



*“Before I Formed Thee in the Belly I Knew Thee”*

## Show Notes & Transcripts

### Podcast General Description:

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

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

### Podcast Episode Descriptions:

#### Part 1:

How does the Book of Jeremiah connect with the Book of Mormon? Dr. John Hilton III examines the relationship of the Book of Jeremiah to the Book of Mormon, its chronology, and how the prophet Jeremiah can lead us to Jesus Christ.

#### Part 2:

Dr. John Hilton III continues to examine how the prophet Jeremiah was a God-sent teacher and how the book and teachings apply to Latter-day Saints.

## Timecodes:

### Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. John Hilton III
- 01:16 Introduction of Dr. John Hilton III
- 04:26 Background to Jeremiah
- 08:02 Jeremiah warns Israel to repent or perish
- 09:29 Jeremiah benefits from different Bible translations
- 11:17 Timing of Jeremiah
- 13:14 “Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee. . . .”
- 14:59 Jeremiah doubts his ability to be a prophet
- 17:13 Premortal existence vs. preexistence
- 18:13 Cracked cisterns in Israel
- 19:44 Idol worship and backsliding Israel
- 24:06 The temple isn’t enough to keep Israel safe
- 27:29 Jeremiah is told that no one will listen to his warnings
- 31:52 Jeremiah parallels with Mormon
- 36:09 The Lord encourages Jeremiah
- 38:17 The gathering of Israel will make the Exodus look small
- 43:20 Hunters and fishers
- 46:35 End of Part I–Dr. John Hilton III

### Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. John Hilton III
- 00:07 Who does Israel trust?
- 02:47 Potter and clay
- 05:16 Jeremiah feels a fire in his bones
- 08:23 “A Teacher Come from God” and “Safety for the Soul”
- 12:24 Jeremiah criticizes forced labor
- 15:46 Live, Care, Unite, and Invite
- 17:27 The Sea of Galilee vs the Dead Sea
- 18:49 Jeremiah wears a yoke
- 22:01 Dr. Hilton III shares a personal story about learning to speak Spanish
- 26:26 A boy named Harry
- 34:09 How long has the Lord known us?
- 39:14 End of Part II–Dr. John Hilton III

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## **Biographical Information:**



John Hilton III was born in San Francisco and grew up in Seattle. He served a mission in Denver, and got a Bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University. While there he met his wife Lani and they have six children. They have lived in Boise, Boston, Miami, Mexico, Jerusalem and China. John has a Masters degree from Harvard and a Ph.D from BYU, both in Education. John is a Professor of Religious Education at BYU.

John has published **several books** with Deseret Book, including *Considering the Cross: How Calvary Connects Us with Christ*. He is also the author of the **video course** and **podcast** "Seeking Jesus." John loves teaching, reading and spending time with his family.

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<https://johnhiltoniii.com/resources-for-studying-jeremiah/>

**Jeremiah Chronology <https://www.bibletales.online/chronological-order-of-jeremiah/>**

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Hank Smith:	00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come, Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:15	As together, we follow him.
Hank Smith:	00:19	Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, I am here with my incredible co-host. Let me describe him for you. He is a green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit. John, as I was reading the Book of Jeremiah preparing for our lesson, I just could not help but see your face when I read, "A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit." But correct me if I'm wrong, John, I've known you long enough. You don't like olives.
John Bytheway:	00:54	I don't. I pull them off my supreme pizzas and hand them to the children, but I do resemble the bark of an old olive tree, gnarled, old.
Hank Smith:	01:04	Yes.
John Bytheway:	01:05	That's where you saw my face. It was that part, right?
Hank Smith:	01:08	That's true. Olive trees can live a very long time.
John Bytheway:	01:14	Well, I hope that's prophetic.
Hank Smith:	01:15	Yes, you will live for very long time, right? It's 500 years. Like I mentioned, John, we are in the Book of Jeremiah and I got to be honest, this transition from Isaiah to Jeremiah takes my

knowledge from, "Hey, I feel like I know a lot," to, "Oh, my word, how little do I know about Jeremiah." And I think maybe our listeners feel the same way, so we needed to bring someone in who could help us make the transition from Isaiah that we've been studying for five weeks to Jeremiah, who maybe some people have never studied before. Who's going to help us make this transition?

- John Bytheway: 01:57 This is so fun for us, Hank, because we have been friends with John Hilton III long before we ever... I think before the word podcast was invented, probably.
- Hank Smith: 02:07 I think so. Yep.
- John Bytheway: 02:08 And so it's fun to have John with us again. He's been on here before. We love his book, *Considering the Cross*, and I'm glad to have him here because I think you're right, Hank. I think most of us, what we know about Jeremiah is oh, he was a contemporary of Lehi and that's about where it ends. So let me give you a quick bio. John Hilton, a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University. He has a master's degree from Harvard and a PhD from BYU, both in education. He's the author of *The Founder Of Our Peace*, and of course *Considering the Cross* more recent, and many other books, audio recordings, articles. He loves teaching, reading, snowboarding, traveling, serving, spending time with family. He and his wife, Lani, have six children. He also has a podcast called *Seeking Jesus*, which is really good and I hope our listeners will listen to that. We love having John here with us again. So what should we call you today, JIII and I'm JB or something like that, so we don't get mixed up?
- Hank Smith: 03:09 JB, JIII. You got it. In my text messages back and forth, I usually call him JHIII. And then I always have to throw in, he's so great, they've made three of him. He really is that great.
- John Bytheway: 03:22 Well, Hank, I remember you telling a story about John that he had heard President Nelson say something about China and John just decided to learn Chinese on his own. It wasn't his language he learned on his mission and he just started studying it. And is that true, John? Are you pretty fluent in, is it Mandarin?
- Dr. John Hilton III: 03:43 It's true. Yeah, I can't read or write in Mandarin, but I can hold a conversation and do a little talking. Yeah.

Hank Smith:	03:49	That's John. That is John to a tee. But also, maybe I've shared this before. I've had people in my family pass away over the last few years and who's at my door? John Hilton. He mourns with those who mourn, I'll tell you that. John, we've been friends a long time. It feels like since the 1900s, it really does. It feels that long. John, how do you want to approach Jeremiah knowing, I think, that a lot of our listeners, this maybe really first time through, I don't know a lot about this, I want to know something, how do you want to begin?
Dr. John Hilton III:	04:26	So I want to begin with two words, get excited. It's so funny, I think, to have a book of scripture that we really just don't know that well. Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible and it's probably one of the ones that we know the least, but I want to give you just upfront for those of you who are deciding like, "Do I even want to listen to this episode?" Let me just give you a few reasons why I think you'll really want to study Jeremiah. First of all, I personally love lesser known Bible stories and Jeremiah is full of them because we don't read it, so we don't know the stories, but they're fun. Also, Jeremiah has some powerful teachings that can help us come closer to Jesus Christ.
Dr. John Hilton III:	05:04	Another reason why we really want to own Jeremiah is because of his connections to The Book of Mormon. If you think about it, my guess is first Nephi, chapter one is the most frequently read chapter in The Book of Mormon, which makes first Nephi, chapter one, verse four, one of the most frequently read verses. Let me just read it to you. "Before it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah, my father Lehi, having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days, in that same year there came many prophets, prophesy unto the people that they must repent or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed."
Dr. John Hilton III:	05:39	Jeremiah was one of those prophets and it mentions Zedekiah by name. Well, three quarters of all the references to Zedekiah in the Bible are found in the Book of Jeremiah. So in other words, if you want to really know what Lehi's Jerusalem is like, what's Nephi's Jerusalem like? You want to read Jeremiah. It's our best source for understanding Jerusalem in the time period of Lehi. And not to get overly exuberant, but Jeremiah's writings are also on the brass plates. Nephi studies them. He says, first Nephi, chapter five, once they got the brass plates, they said "they contained the prophecies of the holy prophets from the beginning even down to the reign of Zedekiah and also many prophecies which were spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah."

Dr. John Hilton III: 06:25 And several hundred years later, another prophet named Nephi, Nephi, the son of Helaman, is going to talk about Jeremiah. He says, "We know that Jerusalem was destroyed according to the words of Jeremiah. Oh then why not the Son of God come according to his prophecy?" So in other words, Book of Mormon prophets are studying Jeremiah, so why not us?

Hank Smith: 06:47 Absolutely. And you're talking about context here, John, that I think most people need to understand. Let's just do a brief cursory history here. We lost the northern kingdom of Israel in 721, 722 BC. 130 years later or so we lose the southern kingdom of Judah and that is the time of Jeremiah, right? Right during that same time period. It fits right in like a puzzle piece with The Book of Mormon, because that's the same time The Book of Mormon begins.

Dr. John Hilton III: 07:17 Exactly. And we only got maybe one or two chapters about this back in second Kings was we talked about the fall of Jerusalem, but now Jeremiah is all in this time period, a few decades before starting in the reign of Josiah. All the way down, Jeremiah will see the fall of Jerusalem.

Hank Smith: 07:35 So Lehi gets to leave town and Jeremiah gets to stay.

Dr. John Hilton III: 07:40 Yeah, there's some powerful lessons we can learn from that. Sometimes you get to be the Lehi, but sometimes you're the Jeremiah.

Hank Smith: 07:47 And you stick around. I can see there are two mission calls sitting side by side and he's like, "Oh, really? I got to stay here and witness the fall of Jerusalem." Where Lehi is on the way out.

Dr. John Hilton III: 08:02 So I also want to say up front maybe there's probably some good reasons why we don't know Jeremiah as well as maybe we could. First of all, large chunks of the Book of Jeremiah are him preaching to the people and the main message is repent or perish, but he might take five chapters in a row to go through that same message over and over again. And so as modern readers, maybe that might feel tedious sometimes to some people.

Dr. John Hilton III: 08:27 Another trouble with Jeremiah is the book doesn't appear in chronological order, so we would have to rearrange the chapters to read it as a straight through storyline. And we can put this in the show notes, [johnhiltoniii.com/jeremiah](http://johnhiltoniii.com/jeremiah). I've put the chapters in a chronological order. So if you're interested in

saying like, "I want to read the book chronologically." But some of you are like, "Well, man, I don't know if I want to read the whole book of Jeremiah, a bunch of chapters there." Here's my biggest tip for studying the Book of Jeremiah, and that's to watch the movie called Jeremiah. It stars Patrick Dempsey. Have either of you guys ever seen it?

- Hank Smith: 09:00 I don't think so.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 09:01 It's so good. It's available for free on YouTube, so if you just go on YouTube and put Jeremiah, I also link to it at the [johnhiltoniii.com/jeremiah](http://johnhiltoniii.com/jeremiah) page. It's not 100% scriptural, but a lot of it is scriptural. And when you see these scenes, some of which we'll talk about today, all of a sudden Jeremiah comes to life in a new way. So I definitely recommend the Jeremiah movie and if you've got teenagers, that could be a fun movie to watch as a family one Sunday afternoon.
- Hank Smith: 09:26 That's great. Thanks, John. I didn't know about that.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 09:29 So maybe we can just dive in with Jeremiah chapter one. And just so you guys know, sometimes I'll be quoting from the King James version, sometimes I'll be quoting from the New Revised Standard version. And often today I'll be quoting from the New Living Translation. The New Living Translation is designed for sixth graders. And I think that sometimes when you're approaching a book like Jeremiah, that's really unfamiliar, it can be helpful to read it at a sixth grade reading level because then some of the complicated parts you're just able to get through and understand more easily. And honestly, it's hard to love a book of scripture if you can't really understand what it says.
- Hank Smith: 10:04 And it doesn't do you a lot of good to read Jeremiah and not get a single thing out of it. So yeah, go pick up one of these alternatives.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 10:12 So let's just dive in to Jeremiah chapter one, picking up just the very beginning. These are the words of Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, one of the priests from the town of Anathoth and the land of Benjamin. The Lord first gave messages to Jeremiah during the 13th year of the reign of Josiah. That's about 630 BC. The Lord's messages continued throughout the reign of Jehoiakim. Josiah's son until the 11th year of the reign of King Zedekiah, another of Josiah's sons. In August of that 11th year, about 586 BC, the people of Jerusalem were taken away as captives." So these first four verses are just introducing us to the timeframe of Jeremiah's life and prophesying.

Hank Smith:	10:54	The time of the captives, John, 586.
Dr. John Hilton III:	10:56	And so Lehi's leaving Jerusalem approximately 600 BC. Jeremiah is there a couple decades before that, he's there a decade after that. So that's part of the reason why this is so exciting. This is really Book of Mormon context.
John Bytheway:	11:09	But that means that we've taken a jump from the timeframe of Isaiah, doesn't it? Even though it's just one page away?
Dr. John Hilton III:	11:17	Yeah, that's a great point. So that's one of the reasons why I think it is helpful how we studied second Kings a few months ago, so we can kind of see where it fits in the storyline. Isaiah's in the time around the scattering of Israel with Assyria being the dominant tribe or dominant country. So now we're jumping forward a century. Babylon is the new superpower, so that's a great point. From Isaiah to Jeremiah, we've jumped forward in time.
John Bytheway:	11:42	We fast forwarded about a hundred years.
Hank Smith:	11:44	I would say this is an absolutely crucial skill if you really want to understand the Old Testament is the way it's set up. You've got the Torah, The Five Books Of Moses, then you have the history, then you have the writings, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, and then you have these prophets, Isaiah through Malachi. Each of these prophets, correct me if I'm wrong, John, but each of these prophets fit somewhere back in that history that we talked about and they didn't put them in order. Of course not, you can't put them in order, you can't make it easy for us. They put it in order of length of how long these books are, and stuck them back. So you've got to know your history in order to know what the context is for the prophet who's speaking.
Dr. John Hilton III:	12:32	Really well said. And that is a great scriptural skill.
Hank Smith:	12:34	Because if you're thinking, oh, we're continuing on past the time of Esther, we're not, we're going now backwards to where do we have the verses, the actual scriptures this would fit in?
Dr. John Hilton III:	12:45	We're basically here between second Kings 23 to 25. So if you were to go back and read these chapters of history, that would give you some additional context for Jeremiah.
Hank Smith:	12:56	When Jeremiah is alive in what he's doing. Okay.

Dr. John Hilton III:	12:59	We're actually about to get much more, like there's more histories and stories about this time period in the Book of Jeremiah than there is in those couple of chapters in second Kings.
Hank Smith:	13:08	Got it. Okay. So we're going to get more stories, not just preaching.
Dr. John Hilton III:	13:14	Correct. That's my favorite part, actually. It's the stories. So we've kind of set up a little bit of the context and background. Probably the most famous verses in Jeremiah are chapter one verses five and six. God calls Jeremiah saying, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee. And before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." And I just love this assurance from the Lord, "I knew you before you were born." And by the end of today when we get to Jeremiah chapter 29, we'll look at another verse where the Lord says something similar and maybe put those together at that point and talk more about this principle. But God has special plans for each of us, not just Jeremiah. I think it's interesting though that Jeremiah doesn't feel up to the mission. He goes on to say, "I can't speak, I'm a child."
Hank Smith:	14:03	"Oh Lord God, behold I cannot speak for I am a child, don't choose me."
John Bytheway:	14:10	You kind of see a pattern there. I look at the footnotes. You've got Exodus four 10. So what did Moses say?
Dr. John Hilton III:	14:15	"I'm slow of speech, I'm slow of tongue."
John Bytheway:	14:17	What did Enoch say?
Dr. John Hilton III:	14:20	"I'm only a lad. All the people hate me."
John Bytheway:	14:22	"All the people hate me." What did Isaiah say? "I'm a man of unclean lips, I dwell on..." And you see, I love that it's not, "Oh yeah, I got this."
Dr. John Hilton III:	14:33	I knew you were going to call on me.
John Bytheway:	14:36	Yeah, this is beyond what I'm able to do and a lot of us maybe can relate to that. I can't do that. So I like that, how consistent that is. And the footnote 6A there lists Moses and Enoch. And I wrote in Isaiah six because I thought it wasn't exactly the same, but he just said, "I dwell with the people of..." Well, what did he say? I am undone. I mean that's...

Dr. John Hilton III:	14:59	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	15:00	I'm coming apart. I can't do this.
Dr. John Hilton III:	15:02	But then in verse seven, just like in the same pattern that you've highlighted, the Lord responds, "Say not I am a child, for thou shalt go to all whom I send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid."
Hank Smith:	15:12	Be not afraid.
Dr. John Hilton III:	15:14	"Of their faces. For I am with thee to deliver thee." This is so applicable, right? You and I were going to receive some kind of calling, we don't feel up to the task. And the Lord says, "You can do this. Be not afraid. I am with you."
John Bytheway:	15:27	The thing I loved about that was the Lord didn't say, "Moses, you're great, you're awesome, you're so great." He just said, "I will be with you." And I thought, what a great... That's very consistent. "What else do you need if I'm with you? I'll be with you." It's almost like, "It's good that you're sensing your inadequacy, but I will be with you."
Dr. John Hilton III:	15:44	And if we jump down to verse 17, we hear more of that kind of the Lord saying this, "Get up and prepare for action. Go out, tell them everything I tell you to say. Do not be afraid of them. For see, today I have made you strong like a fortified city that cannot be captured like an iron pillar or a bronze wall. You will stand against the whole land, kings, officials, priests, and the people of Judah. They will fight you, but they will fail."
Hank Smith:	16:09	Wow. What a pep talk.
Dr. John Hilton III:	16:11	Yeah, seriously. "I am with you. I will take care of you." And I just love these words if you're like me and sometimes you get afraid, you're fearful and you collect scriptures that give you strength, that Jeremiah chapter one is full of powerful reassurances from the Lord that strengthen Jeremiah and can strengthen us as well.
Hank Smith:	16:30	Absolutely. If you're feeling discouraged, if you're feeling like I'm not up to the task, come to these verses and go slow through them, read them. This is what my daughter writes on her mirror with her dry-erase, "I am with thee, said the Lord, I will deliver thee." Jeremiah one, five. In my study of the Bible, I don't see a lot of references to a premortal life. I feel like there

is kind of a clear one here. Am I proof-texting there? "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee."

- Dr. John Hilton III: 17:04 I don't think that's proof-texting. I think it's fair to say that's one of our best biblical examples of a reference to the premortal life. I think that's totally fair. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 17:13 Yeah. And if I could add something to that, Dr. Robert Millet that we've had on our podcast taught me that, don't use the phrase preexistence because other religious traditions use that and they don't mean the same thing. They think that maybe we preexisted in the mind of God, but this sounds like more than that. And ever since that, I've done what you two just did, call it premortal life or premortal existence. This sounds like more than just you existed in the mind of God. This is, I knew thee, you had a character, you had a competency before you got here. And I think it sounds a little more than just you preexisted in my mind.
- Hank Smith: 17:54 Absolutely. I just wanted to make sure we hit that and I wanted to see what our expert had to say. And well, I feel vindicated that our expert likes my take on that, but I think when you run into maybe what you see is a reference to the premortal life in the Bible, take note of that because it's not often.
- John Bytheway: 18:13 Yeah.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 18:13 So the next several chapters, Jeremiah two through six are primarily focused on Jeremiah's preaching to the people and warning them to repent. And I thought we would just sample a few of these verses along the way before we get to the next big story in Jeremiah seven. So in Jeremiah chapter two, verse 13, we read, "For my people have done two evil things. They have abandoned me, fountain of living water, and they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all." So John, Hank, I know you guys both lead tours to Jerusalem and so forth, you've seen a bunch of cisterns. Why would a cracked cistern be such a big deal?
- Hank Smith: 18:54 Oh, a cistern is going to... That's the only way to survive. You're going to have your rainy season and then comes the dry season. And if you do not have water storage, I almost said food storage, you don't have water storage it's certain death. You need water to survive.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 19:13 Yeah. So the Lord's saying you've done two things wrong. Number one, you've abandoned the true living water. And

number two, your replacement, it's cracked. There's no salvation in there for you.

- John Bytheway: 19:24 Yeah. And I like that. It's not just that you need water, it's living water versus cistern water. Cistern water is subject to stagnation because it's holding still, living water from a spring. That's the pool of Siloam, that's where Jesus sent the man to wash right at the beginning of John nine, which is living water because it comes from a spring.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 19:44 Now, here's a PG-13 passage that since it's in the Book of Jeremiah, I thought it was fair to read, it's Jeremiah 2, 24, the Lord says to Israel, "You are like a wild donkey sniffing the wind at mating time. Who can restrain her lust? Those who desire her don't need to search for she goes running to them. When will you stop running? When will you stop panting after other gods? But you say save your breath, I'm in love with these foreign gods, I can't stop loving them now." Jumping down to verse 27, we see a similar idea, "To an image carved from a piece of wood they say, 'You are my father.' To an idol chiseled from a block of stone they say, 'You are my mother.' They turn their backs on me, but in times of trouble they cry out to me, 'Come and save us.' But why not call on these gods that you've made? When trouble comes, let them save you if they can, for you have as many gods as there are towns in Judah."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 20:37 So the Lord is using these different metaphors to say, "You guys are not faithful to me." And this is a key theme throughout Jeremiah, he's highlighting idol worship, stop turning to other gods and focus on the one true God. That's the theme we've seen throughout the Old Testament.
- Hank Smith: 20:52 I love all these metaphors.
- John Bytheway: 20:54 Yeah. Can you just tell us which translation you just used there?
- Dr. John Hilton III: 20:59 So that's the New Living Translation. That's when I mentioned that's at a sixth grade reading level. So again, I think it's helpful when you're reading some unfamiliar texts to kind of make the meaning plain.
- John Bytheway: 21:08 I do like verse 17, which ends when he led thee by the way, I had to underline that one. But you don't have to.
- Hank Smith: 21:14 I was just going to say, John, these are pretty extreme metaphors, but sometimes subtle doesn't seem to work. So let's just flat out say it, would you rather have this beautiful living

water or this nasty rancid water in a broken cistern? Would you go rather chase through lust other gods, or do you want the God who is sitting here waiting for you? Would you rather call a stone a father or a mother and see what it can do for you? These are aggressive metaphors. I guess you can say. You can't miss the point.

- Dr. John Hilton III: 21:47 Which gives us some context for Book of Mormon times. Why are the people angry with the prophets? Why do people seek Lehi's life? The prophets are being very bold, Jeremiah is a great example of being bold and speaking out against sin. So if we flip the page to chapter three, we see one of Jeremiah's favorite words and the word is backsliding. I don't know about you guys. I did not hear the word backsliding very often growing up. It means to fall back into sin basically, but Jeremiah uses this word more than all other scriptural authors combined. So when you hear the word backsliding, think Jeremiah. I'll just read a few examples.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 22:24 Chapter three verse 12, "'Return, thou backsliding Israel,' saith the Lord. 'And I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful.'" Verse 14, "Turn, oh backsliding children." Verse 22, "Return, ye backsliding children and I will heal your backsliding." And I just love this. All of us are going to backslide, we're all going to fall back into temptation at time. But the Lord is saying, "I'm merciful. Come, return to me. We can make things work." And I love that.
- John Bytheway: 22:53 It's kind of fun to imagine that King James translators sitting around, "Behold, what shall we use? What word shall we use here? The old translator, I suggest backsliding."
- Hank Smith: 23:05 It's returning to sin.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 23:07 Just falling back.
- Hank Smith: 23:08 You feel like I've gotten out, here I go and then back in. And that can be discouraging. But here it says the Lord over and over, "I'm here, I'm here. I can redeem you, backsliding Israelites." I have been in my life before, I think a backsliding Israelite. Gave something up, got rid of it entirely and then it came back.
- John Bytheway: 23:30 I think we talk about the pride cycle a lot in The Book of Mormon. And I guess this is a different metaphor, kind of for the same thing. You're returning or you're going back to an old way of living that you had conquered before.

Hank Smith:	23:42	Yeah, the Savior told a great parable about this when he said there was a house that had an evil spirit and they casted the evil spirit out and then it returns with seven of its friends because the house wasn't full of anything else. The sins returned with even more sins, with even more friends. That would be an example, right John? Of backsliding back into what you were before.
Dr. John Hilton III:	24:06	Let's maybe jump ahead to chapter seven. Let's get back into the storyline and we'll kind of read through it, but this is one where if you can watch the Jeremiah movie, this scene will come alive for you in ways you'll never forget. But in Jeremiah chapter seven, Jeremiah goes to the house of the Lord, so he is at kind of this temple complex area and he's preaching. First he offers hope if we look at verse five, he says, "If you truly amend your ways and if you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the foreigner, the orphan, the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, if you do not go after other god's, I will dwell with you."
Dr. John Hilton III:	24:41	I mean, so that's a promise. But Jeremiah goes on to say, "You're probably not going to do this." And through Jeremiah the Lord says, "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal and go after other gods that you have not known and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name and say, 'We are safe.' Only to go on doing all those abominations?" In other words, what the Lord is saying is, "You guys think that because you have the temple here with you that everything's okay, you can do all this bad stuff. And it's like, 'Oh, we got the Lord's house with us, it's fine.'" And he's saying, "No, that is not."
Hank Smith:	25:18	That is not okay. You can't do all these things and then come stand before me and think, "No big deal, everything's fine."
Dr. John Hilton III:	25:26	And so this is where we get a really powerful line. Through Jeremiah, the Lord says, "Has this house which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight?"
Hank Smith:	25:37	Interesting.
Dr. John Hilton III:	25:38	"Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people." And maybe there's two things we can unpack here. Let's do the harder one first. What's this reference to Shiloh? So the Ark of the Covenant had been in Shiloh and Shiloh was destroyed. So it's kind of like the Lord is saying, "Look, maybe the people of Shiloh, they thought they were all good because

they had the Ark with them, but Shiloh was destroyed. Now you in Jerusalem, you think, 'Oh, we're all good. We've got the temple with us.' No, you will be destroyed. The Ark won't protect you, the temple won't protect you if you are not living up to the covenants." And that helps to see why. The other one that's probably a little more obvious is Jeremiah's use of this phrase, "Den of robbers." What's that reminding you guys of right off the bat?

- Hank Smith: 26:25 I'm thinking of Jesus in the temple. He says, "You've turned to my house into a den of thieves."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 26:31 Yeah. So clearly Jesus is alluding to Jeremiah when he says this is a den of thieves, den of robbers. The den of, and then robbers or thieves, it only appears in these two passages, so it's a clear reference. So now maybe with understanding that extra context from Jeremiah and Shiloh, we can see that when Jesus says, "You've made my house a den of thieves," it's sort of a subtle threat or implication. "Remember how Jeremiah said the same thing? Remember what happened to the temple in his day? The same thing is going to happen to your temple, you people here in Jerusalem that I'm talking to."
- Hank Smith: 27:03 Wow.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 27:03 Does that make sense?
- Hank Smith: 27:04 Absolutely. And it only hits home if one, you know your scriptures. And two, it tells me Jesus knew his scriptures. Sometimes we don't notice how well Jesus knows his scriptures until we're reading the Old Testament going, "Hey, that sounds a lot like something Jesus said."
- John Bytheway: 27:21 It looks like those references are both there footnoted below Matthew 21:13 and Luke 19:46.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 27:29 Yeah. If we just go a little bit further in Jeremiah chapter seven to verse 27, this has got to be one of the most all time discouraging passages of scripture to the person receiving it. So the Lord says to Jeremiah, "You shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you." I mean, how does that sound like a discouraging mission call, right? You've been called to labor in such and such a mission. No one will listen to you.
- Hank Smith: 27:55 No one will listen to you.

Dr. John Hilton III:	27:56	They will reject every word you say, but have great experiences. You go.
Hank Smith:	28:01	Go for it.
Dr. John Hilton III:	28:02	And Jeremiah, he's already been preaching for years and he's going to go on and preach for decades longer. And that's I think a great kind of subtle message from Jeremiah. I mean seriously, think about it. Sometimes you work hard at something and then you don't see the results. You plan to have this really spiritual track and it gets canceled by COVID. There's all sorts of things that we work really hard on and fail. And I don't know about you, but I don't like to fail. When I'm doing something, I want it to go awesome. And probably Jeremiah did too, but the Lord tells him, "Look, it's not going to." And for me, I think that's really an important message for us. Sometimes we're going to fail and just because we're working hard and doing what God wants us to do, it doesn't mean everything's going to turn out perfectly.
Hank Smith:	28:43	Yeah. What verses were that? Was that John?
Dr. John Hilton III:	28:45	That was Jeremiah 7:27.
John Bytheway:	28:47	I don't have a reference, but I heard that someone had confronted Mother Teresa once and told her, "You can't possibly save all these people that you're trying to save and give them some dignity in death and everything." And I, like you guys, just totally admire Mother Teresa. She said, "Well, we're not called to be successful in all things. We're called to be faithful in all things." And that's what Jeremiah was doing. He was doing what he was asked.
Dr. John Hilton III:	29:14	And sometimes we might not realize the personal cost to Jeremiah. If we jumped over to Jeremiah chapter 11, verse 21, the people of Jeremiah's hometown, they tried to kill him. They said, "Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord or you will die by our hands." And then just a few verses later, chapter 12, verse six, we learned that even Jeremiah's family members had abandoned him. So it's not just that he's working hard, but he's got a good support group. He's working hard and he's abandoned by the people of his hometown, he's abandoned by his family, but he still keeps pressing forward. So in Jeremiah chapter 12, verse one, and again the context, his hometown's abandoning him, his family's abandoning him. Jeremiah, he cries out in anguish to the Lord. He says, "Okay, you'll be right, Lord, when I lay the charges against you, but let me put my case to

you. Why does the way of the guilty prosper? Why are all those who are treacherous, thriving?"

- Dr. John Hilton III: 30:11 And I love how Jeremiah starts out as a complaint. He's like, "All right, God, I know you're going to correct me, but hear me out, let me give my complaint anyways. My life is terrible and all the wicked are doing great. What's going on?" And I can sympathize with Jeremiah, right? He didn't want to be called to be a prophet. He told the Lord, "I'm a child." You would think that God's going to respond back to Jeremiah in a really comforting way, but it's actually, he gives him kind of a challenge. Look in verse five, the Lord says, "If you've run with the footmen and they've wearied thee, how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how will thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"
- Dr. John Hilton III: 30:50 In other words, the Lord's pep talk is, "Jeremiah, this is just the beginning. I mean, you're still in the foot race and it's about to heat up." And I think that's a powerful scriptural phrase for us to ponder, "If you've run with the footmen and they've wearied you, how could you contend with the horses?"
- Hank Smith: 31:05 I automatically thought of Mormon at the end of Mormon, where if you read Mormon, not Book of Mormon, but the little book of Mormon inside the Book of Mormon, he says that he prayed, "Not withstanding their wickedness, I had led them into battle, I had loved them according to the love of God, which is in me. My soul has been poured out in prayer unto God all day long for them. Nevertheless, it was without faith because of the hardness of their hearts." He goes on later to say, "I was without hope." In Mormon chapter six, he laments the loss of these people. So are these callings of, "You are going to move forward, you're not going to see success. And by the way, you're tired now? Oh, just wait. Just wait, it gets worse."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 31:52 Hank, I think you've picked up on something that's really powerful and I think we really can see connections between Mormon and Jeremiah. And this would be like a great thing to kind of study side by side and look at more connections. I mean, they're both called to preach to their people and in some ways they both fail. Jeremiah and Mormon both see their people destroyed.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 32:14 I love that insight that you just shared and we could probably find additional parallel connections between Mormon and Jeremiah. But I think again, that's telling us sometimes God's going to send you on a mission and it's not going to succeed. Sometimes you're going to knock on that door or minister to

that sister for 30 years and not get the outcome you hope for. But Jeremiah and Mormon, they're right there with you.

- John Bytheway: 32:37 It's one of my favorite lessons because when Mormon says this to Moroni, he says, "But we can't cease to labor. We have a labor to perform while in this tabernacle of clay." You remember the verse, "Notwithstanding their hardness, let us continue faithful." It's not about what they are doing, that's a little bit out of your control, but let us continue faithful with what we've been called to do." And I love that little thing that Mormon did there, notwithstanding their hardness, it's not about them, it's about us doing what we were called to do.
- Hank Smith: 33:09 I remember many times as a seminary teacher, doesn't happen as much at BYU, but knowing when that kid walked out of my class as a senior, that was probably the last time he was going to see the inside of a church building.
- John Bytheway: 33:23 And taking responsibility for it.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 33:26 Yeah. And just going, "Ugh."
- John Bytheway: 33:29 "I wish I could have found a way."
- Hank Smith: 33:30 I wanted to reach you, I know grandma and grandpa, and mom and dad have been praying. I know how that road ends too. I've done this enough times, I know how this road ends. It's a heartbreaking thing, but to realize here is validating that it's happened to the greats of the past, to Jeremiah, to Mormon, even Abinadi who doesn't see the success maybe of his call.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 33:56 And I love that phrase that you used, it's validating. I really think it is validating for us to remember. And there's lots of examples, maybe some lesser known people remember Com in the Book of Ether. He fought against the robbers much, but he didn't prevail against them. Or Nephi, the son of Helaman, it says he went to the land northward, he did preach the word of God and they did reject all his words. That's probably not the kind of thing that your daughter wants to write on her mirror. That's not the verse that makes it to the mirror, but in some ways I think it could be as a reminder to us that it's okay to fail.
- Hank Smith: 34:26 Yeah. Jesus in his own hometown, John. Jesus in Nazareth is rejected by his own hometown. And according to the Bible, never returns. It's a heartbreaking moment, it reminds me every time of Isaiah saying, "The Lord will be acquainted with grief." Jeremiah, Mormon, and all these others we've been talking

about are those who have been acquainted with grief. It is definitely part of this work.

- Dr. John Hilton III: 34:52 So in Jeremiah chapter 12, Jeremiah was kind of pouring out his heart to the Lord, and the Lord kind of responds like, "Hey, step it up." But if we jump to chapter 15, there's a similar passage and the Lord responds more gently.
- Hank Smith: 35:04 To all those faithful Sunday school teachers, seminary teachers who are out there, who are trying their best to get through to their classes and to know that sometimes it doesn't work out. If you're in that situation, you're standing shoulder to shoulder with some of the best in the Lord's work. Sometimes despite your very best efforts, they do not hear. It's also a helpful reminder to me, and I bet it has been for both of you, to realize they have a Lord, they have a Savior, and I'm not him. So though they might be lost to me, they're not lost to him.
- John Bytheway: 35:48 And you never know, they may hear something that was Alma, "I remember my father to have taught the people concerning Jesus Christ, the son of God who could forgive sins." And my mind caught hold upon this thought. And that's such a wonderful verse that see somewhere back there, he heard what his father was saying and-
- Hank Smith: 36:06 You never know what might stick.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 36:09 So let's look at Jeremiah chapter 15:15. Jeremiah says, "Lord, you know what's happening to me. Please step in and help me. Punish my persecutors. Give me time, don't let me die young. It is for your sake that I'm suffering. When I discovered your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart's delight. For I bear your name, Lord God of Heaven's armies. I never joined the people in their merry feasts. I sat alone because your hand was on me. I was filled with indignation at their sins. Why does my suffering continue? Why is my wound so incurable? Your help seems as uncertain as a seasonal brook, like a spring that has gone dry."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 36:50 Take a moment to unpack that, like if you felt that way. I just love Jeremiah's raw emotion. It's like those verses you quoted, Hank, from Mormon where he said, "My soul was filled with anguish."
- Hank Smith: 36:59 Yeah.

Dr. John Hilton III:	37:00	You can just sense that. But in verse 19, the Lord responds with encouragement. He says, "You must influence them. Don't let them influence you. They will fight you like an attacking army. I will make you as secure as a fortified wall of bronze. They will not conquer you, for I am with you to protect you and rescue you. I, the Lord, have spoken. Yes, I will certainly keep you safe from these wicked men. I will rescue you from their cruel hands."
Dr. John Hilton III:	37:28	Things can be excruciatingly difficult, but I love Jeremiah's open, honest conversation. He doesn't just beat around the bush. He's like lays it all out with the Lord and then he receives comfort from the Lord.
Hank Smith:	37:41	This is something we learned about in the Book of Job, that even a prayer of frustration is an act of faith. Even a prayer of, "I'm upset, this is not going the way that I thought it would go." That is still an act of faith. You're still calling out to God. And God knows how you feel, so you might as well be open with him. He won't be shocked that, "What? What are you saying? I can't believe you're saying these things to me." It's okay. I love Jeremiah's prayer. It reminds me of Joseph Smith. Where are you?
Dr. John Hilton III:	38:17	As we keep moving forward? Jeremiah's main message is that the people of Jerusalem are going to be destroyed if they don't repent. Another message that he returns to a few times has to do with the gathering of Israel. Let's jump over to Jeremiah chapter 16, starting in verse 14. We read, "Therefore the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when it shall no longer be said as the Lord liveth who brought up the people out of the land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of north and out of all the lands where he had driven them, for I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their ancestors."
Dr. John Hilton III:	38:56	And let's just maybe pause right there for a minute. So basically the biggest miracle of all times has been-
John Bytheway:	39:01	The Exodus.
Dr. John Hilton III:	39:01	The Exodus, right. Coming out of Egypt. But now the Lord's saying, "There's going to be a new miracle that takes place and that's going to all of a sudden relegate the Exodus to be one of the, not the greatest hits of all times. Now it's the gathering of Israel, the return of these tribes."

Hank Smith:	39:16	People won't be talking about the Red Sea anymore.
John Bytheway:	39:19	Right in the Come Follow Me manual it quotes President Nelson, "You are sent to earth at this precise time to help gather Israel. There is nothing happening on this earth right now that is more important than that gathering. The gathering should mean everything to you." So that's a perfect place to remind us of what President Nelson taught.
Dr. John Hilton III:	39:39	On that note, if we just keep reading, we learn a little bit about maybe our role in this verse 16. "I am now sending for many fishermen, says the Lord. They shall catch them, and afterward I will send for many hunters and they shall hunt them from every mountain, from every hill and out of the clefts of the rocks." That could be an illusion to our role as hunters, fishers, gatherers taking part in this most important effort that's taking place right now. You can kind of feel with that quote that you shared, President Nelson urging us to fulfill our part in the gathering of Israel.
John Bytheway:	40:12	This verse means something to me and my family because I went on what we might call a fisher mission where people were friendly to us, they wanted to listen, they invited us into their home in the Philippines, I could throw a net over the side and find people to teach. And my son went to what we might call a hunter mission, which is one at a time and where teaching opportunities were difficult and hard to find. And it helped as we discussed back and forth in our letters that some are called to fisher missions and some might be called to hunter missions. And they're a little different, but they're all part of this great gathering. So that's an application of course, but that verse means a lot to us and our family for that reason.
Hank Smith:	40:56	I love it.
Dr. John Hilton III:	40:57	That's beautiful.
Hank Smith:	40:58	This to me speaks Book of Mormon language that Nephi, Lehi, and Jacob, they're living the scattering. So is Jeremiah. He's living in the scattering. They've just a hundred years previous, the northern kingdom of Israel was taken captive, gone. They're seeing, living, or almost who have lived in the destruction of the southern kingdom of Judah. And this has to be a comfort that one day I'll bring everybody back. It probably won't be tomorrow, but one day. One day I will bring everyone back. And it seems to me the more clearly I read The Book of Mormon, or the more carefully I read The Book of Mormon, I see Nephi and

Jacob holding onto that promise probably more than anybody else in the book.

- Hank Smith: 41:51 After Nephi and Jacob, they kind of lose it a little bit, you don't hear from it much in Mosiah or Alma, you don't hear from it much in Helaman. Then all of a sudden in third Nephi, Jesus brings it back up. He's like, "Oh, do you remember? You are scattered Israel. And I made a promise and I'm going to keep it." So is this the comforting message to Jeremiah, John, that you are living in the days of the scattering of Israel, but one day I will bring it all back, I will fix it all?
- Dr. John Hilton III: 42:19 And I think that's interesting, how you said it's probably not going to happen tomorrow. So for Nephi and Jacob, I love how they're able to still have hope in things that may not even happen in their lifetime, that did not happen in their lifetime. And so to me, there's a clear message. Maybe there's some problem in my life right now that actually is not going to be resolved in mortality. But Jacob, Nephi, Jeremiah, they're having hope for future events. If I can have that eternal perspective, that's a game changer.
- Hank Smith: 42:47 Yeah. And it will be huge, isn't that what the Lord's trying to say in these verses, John? That this gathering will be huge. It will be so big that no one's talking Red Sea anymore, everybody's talking the gathering.
- John Bytheway: 42:59 What was Isaiah told? You're going to have to enlarge the place of your tent because this house of Israel will be breaking out on the right hand and on the left, and you're going to have to strengthen your stake. This gathering's going to be big.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 43:10 Yeah, it's like this new super heroes movie is so big, no one's even going to be taught, like Marvel's going to be a thing of the past once you see this new movie that's coming out like that kind of thing.
- Hank Smith: 43:20 When we talk about hunting them out of the mountains and of the hills and of the holes of the rock, how many people listening today to our podcast are thinking, "That was me at one point"? In verse 16, the Lord says, "I will send fishers and hunters into the mountains, into every hill." That's a high percentage word, every. "Every hill and out of the holes of the rocks." I bet this hits home a little bit for the both of you having missionaries just returned. John Bytheway, tell me your kids went where?

John Bytheway: 43:53 My oldest daughter went to Lyon, France. My son went to the call said Copenhagen, Denmark, but then said serving the Iceland mission region. And he's currently teaching Icelandic in the MTC. And then my daughter was called to Tahiti, but because of COVID spent about the first half of her mission in Tucson and then finished in Tahiti. So amazing.

Hank Smith: 44:14 And John Hilton, you have a couple of missionaries.

Dr. John Hilton III: 44:17 Yeah, my son Levi just got back from the Georgia Atlanta North Mission. And my daughter Anne Marie is serving in the England Leeds Mission speaking Mandarin.

Hank Smith: 44:26 Wow. There's something about Jeremiah 16:16 that to a parent of a missionary sings, your children, and even all of us, we did this back in the 1900s, went into the hills, and mountains, and rocks, and went looking. Isn't it similar to the Savior saying, I leave the 99, I go find my one out there. So any missionary listening, this is you. What did President Nelson say, John? You are part of something huge, something big, bigger than the parting of the Red Sea.

Dr. John Hilton III: 45:02 And I think it's fair to say that even if you're not a full-time missionary, all of us are part of this. We are all right now on the mission to be fishers, and hunters, and gatherers, whether we've got a name badge or not.

John Bytheway: 45:12 And President Nelson might add on both sides of the veil, which it just expands the whole thing in amazing ways to the Temple.

Hank Smith: 45:20 To think it all started out with six little members of the church in upstate New York is a fun little thought, right?

John Bytheway: 45:26 It's only a little hand of priesthood, you see here this evening. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 45:31 It'll fill the earth.

John Bytheway: 45:35 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:01	Welcome to part two of John Hilton III, Jeremiah, chapters one through 20.
John Hilton III:	00:07	Let's turn the page and look at Jeremiah, chapter 17. I'll start in verse five. It says, "Thus says the Lord, cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. They shall be like a shrub in the desert. They shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness. And in contrast, blessed are those who trust in the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when the heat comes." And I love that. That's probably worth unpacking for a minute. What does this mean in your life to really trust in the Lord versus trusting in mere mortals? That's a theme that Jeremiah returns to a few times, this issue of trust. Where's my trust?
Hank Smith:	00:59	The Book of Mormon would call that the arm of the flesh. Do not trust in the arm of the flesh. I think of Nephi automatically, "For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters." Remember Nephi saying that the Liahona led them to the more fertile parts of the wilderness. Also, Psalms. What is it? Psalm 23, "He leadeth me beside still waters."
John Bytheway:	01:23	One of the things that, it was Elder Maxwell that I first recall saying it so beautifully, but part of trusting in the Lord is trusting in His timing, which is one of the hardest things to do, when our expectations are not met of how things should happen and how they should unfold.
Dr. John Hilton III:	01:40	Definitely. In so many areas of our lives, I think it's easy to look sideways to see what other people are doing, to trust in the opinions of experts rather than really look upward to trust in God, in His prophets. If we just keep reading here in chapter 17, Jeremiah gives an amazing promise about the Sabbath day. So Jeremiah is called to go stand in the gates of Jerusalem and he says, "If you listen to me, says the Lord, and bring in no burden by the gate of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the

Sabbath day holy and do no work on it, then this city shall be inhabited forever. But if you do not listen to me to keep the Sabbath day holy, then I will kindle a fire in its gates." And we've already had the spoiler alert. We know what the people are going to choose, but I think it's really powerful to see the amazing blessings that come from keeping the Sabbath day.

- Hank Smith: 02:34 Yeah, it's impressive to me that Jeremiah is still going. He's like the Energizer Bunny fully knowing they're not going to. He's still teaching the doctrine, but knowing full well they're not going to take it.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 02:47 He preaches for decades, and we've already seen some of this in Jeremiah. He uses these very creative metaphors and object lessons. If we were to jump over to chapter 18, I think this is one of the more famous passages from Jeremiah. Jeremiah is told to go watch a potter making a clay vessel and the vessel doesn't turn out properly so the potter reuses the clay to make a new vessel, and then God gives an interpretation. He says, this is verse six of Jeremiah 18, "Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done, just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 03:28 And I think we can look at that in different ways. Maybe a negative view is like, well, Jerusalem's doing terrible, so we're just going to have to reshape them and that's really painful. But I think it's also a hopeful message. Maybe sometimes I feel like a misshapen piece of clay. And it's like, well, I'm useless. And God's saying, "No, no, no, don't worry. I can reshape you. You are clay in my hands." And to me, I think that's a real message of hope that God's going to be able to shape me to do whatever it is He needs from me.
- John Bytheway: 03:59 Yeah, I'd like the idea that, is it Paul that talks about becoming a new creature? He's a creator and he can make you a new creation, a new creature.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 04:08 Yeah. Clay in the potter's hand, that's a great one liner from Jeremiah. There's an object lesson, and if there's any seminary teachers listening, you might want to do this, but you might not. It probably doesn't meet the, say, current safety standards. So this is jump into Jeremiah chapter 19, around verse three. Jeremiah is told to go and get some pottery. And so he gets this pottery and he says, "Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, inhabitants of Jerusalem; thus saith the LORD of hosts, I will bring evil upon this people." And then He takes the pottery and He just throws it to the ground and it smashes into pieces. Can you see the early morning seminary teacher just throwing

the pottery on the ground? That's going to wake the kids up. Make sure everyone has the safety goggles, though, if you do that.

- Dr. John Hilton III: 04:51 And then verse 11, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so I will break this people and this city as one breaketh a potter's vessel." So Jeremiah's got this really creative object lesson, but the authorities are not impressed with it. In fact, as a result, Jeremiah is captured, one of the temple priests hits Jeremiah and puts him in the stocks. When I think of this, picture these stocks in my mind, kind of like Medieval Europe, people are throwing tomatoes at you as they walk past. I'm not sure if that's exactly how it was for Jeremiah.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 05:21 But in other words, Jeremiah does exactly what God tells him to do with this amazing object lesson, and then things get worse. Jeremiah 20 is another time where Jeremiah's in the stocks, he pours out his heart to the Lord and actually he quits. In verse Jeremiah chapter 20, verse nine, Jeremiah said, "I will not make mention of Him," the Lord, "nor speak anymore in His name." I quit. I'm done. Thanks Lord for the mission call. I bought my ticket. I'm heading home.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 05:52 But then note this next phrase, Jeremiah says, "But God's word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones and I could not stay." I mean, that is one of the most powerful scriptural phrases, "His word was in my heart like a fire in my bones." Jeremiah wants to quit, but he can't. God's word is just there, planted so deeply. And I hope that I can be that way in my life.
- John Bytheway: 06:22 Boy, this reminds me. I was listening to a cassette tape, guys, a Boyd K. Packer at a CES symposium talking about an old seminary or Sunday school teacher that they had. President Packer said, "We could warm our hands by the fire of his testimony." Great phrase.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 06:40 That's how Jeremiah is. The Word is in his heart like a fire in the bones. And maybe just pause for a minute on that phrase. Hank, John, if someone were to come to you and say, "I barely can read the scriptures, I'm getting bored with my studies." What do you think? What are some things that we could do today to get God's Word in our hearts like a fire in the bones?
- Hank Smith: 07:01 Wow, what a verse, Jeremiah 29. I love it, John. "I quit. I'm done. I will not make mention of Him nor speak of Him anymore in His name." And it's not even one space later, but, "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones and I was

weary with forbearing. I could not stay." So how long is his commitment to quitting. He's like, "I quit. Okay, nevermind. I'm back." I think the Lord loves that kind of gumption.

- Hank Smith: 07:41 One of my favorite quotes is from the prophet Brigham Young, and they're talking about the trek west, and this is what he says, "We are willing to take our full share of troubles, trials, losses and crosses, hardships and fatigues, warning and watching for the kingdom of heaven's sake. And we feel the same, calm or strife, turmoil or peace, life or death, in the name of Israel's God we mean to conquer or die trying." That to me is similar to, "I could not stay. I could not be quiet. I am moving forward. It's in my bones."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 08:22 Love that.
- John Bytheway: 08:23 Elder Jeffrey R. Holland gave a talk called A Teacher Come From God. And in here he spoke about Jeremiah. He said, "So speak on unto them. He did, but initially not with much success, things went from bad to worse until finally he was imprisoned and made a laughingstock among the people, angered that he had been so mistreated and maligned, Jeremiah vowed in effect he would never teach another lesson, whether it be to an investigator, primary child, new convert or heaven forbid the 15-year-olds. I will not make mention to the Lord nor speak anymore in his name," the discouraged prophet said, "but then came the turning point of Jeremiah's life. Something had been happening with every testimony he had borne, every scripture he had read, every truth he had taught. Something had been happening that he hadn't counted on, even as he vowed to close his mouth and walk away from the Lord's work, he found that he could not. Why? Because his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones and I was weary with forbearing that I could not stay."
- John Bytheway: 09:26 And Elder Holland continues, "This is what happens in the gospel to both the teacher and the taught. It is what happens to Nephi and Lehi when, 'The Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven and did enter into their hearts and they were filled as if with fire and they could speak forth marvelous words.' Helaman 5:45."
- Hank Smith: 09:46 That's fantastic. A lot of us will remember October 2009. I bet both of you remember Safety for the Soul, Elder Holland's talk on the Book of Mormon. I remember some pounding of the pulpit a little bit. I'm going to read a bit of it, but I would encourage everyone to go back. You've got to hear him say it, the power in his voice.

Hank Smith: 10:10 He said, "Now, I did not sail with the brother of Jared in crossing an ocean, settling in a new world. I did not hear King Benjamin speak, his angelically delivered sermon. I did not proselyte with Alma and Amulek, nor witness the fiery death of the innocent believers. I was not among the Nephite crowd who touched the wounds of the resurrected Lord, nor did I weep with Mormon and Moroni over the destruction of an entire civilization, but my testimony of this record and the piece it brings to the human heart is as binding and unequivocal as was theirs. Like them, I give my name unto the world to witness unto the world that which I have seen. And like them, I lie not, God bearing witness of it. I ask that my testimony of the Book of Mormon and all that it implies given today under my oath and my office be recorded by men on earth and angels in heaven.

Hank Smith: 11:13 "I hope I have a few years left in my last days, but whether I do or do not, I want it absolutely clear when I stand before the judgment bar of God that I declare to the world in the most straightforward language that I could summon that the Book of Mormon is true, that it came forth the way Joseph said it came forth and it was given to bring happiness and hope to the faithful in the travail of the latter days."

Hank Smith: 11:41 Do you remember you guys hearing that and just, "Ooh!" And that's a Jeremiah 20:9 moment. "Like a fire burning in my bones, I could not stop. I could not stay."

Dr. John Hilton III: 11:59 So Jeremiah goes on and he continues his preaching. Maybe we can take a look at Jeremiah 21:13. So now we've left the Come Follow Me curriculum. Come Follow Me curriculum I think ends at Jeremiah chapter 20, but it doesn't pick up next week until Jeremiah chapter 30. So if you're okay, let's fill in the gaps with some of the highlights of 21 through 30.

Hank Smith: 12:20 I don't know if there's a Come Follow Me police that will come get you, John.

Dr. John Hilton III: 12:24 In Jeremiah chapter 22:13, we read, "And the Lord says, 'What sorrow awaits Jehoiakim?'" Now just to pause there real quick, Jehoiakim, he's the king of Judah at the time. He's Zedekiah's older brother and he's probably king during much of Lehi's lifetime as well. So even though this is a name that we're not familiar with, this would've been a name that Nephi was familiar with.

Dr. John Hilton III: 12:47 So Jeremiah's criticizing the current king who builds his palace with forced labor. He builds injustice into its walls for he makes his neighbors work for nothing. He does not pay them for their

labor. He says, "I will build a magnificent palace of huge rooms and many windows. I will panel it throughout with a fragrant cedar and paint it a lovely red. But a beautiful cedar palace does not make a great king. Your father, Josiah, also had plenty to eat and drink."

- Dr. John Hilton III: 13:18 So now Jeremiah is referring to Jehoiakim's father, Josiah, who we've read about, a righteous, wonderful king. And Jeremiah's saying, "Josiah had plenty of material wealth, but he was just and right in all his dealings." He continues, "That is why the Lord blessed him. He gave justice and help to the poor and needy. Everything went well for him. 'Isn't that what it means to know me?' saith the LORD."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 13:43 And I love that last phrase. "The LORD says he gave justice and help to the poor and needy. 'Isn't that what it means to know me?'" To me, that phrase connects me to John chapter 17:3 where before going into Gethsemane, Jesus says, "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, in Jesus Christ whom Thou sent." So eternal life is to know God. And here the Lord says, "What does it mean to know me? To serve the poor and the needy." That's what it means.
- Hank Smith: 14:16 Elder Quentin L. Cook recently gave a talk at BYU and he spoke of the individual prophets. Many, I shouldn't say all of them, but he spoke about many individual prophets, it was the Education Week.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 14:29 Yeah, Education Week devotional.
- Hank Smith: 14:30 When he got to President Monson, he said, "Nobody took care of the poor and the needy like President Monson. Nobody had the one-on-one ministry like President Monson." I mean, he was called as bishop. He's 22 years old. Ward has a thousand people in it and he's using his vacation time to go visit widows. That to me is an indication that President Monson knew the Lord. "This is what it means to know me: to feed the poor and the needy." I really like that. And Jeremiah is calling this king out on his opulence, right?
- Dr. John Hilton III: 15:10 Yeah. And then again, it's kind of like the Last Supper, "Lord is it I?" To what extent am I kind of in the same boat? Jeremiah would say to me, "Hey John, you've got a lot. Maybe it's time for you to give a little bit more back to help others."

Hank Smith: 15:24 That's a pretty big house you've got there in Orem, Utah, there John. How about coming to your friend Hank and helping him out?"

John Bytheway: 15:33 Boy, those phrases, "You're building injustice into its walls and oppression into its doorframes and ceilings." That's poetic. By using forced labor, you're building injustice into your house.

Hank Smith: 15:44 It's in your walls now.

John Bytheway: 15:46 Speaking of President Monson, when I was young, I remember President Kimball speaking of the threefold mission of the church to proclaim the gospel, perfect the saints and redeem the dead. And it was President Monson that added care for the poor and needy in his administration. And it's been recently reticulated now in the new handbook to, "Live the gospel of Jesus Christ, care for those in need..." It doesn't say "poor and needy," but just "those in need." "Live the gospel of Jesus Christ, care for those in need, invite all to come unto Christ, and unite families for eternity." And that's the new way the Work of Salvation has been articulated. I think it's beautiful: live, care, invite, unite.

Dr. John Hilton III: 16:30 Well, I remember when that addition was made during the time of President Monson, and I always kind of refer to that as the fourth mission. When we get to the New Testament, there's going to be lots of times that Jesus talks about the importance of serving the poor. And sometimes we'll say, "Well yes, and we should also serve the poor in spirit." And we'll diverge and talk about helping the poor in spirit. And that's true, we should serve the poor in spirit. But what Jeremiah is talking about here, what Jesus is talking about, the new [inaudible 00:16:55] is serving the poor financially.

Dr. John Hilton III: 16:58 And that's an obligation that we just cannot escape. We are called by God to do it. And I love what Elder Holland said, I can't tell you exactly what your responsibility is to care for those who cannot or do not always provide for themselves, but the Lord can. And so then the responsibility is on each of us to pray and say, "Lord, what do you want me to do with the stewardship I've been given? What's my responsibility to care for the poor?"

Hank Smith: 17:25 Both of you have been to Israel, and I like to tell this story as we venture from the Sea of Galilee down to the Dead Sea, that there's an old... I think it's a Jewish rabbi or I can't remember who said, "Look how beautiful the Sea of Galilee is because it takes and gives, it takes and gives, it takes and gives. And look how dead the Dead Sea is because it takes, and takes, and

takes, but has no outlet. It does not give." But the Sea of Galilee is just brimming with life and-

- Dr. John Hilton III: 17:59 Water comes in, the Jordan flows through it, it flows out. It goes in and out.
- Hank Smith: 18:04 The rabbi's idea is that's a beautiful life. A life that takes and gives, takes and gives instead of just a life that is focused on taking and taking. That's always stuck with me.
- Hank Smith: 18:15 I like this. I'm going to write down here in Jeremiah 22, kind of a King Benjamin reference because he seems to fit this idea of what Jeremiah is talking about. He's a fantastic king and he reigned in judgment and justice and it was well with him. He was beloved by his people. The same with his son, King Mosiah, beloved by the people. What did you say, John? He didn't build unrighteousness into the walls.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 18:43 He labored with his own hands for his support.
- John Bytheway: 18:46 And you'd probably say that King Noah did.
- Hank smith: 18:48 Yeah.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 18:49 Well, let's jump to one of my all time favorite stories about Jeremiah. This is, again, one of those lesser known stories. You want to watch the Jeremiah movie, it will make this scene come alive. So we're going to be around Jeremiah 27:28. It's another one of Jeremiah's object lessons. The Lord calls him to wear a yoke, kind of like the oxen wear. So he's walking around the city wearing this yoke, and it's an object lesson to say pretty soon Jerusalem will be under the yoke of bondage to Babylon.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 19:18 So one day, Jeremiah is in the temple, he's wearing his yoke. And this false prophet named Hananiah makes his own prophecy. He says that God has revealed to him that the yoke of Babylon will be broken. Within two years, Jerusalem's going to be set free. And to illustrate his point, Hananiah takes Jeremiah's yoke that he's wearing and he breaks it and he says, "Thus saith the Lord, in two years I will break the yoke of oppression of Babylon."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 19:45 So, I mean, try to imagine this scene in your mind and watch-
- Hank Smith: 19:48 Crazy scene.

- Dr. John Hilton III: 19:49 ... or watch the Jeremiah movie. It is a crazy scene. So Jeremiah later says to Hananiah, "You have broken a wooden yoke, but you have replaced it with a yoke of iron." And then he prophesies that Hananiah will die that year, and Hananiah does.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 20:05 So for the people who are there watching, it kind of takes us to Zedekiah, who's a really complicated character and we'll talk more about him next week. In next week Come Follow Me, there's a lot more exciting stories with Zedekiah, but you've got to wonder, what does Zedekiah feel? He's watching Jeremiah, the people are listening to him, Hananiah... There's other false prophets, but does Zedekiah know they're false prophets? He probably wants to listen to them. It sounds good. But then when Hananiah dies the other guy was probably like, "Oh..." This is probably taking place just a couple of years after Nephi and Lehi left Jerusalem.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 20:37 That takes us to Jeremiah chapter 29. That's the last chapter we'll discuss today. And it's got a really beautiful verse that I want to tie back to one of the first verses we talked about back in Jeremiah chapter 1:5.
- Dr. John Hilton III: 20:50 So in Jeremiah chapter 29, verse 11, the Lord says, "I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." That's such a beautiful verse. I'm just going to read it one more time. "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm. To give you a future with hope."
- Dr. John Hilton III: 21:19 I love that God has a plan for you. And back in Jeremiah chapter 1:5, the Lord says, "Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you." We're not in a short-term relationship with the Lord. He's known us from the beginning, and I love that He's got a plan for us. He's got hopes and dreams and a future with hope for you and for me. And I just know that we can tap into that plan. Sometimes God's going to tell us everything. Maybe we see something in our patriarchal blessing, we know what to do. Sometimes we're like Nephi, we just need to go without knowing the next step. But just to know that God has a plan for us can really be a blessing.
- Hank Smith: 21:58 These are like a bookend verses, aren't they, John?
- Dr. John Hilton III: 22:01 Yeah. So if I can just share a personal story along the lines of God's plans for us. You mentioned earlier that I speak Chinese. I served an English-speaking mission. I learned Chinese in my thirties. But before that, as a missionary, there was a time when I was serving in downtown Denver and a lot of the people we

tracted into were Spanish speakers. And the Spanish speakers were really nice. They would invite us in, offer some food. A lot nicer, actually, than the English speakers we would tract into.

Dr. John Hilton III: 22:28 So I called my mission president and I said, "President Horn, could I switch and become a Spanish-speaking missionary?" And he said, "No, we need you as an English-speaking missionary." But as I continued to kind of tract in those areas, the Holy Ghost whispered to my heart, "John, as soon as you get back from your mission, you need to learn Spanish."

Dr. John Hilton III: 22:48 So I came back from my mission, I enrolled in Spanish 101, and it was kind of embarrassing to be in Spanish 101. I was the only returned missionary in the class. Everyone else was college freshman who had taken Spanish in high school. But I just kept at it. I took Spanish 101, 102. It's a long story, but shortly after my wife Lani and I got married, we moved to Mexico for three months to really solidify our Spanish fluency. Then we came back and the first area where I was a seminary teacher was a beautiful farm town, Nyssa, Oregon, and a lot of the population there was Spanish speakers and Lani and I were called as ward missionaries. We were able to do lots of sharing the gospel in Spanish. And I felt like, "Okay, this was why God called me to learn Spanish, gave me that prompting years ago."

Dr. John Hilton III: 23:32 Then we moved to Boston and I was teaching institute part-time in Boston, working full-time in a master's program. And I had made a commitment to the church educational system that once I graduated I would go wherever they assigned me. I loved being in Boston. I hoped that I would remain in Boston, but that winter was also very cold in Boston. I don't know, probably every winter is very cold in Boston. The snow that fell in November was still on the ground in March. And I remember one morning as I was going out to my car early in the morning, I kind of was like, "Why do I want to live in a place where I'm miserable for three months out of the year?" And I felt this little prompt... Sorry for my friends in Boston still, but I felt this little prompting from the Spirit say, "John, you're going to go to the South and you'll speak Spanish."

Dr. John Hilton III: 24:21 And I was thinking, "Do people... Is there a lot of Spanish speakers in the South? What does that mean?" Well, some time passed. I got assigned by the church educational system to be an institute director of a nearby university a couple hours away. My wife Lani and I, we went house hunting and we couldn't find any houses there in New Haven. So we said, "Okay, we'll come back and go house hunting another weekend."

Dr. John Hilton III: 24:44 The next Monday, an email went out to all seminary and institute employees saying that there was a new position available to be a coordinator in Miami, Florida. And it specifically said that if you want this job, you need to be able to speak Spanish because two of the stakes you're coordinating are Spanish-speaking stakes. And I just felt the Spirit say, "This is your job, this is you." So I called and I said, "Hey, I think this is for me." And the person I talked to said, "Look, we've got tons of return missionaries who speak Spanish, and we've already assigned you to New Haven. We don't need you, forget it."

Dr. John Hilton III: 25:16 But the Spirit just really said, "This is your plan." So I called that person's boss and I said, "Look, you can do whatever you want. I'm just telling you I really think I'm a good fit for this job." And he called me back three days later and he said, "You're right. It's your job." Our family moved to Miami and it was such a beautiful time in our lives to be there in Miami, to have the privilege to train early morning seminary teachers in Spanish and Teach Institute in Spanish. I just loved it.

Dr. John Hilton III: 25:45 And so I apologize for sharing a long and personal story, but to me it's an illustration that God has plans for us. And sometimes it's just a little prompting that we get and then line upon line, it's going to flow. I see that in the Sorensen's. This is the whole story of Steve and Shannon Sorensen feeling a prompting to create a followHIM podcast, right? Line upon line, things will grow and develop as we keep our eye on the plans that God has. And I just love that phrase, that He has a hope for our future and as we follow His plans for us, we can have hope in our future.

John Bytheway: 26:20 Beautiful. Great story.

Hank Smith: 26:22 Yeah, it's really a fantastic story, John.

John Bytheway: 26:26 John, this reminds me of a story of just the Lord having a plan for somebody when it didn't seem like there was one. There was a little boy whose name was Harry. He was born in Lancashire, England, in 1857, and he had a little sister named Polly and his mother joined the church. His father left the family a lot. He had a drinking problem. Sometimes he would send money.

John Bytheway: 26:50 One time he sent enough money that Harry's mother decided, "I'm going to go to Zion." And she took a couple of, I think it was younger children, and left Harry and Polly with some members, different members. In fact, Harry was left with a family called the Toves. And their conversion was nominal. The Toves would

take Harry with them to pubs and taverns and drink themselves into a stupor. Harry would often just hide under the table, and they taught him these dirty little tavern songs. He said he almost never forgot the lyrics of those songs for his whole life, but they would make him sing these songs so that people would give him money and then they could buy more liquor.

John Bytheway: 27:35

So all of this time, he didn't get to go to school. He tried running away a couple of times and he heard what he called a soul voice say, "Harry, if you do this, you'll never see your mother again." The Toves actually tried to enlist him in the army to be a drummer because he had good rhythm, something like that. And again, that soul voice said, "You need to go back." And he said one time while on what his biographer called a begging tour, Mother Tove as he called her was asleep and a newspaper blew by. He didn't know how to read or decipher, they used to call it. And he grabbed this newspaper and he looked at it and he just thought it was magical that these little marks could speak to people, these little marks on a paper.

John Bytheway: 28:20

And he said out loud, "Will books and papers ever speak to me? I wonder if I will ever read books." And he heard a voice, he called that his soul voice, that said, "Aye like A-Y-E aye and you'll write them too." And he said he was caught up in a profound silence for a long time until Mother Tove awoke and they resumed their journey. Well, he said, "My boyhood was a tragedy and a nightmare. I had to beat the dogs to the garbage." Horrible childhood and aching to be able to read, which he never was taught to do. Well eventually Brigham Young found out about Harry and Polly and through the Perpetual (Emigration) Fund brought them across the ocean and across the plains.

John Bytheway: 29:12

I remember that Harry was with a certain wagon train, fell asleep and woke up when the last man on a horse was already on the other side of the river. And he yelled out to him, "Wait for me." And the man on the horse said, "Can you swim?" He said, "Yes," but he really couldn't and he almost drowned. He made it to the other side but he realized he'd left his shoes on the other side of the river. So he crossed the plains mostly in bare feet. He did find some boots on a dead soldier and you'd think he would wear those to cross the plains but when he was asked about it later, he said, "No, I want something to wear when I see my mother again." So I think this is about eight years old when these things were happening in England, and I think he's about 11 years old when they get to Immigration Canyon.

- John Bytheway: 30:04 I guess that they would prepare themselves the night before of coming into the valley, get all cleaned up and everything. And he put those boots on and walked down. I believe they came down State Street or Main Street, and there was a bit of recognition. He thought he saw his mother there and it was her and he was older, but saw her and said, exact quote, "What's up, Mother?" And she took Harry and she had married another man who was killed in a threshing accident and then married another man who worked in the mines in Tukwila.
- John Bytheway: 30:37 So you're thinking, "Oh good, Harry's going to get a chance to read." But instead, he went to work in these mines. And finally an educator named Hannah Holbrook, and there's an elementary school named after her in Bountiful, Utah, she discovered Harry and taught him to read.
- John Bytheway: 30:56 His biographer said he went at it with everything he had: science, philosophy, everything, the scriptures. And his biographer said, and I'll tell you who it is, "Had you read and studied as much as Harry did once he learned how to read, you would've earned a master's degree in any university." Well, he was living in a hut with some builders of the Salt Lake Temple. He put on his only coat, marched up University Hill and gave the valedictorian address.
- John Bytheway: 31:26 Later he was called on a mission to the Southern states. He had to sub for the mission president at one point, I can't remember why. So he was enacting mission president. He went to retrieve the bodies of Elder Gibbs and Elder Berry that were killed, the cane Massacre, I think they called it Cane Creek massacre. He dressed up as a vagabond and went and rescued these bodies and he was often asked to retell the story. He would dress up in that vagabond outfit that he had as he retold the story.
- John Bytheway: 31:57 Eventually he was asked, "Can you write the history of your church?" For, I think it was Encyclopedia Americana Magazine or something. And he said, "Well, you don't know what you're asking. That would be quite a bit." But he started putting that together and eventually he was called as a member of the Quorum of the 70, put all of this history together on April 6th of 1930.
- Hank Smith: 32:20 Yeah, 100 years.
- John Bytheway: 32:24 Yeah, exactly 100 years. He was speaking in General Conference and he said, "We have seven temples in the land roundabout in our first hundred years. Imagine the day when there will be 100 temples," and the audience, "Oh!" And think of it today, John

and Hank. Then he picked up these books and he put them on the pulpit and said, "Here as to an altar, I place this work of mine. And if there's anything of excellence in it, I know it is of Thee," he said to God. He said, "O God, the Eternal Father, here as to an altar, I place this work of mine." And those books were the Comprehensive History of the Church by Brigham Henry Roberts, the B.H. Roberts that went by Harry.

- John Bytheway: 33:11 The fun part of the story for me is when he would give copies of these volumes to his former missionaries, he would sign his name and put underneath in quotes, "And you'll write them too."
- John Bytheway: 33:28 And here's someone who was denied the chance to read, but as you've pointed out, John, God had a plan for him and it all unfolded eventually. And maybe had he not been denied that chance, he would not have gone for it with the same fervor. I don't know. But it's such a beautiful story. And some of our listeners will remember that name, B.H. Roberts. And that's a little bit of his backstory. I got that from his biography written by Truman G. Madsen, so that's why it's his biographer. But he tells it like that where he doesn't give away who it is until the end. But that story gives me testimony of that idea that God has a plan for us.
- Hank Smith: 34:09 I love these bookend verses you've given us, John. Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee." This is from Brigham Young, "I want to tell you, each and every one of you, that you are well acquainted with God, our Heavenly Father, or the Great Elohim. You are well acquainted with Him, for there is not a soul of you but what has lived in His house and dwelt with Him year after year; and yet you are seeking to become acquainted with Him when the fact is you have merely forgotten what you already know." And that's Brigham Young.
- Hank Smith: 34:49 And then you go to the last verse here that John gave us, Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end."
- Hank Smith: 35:03 "I knew you before, I'm going to know you at the end," this is President Ezra Taft Benson, "nothing will surprise us more when we get to heaven and see the Father and realize how well we know Him and how familiar His face is to us."
- Hank Smith: 35:21 John, before we let you go, I'd like to ask you just one more question. You've been wonderful for us today, and I feel like the book of Jeremiah has changed for me. It's become a good

friend. It really has given me fire in the bones just to read this book. What do you hope our listeners walk away with, having listened to our episodes with you?

Dr. John Hilton III: 35:43 I would just say maybe two things. I hope that we have a little more of that fire in the bones ourselves, that God's Word is burning in us. Sometimes there's a book like Jeremiah, we said at the very beginning, "Oh, I don't know this one as much. We don't have the Jeremiah chapter, so the Book of Mormon... So we might not encounter it as frequently."

Dr. John Hilton III: 36:02 But I hope that we felt like, "Wow, this is fun." And it gets us excited to go back and to explore other books of scripture in upcoming weeks. What's the book of Hosea all about? Who's Amos? Let's get excited, not just say, "Oh, yeah, those are the books that we skip," but there's excitement and joy and spiritual power in these amazing lesser-known books of the Bible, perhaps.

Dr. John Hilton III: 36:21 The other thing that we might not have touched on quite as much today, we've seen a few places where Jesus Christ connects with Jeremiah like the den of robbers, the den of thieves. You both have made a few connections between Jesus Christ and Jeremiah. But throughout, we've been reading about the LORD, all caps, Jehovah interacting with Jeremiah. And so I would just want us to remember that Jesus Christ, He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And as we're reading about these interactions between Jeremiah and the Lord, these are interactions between Jeremiah and Jesus Christ, and it's helping us, I think, get to know Jesus Christ better.

Dr. John Hilton III: 36:59 And more than anything else, that's what I would hope that as a result of these episodes, we're feeling a greater connection with our Savior Jesus Christ and want to become more like Him.

Dr. John Hilton III: 37:08 As we were reading this today and Jeremiah was feeling this isn't working in all of this, I wonder if he knew that one day we, in the latter days, not just us, the whole Christian world would read Jeremiah and find strength from reading him. And your life will mean something for generations, for millennia, for people, because we will get to read your story.

Hank Smith: 37:33 Wow, what a great day we've had today with my two friends, my two John friends. Thank you. We want to remind everybody of the podcast Seeking Jesus with John Hilton III. You can also go to his website, [johnhiltoniii.com/jeremiah](http://johnhiltoniii.com/jeremiah) to find more of what we've talked about today. Please keep expanding your gospel knowledge.

Hank Smith: 37:58 We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen, we love you. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we hope all of you will join us. We have more Jeremiah to talk about next week on followHIM.

Hank Smith: 38:14 We have an amazing production crew we want you to know about. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Nielson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts and Ariel Cuadra. Thank you to our amazing production team.

## HOW DO I KEEP MYSELF FROM BACKSLIDING?



- Hank Smith: 00:00 Hello everyone, welcome to followHIM Favorites. If you've been following followHIM Favorites this year, you know that John Bytheway and I are taking a single question from each week's lesson, and providing some insight. John, this week's lesson is on the first half of Jeremiah, and there's a term in the first half of Jeremiah called backsliding. And the Lord keeps using it over and over where he says, "Backsliding Israel." He does it in Jeremiah chapter three, backsliding Israel, backsliding Israel. And as we were discussing that with Dr. John Hilton on our full podcast, he told us that backsliding is when we return to our sins. We repent, we forsake them, and then we go back.
- Hank Smith: 00:49 John, the question this week is how do I keep from backsliding? How do I keep from going back to my sins? What would you say to someone who wants to stay away from their former sins, but they are drawn to them? What do you do?
- John Bytheway: 01:00 That's a good question, because I think all of us have episodes of backsliding. We know better, and so I'm grateful we have the sacrament every week. The Lord gives us so many chances to start again, doesn't he? The very fact that you would even ask the question, how can I stop backsliding, is evidence that you're trying to do better, which is so great. For me, I stop backsliding by wearing Velcro jacket. I don't slide anywhere, but I hope that anyone asking that kind of a question will recognize that just being willing to ask that question shows that you're spiritually sensitive and aware. And you're moving forward if you're worried about backsliding. If they're really serious things, you go and you talk to your bishop.
- John Bytheway: 01:50 And he'll help you to see the progress that you're making. Hank, it's like the stock market, or something. It goes up, but it goes down, but it goes up again and it...
- Hank Smith: 02:00 It's trending up.
- John Bytheway: 02:02 That's exactly it. You're trending upward. They're going to be mistakes that you make, and there's going to be things that you maybe wish you hadn't have done. But when your overall trend

or slope is upward, I think that's what the Lord's asking because he knows that we're going to keep having tough times sometimes with trials and so forth. I just think if you're even asking the question, it's evidence that you're still trying. And once in a while, we'll backslide, but I love that the covenant path, sure, it has off-ramps, but it has so many on-ramps. You can keep getting back on.

- Hank Smith: 02:38 Excellent, excellent. I think two things that have helped me are one, a description that Proverbs uses, and that also that Peter picks up on is he says... And when I tell this to my students, they just are really grossed out by this, but it's really in the scriptures. It says, "We return to our sins like a dog to its vomit." It's such a disgusting idea, but sometimes, I'll hear our dog behind our couch going, "Blarg, blarg, blarg, blarg." And my kids go, "Ew!" Right? And they're like, "Dad, clean it up." And I say, "Oh, don't worry. She'll be back." And within half hour or so, she comes over and licks it all up. And they're, "Ew, that's so gross. It's disgusting."
- John Bytheway: 03:17 Yeah, it is.
- Hank Smith: 03:18 That helps me not return to my sins, right? To go, "Ew, why would I do that? I would never return that like dog to its vomit." And then the other one that's really helped me is a parable of Jesus where he says, "There once was a house or a man." He goes back and forth, a person who has an evil spirit, so that's a sin. And he casts it out. He casts out the evil spirit, but then the evil spirit, the sin goes out there, doesn't find anywhere to live. It turns around, and comes back to the house and he finds it empty. What does he do? He moves back into the house. The sin moves back into the man's life, and brings with him a whole bunch of other sins. Brings him... I think he says seven more sins with him.
- Hank Smith: 04:00 Now, he's worse off than he was before. I think what the Savior meant by that is you have to fill your house with other things. If you're going to get rid of a sin, you've got to fill your life with other things. Perhaps, it's new hobbies. You're not just sitting around idle. Maybe you join a team, or try out for a play at school or choir, or you get a new group of friends, something that's going to fill your house. When those sins come back looking for a place in your life, you're like, "Hey, I'm sorry, there's no vacancy here. I don't have time for you. I've filled my life with other things." Those two scriptural passages have helped me not return to my sins. But like you said John, it's going to happen.

Hank Smith: 04:43 You're trending in the right direction is what's important. You're coming back every time. You're picking yourself up, dusting yourself off and saying, "I'm going to try again to overcome."

John Bytheway: 04:51 I love that parable that you used Hank. Because if you fill your lives with other things, you'll find some things that you really enjoy doing that are good, that are wholesome things. Well, you'll want to do those again, and you'll crowd out the other stuff. I like to use the example of grass and dandelions. When the grass is really thick and good, there's no room for other seeds, other weeds to come in and plant themselves. It's nice to have good things to do, but again, the very fact that you recognize and are asking that question is wonderful, says something about where you are. How can I stop backsliding? The other thing I think the Lord is just so wonderful and merciful is that he already has that thing in place.

John Bytheway: 05:28 You are going to need this sacrament table again. You're going to need to come back here again next week. He knows, "Come back here, let's renew that covenant again." And you see the sacrament table there. There is a visual aid of the Lord's mercy for us right there every week in the chapel.

Hank Smith: 05:46 That's beautiful, John. Yeah, It's not a matter of if. It's not like the bishop stands up and says, "Okay, if anybody sinned, we'll set up the sacrament."

John Bytheway: 05:55 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 05:55 "So, anybody?" No, it's assumed.

John Bytheway: 05:57 All in favor.

Hank Smith: 05:58 Yeah, yeah. It's assumed that we all need it.

John Bytheway: 06:02 You're going to need this. I used to tell my ward, "Isn't it nice that we don't wheel this table out of a storage room just at Christmas and Easter? But every single week, we can look forward to coming back and getting a fresh start."

Hank Smith: 06:15 Yep, and it's okay, it's okay. And you are going to overcome. Don't give up, you are going to overcome. Whatever sin it is you're thinking of, you're going to get over it. You're going to get past it.

John Bytheway: 06:26 You'll be trending upward like we said. Yeah.

Hank Smith:

06:28

Yep, yep. The Lord's going to bless you and help you, so don't get discouraged. It's going to happen for you, just keep trying. We hope you'll join us next week for another followHIM Favorites. We also hope you'll join us on our full podcast. This week, we're discussing these chapters with Dr. John Hilton III. He's so great, they made three of him. You are going to want to come out and hear that, and then join us next week back here for another followHIM Favorites.