

EPISODE 18 • PART I

Dr. Brent L. Top



D&C 45

Hank Smith:	<u>00:01</u>	Welcome to Follow Him, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their <i>Come, Follow Me</i> study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:09</u>	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:10</u>	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:11</u>	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:13</u>	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:15</u>	As together, we followHIM.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:19</u>	My friends, welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with my illustrious co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome John.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:29</u>	Thanks Hank.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:31</u>	You are the greatest. You are the greatest. It's a treat for me to host a podcast with John Bytheway.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:38</u>	Which adjective will Hank choose today? I always look forward to that.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:42</u>	Yes. John, we have a treat every episode to talk to a brilliant mind in the Church. Who's with us this week?
John Bytheway:	<u>00:49</u>	Dr. Brent L. Top is the Richard L. Evans Chair of Religious Understanding and Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. He is the former Dean of Religious Education. So he was our boss, wasn't he? And also served as Department Chair and an Associate Dean. He is retiring this year after 45 years as a religious educator-
Hank Smith:	<u>01:10</u>	Wow.

John Bytheway: 01:10 ... in the Church Educational System. Remember that number 45. We're going to use that today. The last 34 being at BYU. He's the author of more than 20 books and scores of articles and chapters in books. He's married to his high school sweetheart, the former Wendy Cope. They served a mission together in the Illinois Peoria Mission from 2004 to 2007 where Brent presided over that mission. They and their family have also lived in the Holy Land where Brent taught at the BYU Jerusalem Center. He has a great love for all of Heavenly Father's children, and much of his career has been spent in building bridges and in dialogue with scholars, religious leaders, and people of other faiths.

John Bytheway: 01:53 He and Wendy are kept busy with their growing family of four children, 24 and a half grandchildren, and their first great-grandchild. Imagine that.

Hank Smith: 02:01 Wow.

John Bytheway: 02:03 Brent, this is perfect today because Brent's most recent book is called *Watch and Be Ready* and that's, get ready for the Second Coming language. And in Section 45 today, we've got a lot of wonderful stuff about that. I also want to comment that a book that has been deeply helpful to me and my family members is one called *Glimpses Beyond Death's Door*. Brent and his wonderful wife, Wendy, did research on near-death experiences and then the gospel and said, how do these and how can they correlate? Where do they correlate? And it was fascinating and testimony building. But today is more of a "watch and be ready day." And we're really excited to have Dr. Top with us. Thanks for joining us today.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 02:49 Oh, thank you, John and Hank. It's a pleasure to be there. When you mentioned the book, *Glimpses Beyond Death's Door*, and then [inaudible 00:02:59] asked me to follow up and did a little book called *What's On The Other Side?* But my children mocked me, my son, I don't know where they get the sarcasm and the mockery because I am just down the line straight arrow. I never tease anyone. And so my son says that with all of the research about death and the spirit world that I've done and written about that when I die and get into the spirit world, I'm going to be wandering around saying, "Well, it wasn't like this in my book."

Hank Smith: 03:36 That will be funny. You'll be like, "Oh, I was right about that. I was right about that."

Dr. Brent L. To...: 03:37 Yeah. I didn't get that one, but no, I'm just so pleased to be with you and love what you're doing and I love the gospel and

anything we can do to bless and strengthen and help others. I'm all for it.

- Hank Smith: [03:53](#) Let's jump into the *Come, Follow Me* lesson this week. Since we have a brilliant mind here, I'm going to take advantage of this. This week's *Come, Follow Me* lesson, John and Brent, focuses on a single section of the Doctrine and Covenants. That happens a couple of times this year. Brent, can you give us some background here? Remind us of what brought Joseph Smith and the Church to Ohio, and then anything else that leads up to this section we need to know.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [04:25](#) I think all of your listeners will remember in previous discussions that the Lord reveals to the prophet Joseph Smith that they are to gather to the Ohio, because those early missionaries had had such success with some of the religious leaders and people of Ohio, Sidney Rigdon being one of them, and many of the others as the saints in New York were really in two different geographical areas. During this period of time, there is great opposition to the church coming from outside, of course. And with the converts in Ohio, it becomes that there's really a greater future and more members in the Ohio and the Lord reveals to the Prophet Joseph. And in that spirit of gathering, the Saints have been very, very focused on gathering and establishing Zion. And so the revelation is that they are to move to the Ohio is how it is called.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [05:38](#) But the opposition to the Church follows wherever it goes. And that's true today. We gather to Zion, we gather to stakes in Zion. We have geographical areas where there are many Saints, but the opposition to the Church and the critics of the Church are in every geography, in every area. And Section 45 is coming at a time when the Saints are under a great barrage of what we would call anti-Mormon efforts. And so the prophet, and you see in the heading of the revelation and it's actually more expanded that we can get in the Joseph Smith Papers that Joseph says that there were many false reports and folly stories were published and circulated to prevent people from investigating the work or embracing the faith.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [06:39](#) I think that you see that here in this spirit of anticipation of establishing Zion, now the opposition follows them and they are in this spirit of wanting to have a Zion experience and yet Satan does never leave them alone. And there continues to be the opposition, falsehoods being published and all kinds of opposition. And you can only imagine how that would be for individuals. So you see it against the Church in general, but all of us have experienced how that opposition can have a very

personal and very individual harm. And I think that's what we're seeing and yet in this period of opposition and challenge, and difficulty comes one of the greatest revelations that we have in the Doctrine and Covenants.

- Dr. Brent L. To...: 07:39 Now, there's something else that is going on that I think we all ought to see and understand. And it may have been mentioned previously in one of the discussions that you had is that the Prophet Joseph Smith has started what we call the Joseph Smith translation. And that's going to take on a big role in this revelation as well. So you have those external things that are happening around the Church and within the hearts and minds and souls of individuals in the Church, but you have the Prophet Joseph receiving inspired direction in the Old Testament. And then in this revelation, he is basically commanded to go to the New Testament. And that really sets the stage for a revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants that is quoting and expanding upon the words of Jesus given on the Mount of Olives with regards to counseling and directing his disciples.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 08:44 So that's a long kind of story to get the background, but that's what's going on. External opposition, and then the Prophet Joseph Smith's translation of the scriptures turning to the New Testament, which will then open up their discussion with an understanding with regards to the Second Coming and preparing for the Second Coming and the ultimate establishment of Zion.
- Hank Smith: 09:11 Oh, this is fantastic. This is March of 1831. Joseph gets to Kirtland in January, I think it is '31. So you've still got a lot of Saints in New York, right? They're going to be coming-
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 09:25 They're coming.
- Hank Smith: 09:25 Yeah. They're still just probably pouring in as the days move on into spring. I was going to say one more thing, John, maybe you have something to say about this, but I think Brent, you were right on there that this material that is circulated by the opposition critics of the Church does do a lot of personal damage to individuals and to families. There's a dark side to that, but there's also the side where this glorious revelation comes. I'm not a "neener neener" kind of guy, but the idea that all this opposition leads to more revelation is probably not what they were hoping for, these critics of the Church.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 10:08 Yeah. If I could just interject there, Hank, I think you're right on. And I think many of us have had the experience that when the Adversary and all those that are seeking to destroy the Church,

they'll do their body blows. They'll have an uppercut that may land periodically. But in every time in my life as I've seen that is that the Lord has the knockout punch. And in every single time, I've seen it in my own life where there is opposition, but then God uses that opposition to bring about greater purposes. This is a perfect example of that right there.

- Hank Smith: [10:50](#) I think of one automatically that I just have loved. And that is that a man named Karl G. Maeser was introduced to the Church by an anti-Mormon book that he read, investigated, joined the Church, comes to Utah and starts a little university that all three of us have come to know and loved called Brigham Young University. So that worked out pretty well.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [11:15](#) Yeah. Grateful for that anti-Mormon book.
- John Bytheway: [11:19](#) And the coolest classroom on the whole campus is in the Karl G. Maeser building. The one with a balcony, I love that one.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [11:27](#) And I think that we're seeing right now a living prophet doing what Section 45 is trying to say is, oh yeah, there's going to be some hard times, but the outcome if you stay true is glorious and beyond comprehension. And I just thought of that that President Nelson is giving us virtually the same message that the Lord gave to the Prophet Joseph in Section 45.
- Hank Smith: [11:55](#) Oh, I love it.
- John Bytheway: [11:56](#) Yeah. This Section, there are some troubling things, but there's also, but don't be troubled. There's also some promises of peace and you're like, which one? And it's kind of this culmination of a lot of opposition in all things, but I'm with you. This is going to be a great day because this section is so long, but let's jump right into Section 45. And can you kind of walk us through this Section, Dr. Top, and help us see things that stand out to you as we go through?
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [12:29](#) Okay. Well, the one thing that I think we have to emphasize, and we're seeing it with many of the revelations that whatever the situation or the question that is bringing about the revelation, I love that the opening of the revelations are always saying, "Listen to me, the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to me. Don't listen to the outside voice in the static of the world, listen to me." And so the revelation begins, hearken, hear, give heed to, and then he's saying the harvest is coming and that was certainly on their minds, but I love verse three. That really introduces us to, like you said, the great and glorious promises, but I think the Lord is

saying, "I got your back. I'm on your side. Listen to me, hang on to me and look at what's going to happen."

- Dr. Brent L. To...: [13:33](#) And so verse three, "Listen to him who is the Advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him." That is powerful. We have an Advocate that stands up for us. And then that word pleading with the father, that isn't just a lawyer that has been assigned because we're poor and have nothing to offer to get a good lawyer to get us off. We have a lawyer, an advocate, a friend who is pleading for us. That passion shows us the depth of the love of the Lord. Then the next verse tells us why we've got a chance. I think holy cow, if Top were to stand in front of the bar of justice right now, I'm toast. I am absolute toast because I've got nothing really to bring. My assets are really nothing and my debts are everything. And so listen to my advocate, and he tells me why I've got a chance.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [14:52](#) Saying, "Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin and whom thou wast well-pleased. Behold the blood of thy Son, which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gave us that thyself might be glorified." He's saying to his Father, "Behold them, look at them, I'm pleading in their behalf because I have shed my blood for them. I have done what thou hast sent me to do for them." I've got a chance, not because of Brent Top and anything I've said or done, but he's got my back because he bought me with his blood. I am his now. And so then he can say to the Father, and I think this is so important to remember, he's got our back. He's bought us with his blood. He's presenting us to the Father. He's pleading for us.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [15:57](#) And then he says, "Father, spare these, my brethren." And then comes the key phrase. This is all we've got to do, that "believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life". And so the Lord is saying to these Saints, all that is going on around you, listen to me, believe in me, hold on. And then as you jump down in verse nine, all of the verses in between have some great things there, but he says, "I have sent my everlasting covenant into the world to be the light of the world and a standard for my people and for the Gentiles to seek to it." And he's reminding them, they have embraced that covenant that is going to lead to those glorious promises and blessings. And they have a role, don't be discouraged with the false reports. Don't be discouraged with the quote, 'anti-Mormon attacks', believe on me. The light will shine forth and your job is just to trust in me and keep pressing forward.
- Hank Smith: [17:13](#) Brent, I love this. You came to my memory one of my favorite verses in the Book of Mormon where Lehi is blessing his son,

Jacob in Nephi 2. And maybe I've mentioned this before, John, but I just love it. He says, "Jacob," in verse three, "I know that thou art redeemed because of the righteousness of thy Redeemer." We rely on him totally. Brent, I know as Stake President and as Bishop, you've probably seen people who, I'm just not good enough. I'm just not good enough. And the opening of this Section is, that's okay. You're not good enough but He is.

- Dr. Brent L. To...: 17:51 That's exactly right.
- Hank Smith: 17:52 He is good enough.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 17:53 One of our colleagues, a name that is known throughout the Church, a dear friend and colleague that passed away not long ago, Stephen Robinson, what a great impact he had on the Church. But he often said, "We ought to pray every day that we don't get what we deserve." And that is such a beautiful concept that the Lord is saying, "Hey, you're not going to get what you deserve, but you're going to get what I deserve." And boy, that changes the equation rather quickly.
- Hank Smith: 18:30 Yeah, it does. I remember in that book, he said, "Christ offers us mercy." Mercy by definition is something you haven't earned. The moment you earn it, it's justice.
- John Bytheway: 18:39 That's right.
- Hank Smith: 18:39 You can't earn mercy. Oh, I'm glad you reminded us of Stephen's work there. That was awesome.
- John Bytheway: 18:47 It's like King Benjamin. "Are we not all beggars?" None of us can say, "I earned this. You got to give it to me." And I just want to second this, advocate is my... and I reserve the right to change my mind tomorrow. But Advocate is my favorite nickname for the Savior. Because it indicates it's not just Judge. It indicates there's three of us. There's us, there's our Advocate, and there's the Father. And the same with Mediator, indicates three of us. The same with Intercessor. And I love to show the teenagers, how do you imagine the judgment? How do you imagine the judgment? Do you think you'll be alone? Most of them think they'll be alone. And I love to show them, if you just Google Jesus advocate, there's a beautiful painting where there's this man kind of hat in hand. And there's the Savior behind him with his arm on his shoulder.

John Bytheway:	<u>19:35</u>	And I like to show them that. And then read this verse in Section 45. You don't even have to do the talking. He's going to talk for you and say, "Behold, the sufferings and death of him who did no sin." That's just amazing and hopeful. And we think of Section 110 in the Kirtland Temple. "I'm your Advocate with the Father." I think one of my favorites is 1 John, where he says, "If any man sin-"
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>20:01</u>	Of course you would choose a John book.
John Bytheway:	<u>20:04</u>	Yeah. I like that one. There's just something about it, it has a ring it.
Hank Smith:	<u>20:07</u>	It just rings.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>20:08</u>	Holy cow. And you got four of them. You're kind of greedy with those John books.
John Bytheway:	<u>20:13</u>	Yeah. My parents knew it. But in 1 John, where he says, "If any man sin," and I always add, if any woman sin, if any teenager sin, "We have an Advocate." And when you read the definition of Advocate, it's like, as you said, Brother Top, it's an attorney for the Defense who, someone who comes to your side and does the talking for you, which is such a wonderful thing. No, you won't be alone at the judgment. You'll have an Advocate.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>20:44</u>	In fact, I like what you said there about the three of us, but Advocate also implies that they're at your side, not just in the courtroom scene, so to speak, but they're with you all along. And in fact, one of the scriptural terms that I think is closely related to Advocate is succor. That we receive succor from our Advocate, who is our Coach, our Cheerleader, our Friend. And then also the word succor has the implication of to walk or run alongside. And so that word Advocate. And I think that really sets the stage for, like you said earlier, there are some challenging things that are going to happen in the Last Days that this revelation and other revelations point out. But I think he then can say, "Don't be stressed. Don't be fearful. I'm with you."
Hank Smith:	<u>21:50</u>	"I'm with you."
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>21:51</u>	I'm with you all the all along. And I think that is really the preface for everything else that we read. But unfortunately, when it comes to Second Coming, last days, tribulation things, we tend to focus our attention on the tribulation, not on the triumphal introduction to any discussion of the tribulations.

Hank Smith:	<u>22:17</u>	Don't skip these opening verses.
John Bytheway:	<u>22:19</u>	Just go back to, because we already covered Section 29. And in Section 29, verse five, this is the part I like because he'll be there for us at the end. But he says in Section 29, verse five, "I am in your midst and I'm your Advocate." He's with us right now. And I think the Book of Mormon says, "He advocated the cause of the children of men." So that's my favorite nickname.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>22:42</u>	I love it.
Hank Smith:	<u>22:43</u>	And back to verse five, this is the crutch of it is what you've said. "Spare these my brother, and that believe on my name."
John Bytheway:	<u>22:50</u>	And spare these my sisters, spare those who'll come to the sacrament table-
Hank Smith:	<u>22:54</u>	My friends.
John Bytheway:	<u>22:54</u>	... willing to take my name upon them, spare these. Wow. It's so grateful he's there for that.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>23:03</u>	Verse 10 actually is kind of a bridge from that preface that we've been discussing into the actual revelation that links it with the old scriptures that we find both in the Old Testament and New Testament. So in verse 10, he's saying, "And come ye unto it," the everlasting covenant that is established, "Come ye unto it, and with him that cometh, I will reason." And then comes this key phrase, "As with men in days of old..." That's kind of the bridge, okay? "As with men in days of old, and I will show you my strong reasoning." So the Lord is going to give us the case. He's laying out the case here. And he says, "Hearken ye together and let me show unto you even my wisdom, the wisdom of him whom ye say is the God of Enoch."
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>24:04</u>	Now, in my hard copy scriptures, I've got Enoch marked because that just kind of jumps out of nowhere. It's just, "Whoa, where did that come from?"
John Bytheway:	<u>24:16</u>	It's before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob even.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>24:19</u>	And so that now is saying to us, and that is the link back to Joseph Smith's work on the translation of the Bible.
John Bytheway:	<u>24:29</u>	Oh, that's Moses 7.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 24:30 That is Moses Chapter 6 and 7 that is coming during this period of time of the translation. And so those Saints that are, I guess you'd say being persecuted or filled with doubts and concerns and yet looking for the hope of establishing Zion, God is comparing them to the people of Enoch. And they're saying, "Listen to what I taught the people of Enoch." And I think the Lord could also then be saying, I want to lead you to the same place that the people of Enoch arrived.

Hank Smith: 25:09 I think repetition is the law of learning. We asked Dr. Millet this, but let's ask you this as well.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 25:14 I rarely agree with Bob on anything. I was his Associate Dean and then at that same time, he was a Stake President and I was his First Counselor.

Hank Smith: 25:26 Oh [inaudible 00:25:26].

Dr. Brent L. To...: 25:26 So I basically just carry his water. I just carry his bag. So whatever brother Millet says, that's the law.

Hank Smith: 25:36 He's going to laugh when he hears this I think. We asked him this, a lot of people, I don't think understand the connection between the JST and the Restoration. They kind of see them in two separate boxes. One was a project and the restoration was kind of separate from that. How would you explain the JST project in its... How did it influence the Restoration?

Dr. Brent L. To...: 25:59 Okay. I think you might also, if we use that same reasoning, and I don't mean this in a derogatory way, but no one would say, well, there was the Restoration and then there was this side project called the Book of Commandments and the Doctrine and Covenants. Nobody would do that because we're saying those revelations are the Restoration. They are the ongoing Restoration. And the JST project or the New Translation as it was called was the means by which God continues to speak to his prophet and to the Saints. And so it is intimately intertwined with the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and the activities of the Church in that period. So it is not just a tweaking of a word here and there, which sometimes that's what it was, was just a word here or there, or just some clarifications.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 27:03 But as we pointed out and as John jumped in and said, wait a second, that's Moses, Chapter 6 and 7. Some of the greatest revelations of the Restoration are in what we call today the Pearl of Great Price in the books of Abraham and Moses. And so the Joseph Smith Translation was as important in the ongoing

revelation as Joseph Smith going into the grove to pray for a remission of his sins and for guidance in which church he should join. They're just parts of the same-

- Hank Smith: 27:39 Wow.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 27:39 ... ongoing revelation.
- Hank Smith: 27:41 That is so crucial to understand because so often we just think, oh, the Lord wanted him to update the Bible. Where, yes, that's a benefit, but so much more.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 27:52 So was my answer better than Millet's? That's all I care about.
- Hank Smith: 27:57 We'll put them side by side and then the-
- John Bytheway: 27:59 We're going to pull the audience on that.
- Hank Smith: 28:01 Yeah, right.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 28:01 Exactly. But I think that's the point I'm trying to say is nobody doubts Joseph's prayer in the First Vision as being important to the Restoration. Well, Joseph's prayer during the translation process is bringing about great revelations too that are absolutely vital to the "Ongoing Restoration."
- Hank Smith: 28:23 Thanks for doing that. Let's jump back in where we were.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 28:26 Okay. All right. So now as he's introduced the old people of the Old World of Enoch and reasoning with the prophets of the Old Testament, remember Joseph and Sidney have been involved in the translation process starting in Genesis. That's where they have started in it. But it is this revelation that really now leads them back to going to the New Testament, even without the Old Testament being completed. And so look at what happens there. So he talks about in verse 13, the strangers and pilgrims on earth. They're wandering, they've got their daily challenges. They've got the opposition. So the saints here in 1831 are compared to Enoch's people and to the others that are strangers and pilgrims in mortality seeking the gospel just like strangers and pilgrims in the world in 2021.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 29:28 We are strangers and pilgrims seeking that light, that everlasting covenant, that the Lord says is a light that shineth in darkness. And then he says they obtained a promise that they should find it and see it in their flesh. That becomes then a bridge to this revelation where the Lord now speaks specifically to Joseph

quoting the previous revelation He gives to his disciples shortly before his death on the Mount of Olives. He's quoting himself. Now, I don't know whether Hank has ever done this in his writings, but John and I do it all the time because we only have a pool of knowledge that's only about this deep. And so-

- John Bytheway: 30:20 I'm going to quote myself.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 30:22 So I've got to find a way... No, I'm joking, John. That's wonderful. But the idea here, and I don't want this to be too facetious, but look at what he's just saying is starting right there in verse 16, he's now saying to Joseph and the Latter-day Saints, "I will show it plainly to you as I showed it to my disciples, the 11," okay? The 12, assuming that Judas is there. As I stood before them in the flesh and spake unto them saying... Matthew 24. This is Matthew 24 and 25 to some degree, I find it fascinating. This is a revelation quoting another major revelation, which is then also a precursor to the Joseph Smith translation of Matthew 24. So you basically have three revelations rolled into a package here in Section 45.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 31:31 And they're all saying much the same thing, which I think is probably saying you ought to pay attention to this because I said it on the Mount of Olives, Joseph translates it under the influence of the spirit and divides it up to ancient and modern applicability. And then we have section 45. Hey, pay attention. No wonder the first word in Section 45 is "hearken."
- Hank Smith: 32:02 "Hearken." I would guess that a lot of our listeners are going, wait, what's that third revelation? That becomes what we call Joseph Smith Matthew.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 32:11 That's it.
- Hank Smith: 32:12 Which some people have never even looked at, but it's the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew Chapter 24.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 32:18 And then that's exactly what the Lord is quoting in Section 45. And so that's why I say you've got three revelations for the price of one.
- John Bytheway: 32:28 And you kind of need this because Matthew 24 by itself, how's this going? Now, is this about the destruction of Jerusalem or is this about the last days?
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 32:39 Yup. Exactly.

- John Bytheway: [32:41](#) And Joseph Smith Matthew and D&C 45 helps us. I was just underlining the three columns of footnotes for those of us who use paper scriptures, like I still do. And there's 13 different references to Matthew 24 and Joseph Smith Matthew. Why don't you keep going Brent, about how does this help us understand the prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem and the last days?
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [33:02](#) Well, Joseph Smith Matthew has a really beautiful way of doing it. And that was the inspiration given to the Prophet Joseph. And then that kind of becomes a commentary for section 45 that we're also looking at today. But very quickly in our... Because I'm an old husband and I'm a dinosaur that is soon going to become petroleum, and so I just mark in my paper scriptures there that the first 20 verses of Joseph Smith Matthew deal with the destruction of Jerusalem and the first century. That's the way to look at it. Even though you've got some introductory stuff there, but it's very simple, verses one through 20 of Joseph Smith Matthew, ancient. Verses 21 to the end of the chapter, us. Dealing with us.
- Hank Smith: [34:01](#) Perfect.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [34:01](#) And so Section 45 is going to do much the same thing when he is now saying, as he's saying to the disciples about the signs of the times. And that's always the big, big deal. And he's talking about the Signs of the Times with regards to the destruction of Jerusalem. You see that in section 45 verse 20. The temple will be destroyed. Okay? And so you have up in verse 17, he's giving a view that ultimately there is going to be a redemption. Look at verse 17, he's talking about the redemption of the dead. This is a redemption of the dead revelation. And yet he's now looking... He's quoting from what was on the Mount of Olives, but we don't really even have that understanding in Matthew 24.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: [35:00](#) It takes the Restoration and subsequent revelation to start saying, oh, now we see as somebody has been telling us the past few years that the Gathering of Israel takes place on both sides of the veil. Ring a bell, holy cow. That's what we're reading.
- Hank Smith: [35:21](#) I really love this. I had never made that connection. I teach Matthew 24 all the time and have never, and I hate to admit this, I have never gone to Section 45. I've gone to Joseph Smith Matthew before and used it, but I'm going to come now, whenever I teach Matthew 24 back to Section 45 and link it to the Gathering of Israel. He says in verse 20 that that temple will be destroyed. In 70 A.D., there was a Jewish rebellion. It's a couple of decades after the Savior's crucifixion in which the

Romans go to stop the rebellion and to make an example of the Jews. And Josephus tells us they took the city down, they destroyed it. That the streets ran with blood. And there's even a point that Luke describes where the savior is carrying his cross and the women are weeping.

- Hank Smith: 36:13 And he says, "Weep, not for me, but weep for yourselves." He really saw this. He really saw this future destruction of Jerusalem and it hurt him. You can feel it in his words that it hurt him. He says that there will be not one stone left upon another. And Josephus says "Well, they plowed Jerusalem like a field."
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 36:31 Even with that Abomination of Desolation is the scriptural term that applies to that, then that becomes a bridge to the discussion of the Last Days. Can I just take the liberty of bouncing around in this revelation to bring about a point that I want to make? So even though I'm not taking it sequentially, I want to come back to something that the Lord says. So I want to bounce around and have you look at some verses. Okay? And you go over to verse 26 and I'm going to bounce around and jump around and people are going to say, "Oh, Top, you're just prooftexting." All right. I understand. But there's meaning in my madness. Okay? All right.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 37:19 So verse 26, "In that day shall be wars and rumors of wars. The whole earth shall be in commotion." Man, have any of us felt any of that?
- Hank Smith: 37:29 Yeah.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 37:29 Holy cow. Okay. "Men's hearts shall fail them and they shall say that Christ delayeth his coming until the end of the earth." I don't know about you, but even in my own family, this past year has been extraordinarily challenging. And I think even within my own family, as my wife, Wendy and I talk about it, has been a trial of faith, is can I really hang on? And this sounds goofy, but sometimes it may come from a mother that now has their kids at home and she asked to oversee their schooling online during a pandemic. And we're worrying about aged parents and can't visit grandma and grandpa, and all the things that are in commotion around us. And they don't consciously see their faith failing, but sometimes I can see because all they can see is the tribulation and the difficulties around them.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 38:36 And so that's what I want to point out and then come back. So we're all in this commotion together in the Last Days. And I'm sure all of us at some time or another have thought, when in the world is the Lord coming? Why hasn't he come now? We're

already 21 years past what most people thought was going to happen. And so we start thinking, well, he's 21 years late. Well, out of 1,000 years, give him a break here. All right? Okay. So wars, rumors of wars, hearts failing them, things in commotion. Verse 27. "The love of men shall wax cold and iniquities shall abound." Woo. We got that. Okay? Come down a little bit further. Verse 31. I'm just looking at phrases. "And they shall see an overflowing scourge for a desolating sickness shall cover the land."

- Dr. Brent L. To...: 39:37 How many times have people asked me in the past year, "Is this it?" I don't know, but I'm sure that in 1918, the saints wondered the exact same thing with the Spanish Flu pandemic. And so every time some things like that come on. Okay. For those of us that have the hard copies, turn the page over to verse 33.
- John Bytheway: 39:59 I'm with you.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 40:00 Okay. All right. When I was in a Stake Presidency with Bob Millet, I was using my phone and my electronic scriptures, and Bob who is even an older dinosaur than me said, he said, "It doesn't count if you use electronic scriptures."
- John Bytheway: 40:18 I'm going to write that down right now.
- Hank Smith: 40:20 Yeah. It does not count.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 40:21 But no, holy cow, in this day and age, I don't think my grandkids know what a hard copy of the scriptures are.
- John Bytheway: 40:30 This is how I know where things are.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 40:31 Exactly.
- John Bytheway: 40:31 Oh, I know what is on the page, it's in the second column up high.
- Hank Smith: 40:36 Pretty soon it'll be, you have to scroll twice. You really just have to scroll twice and it'll be right there.
- John Bytheway: 40:42 Two scrolls.
- Dr. Brent L. To...: 40:43 When we were on our mission, I'm still so hardcore of hard copy, but my wife is wonderful on studying her scriptures online, making her notes, her cross-referencing. She actually can do more in-depth gospel study electronically than I can, but I am so tied to my teaching scriptures that I can't let them go.

Hank Smith: 41:07 Me too. Me too. In fact, we had a fire come about 20 feet from our house last fall, and man, I was searching for my scriptures. Sarah's looking for the kids and I was looking for my scriptures. [crosstalk 00:41:21]-

Dr. Brent L. To...: 41:22 Oh, absolutely. Verse 33. "Earthquakes in diverse places. Many desolations. Men will harden their hearts against me and they will take up the sword against one another." Holy cow. What have we seen in city streets? What in the world is going on as they kill one another? Okay? Now I want to jump down purposely, you're going to say, well, you're missing the best part. No, we're going to get to the best part, but now come down in verse 40. "And they shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. And they shall be whole blood and fire and vapors of smoke. And before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened and the moon be turned into blood. And the stars shall be from heaven."

Dr. Brent L. To...: 42:17 Holy cow. All the things that are going on. I'm not done yet. Okay? Section 29, you thought you had it all with eyeballs falling out, but now we got more. Okay? And so now what's going to happen is when the Lord comes and stands on the Mount of Olives and the earth trembles to and fro... And look at verse 49, "And they that laugh shall see their folly." Okay. So that becomes the transition that with all these things that are going on, those that are losing their faith, those that are mocking kind of like in the Book of Mormon when the Saints that were looking for the sign of the day, the night and the day, and they're going to be put to death because of their belief, the same thing's happening here is people are saying, "How can you believe this stuff?"

Dr. Brent L. To...: 43:23 How can you believe this? This is folly. And now Section 45, the Lord has got the great message for us.

Hank Smith: 43:31 Brent, you mentioned the Book of Mormon, that's Helam in Chapter 1, I thought of Korihor who said, "What is this? Your faith is from a deranged mind."

Dr. Brent L. To...: 43:40 Exactly.

John Bytheway: 43:41 "This derangement of your minds comes because of the traditions of your... It's frenzied, deranged, yoked, bound, foolish."

Dr. Brent L. To...: 43:51 I don't want to say to those that may be struggling with the difficulties of the day, of today. And they're struggling with their faith and they're being bombarded with all those things. We're not saying you're deranged like the most bitter enemies.

John Bytheway: 44:08 Oh no, totally different setting.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 44:10 That's in a separate category, but I think it's this idea that may be little by little, my faith reservoir is leaking. And I'm starting to lose drop by drop instead of adding drop by drop to that reservoir of righteousness. And I think it's natural. I think all of us are going to wonder, how long is this pandemic going to go on? When am I going to be able to live life normally again? When is there going to be peace in the streets and civility and courtesy in discourse? We all are having those things. I think the Lord is trying to say you're not much different than my disciples. So now jump back to verse 34 and you'll see why I did the goofy thing of going, this hardship, this trial, this abomination.

Hank Smith: 45:11 This one. This one.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 45:11 And I'm bouncing it around. And he then says in verse 34, "And now when the Lord had spoken these words unto my disciples, they were troubled. You think, holy cow. And I said unto them, and they saying unto us, "Be not troubled. When all these things shall come to pass, ye may know that the promises which have been made unto you shall be fulfilled. And when the light shall begin to break forth, it shall be with them like unto a parable of the fig tree. And you shall see them with your own eyes. And you say when they begin to shoot forth and their leaves are yet tender that summer is nigh at hand." Be not troubled. I don't think I'm a spiritual giant. And it's probably been made obvious in this discussion today. But I've had some of my own children with so many of the things that are going on and they will say, "Mom, Dad, why are you just not even... It's like you're not even paying attention."

Dr. Brent L. To...: 46:28 And I say, "Oh no, we're paying attention just like you are. We're seeing the fig tree, the leaves starting to sprout. We see the exact same signs that you see." But as for me, and I think I can speak for Sister Top, of course there is compassion and there is being difficulties around us, don't bring joy to me in any way, but I don't have that pandemic paranoia and stress because I have had the experiences of seeing the promises of God fulfilled in my life over and over and over again that I know that he will fulfill his word and that when he says, "Be not troubled, I've got your back," he means it. And so while I am not looking at all the difficulties and the surrounding suffering that we see lightly or

looking at it as some form of TV entertainment, I am looking at it and saying, "See, the hand of God is being manifest."

Dr. Brent L. To...: [47:46](#)

And he's saying to us, "I promised you great things that are going to happen. If you'll just believe in me, let me be your Advocate. Let me be your guide. Let me be your light." I think it comes back where the Lord uses his introduction to the revelation to a very important scene in the revelation wrapping up scenes when he says, okay, we go back to verse 51. So when the Savior appears on the Mount of Olives, "And then shall the Jews look upon me and say, 'What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet.'" Go back to the very first of this section, go back to the very first when he's saying, "My blood, look upon my blood." And he says, "What are these wounds in thine hands and his feet?" And he says, "These wounds are wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the son of God."

Dr. Brent L. To...: [48:57](#)

And then comes an important message that goes back to the beginning of section 45 as well. In fact, if you turn back to the section of verse 45 there where he talks about repenting, and he's saying, "Harken under my voice lest," in verse two, "Lest death shall come upon you and the summer shall come, and your soul is not saved." Okay? Well, he's giving us that counsel and telling us he's there to help us. Then you come back over to verse 53, "Then shall they weep because of their iniquities. Then shall they lament because they persecuted their king. And those that have laughed, have mocked, have persecuted will see their folly."

John Bytheway: [49:50](#)

Please join us for Part II of this podcast.