you think he has us in mind as He gives these revelations? I mean, we first want to read them how they were received by those initial saints. But do you think the Lord has that dual audience in mind as he gives the Doctrine and Covenants?

Tony Sweat: 00:12:56 He has to. I mean, the Scriptures say all things are present before His eyes. He sees the end from the beginning. He is Alpha and Omega. I mean, all you have to do is look at Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants that was given in 1831. The church is barely a year and a half old when Section 1 is given. He's saying, "Hearken the world, oh ye islands, outlands from afar, everybody listen up. Everybody, I'm talking to you all." The Lord definitely... I wouldn't have any problem saying He's got not just us in mind, He's got future generations in mind that you and I can't even fathom right now.

Hank Smith: 00:13:32 Like in Section 25, the last verse, "This is my voice unto all." It's not just Emma make a hymnbook. I love that we went through that and saw all of the different things that Emma was asked to do to be I wrote it my margin, a comfort, a scribe, an expounder, an exhorter, a writer, a learner, even a compiler though it doesn't use that word. Then the Lord says, "I'm saying this to everybody." Before we go right into Section 29, Tony, I think everybody knows in the Pearl of Great Price, there's a book of Moses. But could you kind of tell us now in context of

all this, what that is, how that relates to the JST, how that relates to the book of Genesis, and what's going on in Moses?

Tony Sweat: [00:14:18](#) Yeah. It's important again that we realize that right after the church is organized in April of 1831, the first big next projects that Joseph Smith undertakes is his Bible revision. He starts it in June of 1830, so just a few months later. We don't know precisely what kicks off Moses one. Moses one is almost this prequel to Genesis. I almost read it like Genesis kicks off with the first book of Moses. And in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. It's almost like Joseph saying, "How did Moses learn this?" You get this prequel chapter, this Moses one. Man alive, if you want to test, one, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, just read Moses chapter one.

Tony Sweat: [00:14:58](#) Are there any listener out there to write anything as beautiful and succinct as Moses 139, for this is my work and my glory? You have this dramatic God, Moses. You're my son. My son, I have a work for you, expansive. He sees the creation, all inhabitants, closes, Satan comes, tempts him. Son of Man. We've heard all this. Cast him out, God comes again, teaches him more. It's just this wow. It's a wow chapter. What I'm saying is it's uncertain if that was ever part of the Bible, or if that led Joseph to go into the Bible. Did Moses one spur the JST or did the JST spur Moses one?

Tony Sweat: [00:15:41](#) It's not quite exactly clear. But we know that after his vision of Moses record and Moses chapter one in the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph then begins his Bible revision. He starts revising by inspiration revelation Genesis chapter one which is the first book of Moses, and that becomes Moses two. So his revision of Genesis one is Moses two. His revision of Genesis two becomes Moses three and so on. So if that wasn't confusing enough for your listeners. Basically, as you're reading Moses two to five, it's his translation of Genesis one to four.

Hank Smith: [00:16:16](#) I think that makes sense. Moses one is this brand new scripture.

John Bytheway: [00:16:20](#) Tony, I'm so glad you said that. I mean, it is amazing, the vision. And it's a great story and I'm glad to know this other stuff is coming near to that time, these sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Tony Sweat: [00:16:35](#) Let me just show you a few direct connections between Joseph translating the book of Moses and this Section 29. Go to Moses chapter three. You can see in the chapter heading, God created all things spiritually before they were naturally upon the earth. In verse five, for I the Lord created all things of which I have

spoken spiritually before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. Now jump over to Section 29 and go to verse 32, first spiritual, second temporal, which is the beginning of my work.

- Tony Sweat: [00:17:07](#) Again, first temporal and secondly spiritual, or verse 31, sorry, for by the power of my Spirit created I them, yea, all things both spiritual and temporal. So you're seeing a direct connection there with Moses three. Or now if you go to Moses chapter four, and I Lord God speaking to Moses saying that Satan who now is commanded in my name and the name of my only begotten is the same which was before me in the beginning. He came before me saying, "Behold, here am I, send me. I will be thy son. I will redeem all mankind. That one soul shall not be lost and surely I will do it. Wherefore, give me thine honor."
- Tony Sweat: [00:17:41](#) Now jump over to Doctrine and Covenants Section 29 and look at verse 36. It came to pass that Adam being tempted by the devil for behold the devil is before Adam and he rebelled against me saying, "Give me thine honor which is my power." There's just a few examples and you see this all through Section 29. These direct connections between what he's translating and learning in the book of Moses, you see those ideas spilling into this revelation of Section 29.
- Hank Smith: [00:18:10](#) You can see kind of scripture weaving into Joseph's thoughts and the way he describes the revelations he's receiving.
- John Bytheway: [00:18:18](#) This is great. I'm looking in the footnotes on page 52 if you're using old-fashioned pages. I'm seeing Moses three, Moses three, Moses four, Moses four. Seeing them that way, which is so fun. I like seeing it unfold.
- Tony Sweat: [00:18:33](#) That inner woven idea that Robert J. Matthew said right there.
- Hank Smith: [00:18:37](#) Tony, I've noticed and maybe when I was a kid, I used to look ahead to see how long sections were because as you read them as a family, you're going, "Okay, this one's a short one."
- Tony Sweat: [00:18:48](#) Isn't that the first thing we do? One chapter or section a day, open it up. Look at how many pages it is?
- Hank Smith: [00:18:53](#) How long is this? This is one of Joseph Smith's longer revelations. Some of these other shorter ones like section 13, 14, 15. They're shorter, six, seven verses and then here this comes, it's pretty prolific. Is this new ground a little bit for him? Section 18 I guess is pretty amazing.

John Bytheway: 00:19:20 Section 20 is super long.

Hank Smith: 00:19:21 Yeah. Section 20, Articles and Covenants.

Tony Sweat: 00:19:24 But this is definitely longer. Most Doctrine and Covenants revelations don't get up to this 50-ish verse. This is definitely a longer revelation.

Hank Smith: 00:19:32 Yeah. It feels very New Testament-esque to me.

John Bytheway: 00:19:35 You did something wonderful with Section 1. You broke it into pieces. Do you have something like that? Am I putting you on the spot for Section 29?

Tony Sweat: 00:19:44 I got it. I got something for you. I came prepared.

John Bytheway: 00:19:47 I'm ready.

Tony Sweat: 00:19:48 In the Come Follow Me manual they have a really good outline where they kind of say, "Here's verses on the premortal life, and here's verses on the creation and on the fall and on the purpose of life, the atonement, the resurrection, final judgment." It's excellent. Follow that. I like to add just a few more into that list from Section 29. So if you want to take this approach, follow us and come follow me. The topics I do are pre-existence, Adam and Eve in the garden, the present day or purpose of life. Then I do events and things prior to the second coming, events at Christ's coming. Then I do Millennium end of the world.

Tony Sweat: 00:20:28 Now, unfortunately, it's not a chronological story. They don't go in that order. But you can take a pre-existence to the end of the world approach with this section. If you want, I can read those verses off. That might be a little too tiresome. But if you want, you could just send you yourself, your kids in to go find those. They are in there.

Hank Smith: 00:20:46 Like you said, let's see, they had seven bullet points on page 54 of the Come Follow Me manual. Really nice break down.

Tony Sweat: 00:20:55 Really well done.

Hank Smith: 00:20:56 Then you've added a couple of other things. So that's helpful.

Tony Sweat: 00:20:58 I do want to say something about this section that is a little different than the standard narrative we give it because even the one that I just gave where it's this broad scope. It is a broad scope of a section where you get things from the premortal life

all the way to the end of the world. But I actually don't think that's the focal point of the section. Again, in context, they are thinking about Zion. They're thinking about, why are we going to gather and build this new Jerusalem, the city of Zion? Joseph Smith, in his revelations, always puts the building of Zion in this second coming preparation context.

- Tony Sweat: 00:21:36 One of the purposes of this section is it gives a rationale for building Zion and for the covenant people of the Lord to prepare for the second coming. So you have to remember in context, take our Article of Faith. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel, restoration of lost 10 tribes. That Zion, the New Jerusalem, will be build upon the American continent. That Christ will reign personally upon the earth. He'll return to the earth. Those order of events, you guys, are how they viewed things. Joseph always teaches about the gathering of Israel in a second coming context and the building of Zion in that context.
- Tony Sweat: 00:22:15 Jump to verse seven, and you're called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect. For mine elect, hear my voice and harden not their hearts. And a big question particularly in Joseph Smith's time and in some circles today is, who are the elect? Verse seven gives us a hint. That the elect are those who voluntarily choose to hear God's voice. Because in Joseph's time and today, some people are saying, "No, God chooses the elect." It's like the difference between do I sign up for my county city league basketball team? Or do I get chosen to play for an NBA team? What these seem to be saying is you get to choose to be part of the elect. It's almost like we could choose to go play professional basketball.
- John Bytheway: 00:23:05 Correct me if I'm wrong here, but that sounds like the difference early on between Presbyterianism and Methodism.
- Tony Sweat: 00:23:10 Yes.
- John Bytheway: 00:23:11 Where Presbyterianism, you are chosen by God. Methodism, you can volunteer yourself.
- Tony Sweat: 00:23:19 Yeah, spot on.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:20 Kind of predestination.
- Tony Sweat: 00:23:24 Yeah, this is predestination, for nation, Calvinism, Arminianism, God's sovereign will and man's ability to choose. And our doctrine is going to come firmly down through these revelations on the side of, "It is your choice. It is all within your power." I

just went through and look at some of these words on this theme of you can choose to be part of the elect. Verse one, the Lord kicks off with, "Listen." That's a choice. Verse two, as many as will hearken to my voice. Verse seven that we just read, that the elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts. Verse 35, He gave unto man to be an agent unto himself. Verse 36, people turned away from God because of their agency. Verse 39, he wants men to be agents unto themselves. Verse 40, Adam yielded. Verse 43, even as many as would believe or with verse 45, they love darkness rather than light, their deeds are evil, and they receive the wages of whom they list to obey. There's this theme through this whole section on agency. It's your choice. You can choose to be elect and be prepared and be with Zion.

- Hank Smith: 00:24:53 You just made me think of it would be interesting to be in this brand new church and someone says, "Hey, what do you guys believe about this?" You're going, "I don't know. Let me go ask Joseph." Do we believe in agency? I think we do. Let's go talk about it. It would be interesting to see what I believe being rolled out in front of me in real time.
- Tony Sweat: 00:25:14 In real time. Do you know what I like about verse seven too? Mine elect, hear my voice and harden not their hearts. Here's President Nelson telling us to go find those who will let God prevail in their lives. That's the same thing, that's their choice. Are you willing to let God prevail?
- Hank Smith: 00:25:34 There's a theme of agency running through this section, which by the way is something... If I'm going to focus on one thing to teach my children, Tony, if you ever talk to my kids, they'll say it's, "Dad's always talk about our choices." Our choices, our decisions determine our destiny. It's all about our choices, the choices we make. "I will always love you," I tell them. "I will always love you no matter what choice you make." But your choices matter. They will make the difference in your life and I think Section 29, you're saying the Lord is saying the same thing, your choices matter.
- Tony Sweat: 00:26:08 Your choices matter and you have the power to choose. That's a big idea.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:14 Tony, I can't tell you how many people have said from our first episode with you, they love that point where God says, "Why is everybody saying you do you?" You don't do you. That's a terrible idea. You do God, right? It seems almost like Section 29 is we're coming up with our Tony Sweat themes here where the Lord's saying, "That's a terrible idea." You have the freedom to

choose and I want you to choose me. I don't want you to choose you, choose me.

- Tony Sweat: [00:26:39](#) Yeah, and these are big theological ideas. Is really at the heart of it, can we voluntarily choose God and choose to follow him? The answer overwhelmingly in Section 29 is yes.
- Hank Smith: [00:26:52](#) The Lord does something in Section 29 verse two that for me personally, I really love it just because I have chickens. My wife grew up with having chickens in the yard. And so we've always had them since we've been married or I guess we didn't in our first little apartment. That would have been odd. But as soon as we got a house, we got chickens. The Lord says... And this is a theme in the Book of Mormon. It's a theme in the New Testament. He says, "I will gather my people as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." If you've never seen that, it's a beautiful concept because you take these little chicks and they are just completely vulnerable to predators.
- Hank Smith: [00:27:33](#) This mother hen will start clucking and those little chicks will run for cover, they'll dive underneath there, and they will fall sound asleep there. They're just so safe and so warm. So whenever I read that verse, I think of the Lord's love. Other people might not see that if they've never seen a chicken. They're going, "That's an odd metaphor. But really, if you've ever seen this happen, you'll go, "Oh, wow, they look so safe there." They feel safe. You can tell that they feel safe because they can't get out. [crosstalk 00:28:04].
- Tony Sweat: [00:28:04](#) There's a cool little painting that I think, again, in the Come Follow Me manual, they have a Liz Lemon Swindle painting, I think, of that. It's a great visual to see for you non-farmers out there, for you non-Hank Smiths.
- Hank Smith: [00:28:17](#) Non-chicken owners.
- Tony Sweat: [00:28:18](#) That's right.
- John Bytheway: [00:28:19](#) I was going to bring this up because I knew this was coming. But in 3rd Nephi 10, you mentioned, Hank, that I've got in my margins present, past, and future because in verse 4 of 3rd Nephi 10, how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and have nourished you? That kind of sounds present tense-ish. Verse five, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? Yay, O ye people of the house of Israel who have fallen? Yay, O ye people of the house of Israel that dwell at Jerusalem as ye

that have fallen? Hey, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth with her chickens and ye would not? There's their choice again and then verse six, O house of Israel who I might have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? If you were to repent, return unto me with full purpose of heart, and I see a present, past, and future there always willing to be that gatherer, I thought that'S kind of fun to see that it's not time bound.

- Hank Smith: 00:29:20 I think about, though, where can I turn for peace? I think verse two the Lord saying, "Right here. I'm right here. I'm the one that can offer you that comfort, that peace, and that safety that you're so desperately looking for in the atonement." Look at verse one. The arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins. And because he's done that, I can now offer you this wonderful life. Right? John 8:12, the Lord says, "Those who follow me will have the light of life." I love the phrase, the light of life.
- John Bytheway: 00:29:54 Look at that, Hank, with what you're saying. Look at verse five. Lift up your hearts, be glad. There's so much good news. Be glad I'm in your midst. I am your advocate with the Father. I'm laying down all the great things for you. It's his goodwill to give you the kingdom. Back to where can I turn for peace? The Lord saying right here.
- Hank Smith: 00:30:24 It is his goodwill to give you the kingdom. He's not saying I'm pleading with the Father and the Father is saying, "Oh, I don't know." They're all on our side. I'm on your side, the father's on your side. What did Elder Stevenson once say something very simple? He said, "You have the Savior of the world on your side. How can you lose? How can you lose?" It comes back to choose him. Choose.
- Tony Sweat: 00:30:50 Let God prevail.
- Hank Smith: 00:30:52 Yeah. Let's keep going here, Tony. Let's talk about verse seven, the gathering, because the Lord says it again in verse eight. That they shall be gathered into one place upon the face of the land. I'm assuming they would have thought of that as Zion.
- Tony Sweat: 00:31:06 Yes, definitely. I need to frankly be careful with this because I don't mean this as a criticism of our collective generation. But while we've made a great focus on the gathering of Israel, importantly, we've lost sight a little bit of the building of the New Jerusalem in my opinion anyway. It's one of the great works of the latter days that a city called New Jerusalem will be built. Our Article of Faith does not say that perhaps maybe if things go right-

Hank Smith: 00:31:46 Metaphorically.

Tony Sweat: 00:31:47 Metaphorically, if we are lucky. No, it says that Zion the New Jerusalem will be built upon the American continent. They were viewing at this time anyway that gathering as we should build this city and gather there now. Now, I know that the listeners will say, "Will the whole church gather there? How could we do that with a global church?" I couldn't answer those questions. That will be something that we'll have to see how it unfolds given time and prophetic direction. But at minimum, it is one of our articles of faith. We do believe that there will be a city of New Jerusalem built and some sort of gathering. Now, currently we're gathering to our local stakes of Zion and building up the church where we're at. That may be the continued direction. But at this time in particular, they are viewing the gathering as a central place around a physical city that they're going to build the city of Zion.

Hank Smith: 00:32:46 That's beautiful. I've heard it said before, how can we expect the king to come if there is no kingdom for him to come to?

Tony Sweat: 00:32:55 It's probably a good point too right there around where it says they will be gathered into one place. We'll talk about this in this chapter, we're going to look at a lot of frankly scary verses. The ones that would give some of your kid nightmares.

Hank Smith: 00:33:11 Oh my goodness. Next page.

Tony Sweat: 00:33:12 Yeah, the very next page. But next verse seven and eight on the gathering unto one place upon the face of the earth. Notice where it says, "To prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked." So again, you're seeing that gather Israel, build the New Jerusalem so that you're prepared and ready before the calamities of the second coming. It'd be good to cross reference that with Doctrine and Covenants, Section 45.

Hank Smith: 00:33:49 Right. Which is a big second coming section, right?

Tony Sweat: 00:33:51 Which is a big second coming like this one, but I would do Doctrine and Covenants 45 verses 66 to 71 because listen to what it says about this city of New Jerusalem, Section 45. Let me get there myself. Scroll, scroll. This is another big long section.

Hank Smith: 00:34:11 There's a footnote there for D&C 45:66 and then says 64 through 66. You're saying go even longer.

Tony Sweat: 00:34:19 I'd say go even longer and I'll show you why. This is what it says starting in 66, and it shall be called, that pronoun there, is this city of Zion or this place, it shall be called the New Jerusalem. Look at these words, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God, and the glory of the Lord shall be there and the terror of the Lord shall also be there. In so much that the wicked will not come into it and it shall be called Zion. It shall come to pass among the wicked that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee to Zion for safety, and there shall be gathered unto it. Here's that connection to Section 29 verse eight and nine there. There shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven. It shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another. It shall be said among the wicked, let us not go up to battle against Zion for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible. I like that. These guys are intimidating, or they're powerful. They see Hank and his chickens and they're like, "We are not going to fight against those guys."

Hank Smith: 00:35:27 How can we possibly? I was going to say, "Can we put the BYU football and rugby team as the guards over the front gates of Zion?"

Tony Sweat: 00:35:36 It shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations. And then look at this line, and shall come to Zion singing with songs of everlasting joy. Things like singing, joy, peace, safety, refuge, glory, those are important to remember in this context of second coming, calamities, preparing for the second coming, building the city of New Jerusalem. So it's just a really good cross-reference to go there with Section 28:8-9.

Hank Smith: 00:36:09 You're prepping us for the difficult verses we're about to read.

Tony Sweat: 00:36:13 That's right.

Hank Smith: 00:36:15 The beast of the forest devouring us up and the sun being darkened and the weeping and wailing of Section 29. I remember as a kid, I wasn't one to ever get scared. But I remember those verses of, "Wow. Oh, this is intense. This is intense scripture."

John Bytheway: 00:36:35 I absolutely remember verse 18, flies in your face falling off. And I thought I saw something like that in Indiana Jones. The guy

melted in front of the Ark of the Covenant. That's like that thing in the... No, the first one, the Raiders of the Lost Ark.

- Tony Sweat: [00:36:57](#) The Raiders of the Lost Ark. That's right.
- John Bytheway: [00:36:58](#) He opens up the Ark of the Covenant, his face melts off. I thought that looks like that verse.
- Tony Sweat: [00:37:03](#) I always pictured these gigantic flies. Flies the size of small dogs picking people up.
- John Bytheway: [00:37:11](#) 2020 was really something, but when they announced, "We have murder hornets in Oregon," I thought, "Good heavens."
- Hank Smith: [00:37:18](#) Tony, you read Section 29 verse 13, "To be with me that we may be one." That is John 17 language, the great intercessory prayer. I've frequently told my students, if you want to know your worth, do you wonder about your worth? Go to John 17:24. The Lord can ask his father for anything. And what does he want? He says, "Father, I will that they also whom thou has given me," that's you and I, those who have received him by our agency, right? "I want them with me where I am." So I've told my students, the Lord could ask for anything and what does he ask for? He asks for you.
- Tony Sweat: [00:37:56](#) He asks for you. That's beautiful.
- Hank Smith: [00:37:57](#) He wants you there. And I've said, "What does he see in you?" I don't know. I don't know. But apparently, he sees something that we don't see. Apparently, it will not be heaven to him if you're not there. That screams to me of love, of how much the Lord loves us. As scary as these next verses are going to be, as long as we keep his love in mind, I think we're going to be okay.
- Tony Sweat: [00:38:28](#) Yeah, back to Zion, joy. Lift up your hearts, be glad. That'd be important too, especially those who have younger children, or if anybody who rightly so gets nervous about some of the prophecies prior to the second coming. Focusing on those positive verses. The Lord always seems to give a positive message with it as well.
- Hank Smith: [00:38:51](#) Before we get into these verses, can I tell you a quick story? I was teaching a class on the second coming, Matthew 24 and 25, the Olivet Discourse, and a girl student of mine at BYU, she just started crying and she was really crying. I thought, "Oh, I have that effect on people, right? Just really make people sad." Afterwards, she was putting her stuff away, I said, "Hey, I'm so

sorry if I said something that offended you." I said, "That happens to me all the time. I'm so sorry." She said, "No, no, it's not you. I am just so scared of the second coming. I am so scared of it."

- Hank Smith: 00:39:32 Like I said, when I was younger, I just found these verses pretty cool. But she was so scared and I said, "What scares you?" She just said, "I just don't want to be alive for the second coming. I just rather not be here. Can you imagine what it would be like to be here during all of that?" We had a funny conversation. I told her a story. This is like story inception. I'm going to tell you a story in a story. But Elder Holland once met a missionary who said... It was very serious to Elder Holland and he said, "Elder Holland, are these the last days?" Elder Holland said, "Son."
- Tony Sweat: 00:40:09 I may not know much.
- Hank Smith: 00:40:11 Yeah. He said, "I am not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but even I know the name of the church." We are the church of Jesus Christ of Last Day Saints. We are in the last days. I asked her, I said, "How do you feel leaving today? Leaving right now?" She said, "I like right now." I said, "Well, you're in the middle of it."
- Tony Sweat: 00:40:34 You're in it.
- Hank Smith: 00:40:35 You are in it. This isn't a future idea. We are right in the middle of all this. And I said, "How are you doing?" She said, "Good." I said, "Yeah, you're doing your homework, you're dating. Why? Why are you doing so well?" It was the knowledge that she had of the Lord. I really believe that, Tony, that the Lord's love and confidence in us, and His atonement, it will be like in the eye of the hurricane. Calm, peaceful, and as we watch this unfold around us. The Lord says that great day, the sun will be darkened. This is where things get a little sketchy. The moon shall return to blood, stars fall from heaven, greater signs and heaven above and the earth beneath weeping and wailing among the hosts of men, hail storms destroying crops. Let's see. I don't know if we want to keep going, stop me any time you guys-
- John Bytheway: 00:41:34 Keep going brother.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:36 I will take vengeance upon the wicked for they will not repent for the cup of mine indignation is full for behold my blood shall not cleanse them if they hear me not. I the Lord God will send flies upon the face of the earth. They will eat the flesh and shall

cause maggots to come in upon them. That's disgusting. Their tongue shall be staid, their flesh shall fall from their bones, eyes from their sockets, beasts of the forest devouring them up. Now, I'm really getting into this, you guys. The horror of the whole earth, the great and abominable church will be cast down into fire. This is very similar to Nephi's vision, don't you see that there of the ending of the great and spacious building, the great and abominable church? Same thing in my eyes, exact same thing.

- Hank Smith: 00:42:28 He says, "And the end shall come and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth." That reminds me of the book of Revelation where the Lord says, "We're going to replace the secular satanic system with a celestial economy, a celestial government." All right, guys. I'm not going to keep going on these.
- Tony Sweat: 00:42:57 I just wanted you to keep going.
- Hank Smith: 00:43:01 I'm scaring the children. Think of the children.
- Tony Sweat: 00:43:04 I've heard in one of your previous episodes, John. I liked how you described resting the scriptures, and wrestling him to fit our own view. I don't want to rest the scriptures here, so forgive me if I do. But I do wonder if these verses aren't a little bit of what we have learned from Section 19 verse 7 where the Lord told Martin Harris... It's not that I'm truly going to damn people for eternity. I say that it's more expressed is how he says it to work upon the hearts of the children of men. I almost wonder if I could give a reinterpretation... If I could be so bold, which maybe I shouldn't be. So apologize for being presumptuous here.
- Tony Sweat: 00:43:48 If I could reinterpret these verses, I almost wonder if the Lord is being expressed perhaps to work upon our hearts and almost using some rhetorical devices to catch our attention. To sum it up, he's in essence saying, "I am going to get rid of wickedness, I am going to get rid of disobedience. I'm going to get rid of things that are terrestrial. And there will be some calamity in connection with that and some difficulty with it. But that I'm going to make everything new in the way that it should be. I'm going to get rid of death. I'm going to get rid of destruction. I'm going to get rid of sorrow." I don't know. I don't know if that's the right interpretation, and if I'm wrong, forgive me, but I do wonder how much of it is rhetoric.

Hank Smith: 00:44:39 I'm with you, Tony. I think oftentimes when we read about the vengeance of the Lord, for me personally, again, I might be resting the scriptures as well. But for me personally, the vengeance of the Lord can be often described as the natural consequences of sin. As I break my covenants, the Lord's protection, His hands are off and I have natural consequences from breaking the commandments. For me when the Lord describes what it's like a life that's breaking the commandments, he's going to use this language because to Him, it's the suffering of His children because they break the commandments. I like what you called it there, a rhetorical device, because it's this idea of let's get their attention and show them sin is not the way to go. It will never bring a happy life. For me personally, I don't see the Lord saying, "I want to hurt people." I think He's saying, "You're hurting yourselves." Right? Look at verse 17. For they will not repent. They will not repent. They're not taking the escape I've offered.

John Bytheway: 00:45:59 That makes me wonder, Hank, too if this is... You know how the Book of Mormon talks about, "They did not sin ignorantly. They knew the will of God concerning them and they will not repent." It sounds like their opportunity is there. They know what's going on. Look at that, behold my blood shall not cleanse them. I want to offer them grace and they will not repent. I wonder what level of accountability. It sounds like people that know better maybe. I don't know.

Hank Smith: 00:46:30 I remember Dr. Woodward came in and he said, "Listen, the justice of God isn't here comes God to punish you if you don't repent."

Tony Sweat: 00:46:39 It's withdrawing his spirit.

Hank Smith: 00:46:41 Yeah. You're headed for destruction if God does nothing. If He does nothing, you are headed towards all of this terrible things. God is the merciful side of this. He's not the Justice side. That's the natural consequences of the plan we signed up for. But God is offering us an escape. He's offering us a way out if they will repent. I guarantee you this will all change in verse 17 if He says, "If they will repent, none of this will happen." Because it's not about Him saying, "Well, here it comes. I'm so excited for this part." It's Him saying, "This is where you're headed if you don't repent. I know how this road ends."

Tony Sweat: 00:47:19 Yeah. Going back to verse nine though, it's, "I will burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts." It's like, "Whoa." I always love to ask my class because it says they shall be a stubble. I say, what stubble? And everybody goes like this. I'm like, "You weren't

raised on a farm, were you? You need to go see Hank and his chickens, but when you burn the corn stalks, what's left? These little stubbles in the ground. It looks similar to a close up of this. But this idea of that day that she'll burn as an oven and burn them up. I mean, it works expressly on my heart.

- Hank Smith: 00:47:56 It works on me too. I think the Lord says at the end of verse 21, "As I live, abomination shall not reign." For those of us who are feeling like, listen, I don't like the justice of God, almost like Corianton in the Book of Mormon. I don't like the idea of anybody suffering.
- Tony Sweat: 00:48:13 I think it's unjust.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:14 Yeah. I don't think anybody should have to suffer. I don't think that there should be any justice at all. The Lord saying, "This is the why." I don't want my children to suffer. But I cannot, will not allow abomination to reign. I can't allow sin to reign.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:34 Who should reign?
- Tony Sweat: 00:48:39 That's His motive. That's His motive, is I don't want these abominable things to reign and happen.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:45 I think all of us understand that as parents. I don't want you to suffer. What's more important to me is that sin doesn't run your life and control your life. That's why we have rules. That's why we have consequences in my house, is I don't want you to suffer.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:59 My kids have heard me say this a lot when we get in arguments or fights within our family, I'm sorry to admit that happens. But I always love to tell them, "This is not you against you or mom against you or dad against you." This is Satan against all of us. We are together and we don't want abomination to reign. We don't want contention to reign. I like how you brought that out, Hank, but this is all of us against the adversary trying to get right with God, apply His grace. So we will repent so that His blood can cleanse us like in verse 17.
- Hank Smith: 00:49:41 The law of justice is powerful. I think the Savior describes it in the New Testament as a wolf coming for sheep. Right? We got nothing. If we're these little sheep and here comes the law of justice, what are we going to be? You got nothing, you're dead.
- John Bytheway: 00:49:57 The chickens wings aren't big enough to hold them too either.

Hank Smith: 00:50:01 You're gone, you're a goner. So the idea is that we have a savior who is willing to step between us and the law of justice. I think what we're reading here in Section 29 is this is you without a savior.

John Bytheway: 00:50:15 That's Mosiah what? Mosiah 15, Abinadi says, "Standing betwixt us and justice, I just love that line. That I'm going to take the brunt of justice. I'm going to turn and extend mercy to you.

Tony Sweat: 00:50:27 That's something to focus in on is that the Savior is saying, "I am here to conquer all these problems for you." Back to him standing in between, He not only conquers sin and death as we know, but he will get rid of all the effects of the fall of Adam and Eve. All pain, all injustices, all sorrows, all unfairness, all suffering, all of this will be conquered by him. That's part of everything He's going to conquer.

Hank Smith: 00:51:02 Yeah. I think so, Tony. I think this is just kind of opened up my mind a little bit is this idea of the Lord saying, "I will conquer all of this." I do want you to have an accurate view of what I'm conquering. So let me describe it this way.

Tony Sweat: 00:51:17 Yeah. And you almost wonder too. It's hard to know the intent of these verses exactly other than they do work on our hearts. But in verse 18 where it was talking flies and maggots, it's just a way of saying we're all going to die. Our mortal lives will come to an end, and our bodies will decompose because we're of the flesh. Without a savior, without Him, we have no hope in that. Those are sorrowful verses but with Him, He will conquer all of that for us and will raise us back up into bodily glory. It's hard to know what verse 18, 19, 20 is talking about, but I do like that idea of I am not going to let abomination reign. I am not going to let the effects of the fall win out. I am going to win out and I'm going to let righteousness reign as a whole.

Hank Smith: 00:52:14 What I'm intrigued about, Tony, is you mentioned, who had read the whole Bible from cover to cover back then? Because I was looking at footnotes on here and Section 29 is a lot of footnotes meaning it's doctrinally rich. But the very bottom footnote in the first column is Zechariah 14:12 about some of these insects and stuff. This is what it says in Zechariah 14:12. "This shall be the plague where with the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet. Their eyes shall consume away in their holes. And their tongue shall consume away in their mouth."

Hank Smith: 00:53:00 It sounds like a restatement of that. I guess that's why the footnote is there. And it's intriguing to see... When you said that, I thought, "Man, how many biblical phrases come out in the Doctrine and Covenants that perhaps Joseph Smith hadn't even read?" I mean, that's an intriguing thought to say how consistent the Lord is in His language to us.

Tony Sweat: 00:53:22 As I've read President Benson teach about the fall, I've heard Elder Holland teach about the fall, and I think partly, I'm trying to understand the graphic nature of this. I liked what you said, "I will not allow the fault to win." We don't really understand why we need Christ until we understand the fall, almost like 2nd Nephi 9 chapter where Jacob says, "You want to know what life is like if there's a fall and no atonement?" These verses feel like that.

John Bytheway: 00:53:53 That's a great connection.

Hank Smith: 00:53:55 I think I have it memorized, the President Benson statement. Just as a man does not desire food until he is hungry, so a man does not desire Christ until he knows why he needs Christ and no one knows why he needs Christ unless he understands the doctrine of the fall and its effect upon all mankind. No book in the world explains this vital doctrine nearly as well as the Book of Mormon.

Tony Sweat: 00:54:16 Good job, brother.

Hank Smith: 00:54:19 That's one of my favorites because to me, it also helps explain the restoration. We don't understand the restoration unless we understand the apostasy. Otherwise, here's another take on the Bible.

Tony Sweat: 00:54:34 Well, and even on a broader scale too, back to this Article of Faith, the Zion, the New Jerusalem will be built upon the American continent. That Christ will reign personally upon the earth. And that this earth will be renewed. Another word we could use is restored.

Hank Smith: 00:54:47 Tony, one of the things I've always loved that I've only heard from restoration scriptures is the idea that things were created spiritually and then temporarily. And it's kind of like a blueprint or an architect would do something completely to every detail before he would do the actual physical thing. You said before, part of this might come from the book of Moses, the JST part, and then we've got it here. Do you want speak to those verses?

- Tony Sweat: 00:55:16 Yeah. I mean, 31 to 34 is all this spiritual temporal Adam. There's two contexts here. Again, one is that Joseph has just translated these ideas in Moses where the Lord created all things spiritually before they were temporarily upon the face of the earth. Which is a great concept that the Lord plans all of this out first, everything it seems, before He brings it into existence physically as a whole. But it's also tied into the idea of these elders, that this revelation is spurred from, or having also disagreements over Adam's transgression and temporal commandments, or temporal laws as a whole.
- Tony Sweat: 00:55:59 I just love in verse 34 where the Lord says, "Verily I say to you all things are spiritual." So he kind of plays this both like, "Hey, I created things spiritually before they're temporally..." But remember, everything's spiritual to me. That all things are spiritual. And not at any time have I given unto you law which was temporal, neither any man or the children of man, neither Adam your father whom I created. So it kind of ties it back together. But I just think there's a really good and powerful application here that all the laws... Not only does God application one, we could talk this, plan things out, think them through before you bring them into existence. But this application that God doesn't give us commandments that are temporal.
- Tony Sweat: 00:56:51 At one time, I won't tell you who it was, but he was a member of the 70 at the time. He's now one of the 12. I had a chance to meet him. And at the time, I was doing a lot of administrative work. I was a principal for Seminaries and Institutes of Religion at this time when I met him and he said, "What are you doing? What classes do you teach?" I said, "Oh, I just do a lot of administrivia most days."
- Tony Sweat: 00:57:19 When I said that, he kind of rebuked me for using the word administrivia. I've never forgotten this. He said, "Never underestimate the spiritual value of doing temporal things well." Is what he said to me. It has resonated with me. It's great to have that discussion of commandments that we might view as more temporal. It's actually in my opinion kind of a false dichotomy to try to divide them up between, "Oh, that's a temporal commandment, that's a spiritual commandment."
- Hank Smith: 00:57:49 What do you mean by that? What do people say? Because I've never heard that in those words, but how might someone else say something like that?
- Tony Sweat: 00:57:58 Like temporal commandments, let me give you one, for example, the Word of Wisdom. I actually think we do a little bit

of a disservice to the Word of Wisdom when we only explain it as a health code. A purely temporal thing. That God gave this law for only temporal reasons. Now, He did give it for some temporal reasons because of conspiring man, and He does promise us health in our navel, and that we'll run and not be weary, walk and not faint. The Word of Wisdom was given in context of the School of the Prophets trying to help them become more holy. I like to say that the Word of Wisdom is not a health code, it's a holiness code. If the Word of Wisdom was purely temporal, if it was purely about health, the Lord would have said, "Thou shalt do cardio five days a week. Thou shalt plank."

Hank Smith: 00:58:51

We can all be grateful that that part isn't in there.

Tony Sweat: 00:58:55

Thou shalt not eat excessive refined sugars. But he doesn't. I know this is not a section on the Word of Wisdom, but this is an example of spiritual and temporal. He tells us to refrain from some common substances in society for a number of reasons. Coffee, tea, tobacco, alcohol. But the problem we get into sometimes is we want to only explain them temporally. So we say things like, "Well, we're not supposed to drink coffee because it's not good for us." Then a study comes out and says, "Drinking a mild amount of coffee can be good for your body or a mild amount of alcohol. Or studies have shown that a little bit of tea every day does this for you." Then we get stuck.

Hank Smith: 00:59:35

As if it's just been debunked.

Tony Sweat: 00:59:37

As if the Word of Wisdom is now debunked because we're only talking about it temporally. I remember one time, I was with a group of scholars. I was presenting at a conference in the south, in the Southern United States. I was sitting around a table with about 10 of them or so PhD scholars from all over the nation at this academic conference. And they served us in the south sweet tea. All your Southern listeners out there know exactly what I'm talking about. When they brought us the sweet tea, I didn't drink mine and I was just sipping on my water. And I had a shirt on with a why logo. Someone said, "Are you a professor at Yale?" I said, "No, I'm a professor at BYU."

Hank Smith: 01:00:25

And Harvard man myself.

Tony Sweat: 01:00:29

Well, what was interesting is when they noticed I wasn't drinking, they said, "Oh, so are you a Mormon?" I said, "Yes." The follow-up question, they said, "Well, do Mormons not drink tea?" I said, "No, we don't." Now, what's the next question?

Hank Smith: 01:00:42 Why not?

Tony Sweat: 01:00:43 Why not? Right when they said that, all 10 people turned at me, 10 professor PhDs looking right at me to want to explain why Mormons won't drink sweet tea. Now, if I had gone into a purely temporal explanation, I would have missed it. So luckily, I was smart enough that I said something like, "Well, our founding Prophet Joseph Smith gave a revelation telling Latter Day Saints to abstain from some common substances in the world like tea and coffee and alcohol and tobacco. We believe those can benefit our bodies." I said, "But equally, maybe even more important, if we can learn to abstain from those things and develop self-discipline and self-control, we think that can also help us to abstain from more grievous actions and sins that could really harm our lives and our standing with God. It helps us develop the kind of characteristics that we think help us live a more holy life as a whole."

Tony Sweat: 01:01:42 When I said it that way, they all went, "Oh, that makes sense," instead of getting into a debate about why tea is or is not good for you. So that's a really long story but hopefully illustrates how God is trying to teach right here. All things are spiritual. We have to look at them through how they're spiritual commands and not merely temporal ones.

Hank Smith: 01:02:04 I like that a lot, Tony. All things are spiritual and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal. Meaning they might have temporal benefits. Right? Some of these things I'm telling you might have temporal benefits but that's not why we're doing this.

Tony Sweat: 01:02:16 That's not why we're doing it.

Hank Smith: 01:02:17 The Lord is much more interested in our spiritual success than our temporal success.

John Bytheway: 01:02:23 I've always told my students that it's not about health, it's at least partially about agency. You gave a much more beautiful and eloquent answer, but you said it more beautifully, but I absolutely have to have this drink today or whatever. It became an agency issue, but I love the way you said it. It makes my mind want to go, "What are some other commandments like that?"

Tony Sweat: 01:02:46 Fasting is another one.

John Bytheway: 01:02:48 Yeah, that's a good one.

Tony Sweat: 01:02:50 Every first Sunday where we-

John Bytheway: 01:02:52 Sure feels temporal.

Tony Sweat: 01:02:54 Sure feels temporal is right. But John Hilton and I one time in an early publication, we wrote that if you can learn to say no to this cereal in the morning, you'll be able to learn to say no better to the temptation at night. If you cannot touch the steamy meal, you won't touch the steamy show, so to speak. There's a connection there. There's always a spiritual component. I'm not even sure we can divide them, these things that seem temporal.

Hank Smith: 01:03:30 Yeah, I like that. I've often thought... My children have asked me about fasting, and one thing I've said which kind of leads to the spiritual is we get to put ourselves in someone else's shoes, the shoes of the hungry, right? That seems like the Savior himself. I want to walk in your shoes, I want to experience your situation so I know how to help you. So for me, I learn a lot of empathy through fasting. I might say, "Oh, it's really helping my body." Which it probably is but more importantly, it's helping my character, my spirit.

Tony Sweat: 01:04:07 It's important. We don't want any listener out there to think that the temporal benefits aren't there. I'm not undermining that at all, but I think the Lord Himself is trying to say, "We need to get past the temporal and see the deeper spiritual benefits from these temporal commands."

John Bytheway: 01:04:24 Here we've got an explanation. But what about the days when they didn't have an explanation and we look at Father Adam, why are you offering sacrifices? Well, it's this temporal thing that-

Hank Smith: 01:04:35 He told me to do it

John Bytheway: 01:04:37 He didn't even know, and there was a spiritual benefit from doing what the Lord asked him even when he didn't know why. I think maybe our listeners just restate what that member of the 70 said because I know there's a lot of folks and callings out there that feel like I'm doing so much planning and calendaring and paperwork. It can feel kind of draining, and maybe they feel like they're not making a difference. Can you say that again?

Tony Sweat: 01:05:09 Yeah. His line was never underestimate the spiritual value of doing temporal things well. Ever since then, I've just continued to be the worst administrator on the face of the earth. But I'm

focusing on the spiritual value of how poorly I do temporal things.

- Hank Smith: 01:05:30 Tony, I really like that because I have a tendency to be, I think, a little bit like you in that I'd be administrivia, which I will no longer use that term because of you.
- John Bytheway: 01:05:42 Oh, the other term I hear at church, "Oh, I was voluntold."
- Hank Smith: 01:05:49 I used to read and I still do somewhat, I really like self-help, self-motivation speakers and books and things. But probably the one thing that helped me more temporally and spiritually is this idea of verse 31. Before I create things temporally, I create them spiritually. He says it again in verse 32. First spiritually, second temporally. I think he says that again in verse 35. There's a little bit of component of the temple there. Right? That we're going to spiritually create something and then go physically create it. Then we're going to return and report. Then we're going to spiritually create something. Then we're going to physically create it, we're going to return and report.
- Hank Smith: 01:06:31 Then Elder Bednar, I can't remember how many conferences ago, he said that our prayers can be that way. This little insight changed not only my prayers so spiritually but changed my day temporally, physically. In that he said, "In my morning prayers, I create my day spiritually. I go through the whole thing, and I create my day spiritually. Then at the end of the day, I return and report, how much did my physical creation look like my spiritual creation? Some days there's not a lot, it doesn't look like it." Because I'm going to be like, "Help me be a patient parent and I envision that in my mind. Help me be a good teacher, help me drive as a normal person would drive, all these things. All these things not to get upset, not to be impatient, and I kind of envision my day spiritually. And then I try to go do that day. And some days, it looks kind of all right. Right? Usually, those are the days I spent by myself."
- Hank Smith: 01:07:32 Sometimes I'll get frustrated with a child. And then that night as I return in to report, we put those two things side by side and it helps me know, number one, what to repent of, and two, it helps me connect my morning prayer and my evening prayer together. Let's spiritually create something. Let's return and report on the actual physical creation. That little principle to me changed everything. And I think you see it here in Section 29. The Lord is saying this idea of, "I want you to try this. Create things spiritually, then physically, and then let's see how they worked." He said, "I don't want you to just... That's not the whole purpose." It's not just temporal or carnal or sensual.

That's not what this is about, but it's about learning to be a creator like Him.

John Bytheway:

01:08:22

Please join us for part two of this podcast.