



“All That the Lord Hath Spoken We Will Do”

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:

Do our loads become too heavy to bear alone? Join Dr. Dan Belnap as we discuss Moses learning to lead the Israelites, the importance of developing our own spiritual welfare, and the lessons of leadership.

Part 2:

Dr. Belnap returns to discuss what it means to be “bold in the Atonement” as well as the law of Moses being a preparatory law, and the Ten Commandments.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Daniel Belnap
- 00:55 Introduction of Dr. Daniel Belnap
- 03:11 Overview of Exodus 18-20
- 05:37 Editors and authorship of Books of Moses
- 09:23 Break between Exodus 18 and Exodus 19
- 09:51 Jethro suggests Moses isn't paying enough attention to his family
- 12:05 The Israelites need to become more spiritually self-sufficient
- 18:34 Hank shares a personal experience teaching students to be self-sufficient
- 23:01 Elder Bednar allows his sons to mow the lawn
- 26:37 Difficult cases Moses still judges but leaders learn delegation
- 32:47 Ward Councils handle the chronic ward problems
- 34:08 Exodus 19 through Numbers is the emergence of the covenant that governs Israel
- 37:05 Covenant begins with concept of faith
- 38:26 Gratitude is revelatory
- 40:44 "Therefore" in the scriptures establish relationships
- 41:44 *Segullah* or peculiar treasure
- 43:34 Hebrew Bible oaths require ritual acts
- 46:45 God is creating a kingdom of priests
- 52:21 The ratification of the covenant begins (wash and meet in three days)
- 54:33 Theophany on Mount Sinai with meteorological events
- 55:21 The boundary between God and the Israelites is unexpected
- 57:16 Two versions of the same events
- 1:00:43 The Israelites hardened their hearts and couldn't enter the presence of God
- 1:07:27 Joseph F. Smith story of a dream
- 1:10:11 Prophets have privilege of perspective and scope
- 1:16:01 End of Part I

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II – Dr. Daniel Belnap
- 00:55 Two versions of Noah’s Ark story
- 1:40 What do you do when you fall short?
- 04:35 The two great commandments are out of the law of Moses
- 07:10 How do we have agency if God knows what I am doing?
- 11:45 What keeps us from being ready in three days?
- 14:09 The Ten Commandments
- 17:02 Walking through the Ten, The First Commandment
- 20:20 In the Old Testament, covenant relationships matter more than genetics
- 22:17 Why no graven images?
- 25:29 Taking the name of the Lord in vain
- 30:08 The Sabbath day is a liminal state
- 39:50 Honoring parents
- 44:02 Stealing, adultery, and killing have qualifications and explanations
- 50:15 The moral and ethical behavior of Zion hasn’t changed
- 54:37 What might have been the third great commandment? Love the stranger
- 55:48 Coveting and the Other Prodigal
- 57:40 Dr. Belnap shares his thoughts about his education, biblical scholarship and his faith tradition
- 1:06:02 End of Part II–Dr. Daniel Belnap

References:

- "April 18–24. Exodus 18–20: “All That The Lord Hath Spoken We Will Do””. 2022. *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-individuals-and-families-old-testament-2022/17?lang=eng>.
- Bednar, David A. 2022. "Always Retain A Remission Of Your Sins". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2016/04/always-retain-a-remission-of-your-sins?lang=eng>.
- Belnap, Daniel L. 2022. *Amazon.Com*. https://www.amazon.com/Our-Rites-Worship-Latter-day-Scripture/dp/0842528415/ref=sr_1_3?crd=Q9SHRXFKBM34&keywords=daniel+l+belnap&qid=1649791815&srefix=daniel+belnap%2Caps%2C156&sr=8-3.
- Belnap, Daniel L. 2022. *Amazon.Com*. https://www.amazon.com/Illuminating-Jaredite-Records-Daniel-Belnap/dp/1944394974/ref=sr_1_5?crd=Q9SHRXFKBM34&keywords=daniel+l+belnap&qid=1649791815&srefix=daniel+belnap%2Caps%2C156&sr=8-5.
- Belnap, Daniel L. 2022. "“That I May Dwell Among Them”: Liminality And Ritual In The Tabernacle | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/ascending-mountain-lord/i-may-dwell-among-them-liminality-ritual-tabernacle>.
- Belnap, Daniel L. 2022. "“How Excellent Is Thy Lovingkindness” | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/gospel-jesus-christ-old-testament/how-excellent-thy-lovingkindness>.
- Belnap, Daniel L. 2022. "The Law Of Moses | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/new-testament-history-culture-society/law-moses>.
- Belnap, Daniel L. 2022. "“The Lord God Which Gathereth The Outcasts” | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-19-no-3-2018/lord-god-which-gathereth-outcasts>.
- Belnap, Daniel. 2022. "“Those Who Receive You Not”: The Rite Of Wiping Dust Off The Feet | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/our-rites-worship/those-who-receive-you-not-rite-wiping-dust-off-feet>.
- Belnap, Ed., Daniel. 2022. "By Our Rites Of Worship | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book/our-rites-worship>.
- Cook, Quentin L. 2022. "Bishops—Shepherds Over The Lord’S Flock". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/04/31cook?lang=eng>.
- Craig, Michelle. 2022. "Spiritual Capacity". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/15craig.18?lang=eng#18>.
- Eyring, Henry B. 2022. "Spiritual Capacity". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/15craig.18?lang=eng#18>.

- Gong, Gerrit W. 2022. "Covenant Belonging". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/10/41gong?lang=eng>.
- "Guide To The Scriptures". 2022. *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/gs?lang=eng>.
- Hinckley, Gordon B. 2022. "'I Am Clean'". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2007/04/i-am-clean?lang=eng>.
- Nelson, Russell M. 2022. "Children Of The Covenant". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1995/04/children-of-the-covenant.39-40?lang=eng#39>.
- Schade, Aaron P., and Daniel L. Belnap. 2022. "From Creation To Sinai: The Old Testament Through The Lens Of The Restoration | Religious Studies Center". *Rsc.Byu.Edu*.
<https://rsc.byu.edu/winter-2022/creation-sinai-old-testament-through-lens-restoration>.
- Stephens, Carole M. 2022. "'If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments'". *Churchofjesuschrist.Org*.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/10/if-ye-love-me-keep-my-commandments?lang=eng>.

Biographical Information:



Born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and raised in Pocatello, Idaho, and Sandy, Utah. Served full-time mission in Pennsylvania Pittsburgh Mission. Married Erin Pinney in 1997 and had four children: Emma, Jack, Samuel, and Tabitha. Received a BA in international relations from Brigham Young University; an MA in ancient Near Eastern studies from BYU; an MA and a PhD in Northwest Semitics from the University of Chicago. Worked

as a part-time instructor before becoming an assistant professor in 2007. He advanced to the rank of professor in 2020.

Courses Taught: Book of Mormon, Old Testament, New Testament, Pearl of Great Price, Teachings of the Living Prophets (Ancient Scripture); Intro. to Biblical Methodologies, Intro. to Ancient Near Eastern Texts, ANES Capstone (ANES)

Area of Expertise: Hebrew Bible, Ugaritic studies, ritual studies

Areas of Research: Cultural and sociological influences in the Book of Mormon; Use of ritual in ancient and contemporary contexts; doctrines of ascension and theosis in ancient Near East and Late Antiquity; comparative cosmologies

Languages: Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Ugaritic, German, French, and a little Greek (all reading)

Fair Use Notice:

The Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway may make use of copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright holder. This constitutes a “fair use” and any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this podcast is offered publicly and without profit, to the public uses or the internet for comment and nonprofit educational and informational purposes. Copyright Disclaimer under Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, allowance is made for “fair use” for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. In such cases, fair use is permitted.

No copyright(s) is/are claimed.

The content is broadcasted for study, research, and educational purposes.

The broadcaster gains no profit from broadcasted content. This falls under “Fair Use” guidelines:

www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html.

Note:

The *Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints nor Brigham Young University. The opinions expressed on episodes represent the views of the guest and podcasters alone. While the ideas presented may vary from traditional understandings or teachings, they in no way reflect criticism of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day leaders, policies, or practices.



Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to followHIM. A weekly podcast, dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study, I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:10	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	We want To learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:15	As together, we follow Him.
Hank Smith:	00:00:19	Hello everyone. Welcome to followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, I'm your host. I'm here with my peculiar treasure co-host, John Bytheway. John, if there's any word that I think describes-
John Bytheway:	00:00:37	It's peculiar.
Hank Smith:	00:00:39	... it's peculiar, yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:00:41	Just this morning. My wife said that to me.
Hank Smith:	00:00:43	Yeah, just a sweetheart. We're going to be an Exodus 18, 19, 20 today. We needed a brilliant mind and we got one. Who's with us, John?
John Bytheway:	00:00:55	We did. I'm really excited to introduce Dr. Dan Belnap. He was born in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, raised in Pocatello and Sandy, Utah. He served a full-time mission to the Pennsylvania Pittsburgh Mission, married Erin Pinney in 1997. They have four children, Emma, Jack, Samuel, and Tabitha. And he received a bachelor's in international relations from BYU, masters in Ancient Near Eastern studies from BYU and a master's and a PhD in Northwest Semitics from the University of Chicago. He's worked as a part-time instructor before becoming an assistant

professor in 2007 and was advanced to the rank of professor in 2020.

- John Bytheway: 00:01:40 His areas of research include cultural and sociological influences in the Book of Mormon, use of ritual in ancient and contemporary contexts, doctrines of ascension and theosis in ancient Near East and Late Antiquity and comparative cosmologies. And his bio has languages, Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, Syrian, German, French, and a little Greek. Just amazing and a lot of our listeners have this book From Creation to Sinai, which a Deseret book published recently, which is really helpful in making the Old Testament language, symbolism and history, kind of putting those together in an easier way to understand. Dan, you co-wrote that book with Aaron Schade?
- Hank Smith: 00:02:23 Yes. From Creation to Sinai.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:27 From Creation to Sinai, right where we are today. We're going to be in Sinai today, is that right?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:02:33 Well, we're going to be there. I should say about the book. Aaron and I did not write the book, we are the editors of the book. It's got a number of different authors in it and some of them appeared on your show and it's a great collaboration we think.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:47 A compilation of scholarly articles about these chapters that we're studying right now?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:02:52 Right.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:53 Lots of insight. Well, Dan, we want to just glean as much as we can from you. We've left Egypt. We've murmured quite a bit. We are receiving water out of rocks. Manna from heaven. How do you want to come at this Exodus 18, 19 and 20?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:03:11 Well, what's interesting is that chapter 18 picks up with a particular narrative, namely the one in which Jethro, Moses's father-in-law has come to Moses and said, "You are doing way too much. You're taking way too much on your shoulders. You need to spread the authority and the responsibility out." What's interesting about that narrative, just to jump ahead is in many ways you don't get the second half of that story until about Numbers 11. In Numbers 11, picks it up and then you have the story of the 70 elders that are gathered at the temple. And the two that remain behind and yet are filled with the Spirit.

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:03:46	To some degree, chapter 19 of Exodus, all the way through Numbers 10, at least according to some biblical scholars is almost like an insert. You've interrupted the story to expand out this particular period of time or this particular series of events. And those events all have to do with what happens when Israel gets to Sinai following Egypt. And chapter 18, in some ways is separate from chapters 19 and 20, simply because we've got another story, another narrative, but then we have this huge expansion that is Exodus 19 through Numbers 10. In terms of structure, in terms of the Bible, that's one of the first things I'd just point out is that, the narrative of 18 really stops until Numbers 11 and then that narrative picks up at that point.
Hank Smith:	00:04:33	That's a big insert. That's not small, that we're talking 100 pages.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:04:40	Oh yeah. And it could be, again, we don't have all the reasons for that. There's a type of methodological approach to scripture, which I think others have talked about on the show. I would assume they have, called source criticism. The idea that the version of the Bible that we're reading, regardless of the original writers, the original author, we're looking at a later compiled version, much like the Book of Mormon.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:05:05	So the Book of Mormon isn't necessarily the original words of say Alma, but they're Mormon's version of Alma's words. He uses different sources to tell the narrative. Well, we look at these passages and according to some biblical scholars, this is one of the most dense and confused passage of scripture, simply because they see so many sources that have talked about it. And what that really suggests is, among the narratives so far of the Bible, this may be the most important one.
Hank Smith:	00:05:37	I remember at one point we were talking to Dan Peterson, he talked about the beginning of the Moabites, with Lot and his daughters. And I said something to the effect of, "Oh, so perhaps the writer is putting a little jab at the current enemy?" And someone wrote in and said, "What do you mean the writer? It's Moses." And I was like, "Well..." And you deal with that I'm sure with your students is, "This is Moses, right?" And you're like, "Well, yes and no."
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:06:08	The Book of Mormon's a great model for this, because you're looking at a book that, where we know who the editors are, it's Mormon and Moroni. They are pretty clear as to what texts they're using. I always like 35:5 because Mormon tells you exactly why he's using what text he's using, but he tells you something like the fact of, "And the 20th year passed and the

21st and the 22nd, the 23rd and yay, even the 25th." He has said nothing about those five years at all. And then he says, Now I recognize that if someone else were writing this, there were some great and marvelous things that happened, but I'm not putting that in my record. And here's why I'm not. And what I haven't touched. So the idea that we have an editor or a group of editors later that are editing earlier material really shouldn't surprise any Latter Day Saint. And that's what you're seeing in the Bible.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 00:07:02 | Yeah. You're seeing maybe what was some originally written by Moses, but then later editors are adding, taking away. And so do you think this insert, how much of this is Moses? Is there no way to... There's no way to tell? |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:07:15 | There's no way to tell, but what I would say is I don't have a problem with the original being Moses at all. What I'm saying is that groups that have come later have used it for different purposes, different teaching purposes. And by virtue of that, the final compilers have just taken all of these traditions and just cramped them all together. It's like if you're looking at a sculpture, it's important to see it from more than just one side, you need to see two or three or other sides. Because you get a full three dimensional understanding of that sculpture. Well, we can look at it the same way these later editors or compilers have looked at this material and they have two or three different versions of this story and all from and perspectives. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:08:00 | And they're putting them together. As a Latter-day Saint, we do that with the first vision. Joseph Smith has four versions of the first vision in different contexts to different people, doesn't mean any one of them is wrong. Doesn't mean he lied about anything, but by using those four, we get a better grasp of what the first vision is. And so we can think the same thing. Really, the only difference here in the Bible with the Book of Mormon is, the Book of Mormon we know who the editor is. It's Mormon. He tells us outright. This time we don't really know, but we can guess to some degree what they're trying to do. The Book of Deuteronomy ends with someone writing. And if it's Moses, it's awesome, because he's like, "And there was Moses and there's been no prophet like Moses since." He's the greatest thing ever, which if Moses is writing that, that's awesome. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:08:49 | Yeah. Just before he dies, there's no one like Moses. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:08:53 | Right. But I think the idea that you're looking at different versions and the same thing shows up at the end of the Book of |

John. And so you just see these places where it's clear that these are texts that are important. And in these events where you have multiple, here's the way I'd put it, almost multiple witnesses of this event, just like you would have multiple witnesses elsewhere. You have these different sources, all talking about the same event and a later compiler going, "You know what? These all work together great."

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 00:09:23 | Great. Well, John, we're going to have to say, "Okay, there's a little break here in between Exodus 18 and 19." And when we get to Numbers 11, we'll have to say, "Hey, we're back onto the storyline." |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:09:35 | That's exactly right. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:09:36 | We're- |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:09:36 | Meanwhile, back at the ranch. Yeah. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:09:38 | Yeah. That's okay, well, let's do 18. And then, yeah, let's do 19 and 20, but realize that this is the beginning of an insert. I like that. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:09:51 | Chapter 18 has the basic story. As I mentioned earlier, or at least I summarized earlier, Moses has a bit of a problem. They're all out of Egypt and he's taking way too much on his own time. He's taking way too much. And so his father-in-law comes to him. And I always like this because his father-in-law ultimately, that it's his father-in-law saying it, I think is intriguing. It suggests that Moses perhaps isn't paying as much attention to Jethro's daughter as Jethro thinks. So the father-in-law's coming to give him some advice going, "Yeah. You know what? You need to pay more attention with your family. That's what you need to be doing." |
| Hank Smith: | 00:10:32 | If it was my family, it would've gone from my wife to my mother-in-law, for my mother-in-law to my father-in-law and father-in-law to me. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:10:39 | There you go. You're exactly right. That's exactly right. And so that's what you see. Verse 14, I think does a pretty good job of this. Well, verse 13 says that Moses sat to judge the people and the people stood by Moses from morning unto evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people. He said, "What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why sittest thyself alone and all thy people stand by thee from morning until even?" |

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:11:03	And Moses' response is, "Well, the people come to me to inquire of God and to make judgements and make these decisions." And verse 17 Moses' father-in-law said him, "The thing that thou doest is not good." And that's not good Moses. "Though wilt surely wear away both thou and this people that is with thee, for this thing is too heavy for thee, thou art not able to perform it alone." And so he gives this counsel, you need to have more people or even better, you need to teach them, and then they need to govern themselves.
Hank Smith:	00:11:37	Wow. I am hearing so much application here for our listeners who, because we're a Luke... Isn't it, Luke 1 Dan? With God, all things are possible. We're a with God, all things are possible people, and here we've got this great principle of you're human and you're going to wear out if you're not delegating and teaching.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:12:05	That's exactly it. Right. And it's interesting because Jethro's suggesting one, you've got to have more help. Two, we've got to figure out how the people need to be spiritually self-sufficient. They need to know the principles. They need to be able to govern themselves and move forward that way. And that's just a principle that you see, I think across all dispensations, don't you? That this idea that you cannot rely on the leadership alone. In the Book of Mormon, when Mosiah makes the changes, Mosiah two, makes the changes to the governmental structure. One of the reasons he provides this, it's not particularly fair that one person, the king, has to pay the price for all of this. And so he creates this equality in the land, but the way it's phrased is the equality for everyone pay the price for their behavior, individually.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:12:57	And you see this in Doctrine & Covenants. The idea that the more that the Lord has to tell us, the more we lose out on some blessings or understandings. The more things have to be spelled out the less we have in terms of our own spiritual growth. And Paul talks about that in Corinthians, where he points out that you guys are suing one another and yeah, you can need to take it up within the church, but the truth is, figure out how to resolve it yourself. It's just this idea over and over and over again, that we are ultimately responsible for our own spiritual welfare.
Hank Smith:	00:13:31	Yeah. I would love to just flush out this just a little bit more, John, why don't you, because I'm sure you have some addition here just as serving as Bishop, the idea... Because I've seen bishops do this, I've seen relief society presidents do this. They take on everything in an effort to be the best bishop, the best

servant they can be. They sometimes wear themselves out. Did you see that at all?

John Bytheway: 00:13:57 You're just trying to do your job and do what the Lord wants you to do. And sometimes you need a Jethro to come along and help you. I think when I was a bishop, there was some counsel we got to push more to the ward council and now it has been shifted even more where you remember Elder Cooks talk a couple of general conferences ago about, let the elders quorum presidency and the relief society presidency help with some of the counseling and things. And they're trying to move the bishops closer to the youth, have made the bishops the young men's president now. And get them closer to the youth. And so we see it still going on and it's not only a cultural shift for the leadership, but for all of the members. Well, I don't want to talk to you those quorum president, I want to talk to the Bishop.

John Bytheway: 00:14:46 And we're trying to help the bishops be able to do all they need to do and take care of their families. This is an issue that has always gone on. Where there's a leader, no, don't pass me off to one of the leaders of 1000s or 100s or 50s. I need to talk to Moses. You can see that happening. I remember when I was in Aaronic Priesthood, somebody did a lesson on this and they passed out an organizational chart and it had Moses at the top. And then all of these categories, it was like commerce, agriculture, traffic, bicycle licenses. And it was just like 60 of them that were all Moses. And it said under this plan, it took Moses 40 years. And then here's Jethro's plan and it showed this organizational chart. Somebody just was clever and made this, but could it be one of the earliest lessons on delegation that we've ever seen?

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:15:37 I've never been bishop, but I was the executive secretary for a bishop. And he was like, I think all bishops probably are. He was just made sure that he was available for the members, but there was something that I saw and I would counsel him against. I said, "I think there's what I almost call spiritual vampirism." You've got a few people that rely on the spirituality of the bishop to give them their spirituality. So they were constantly calling him late at night and saying, "I need a blessing." And we don't want to not give blessings. But the idea was is that it was really encroaching a lot on the bishop's time and using his spirituality to be their spirituality. Does that make sense what I'm saying there? And it would be like, "Okay, how are we going to resolve this? How's this going to work out?" Because this individual's taking a lot of your time from your family, a lot of your sleep to borrow your spiritual strength.

Hank Smith:	00:16:29	And Dan, I like what Jethro says here is he says, "You're not only going to wear away, but this isn't good for the people."
John Bytheway:	00:16:36	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:16:36	This is not good for this people. It's almost like Moses is a bottleneck. If everything has to run through you, we're never going to get anything done. And people are going to spend most of their time, life waiting in line. And we don't want people to spend their life waiting to talk to you.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:16:52	Or they'll blame Moses for whatever happens. There's no agency here.
John Bytheway:	00:16:56	Yeah. Make this decision for me and if it's not right, believe me, I'll come back and I'll tell you. And I found a lot of times as a bishop, boy, had somebody once that just finally said to me, "You're not going to tell me what to do. Are you?" And I said, "No, I'm not, this is a big one, but this is yours. You need to own this and decide. And do you trust the Lord to guide you? Because I do, but I'm not going to make that one for you."
John Bytheway:	00:17:21	I'm reminded as we've been talking about President Nelson's emphasis on learn to hear Him for yourself. Some of the things you mentioned, Dan, I thought, well, yeah, I loved how... And I know Hank loves this, he's given a talk on it, but how the Lord deals with the brother of Jared and the brother of Jared tries to hand the Lord the problem. And the Lord says, "Wow, what are you going to do about that?" And pushes it right back to him. And it took me a while to learn as a bishop to go, "Wow, what are you going to do about that?"
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:17:45	Yeah. And even better, the brother of Jared story is great because he then goes on to say, "What are you going to do about it?" Oh, and by the way, you can't do this, this, this and this.
John Bytheway:	00:17:53	Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:17:56	You can almost see brother of Jared going, "Well, you know what? I would drill a hole." "Yeah. You're not going to do that." "Fire?" "No, that's not going to happen."
John Bytheway:	00:18:02	Fire's a bad idea on a boat. Let's see.

Hank Smith:	00:18:04	That's so great. And it's almost as if the brother of Jared is saying, "It sounds like, you know what I should do? Go ahead and tell me." "No. No."
John Bytheway:	00:18:14	It makes me laugh. It's like, listen, in a later scripture, you're going to say, if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. I just did. And you said, "What will you have me do?" "So you need the growth, Mahonri." So you go figure it out and I'll inspire you a little bit." It's a great story.
Hank Smith:	00:18:34	Dan, I had to learn this as a professor. When I first got there, I don't know if you remember, but in my office I would constantly have some students in there. And I liked it. I had a good time, but I could see that there are a couple of students that their spirituality, all of a sudden, was coming and sitting in the office and I'm going, "Oh no, what have I..." I've created this on my own. I did this. I, you know, I told the story in class about, oh, I was talking to so and so a student in my office the other day, and she's telling me about this. And all of a sudden, I've got five lined up, ready to have some spiritual time. And I'm like, "Holy cow, I think I did this too." It took me a couple of years before I learned to-
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:19:14	I should point out I haven't had students come to my office like Hank. That's the friendliness of Hank-
John Bytheway:	00:19:19	There's a take a number outside his office.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:19:22	It's like, whoa boy.
John Bytheway:	00:19:23	And it's like the DMV there.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:19:26	Down the hallway, "Hey there, your door's open. Do you know of Hank?" I'm like, "Yeah, down the hall."
Hank Smith:	00:19:32	I think I was hurting the kids. Some of those students, I was enabling and they needed to figure out some of these things on their own or go to the proper channel.
John Bytheway:	00:19:41	The brother of Jared grew through that experience. That's the outcome I think the Lord wanted there was, for the brother of Jared to grow. First little lesson portion here. I can help bear the burden of doing the Lord's work. As you read the council Moses received from his father-in-law, ponder how you can be like the men of truth, sometimes translated, trustworthy men, described in verse 21. And how can you help bear the burden of your church leaders?

John Bytheway:	00:20:10	And then also you might so consider whether you at times are trying to do too much. How might Jethro's council apply to you? Like I said, this has always been an issue and starting in Exodus and even today, "Am I doing too much? Can I delegate more?" And when we don't delegate, we're not helping other people grow too. My mission president always used to say, "A good leader trains leaders as he leads." And he wanted to help other people grow through experience.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:20:39	The challenge I think at least in leadership position is when you do that, you open up the potentiality to failure. Or if you're in a bishop or in a leadership and you delegate something, is it going to be done? How's it going to be done? Interestingly for me, that's where Numbers 11, the second half of the story kicks in. Because that's where we pick up. And he actually has called 70 men. Someone else is going to do Numbers 11. So I don't want to steal their thunder, but Numbers 11 has the calling of those 70. And he gathers them all at the tabernacle to have, I don't know, leadership meeting of some kind and two of them don't go.
Hank Smith:	00:21:16	They just don't show up.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:21:18	For whatever reason, kids birthday party. They're like, "Nope, can't."
John Bytheway:	00:21:22	The more things change, the more they stay the same.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:21:24	That's exactly right. We had a soccer game. So what we're... But it's interesting because he takes the 70 out it says in verse 25 of Numbers 11, "And the Lord came down in a cloud and spake unto him and took of the Spirit that was upon him and gave it unto the 70 elders and it came to pass that when the Spirit rest upon them, they prophesied and did not cease. But there remains two men in the camp. The name of the one was Eldad and the other was Medad and the Spirit rested upon them. And they were of them that was written, but were not out in the tabernacle. And they prophesied in the camp." What I think it's intriguing about that is, it would suggest then that Moses wanted everyone to be in the tabernacle who was called, but there were other ways to accomplish what needed to be done.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:22:08	So I think one of the challenges that leaders sometimes do have is, not only do they take too much on their own, but they have a particular way they wanted things done. But if you're going to delegate it to the ward council, you actually have to let the ward council do it their way. As long as the Spirit is present and

people are doing their calling, then you need to learn how to trust them.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:22:30 And so I think that's the second half of this lesson. Yeah. Now he calls them and now he's got to trust that they're going to be able to do it their way. And that's when the young man runs tells Moses what's happened. Joshua is like, "My Lord. You got to forbid them. Moses, you can't let them do that." And Moses's response is, "Envious thou for my sake, would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." And to me, that right there is Moses as a leader, just going, huh? Oh man. If I could get the people to do this, that would be perfect.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:01 Oh, this is such a great lesson. And I'm thinking as a parent, sometimes I do things for my children and I can hear Jethro saying, "You're going to wear away and you're going to wear away your children." If it's too heavy for a parent to do everything... Let me share with you a story that I've always thought was so funny. This is from Elder Bednar. He's giving an example of this with children. And he says, "Let me give you a silly illustration. Sister Bednar and I have three sons. I like to have a yard that looks nice. And so I was fairly meticulous about how you mow the lawn. And I was famous in our neighborhood for the neatness of the trimming around the lawn. People would come into our neighborhood and say, "How do you do that?" They would come and ask for lessons.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:45 So one day I began teaching one of our sons how to do this. And he messed it up. Now I know none of you have done this, but my first instinct was to take the weed eater away from him because I didn't want him to mess it up. And then came one of these amazing moments where you think so, let me make sure I understand this, not messing up the trimming around the lawn is more important than helping your son learn? So he just obliterated the edges of the lawn, you know what? It grows back and it's not a big deal.
- Hank Smith: 00:24:16 And he did it a second time and he was bad if not worse than the first time. And each time it was horrible, but it got a little better. And the long run outcome was I didn't trim the lawn anymore. And he did it just as well as I did. You have to take some inevitable hits on the front end and you're invested in that and it's kind of painful. And what was really cool is when he learned how to do it, his brother wanted to learn how to do it, which I never could have pulled off." Just a great little anecdote about this same idea of allowing people to fail a little bit.

John Bytheway:	00:24:50	My mission president used to say, "Never come to your boss with a problem. Always come with a recommendation," which was helpful to me as a bishop. But the ward council's like, "Bishop here's this problem." I'd say, "What do you recommend? Or come back with a recommendation." That's the study it out in your mind part that section nine teaches us about. And so this is a fun topic because we all have experience in this.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:25:14	This is a very practical narrative. I think you don't even have to be a believer to look at that and go, yes.
John Bytheway:	00:25:21	Yeah, that's true.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:25:22	I see the wisdom of that lesson. When I was elders quorum president, "You know what? We've got to move. Will you call some people?" And my response was, "No. Now I'm willing to do it as your friend. And I'm willing to do it as your neighbor, but it is not part of my ecclesiastic calling to get people, to help you to move. That's your responsibility. And I promise you, your neighbors will be more than happy to help, but it is your job."
Hank Smith:	00:25:47	Yeah. It's there's no section 171 about elders quorum moving.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:25:52	I've looked in the handbook, it's not there.
Hank Smith:	00:25:54	Yeah. Is there anything else in 18 you want to do? Because that was really fun. I thought that was so practical. And I think a lot of people listening will go. I probably do need to... I'm wearing away, I'm-
John Bytheway:	00:26:08	Well, I think we can look at the organization of the church and we can see in all of this, oh, this is why we have ministering brothers and sisters. This is why there are counselors. This is... And it's brilliant. And we have to work at helping it work so that it all doesn't end up on the bishop's desk. But I like the way you put it, this is very practical. This is, we practice this every week.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:26:37	It all gets summed up in verse 26 and they judge the people at all seasons, the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. And that should be how that goes. Then verse 27 just goes, and Moses let his father-in-law depart. And I think that says something about the relationship Moses has with his father-in-law. I think he took the advice. It tells us that Moses is humble, even now actually has a close relationship with his father-in-law. Close enough that he's like, "Thank you. And can you stick around until these

changes are in effect and counsel me further?" And when it all gets resolved, as supposedly does, Moses let his father-in-law depart. And Jethro went his own way into his own land. He is like, "You're good. I'm going back home, send the kids down for summer vacation week."

- Hank Smith: 00:27:23 You did well.
- John Bytheway: 00:27:24 Maybe Moses, well, Ramsey's always just said, "So it shall be written. So it shall be done." And everything happened. And so how do I do this?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:27:32 The names are slightly confusing, but it's possible that Jethro actually used the one that gave Moses the priesthood, for instance. And by virtue of that it may have been not as priesthood authority, but certainly a priesthood advisor, if that works. And by virtue of that, then this is practical priesthood administration advice as well. How the counselors of the church should run. You can do a comparison with this with Doctrine Covenants 1:21 and how to administer and use the priesthood properly. Persuading.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:04 Long suffering, brotherly kindness.
- Hank Smith: 00:28:06 I thought I heard a little Joseph Smith in there, teach them correct principles and let them govern themselves. Was he pretty effective at this idea of you take it, you go?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:28:17 I think when you look at the history for instance, of Zion in Missouri, I think you'd have to look at that as a place where yeah, just by virtue of the limitations of travel and communication, there's a lot of things that are similar with the ancient world. But as I look at these two, in terms of the ability to communicate and the ability to travel, these two limited if you had the church organization. In the New Testament, one of the challenges that arose was the fact that you now had these congregations, but if there was any type of local changes in authority or persecution, you're not going to be able to get people into the city and you're not going to be able to get letters or epistles to them.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:28:56 So it doesn't take long. And even if you could, it would take, I don't know, a letter if you wrote in Jerusalem to get to Rome, two months? And so get two months there, two months back, that's a lot of time to travel down to Zion from Kirtland for instance, it's a couple of weeks. And so it doesn't take long for things to go awry quickly. By virtue of that, I think just by the

very necessity of things, people had to rely more on the spiritual independence for lack of a better term of others. You had no choice.

- Hank Smith: 00:29:33 That is such a perfect verse in 26, every small matter they judged themselves. You got to be able to figure it out on your own. This is such a great chapter.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:29:44 Well, and then the other element of that is what exactly is a small matter? I think that's subjective too, isn't it? I would think too hopefully you've taught people the law and the principles well enough that by far, most things are small matters. 1st Corinthians, the letter that Paul writes to the people of Corinth. It's intriguing because it's got some big matters and it's got a bunch of small matters and they can't distinguish between the two. And then there's some matters that should never have been a matter at all and yet clearly are. So you look at it and go, that's a big matter, but it should never have been one. You know the answer to that question, that's a given. That should never have been an issue, but you made it an issue. And so I think sometimes there are small matters that become big matters, but never should have been.
- Hank Smith: 00:30:35 I'm writing spiritual self-reliance, right across the top of the page. And as a leader too helping people develop and having confidence in themselves and not saying, "Yeah, come to me, look to me."
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:30:50 And we've put this in the context of priesthood. And yet that holds anyone within any really priesthood authority position that includes relief society presidents. My experience, and granted, and it's subjective and anecdotal, when I was elders quorum president and I'd have my counterparts relief society president, they can take a lot on. We think of the bishop who has to use so much spiritual strength. I think relief society presidents carry a huge load in any given ward.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:31:21 And I think is in fact, one of their challenges too, because they don't want to put anyone out and they've got members of their organization who are mothers and so they... All of these different things that take up time. I think a relief society president in many ways expends more time and energy than other, maybe other leaders. I can't say that, but in the sense they have a lot of responsibilities and this importance, the lesson of delegation. And then learning to trust that delegation, once you've delegated it, now let them figure out how to do it themselves is as much a lesson for the relief society president as it is for the bishop. That's for sure.

Hank Smith:	00:32:00	Absolutely young women's president as well.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:32:03	Primary.
Hank Smith:	00:32:04	Yeah. On small matters. It's good to give people the tools they need to figure this out on their own. So the next time they don't come to you, they can do it on their own. So little training up front can really go a long way.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:32:19	I've described it before this way, that in some ways those in these leadership positions be they bishop, a relief society president, young women's president, primary, whatever it is, elders quorum president, their job in some ways is to take care... Particularly the bishop, but to take care of almost emergencies that pop up, put out fires when they show up.
Hank Smith:	00:32:37	Yeah, the hard causes of verse 26.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:32:41	But there are chronic issues or endemic issues in a given organization. And that really should be the responsibility of the ward council, that we'll take care of that. We've got long term issues that require more planning, more structure. That's the job of the ward council. And we'll go back and we'll report on what we've been doing in terms of those larger chronic, endemic issues.
Hank Smith:	00:33:06	Maybe one of the most relevant chapters of the Old Testament I've ever seen.
John Bytheway:	00:33:10	Our listeners might want to go back and find elder Quentin L. Cook's talk in April, 2021 general conference called Bishops Shepherds Over the Lord's Flock and you'll see some of these same principles we've been talking about outlined in that talk about delegation and letting people lead.
Hank Smith:	00:33:28	And I'll tell you something I just thought of is, I'm sure grateful for the Jethros in my life who are willing to pull me aside and say, "I think this is a bad idea."
John Bytheway:	00:33:38	And Hank, I'm looking at Exodus 18:24 thinking, I bet my father-in-law's going to show me that verse. Moses hearkened unto the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.
Hank Smith:	00:33:50	When someone pulls you aside and says, "The thing that thou doest is not good."

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:33:55	Yeah. We just give straight to Exodus 19. That's what we do when talking with my in-laws, just like what? Chapter 19?
Hank Smith:	00:34:01	Yeah. I don't know. There's no chapter 18. I've never read that one. All right. Well Dan, why don't we keep going. Turn over 19 back to you again. So this is the beginning of what you'd say was this insert that's going to last all the way through Numbers 11?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:34:15	Right. And I don't know if insert's the right language for it, but to say that they've clearly in some ways separated the story of the counselors or the calling of these helpers for Moses, and then gone into great detail about the next set of events. And these next events in 19 ended in 20, in many ways, get to the heart of what it means to be Israel. That the lineage of Jacob, we get that. But what's about to happen in 19 is the emergence of a covenant that is going to make him distinctive. And so obviously all narratives of the Bible are of value, but in many ways, this one becomes a defining narrative for Israel than most.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:34:58	And this is probably why it has been at again from a source critical perspective, so worked and reworked and edited and additions put in from different groups are like, "Oh, you know what? This has affected us this way." This is a story, this narrative and the events that happened in Exodus 19 and 20 are found in every book of scripture we have. They're alluded to in the Book of Mormon, they're referenced in the New Testament, they're found in the Doctrine and Covenants. These events in 19 and 20 are fundamental and foundational into an understanding of Israel. And perhaps more importantly, the experience that Israel should be having.
Hank Smith:	00:35:37	A declaration of independence to the United States, right? Just fundamental to who we are.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:35:43	It's if you're going to be Israel, you need to understand the story.
Hank Smith:	00:35:47	Yeah.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:35:48	And this is in many ways, this is where it begins. Well, it starts right off there. It's the third month they've left Egypt. They've gone through the Red Sea. When traveling, they get to Sinai, it's taken three months to get there, but they're finally at Sinai. And when they get to Sinai, Moses is called by the Lord to the top of the mountain. In many ways, he's been to Sinai already, he wants the burning bush story. And now they're finally to Sinai

and the Lord calls him back up. When he gets up there, a covenant or at least covenant terminology appears beginning in about verse three and it's going to run through verse six. And so when you look at, it says, "thou shalt say to the house of Jacob, unto the children of Israel, you have seen what I did under the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagles wings and brought you unto myself.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:36:34 Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people for all the earth is mine." When I read that, there's a number of elements to it. The first one is something I teach my students is the role of therefore, in verse five. It's a conjunction. Conjunctions are a value in the scriptures. They're not in intrinsically doctrinal. They're not like the word atonement, which just brings up a whole constellation of ideas and concepts.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:37:05 But what they do is establish relationships that allow us to fully grasp doctrine. And in this case, we're dealing primarily with a covenant. But what I find fascinating is how it sets up the concept of faith. In the sense it says, you know what I've done, therefore, you can trust me when I tell you what I'm going to do. You know it, you've experienced it. You have this understanding. And therefore, when I tell you I'm going to do this, you can trust that. And that seems essential to me. That to me is a great example of faith. You know what I've done, therefore, when I tell you I'll do this, trust me.

Hank Smith: 00:37:48 I've given you some enough evidence for you to go on that you can now step out in faith here.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:37:54 And that's a big deal because I think sometimes we define faith too often as an engagement where we let act knowledge. So it's, I don't know, therefore I have to have that faith. And yet in this case, and I think in all cases where I see it in the scriptures, dealing with faith, it's reliant on what you do know. And the more you know, the more faith you have. And I think that connection to knowledge is something that we don't often think about, but is absolutely vital to faith. Your faith is stronger, the more you know.

Hank Smith: 00:38:25 Yeah. And the more you experience.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:38:26 The more you understand and see the Lord's hand in your life. And that's why gratitude, I think is an important principle. God doesn't need it because His self-esteem is so fragile. And if it's not for Him, then it's got to be for whom? And what I find

interesting about gratitude is when you are engaged in true gratitude, prayer, whatever context it's going to be, it becomes revelatory. Example that I give is sometimes when you're hiking up a mountain, you can't see over the next ridge and the next set of switchbacks. And it's just exhausting.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|---|
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:38:57 | But if you turn around and look behind you to see how far you actually have come up the mountain, it gives you strength to go up that next set of switchbacks. You might not know what's ahead, but you do know what's behind. And so gratitude is revelatory in much the same way prophecy is, it's revelatory. And it reveals to you what has been done and particularly the way in which the Lord's been involved in your life, which gives you the power and the strength to move forward into the future with that trust. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:39:25 | It seems to be a theme in the Book of Mormon. Remember what the Lord has done, remember what the Lord has done, so you can move forward in trust because you've seen it done in the past. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:39:35 | Yeah, we see it in Moroni's promise. Sometimes we go too fast, past Moroni 10:3. Ponder how merciful God has been since the creation of Adam and ponder it in your hearts. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:39:49 | It's more subtle in scriptures, but I think there's a powerful theme in there of... And not necessarily being reflected in these verses, but you can find places where the Lord says, "And I'll remember you. I remember you. I remember these things. I'll remember..." So there's an element here of where you can find where God says, "I have faith in you. I trust in you." And I think that's a strength that we ought to keep. Paul talks about that in Galatians. That he's sustained by his faith in Christ who trusted in him too. And so this, this idea that we're sustained by God's faith in us, as well as our faith in God, I think it's vitally important. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:40:30 | Yeah. And the thing that He's reminding them of isn't small. You saw how I got you out of Egypt. That's not a thing that anybody missed, and it's, what happened? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:40:41 | Did you notice that object lesson? |
| Hank Smith: | 00:40:44 | Yeah. You remember when we walked through the Red Sea, that wasn't a magic trick. That was me. And the therefore becomes quite strong at that point. Therefore- |

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:40:55	Therefore are a big deal in the scriptures. And when you find them, they'll help you establish relationships between the concepts. Sometimes they're cause and effect. Sometimes they're summative, but either way, they're always going to demonstrate a relationship in these two elements of a text. They're powerful.
John Bytheway:	00:41:12	Dan, can you tell us, because I think I remember Brent taught that we've also had on the podcast. I think he has a whole book about a peculiar treasure, but is it segula, the Hebrew or something for peculiar treasure?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:41:26	We see the principle of faith being expressed here or the reliance on faith. But when you get into the actual promises that are being made, they're contingent, "You know what I've done, therefore, if you accept my covenant, if you keep my covenant, then I'm going to make you a peculiar treasure." This segula. And it does mean treasure. And he defines it further as a treasure above all people. It's going to be identifying, this unique identifying marker that will mark Israel and demonstrate their uniqueness. Or what God has planned for Israel in terms of uniqueness, that is further outlined in verse six, when he says, "You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." So when He talks about this peculiar treasure, He then specifies it and says, and by that, I mean ultimately a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:42:17	Now the Hebrew phrasing there for that kingdom of priests, this <i>mamlechet kohanim</i> is tricky, the way it's constructed in the Hebrew. And I don't want to bore people with all the details that lies behind that, but it's led to a variety of different translations. And what exactly a kingdom of priests is, how literal are we supposed to take this? Do we take this within the constructive form? Or can they be two absolute noun forms, meaning you shall be unto me, kings and priests? That's the way some have translated this. Kingdom of priests certainly works here, but people have a question as to who exactly is meant to be a kingdom of priest? And what would that mean? What is a priest? What would a kingdom of priests look like? And to some degree that interpretation, how you understand that is governed by what you think is about to follow in terms of an experience.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:43:08	And what I mean by that is Moses goes down off the mountain, asks Israel and says, okay, so this is what God has said. If you're willing to keep His covenant, He'll make you a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. What do you think? And the people all answer in verse eight. "Well, the Lord has spoken.

Well, yeah, we'll do it." So Moses goes back up the mountain. This is the second time up the mountain now. And he says, "The people agree to this," to which the Lord says, "Awesome. Let's seal the deal."

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:43:34 When we think of a covenant, sometimes we focus in on the oath of the covenant. That the speaking or the agreements made between the two parties, but at least in the Old Testament, more oft than not a covenant carries with it an act, a ritual act, a formal act of some kind that represents the ratification of this relationship that's been established. Whether it's a meal, whether it is a changing of clothing, whatever it is, there's an act that goes with the oath. And those two things, the oath that's made between the two parties and the formal act that ratifies that relationship, those two things got to go hand in hand in terms of the covenant making process.
- Hank Smith: 00:44:18 I would love for our listeners to get at least a glimpse into this idea, because we have young Latter-day Saints who go through the temple and they're like, "I don't know what that was. What is going on?" And I think this is some understanding that you can give them and say, "Look, when God makes covenants in the Old Testament, there's a..." I like what you said, "An act of ratification, whether it be of dinner, a change of clothes." Is that similar to what you'd say, "Hey, this is what happens today. And then the endowment, we make an agreement we're going to ratify this agreement?"
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:44:51 Yeah. More oft than not ritual is social. It's a communal act. Even if it's done on an individual level, it's communal at some level, because it demonstrates inclusion into a group or the maintaining the structure of the group, or ultimately to exclude from a group. If behaviors are as such a manner that they're no longer conducive to that community, then you have rituals of exclusion or excommunication. But most rituals have to do with inclusion into a group, a community, or maintaining the integrity of that community. You can think of that from a Latter-day Saint perspective, as we look at our ordinances, Elder Bednar has talked about this to some degree and pointed out that it's, our ordinances are more than ritual, but having said that they carry with it these social elements of ritual, we have baptism, which is inclusion into a community. We have the sacrament, which maintains the integrity of the community.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:45:44 Obviously the temple has a whole series of them. And going along with that is that more oft than not they have new understandings of identity. Who you are, your definition of yourself changes as you move through this. If you go to baptism,

what changes in your sense of self? Well, now you are a member of the Church of Christ. You are a brother and sister in the gospel with these people that are around you. In the temple there's no question that there is a new identity that's being established. Or if not a new identity, an understanding of your true identity. Let's put it that way. A divine nature, perhaps in this manner so explicitly demonstrated.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 00:46:29 | These acts of ratification are not just, "Hey, let's seal the deal. It's let me teach you as well." |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:46:35 | Mm-hmm (affirmative). |
| Hank Smith: | 00:46:36 | Okay. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:46:36 | Right. Particularly, ultimately dealing with identity, which becomes so fundamental to your engagement with that community or that group. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:46:45 | Okay. Yeah. This is really great because you saw what I did. I want to do something grand with you. I want to make you peculiar. And the idea by the way, we've talked about this before. I don't know if we need to hit it again, but God doesn't say, you're better than other people. He's saying "I can use you to bless the whole earth. The whole earth is mine." |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:47:07 | In fact, you can see that in there with that kingdom of priests. However you're going to define priests, a priest has the primary function to act as an intermediary or an intervener between God and others. That's the function of a priest, to bless others and bring them closer in their relationship with God. That is the function of a priest. This event in Exodus 19 and 20 seems at least to me to be one of the central themes to the Book of Hebrews as well. And so for instance, in chapter five, it does talk about the priesthood there and why God calls priests. The purpose for those priests is to he says, "Bring gifts and sacrifices unto the Lord," but it goes further to say so that they have compassion upon the ignorant and the out of the way. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:47:51 | That suggests right there, that at least to the writer of Hebrews, that one of the primary functions of the priesthood and therefore of calling a priest, a high priest in that case is to show compassion upon the ignorant and the out of the way. And that's a whole other discussion in and of itself, which you guys can deal with when you get into the New Testament. But the idea that the priesthood has a function to demonstrate compassion on two particular groups, the ignorant and those |

that are out of the way, I think is telling. And that element of it with the out of the way that does remind me of the concept of succoring that is found in the Book of Mormon. That's exactly who you succor. Those who are out of the way.

Hank Smith: 00:48:30 Is the author here connecting this to the same covenant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Where they were kind of called the same way, "I'm going to set you apart to bless the earth."

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:48:39 It's certainly possible. You have an allusion back to this concept of a holy nation. And yet having said that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not being mentioned explicitly here at all. That doesn't mean this isn't a connection back to it, but it does suggest that this is in some ways, a new element to these older covenants. There's a new focus, a new perspective with a new set of people. They're not the patriarchs, they're another group of people who've had their own experiences. I think it does tie back. But what you're about to see, particularly in Leviticus, the Leviticus has a law version of this law code that we're about to receive. And it stresses their importance to be holy. And Deuteronomy is going to refer to them as a holy people. Moving forward the association of Israel as holy becomes really significant, and I could be wrong as I think back to the Abrahamic covenant, he isn't referred to as holy.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:49:36 That doesn't mean he wasn't holy. There's clearly a distinction and a separation, which is what some people believe holy means, the Hebrew word for holy this *kodesh*, means at some level to separate. That there's a level of separation. And that seems to be the case here, there will be nations and then there will be a holy nation. And that holy nation has a different function and a different purpose. Now that can lead into a greater discussion as to what the nature of holiness is. And so, while I mentioned that it just says separation some good biblical scholars have noted that the concept of holiness carries it with a sense of wholeness or completion. To complete or finish something, to be whole as if to suggest then that if Israel, I'm going to ask you to be holy, I really ask you to be whole, complete.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:50:23 And then you play with that even further, is there two adjectival forms of this word holy, that gets translated to the word holy. And the distinction between those two suggests a level of dynamics or a dynamicism meaning that things that are *kadosh* like, God, the holy one of Israel are expected to make things holy, as opposed to things that are *kodash*, which are holy. They're sacred, they're separated, but they're holy. This

becomes a big deal when you get into, for instance, Leviticus 19, that says be holy, even as I am holy.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:50:57 So now the question is which adjectival form is being expressed? And what does that say? If it says *kodash*, then He's simply saying, I want you to be holy, separate, sacred, even as I am. But if He's using *kadosh*, then He's got a bit of a different nuance to this. I want you to not only be holy, but I want you to make things holy, even as I am holy. And that dynamic element ties in, I think to all of this. Now in this case, it's going to be *kodash* because it's a perfect an adjective for the noun, a nation. But when He actually commands Israel to be holy, it's going to be *kadosh*. He expects Israel to make things whole, make things complete, make things finished. Tie it all together that's what ordinances often do. Ordinances help us become whole and complete and finished.
- Hank Smith: 00:51:47 Going back to your acts of ratification, is ordinance kind of the same idea there?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:51:53 Well, ordinance is an English word, which is nice and vague. In this, it can represent ritual behavior and it can also represent legal precedences.
- Hank Smith: 00:52:03 Okay. Yeah. That's going to say it is nice and vague. You can get it in church. You can do it in the city, the county building, the ordinance.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:52:12 That's exactly right.
- Hank Smith: 00:52:13 The nice and vague. That could be my autobiography title. Nice and vague.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:52:19 Nice and vague.
- Hank Smith: 00:52:21 I see here, the Lord saying I'd like to do this. I like that Moses asks the people, there's an agency there. "Do you want to do this?" "Yes we do." "Okay. Let's..." Now how are they going to ratify it?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:52:33 Okay. That's where it begins to pick up down here in verse 10. Moses comes back up and says, the people have agreed. We've had our oath. You said what you would do. We said what we would do. So the ratification begins and the Lord says unto Moses, "Go onto the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And be ready against the third day. For the third day, the Lord will come down

in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai." So what he's being told is, okay, we've all agreed. Now let's seal the deal. I'm coming down in three days. If I'm going to make you a kingdom of priests, then we probably ought to meet. And so I'm going to come down in three days and I'm going to do it in the sight of all the people. All the people should be able to see me. And that's what we're going to do. That's our meeting.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|---|
| Hank Smith: | 00:53:24 | And what's the idea of washing your clothes? What's the idea of washing yourself? |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:53:29 | Well, I think everyone knows that you have to be clean clothes in the presence of God. He doesn't like dirty clothes. No, I'm just... Actually, I don't think He cares much about the state of the clothing itself, but it will represent your spiritual state. What He's telling Israel He says, "You've got three days to get ready because I'm coming down. And when I'm down, I expect to see you." So it's being represented in this. I don't think the Lord is actually going to have a huge problem if someone's got dirty clothes or scuffed up hems, but they will represent their spiritual state. It does represent their spiritual state. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:54:04 | Much like the unleavened yeast in their house. He's probably not overly concerned about how much yeast you have in your house, but He is concerned about how much corruption you have in your life. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:54:13 | It's the principle that's in play here. And then in verse 12, now in the meantime set up this boundary around the base of Mount Sinai so that nobody comes up here unprepared and sees me on top of Sinai. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:54:26 | I like that. Put a boundary up. There's a temple recommend desk, right at the base of Sinai. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:54:33 | And then 14. And so Moses goes down. He tells the people sanctify and get ready for the third day. And in verse 16, there's the third day. And you have all of the meteorological phenomenon that is associated with the presence of God. When you have a theophany, this is what you're going to have. There's thunders, there's lightnings, there's clouds. The voice of the trumpet. This is a true, full blown theophany that's happening on Mount Sinai. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:55:01 | This is great. |

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:55:02	Now what happens next is where this gets a bit tricky. And this is a place where scholars point out things get a little unexpected. Because what happens is, that Moses brings all the people out of the camp and they stood at the nether part of the mountain and Mount Sinai is, the Lord's there He's descended onto the top of the mountain. And you get verse 20, where from the top of Sinai, Moses is called up the top of the mountain again. The Lord calls Moses to come up there. And then you get verse 21. And the Lord said unto Moses, "Go down, charge the people lest they break through under the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish." The instruction set is basically, you have got to make sure that boundary is in place because I don't want the people coming up here to see me.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:55:48	Now, this is tricky because back there in verse 11, it suggests that seeing God was in fact, the intended purpose for this day's visit. That this was exactly what was supposed to have happened. And yet now when it happens, the Lord's like, "Oh, set up that boundary. I don't want anyone coming up here to see me." And as difficult as it sounds in verse 21, it makes it sound as if the reason they're not meeting is because of God Himself. In other words, "Go down, charge the people lest they break through." It sounds like the people are at the boundary and want to do what?
Hank Smith:	00:56:22	They want to come up.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:56:23	They want to come up. They want to do this. And the Lord's like, "Nope, Nope. I'm rescinding my offer. We're not doing that today."
Hank Smith:	00:56:31	That's unexpected. Yeah.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:56:33	It is unexpected. And when you look at earlier elements in the book of Exodus, everything has been leading to Israel is going to have this relationship with God. Israel's going to do these things. Israel's going to do it, until the event happens and all of a sudden Israel's not allowed to. And that's tricky. It's what I say, it gets tricky in the text. Because it's not what you would expect. It's not what the text is setting up. And so we've got a bit of a disjoining. If that makes any sense. It just it's disconnected, it doesn't feel right. And that's where chapter 20 comes into play. Now I know that the first part of it deals with the 10 commandments. But if you pick up the narrative in verse 18, the first 17 verses or so deal with the 10 commandments.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:57:16	But if you pick up the narrative again in verse 18, here's what we have. And all the people saw the thunderings and the

lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking and when the people saw it, they removed and stood a far off. What you have are kind of two different versions now of the same event. In the first one, it seems to be it's the Lord saying, "Yeah. I'm not going to let you come up here and see me." But now we get Exodus 20, it's not the Lord that is holding people back from seeing Him, it's what? It's the people themselves. They saw this and they removed and stood a far off.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|---|
| Hank Smith: | 00:57:53 | The Lord, verse 21 back in Exodus 19 says, "Lest they perish." They say something very similar in the next in 20, "We don't want to go up there lest we die." |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:58:03 | That's exactly right. And you can see that in verse 19. And they said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die." So you have two different versions, the same things happening, which means on this day, Israel was expected to see God, but did not see God. Chapter 19 suggests that maybe it's because for whatever reason, God wasn't feeling it that day. And then you get chapter 20, which is like, nope, the people themselves removed themselves. Moses goes on, verse 20, "Fear not for God has come to prove to you and that His fear may be before your faces." And the people stood a far off and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. In this pivotal event, this covenant, which was to be ratified by the people becoming a kingdom of priests, apparently by entering into the presence of God Himself, it didn't happen. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:58:56 | It didn't happen. And that's where this event becomes now this, for lack of a better term, a lesson throughout any scripture dealing with Israel. Again, it's going to be alluded to in Deuteronomy 5 and Deuteronomy 10. Interestingly, from those perspectives, they're not going to take the chapter 19 version of the story. They're going to take the Exodus 20 version of the story. That it was the people that removed. It was the people that said, "We don't want to hear," the people that did these things. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:59:23 | And it's at this point where the Book of Mormon becomes valuable to us. Because in Jacob 1:7, Jacob's describing the work that he and the other spiritual leaders were doing. And this is the way he describes it. He says, wherefore we labor diligently among our people that we might persuade them to come unto Christ and partake in the goodness of God that they might enter into His rest lest by any means He should swear in His wrath that they should not enter in. As in the days of the provocation, |

in the days of temptation, while the children of Israel were in the wilderness.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:59:53 Well, he's used two phrases here that even though they don't show up in Exodus 19 and Exodus 20, will in fact be alluded to elsewhere in the Old Testament, Psalm 95 in particular. And is this concept of entering into God's rest and provoking the Lord, the provocation. Now the truth is Israel provokes the Lord all over the place in these stories. You've got the waters of Meribah, which are alluded to, you've got the golden calf story. You've got the quail story, you got Korah, you've got all of these narratives that will run through the rest of Exodus, through Numbers of where they clearly provoke the Lord. And by like take a stick and just poke that bear. But the ultimate provocation, it seems to be here Exodus 19 and 20. And you can actually see this best by restoration scripture.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:00:43 Meaning, if you turn to Doctrine and Covenants 84 beginning, yeah, 19 through 24. It's going to set this up. He's talking about the priesthood and about the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. And points out again, that in the ordinances, both the laws and in the ritual that we associate the priesthood. And without the ordinances thereof and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh. For without this, no man can see the face of God, even the father and live. So Joseph is explaining, or at least the Lord is explaining to Joseph ways in which the priesthood is necessary for this incredible experience to see the face of God. Now, verse 23, this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:01:37 This seems to be a direct illusion back to Exodus 19. That he did everything he could to sanctify his people to behold the face of God, but they hardened their hearts and could not endure His presence. That's exactly what Exodus 20 describes. That they hardened their hearts and could not endure. They did not enter into His presence. And therefore the Lord in His wrath for His anger was kindled against them swore that they should not enter into His rest while in the wilderness. Which rest is the fullness of His glory. I.E, they could have been in the presence of God and they did not. And therefore he swore, while you're in the wilderness, it's not going to happen. This event where Israel enters into a covenant relationship with God of which the culminating element of that should have been an experience where they enter into the presence of God and they did not. And this seems to be the ultimate provocation.

Hank Smith:	01:02:31	And why do you feel like this is in the origin story? Is it because later on they're going to do this so many times that it's going to be a pattern of God wants this, you agree, and then you fail to live up to your obligation? That's a pattern in my life.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:02:49	I think ultimately it's because this is an experience that should be happening. This is if you are Israel, this is what's going to make you separate and distinct, you have the opportunity to enter into the presence of the Lord. Hebrews chapter four and verse six, but as Christ as son over His own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm into the end, wherefore as the Holy Ghost sayeth today, if you will hear His voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness. That's Psalm 95, and then he says, "When your fathers tempted me, proved me and saw my works 40 years, wherefore I was grieved with that generation and said, they do always harden their heart and have not known my ways.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:03:29	So I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." Now, if you go to chapter four, here's how it begins. Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest any of you should seem to come short of it. The writer here is saying is that there was an early Christian understanding within the church in early Christianity that this promise applied to them as well. There's a promise that if you do these things, you can enter into His rest, the fullness of His glory. This is a promise that defines, I think Israel, regardless of what dispensation you're in, regardless of the differences of experience, this is a promise that is given to Israel, that I expect you to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. And by virtue of that, we're going to have to meet.
Hank Smith:	01:04:18	Yeah. And yet, so many of us fall short of it, it's so human. It's God wants this I want this. And when it comes to the moment of choosing I fall short.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:04:32	I don't know why Israel, part of it could have been that they look at that and went, "There's no way I can be ready in three days." So it's back to this concept of faith. I always wonder about that. If I were told that the Lord is coming in three days and that I needed to meet him in three days, and here's what I need to do to be ready. Do I think washing my clothes would make me ready in three days? Do I think I could do it? And yet my response to that is, if the Lord tells you that three days is enough, then it must be enough.
Hank Smith:	01:05:03	So they don't believe Him?

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:05:05	Yeah. At some level they don't trust in that aspect of it. Chapter four of Hebrews continues this at the end of it talks about Christ and what He's made possible. And then it describes, an experience, verse 16, "Let us therefore come boldly under the throne of grace." Now that requires us to understand a little bit about the temple rather than the tabernacle. But if the throne of grace is God's throne, then it's within the holy of holies. And the same idea is repeated by the way, in Hebrews 10, which describes it this way. "This is a new covenant I will put in them." This is chapter 10, verse 16. "I will put my laws into their hearts and into their minds will I write them and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Now where remission of these is there was no more offering for sin, having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:05:52	These two chapters, talk about the ability to enter into holiest of places or approach the throne of God. What strikes me about it is not only does it suggest that the atonement of Christ makes it possible for us to enter into the presence of God, literally enter the presence of God, but in both verses, it talks about being able to do so boldly. There's an understanding here that the atonement too of Christ makes it possible for us to be bold in the presence of God. And I don't think that means disrespectful, and it doesn't mean irreverent, but it does mean... Well, it means whatever you're going to define boldness with. Confidence, surety? These are the things that Israel could have had entering into the presence of God and yet did not.
John Bytheway:	01:06:36	Alma gives such an awesome contrast in Alma five, "When you're brought to stand before God, can you look up?" He doesn't say, are you clean? Or are you prepared? He just says, I love this, "Can you look up?" And Alma 12:14, I think that first one's Alma 5:14 or something, but Alma 12:14, you will not dare to look up. You will fame be glad to command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon you to hide you from His presence if you're not prepared. But the idea of can you look up? Reminds me too, of Enos who says, then I will see His face with pleasure. And maybe that's what that boldness means too. Because I've wondered, what does that mean boldly? It just, it means that you're confident in the Atonement? You're confident that you're prepared because of what the Savior's done for you?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:07:27	Joseph F. Smith tells the story of a dream he had. And for those of you who studied the life of Joseph F. Smith, that mission in Hawaii was tricky. That was difficult, very difficult.
John Bytheway:	01:07:35	He was 15 years old. Wasn't he?

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:07:37	15 years old.
John Bytheway:	01:07:39	Yeah.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:07:39	You read it, he felt very isolated, very alone, very forgotten.
John Bytheway:	01:07:43	He was sick when he got there.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:07:44	He was sick. He has this dream in which he's going to go to the temple. And it's a very famous one, we all know it. But to me, it's a great example of this boldness. And can't find his temple clothing, finally finds it, runs to the temple. There's his what Uncle? Joseph Smith looking down on him, frowning disapprovingly. "Oh, you're late Joseph." And his response is, "Yes, but I'm clean." And just walks right by him. That is that boldness. He knows he belongs there. He knows he deserves to be there and so he is. And so this boldness idea, I think John, you brought up Alma 5. One of the intriguing things about that is, that's of course the wicked, right? But Alma actually described earlier in the verses that, do you look forward with an eye of faith? Do you see your mortality putting on immortality?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:08:35	Do you see your corruption putting on incorruption? Can you imagine unto yourselves, the God saying, "Enter in ye blessed." And I know that he's talking about it to the wicked going, "Or do you think that you're going to be able to lie to God?" But I think those other questions are intriguing, because I think they tie into this boldness, which is, do we think about that often? Do we think about what it's like to be in the presence of God? Do we imagine what eternal life is like? If those verses hold true Alma has just suggested that as weird as it sounds, imagination plays a fundamental role in the expression of faith. Looking forward with an eye of faith and seeing something that hasn't been yet, but will be. Do you imagine it? Do you imagine what it's like to be in the presence of God?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:09:22	Do you imagine it? Do we explore the contours of what it means to have eternal life? And it seems to me that that longterm, that ability to not just look up but as Peter's going to call it, see afar off. Becomes absolutely essential to survival. And in a day and age, particularly now, and this is me getting on my soapbox a bit, but in a day and age where so much information is flying around so fast, so often, that to some degree, there's an element of where we're constantly reacting to the barrage of inspiration that's coming in. It's a constant reaction. We have no choice, but to deal with what keeps flashing before our eyes all the time. And yet to see afar off means, you've got to lift

yourself from that, lift your gaze from that and see a long perspective.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:10:11 In my Pearl of Great Price class, I talk about the importance of the vision of scale and recognizing that one of the things that when prophets have visions is more often not they're shown the scale and the immensity of this work. It's cosmic in scope. Moses sees the earth and all the inhabitants of the earth and every particle of the earth. And Enoch sees millions of earths like this. And Abraham has the work of God expanded before his eyes, and John and all of these individuals have this expansion of vision, not just the vision itself, but an expansion of an understanding of the cosmos and the work of God within that huge cosmic scale. And I think there's an importance to seeing afar off.
- Hank Smith: 01:10:56 They say, man is nothing, which I think I'd never suppose this idea of I'm seeing life in its proper perspective. Instead of like in it with information flying around me, I'm seeing, oh, I'm seeing it from God's point of view a little bit.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:11:11 Right. Right. And that experience that the Israelites were meant to have, I think is tied into that. Why weren't they ready in three days? I don't know, but it makes me think they were concentrating on three days more than the horizon. They didn't see afar off.
- Hank Smith: 01:11:25 What if my clothes aren't clean enough? Yeah.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:11:28 And maybe part of it is we don't actually believe that that's an event that can really happen. I don't think we think enough about entering into the presence of God and what that's like. And yet the Doctrine and Covenants is full of that. And the Book of Mormon has narrative after narrative of people who do, and the New Testament talks about it. There's a promise. There's a promise that's given that this can happen so that you can bless all mankind. You're expected to be a kingdom of priests to bless everybody. And so yeah, the story isn't ultimately negative for Israel at that time for those 40 years, but it lays out an experience that any Israelite is expected to have in any dispensation. In fact, I've quoted enough of Hebrews, but there's one more, you get to Hebrews chapter 12 and you get verse 18.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:12:18 And this is what it says, "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, that burned with fire nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words," that's our illusion back to Exodus 19, isn't it?

Exodus 19:20. And it's saying, "You are not supposed to have that experience," verse 20, "For they could not endure that which was commanded. And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, "I extremely fear and quake." He says, that is not the experience that we're meant to have. Verse 22, "But ye are coming to Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|---|
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 01:13:02 | See that you refuse not him that speaketh. See that you refuse not him that speaketh." This is the experience that Israel could have had and did not have. This is the experience that the writer of Hebrews is saying the Christians should have, whether or not they did is another story. And what I can tell you is that by 1832 in the great vision that Joseph Smith has of the three degrees of glory, these verses are alluded to in them. And show up then in a series of teachings from Joseph, from here to the end of his life. He's constantly alluding to them. In 1842, I want to say, in September and October, writing for the Times and Seasons, Evening and Morning Star, I can't remember which periodical it is, but he talks about this experience and says, "We ought to be having this. This is what the saints should be doing." |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 01:13:55 | This is an experience. And since I'm playing with that, here's section 107. This is in our Doctrine and Covenants talking about the powers of the priesthood. You get verse 18, which says, the power and the authority of the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church. It's then followed by a verse which appears to reflect the blessings, spiritual blessings of the church. To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God, the father and Jesus, the mediator of the covenant. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 01:14:31 | Now I don't think we talk about this enough and yet it's straight out, these are the spiritual blessings that the church has available. And so I'm back to the question that I've asked is, how often do we think about it? Do we even take these seriously? Do we think that they're only for a certain select group of people? Or are they blessings that are available to anyone by virtue the Melchizedek Priesthood? And what does it mean if they are available to everyone? |

Hank Smith:

01:15:01

Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:03	Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
Hank Smith:	00:00:07	Why do you think Dan, 19 says the Lord refused them, 20 says the people refused the Lord. What happened there?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:00:14	This is probably my opinion more than anything other. It's funny, when you read commentary on this passage, a number of biblical scholars say it's clearly confusing, but seeing God, that's not real. So, that can't have been what it's talking about. Even if I were a nonbeliever, I guess I would say this. I'd say okay, whether or not I believe, it doesn't matter. The text suggests that it can happen. Complete conjecture, so you have to take it for what it's worth. But I happen to think that one of those groups later understood that it is Israel's fault for not meeting God, and don't like that story.
Hank Smith:	00:00:51	So they, as they put in this part of... The Lord didn't let them.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:00:55	Yeah. It's the same way in the flood story, you have two different versions there. All the animals go on the Ark, two by two, male and female, including fowl of the air, two by two. That's Genesis five. And then Genesis six opens, says all the animals went on the Ark two by two, male and female. Except for clean animals, they went on seven by seven. Oh, and birds, they also went on seven by seven. So you're like, so which one is it? And in that case, you can make a bit of a guess as to which one's older, clean and unclean animals didn't exist in the days of Noah. So, you've got someone writing from the-
John Bytheway:	00:01:29	From the viewpoint of the Law of Moses, they're writing-
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:01:32	Exactly.
John Bytheway:	00:01:33	Interesting.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:01:33	So, they're trying to validate the Law of Moses, and make it older than it seems, and throws it back then onto the Noah story.

Hank Smith:	00:01:40	I would like to flesh out this idea of what do you do when you fall short? Because I can hear many people going, "That's me. God says let's do this, and I'm saying let's do this, and then I back off and I don't come through." When you say provoke the Lord, can we say... I don't know, I don't want a listener going, "God is mad at me." But this idea of, oh, what you could have had if you just believed, right? You could have these supernal experiences.
John Bytheway:	00:02:12	Maybe the word is refused. You refused the Lord. You, "No, I couldn't do that."
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:02:19	Well, I think section 84 helps in that regard, "They hardened their hearts and could not enter into His presence." I'm always struck by that. The could not means that they have no ability to enter into the presence of God, but it is fronted by it. And they harden their hearts, it's a choice, they chose not to. And choices have consequences. We've quoted a fair amount of Elder Bednar. He's not the only one to have done it, he's just the latest one that I remember. He's given kind of a folk saying, "When you pick up one end of the stick, you've picked up the other." So what I find intriguing about that in terms of understanding agency, is that there's a responsibility, an agency, not just in terms of being able to choose, but ultimately to choose the consequence. You have to be aware of the consequences of the behavior.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:03:01	And in fact, when you look at the narratives in the Bible, more often than not the Lord often tells you the consequences to a set of behavior, and lets you choose. Whether it's the story of Cain and Abel, whether it's the story of Adam and Eve, whether it's the story in the case of Israel, there are consequences that are laid out are explained. And if you decide not to heed His will, those consequences play out.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:03:23	Now having said that, what I do think is intriguing here about the provocation of Israel, because I do think this is the provocation. This is the event when they provoke the Lord ultimately. Are they going to provoke Him more? Yeah, you would wish they weren't, but they're going to. So, they cannot enter into the presence of God or have this experience at this time. But when you look at those, it doesn't mean that they will never enter into His rest. They're just not going to enter into His rest for a period of time. They're going to have to work through the consequences of this behavior.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:03:57	And what's intriguing is that the events of this day follow through to the end of Exodus, of where he gives them a

tabernacle. And when you look at the tabernacle and its function as a temple, this place where God's presence is going to be, there's a sense of, okay, so you weren't ready for the experience then, I'm actually going to give you a series of things to help prepare you for it. We talk about the Mosaic Law as a punishment, and there's no question that the way Exodus is set up, is that the Mosaic Law comes as a result of this behavior. They're non-choosing. They aren't able to enter the presence of God. They don't become a kingdom of priests. The priesthood is given to a particular family. And so, we call it a lesser law.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:04:39 But I think one of the ways that we can frame it to best understand it, is it's a preparatory law. They weren't ready, for whatever reasons they weren't ready. Their minds weren't in the right place, they weren't thinking about the long picture, they weren't seeing the long view, so God gave them a law. When you read the Law of Moses, the law is great because there's a set of moral and ethical teachings that are simply true regardless of the dispensation. And I don't mean just the 10 Commandments, but the moral and ethics that lie behind the 10 Commandments, those hold true regardless. That's not a lesser law, that's just the law. So when it comes to the moral and ethical teachings to Israel, those don't change any. When Christ gets in there and they ask them what are the two great commandments? Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and strength. And the second is like unto it, love thy neighbor.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:05:26 Those are straight out of the Law of Moses. This isn't a lesser law in that regard, governing behaviors of daily interaction or daily activity. I think when you look at those, one of the primary purposes was to help the people view and see things in a manner that allowed for this greater cosmological perspective. Animal sacrifice, that's certainly not unique to the Law of Moses either, it was being done before then. So, that's not unique to it, but the manner in which you engaged in the different types of sacrifice, yeah, this helped you structure and think on a larger level or, lead to a greater perspective of things. Some of the designations that arise help you be able to distinguish and differentiate, and recognize your responsibility to be sacred, to be holy, which is ultimately what both Deuteronomy and Leviticus are going to talk about.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:06:17 So, I don't think this is a sense of having never done this, never entering into His rest, does that mean I'm never going to let you enter into my rest. In the meantime, we've got to teach you how to see differently. So, I'm going to give you a couple things. I'm going to give you a law, which is going to teach you how to

think differently, how to think of people differently. I want you to in fact, see people the way I see them. And I'm going to give you a tabernacle, which hopefully will teach you how to see yourself as I see you, for the same reasons that we talked about before, with the ordinances and the rituals that become associated with the tabernacle.

- Hank Smith: 00:06:50 Would it be fair to say the Lord almost knew they were going to fail this first time, but he wanted them to see that they failed, in order so they'll take what's coming next a little more seriously? Because you don't want to fail down the line in the future, I don't want you to fail, so I kind of set you up?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:07:10 This leads to a question that people have, which is, at least students will end up invariably to this point, which is, "So how do I have agency if God knows what I'm doing?"
- Hank Smith: 00:07:18 God knew that they were going to fall, why did He even have them do it in the first place, right?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:07:22 That's exactly right. So, we're here confronted with the omniscience of God, up against the ignorance of mankind. I don't have a good answer. Except to say, what I tell my students, so an example that I give them, I say, "If I stood up at the beginning of the semester and said, 'I know what grade all of you are getting,' that would demonstrate my omniscience. But if I don't tell you what that grade is, then your agency's still intact. You know that I know what the grade's going to be, but you have no idea whatsoever what your grade is going to be.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:07:57 And so by virtue of that, if I then say something to the effect of, 'I know what grade you're going to get, and what I'd like you to do is work on the following things and do your best,' then that holds out the hope that you're going to get an A in the class, right? I can set up, even as I tell you that I know what grade you're going to get, I still won't tell you the grade. And yet I can give you all the instruction to get an A. And since you don't know what you're going to get you'll work as if you can get an A. Now, I limit your agency if I say something to the effect of, 'I know what grade you're going to get in the class, and Hank, you're not getting higher than a C minus.'"
- Hank Smith: 00:08:30 It's not going to happen.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:08:31 At that point, now I've limited your agency and I've crossed a line. But as long as I don't tell you what the grade is, then it's up to you. And so, if I keep playing with this analogy further, and I

say, "All right, I know what grade you're going to get. And this is what you need to do to get an A, and you turn in an assignment and it's not A worthy. And I say, 'Tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to give you my feedback and let you revise that assignment.' Notice that you still have all the agency, you still don't know what grade you're getting, but I'm giving you the opportunity to revise it. Whether or not you do is completely, totally up to you." And so I think sometimes, even though the Lord is omniscient, He tells you that He knows what grade you're going to get, but that doesn't affect what grade you're going to get. That's up to you.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|---|
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:09:18 | And He puts everything in place for you to be able to do it, and I think He does give us revisions all the time. He gives us feedback all the time, and gives us through the Atonement, the ability to revise. And so, as I go back to Israel's experience, to some degree it is this very tragic story. This is what they could have had happen, but it didn't. And yet the rest of the narrative is basically the Lord giving revisions and saying, "All right, here's your chance to redo. You can redo this." |
| Hank Smith: | 00:09:50 | It's a redemption story, but it starts out just kind of tragic, kind of sad. You could have had this, you didn't. Okay, let's get you ready. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:09:59 | And it's very possible moving forward that individuals did, we simply don't know. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:10:06 | I laugh when I hear you explain 19 and 20, the Lord was in, they were in, and then they were out. That's my life right there. That's got to be so typical of everyone's experience. The Lord was in, I was in, and I fell short. I got scared, I drew back. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:10:25 | It kind of reminds me of Steven Robinson's book, Believing Christ. Well, you believe in Him, but a lot of us just don't believe Him. That was the why he wrote it. Just believe Him, believe that He can do what He said He can do. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:10:37 | It's back to that confidence. Jacob talks about this in Jacob chapter four. In verse 11, he says, "Wherefore, beloved brethren be reconciled unto Him, God, Through the atonement of Christ, His only begotten son. And you may obtain a resurrection, according to the power of the resurrection which is in Christ and be presented as the first fruits of Christ under God. Having faith, and obtained a good hope of glory in Him before he manifests Himself in the flesh." He's not talking about resurrection, he's talking about a particular resurrection. That thanks to Christ it's possible for you not only to be resurrected, |

but to obtain a resurrection and a good hope. Which in the Book of Mormon is associated with a promise. A promise of glory, a hope of glory in Him, before He ever manifests Himself in the flesh. He's talking about receiving exaltation.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:11:23 And then verse 12. "Now beloved, marvel not that I tell you these things, for why not speak of the atonement of Christ and attain to a perfect knowledge of Him, as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection in the world to come?" For Jacob, his thinking is the atonement of Christ makes resurrection possible, but it also makes it possible for exaltation. He says, why not talk about it to the highest common denominator? Resurrection's cool, but this is cooler. Why not talk about it? What's the worst that happens? What's the worst that happens? It sounds kind of a roundabout answer to your question, Hank, of, "Oh, I don't feel I'm worthy, or I've failed when I do these things." And I'm kind of like, yeah, so? Why not think about it? Why get caught up in the things that can pull us down, the things that keep us from not being ready in three days? Why not think about it? And if it happens, it happens.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:12:25 I don't know how, if I can describe it better than that. The commandment to be perfect, that we always try to qualify, and that we always try to talk about, "Well, He can't mean this in terms of perfection," and, "He can't mean that." And I understand all of that, and I know what the Greek word means. And having said that, how much faith should that instill in an individual to know that God thinks you can pull it off? Why would He give you the commandment, if he didn't actually think you could pull off. So I think when God says be perfect, I'm kind of like, so it's achievable, it's doable. And however you want to define it, ultimately, even if it is a process or we become perfect in this, and then we become perfect in this, and we become perfect in this, don't be dismayed by the promise itself. God wouldn't give it, if He didn't think you could pull it off.
- Hank Smith: 00:13:17 Just the fact that He tells you it should give you a lot of confidence in yourself.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:13:21 I think he gives you plenty of material later that says, "Oh, whether this life or in the next life, you'll endure to the end. I'm not particularly concerned, the when, but just know that you can be." It's that confidence, do you think you can pull this off, do you think you can engage with these people? Do you think you can have this experience? Whether or not it happens right now isn't the point, but do you see it? Can you see it? Do you imagine it? And why not speak to a perfect knowledge of Christ? Why not? What's the worst that happens?

Hank Smith:	00:13:52	This is just so great. 19 and 20, I see totally differently. Wash your clothes, three days, come to me. Okay, here we go. And then they just can't do it. They just either don't believe, whatever you said, they're too scared. They're just like, "Moses, you go, we can't go." Why in between then, of this, do we get these 10 Commandments? It's just dropped right in the middle.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:14:15	I think part of it, again, is you're dealing with an amalgam of these different versions, different purposes, different accounts. One of them could be simply the fact that the 10 Commandments are universal. These are not part of the Law of Moses, these are not a punishment given to Israel. This is just simply the law. We find granted in the Book of Mormon, they're quoting the 10 Commandments, but you get a version of this in the Doctrine & Covenants, you get Christ reiterating the centrality of these commandments in the New Testament. And when you look at the commandments themselves, you can see how they divide out. They deal with your own personal relationship with God, and then they deal with your personal relationship with other beings, other people.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:14:56	I describe it in terms of spiritual development, that we have two primary sets of relationships that we're developing. There's this vertical relationship that we have with God that is very personal, very private. Nobody else really has that relationship, it's just you and God, and that's got to grow and get stronger, and bigger and taller. But at the same time that's happening, this has got to be expanding outward as to who my brother is, who my neighbor is. And if these two things aren't happening at the same time, then one's not really experiencing spiritual growth. So when you look at the 10 Commandments, they really do govern both set of relationships. The relationship you have with God, the relationship you have with the larger community of humankind. Your neighbors, your family.
Hank Smith:	00:15:41	Yeah. So, is that the first five, "Thou shall have no other gods before me, thou shalt not make any graven image, not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." What did I miss? I had four there. Maybe it's four and then six.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:15:59	Well, it's interesting. The Sabbath one, I think is a tricky one. Or not tricky, but I think that's kind of a pivot one, simply because the Sabbath is both. It's both a communal day, and a day to develop your personal relationship with the Lord. So you've got the Sabbath, but then there's the honor thy father and thy mother. This has to deal with the family. Don't kill, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't bear false witness, don't covet.

These have to deal with your relationship with your fellow beings.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:16:24 We don't have any instruction as to ultimately why it's separated from the rest of the law that is going to be given in about chapter 20, starting in verse 22. But we do have the separation. And it's suggested the 10 Commandments can be distinguished from the other elements of the law. This isn't the Mosaic Law, these are the 10 Commandments, they govern the behavior. And they are guidelines and commandments to be used, regardless of what dispensation. So, it's very possible that people looked at it and went, "Well, this isn't part of the quote unquote, Law of Moses. It's the law, but it was given at the same time, like it's given to every... We're just going to glump everything together."
- Hank Smith: 00:17:02 Do you want to just walk us through these, and just say, "Look, this is a different aspect of your relationship with God that this offers, this one is different aspects of your relationship with other people that this offers"? Would there be a benefit of just walking through them? Do you do that with your students?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:17:20 You certainly can. If you go through the laws, they're not a step by step process per se, but they do lead to some interesting conclusions, particularly when you put them in the context of other set of scripture. Thou shalt have no other gods before me, interestingly has been prefaced by verse two, says, "I'm the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt." So, we've got a definition here of Godhood for lack of a better term, a function of Godhood. A God is one who's going to deliver, to bring out. To some degree, there's an element here of kinship that is being suggested between God, Jehovah, and Israel. Namely that he brought them out of bondage, he's acted as a redeemer in that regard, to follow the Old Testament understanding of Redeemer.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:18:06 And by virtue of that then, "I have been your God, this is what gods do, and I've been your God, so I don't want any other God before me. We have a relationship, we've established a relationship. We've got a history of a relationship, so I will be your God." But the other elements of this, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down themselves to them, nor serve them. For I the Lord, thy God am a jealous God." But by meaning that, He's not jealous in the sense that, again, that he's got some fragile self-esteem, but, "I take my responsibilities very seriously as a God. This relationship is a real

relationship that you and I have ratified, we have entered into an oath, we're bound. And so, I'm going to take it seriously. I expect you to do so as well."

- Hank Smith: 00:18:57 Do you think he's trying to also correct some of that Egyptian culture, that they picked up over the centuries? Was this something that the Egyptians did?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:19:07 We know they did, but so does ancient Mesopotamia, so does the Hittites, so does the Canaanites, this is just what everybody's doing in the Ancient Near East. The idea of a monotheistic or a henotheistic approach is kind of unique, but then again, it's not like the Egyptians have the same type of story that the Israelites just had. If there is a relationship with God, and delivering people and moving them out, we don't see that described in the Ancient Near East like this at all. This is a unique narrative of a group of people who have this relationship with deity, and it's a covenant relationship. It's not just, "I'm all powerful," it's a covenant relationship. There's expectations.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:19:47 This is built into our doctrine, we have a covenant relationship with God. "I, the Lord am bound when you do what I say." When you do not do what I say, I'm not bound. It's this covenant. If you follow your end of the bargain, I'll follow my end of the bargain. That's how it works. And by the way, it's that allows us to have trust in Him, isn't it, ultimately? That because He takes this so seriously, because it defines who He is, in His relationship, we trust in that. That's why in some ways, faith carries with it even an economic understanding. I can trust in that merchant because I know he doesn't cheat. And so, we go back to that merchant. Now, I hate saying that, because our relationship with God is one that we often described in terms of familial terminology. The truth is, families are bound by covenant too. The genetics are less important in the concept of a family, certainly in the case in the Old Testament, and in the New. The genetics aren't important.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:20:44 It's the covenant relationship that exists between the members of... It's the covenant relationship that exists between a father and mother, that ultimately defines them as father and mother. Abraham chapter one, verse two talks about how Abraham wants the blessings of the father and the right to administer the same. What's intriguing to me about that, is if the blessings are the blessings of the fathers, then the fathers have those blessings, and Abraham wants them, and the right to administer them, then that's what makes him a father: the right to administer these blessings. It's not the genetics. So, when we talk about the posterity of Abraham, we sometimes do it a

disservice if we focus in on just the, am I the literal offspring of Abraham? That doesn't matter. Ultimately, it's the covenant relationship. Isaac didn't get the covenant because his dad was Abraham, he got it because he was a righteous, worthy individual who came to the Lord.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:21:38 And this is the argument that Christ is making in the New Testament. Just because you're the descendants of Abraham, doesn't mean the covenant's yours. And so ultimately it's this covenant relationship that is stressed. It's the covenant relationships that exists between us and God. We may be the offspring of God, but what makes Him our father is His ability to bless us. And what makes us sons and daughters is our choosing to receive. Son and daughter is conditional. We may be the offspring, but we're not necessarily the sons and daughters of God. And when you read about the phrase, or read that sons of God, or sons and daughters of God in the scriptures, it's always conditional.
- John Bytheway: 00:22:14 Yeah. You'll have the power to become the sons of God.
- Hank Smith: 00:22:17 Why does he tie this to graven images? I'm not a statue?
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:22:22 Yeah, I'm not a statue. I'm a living being. There's an element that lies behind that. And I haven't fully fleshed out all aspects of that, but it is intriguing to me for instance, that in 3 Nephi chapter 11, they have an experience. And it's in fact, very similar to the experience that they probably should have been having in Exodus 19. In this case, Christ comes down and they have the opportunity to meet with Christ. Now, He is resurrected, and so what do they do? They feel the prints of the nails in his hand, and they thrust their hands into His side. These are intrusive. But beyond that, what's intriguing is He says, "And you will do these things so that you might know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth." What strikes me about that, is that somehow this experience must lead you to understanding something about the nature of divinity. There's an element of what it means to be a divine being, that will be demonstrated by you touching deity.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:23:15 If that's the case, then certainly one of the things that you might take away from it is that gods are living things. They have bodies, they move. I don't know how far you would thrust your hand into the side, but you're feeling flesh and you're feeling warmth. It's not a corpse. So, you're coming away with an understanding that God has a body, and it's a living body, it's alive. It's possible that what you're seeing here, an element of this is, I want you to understand fully, completely that I am a

living being, embodied even. And that's the idea, and that's the expectation. I don't want you building a graven image. One, you might get it wrong, carve me the wrong way. But the other element of it is, is I'm not that. I'm not a stone, I'm not wood, I'm living. And this concept of a living deity, I think plays such a fundamental role in an understanding of God. And by virtue of this relationship, you have a relationship with a living being.

Hank Smith: 00:24:17

And he says in verse six, "I am merciful", I'm living merciful, showing mercy unto them that love me and keep my commandments." A statue can't do that, a statue can't show mercy.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:24:29

The element of that, if we go with the living body idea, there's an immediacy to it. You'd pray to maybe an idol for mercy, but in this case, you are going to see. You're showing mercy, this is something that you'll be able to experience. There's a tangibility to this mercy or an immediacy to this mercy. One of the other reasons maybe why you're not to build a graven image, is to some degree, mankind is that image. So back in Genesis, you have the idea here that humankind is made in the image and form of God. You don't need to build anything else, you yourselves are the tangible symbol of me.

Hank Smith: 00:25:12

So, connect that to Genesis 1, "God made man in His own image." Don't make anything new, just look around you.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:25:18

That's exactly right. When you see the rest of the Law of Moses, there's no question that God expects you to treat your fellow beings with the same respect and understanding that God himself treats them.

Hank Smith: 00:25:29

That's a fun insight. I'd never even, I haven't thought about that. When God says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God in vain." When I grew up, it was you just don't say the name of God casually. Over the years, the idea of covenant, don't take on this without meaning it, taking the covenant in vain. I'm willing to take upon myself the name of thy son, don't take that in vain. So it's added a little more nuance through the years, but I'd love to hear what you think.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:26:00

I think it's the same way that you just mentioned. At least that's the way Christ seems to understand it. So, when you get in the sermon on the mount in the New Testament, he'll expand on this and say, "Don't just not take the Lord's name in vain, don't swear on anything." The idea, I think that lies behind this is oaths mean things. If you're going to enter into an oath, I expect you to take that seriously. So don't enter into an oath, don't

promise something that you're not willing to do. There's an element of honor and shame.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:26:27 These two aspects played a particular role in Ancient Near Eastern society, your honor means things. And it does today too, but we play a little more fast and loose with our concept of honor. But back then, that's not the case. If you're going to say you're going to do something, there's an expectation that you're going to do it. You see that in the Book of Mormon as early as chapter two, the brothers are just absolutely ticked, and yet still felt bound to it. That's what I find intriguing by that, it's like, "Ah, Nephi..." We have no choice.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:59 Because we promised.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:27:00 Right, oaths mean things. And so, if we take it by that we can really see it as a reflection, or at least the other side of maybe what we were talking about in verses five and six. The Lord's going to take this relationship seriously, He takes His end of the oath seriously, I expect you to do the same. Don't enter into oaths that you're not taking seriously. Don't promise to do things-
- Hank Smith: 00:27:23 That you have no intention of doing.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:27:25 It's possible that if you're taking the Lord's name in vain, in that sense, you lose the sacrality of the Lord's name. It just becomes common use, you don't mean it. So He's saying your word means things. I'm not saying that I think that the Lord is saying that you always have to be sober and somber, certainly, but He is saying, "You need to think real hard about who you are, and what you are doing and what you've agreed to. Because I do." I talk about this sometimes with students is, I know we sometimes like to describe our relationship with God as he's an adult or a parent and we're little children. And I get that in terms of the timeframe, kind of, because we're all eternal beings. But what always strikes me about whenever I'm talking about the law, whether it's the Law of Moses or the law in any dispensation, is how much He ends up treating us like adults, in this sense like equals. There are things that maybe we'd let our little children get away with. He's like, "That's not an option. We're equals on this one."
- Hank Smith: 00:28:27 Maybe we like the parent child relationship, because it gets me out of a lot of, "Oh, He gets me, He understands me. He knows I'm just young."

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:28:35	<p>I fully get why we do, but the Lord doesn't treat us that way. And part of that might be, again back to this concept of vision of scale. I don't have a great way to describe it, because I'm bound by space and time in a way that God is not. But scale makes a difference of things. For instance, the separation between us and God seems vast from my perspective. But if you were to look at it from an eternal perspective, the distance between me and God, it's gone. From an eternal perspective, and that's His view. It's not mine, it's not my view, but it is His view. I don't think He sees as much space between us as we like to think that there is. It's a perspective, and He's got an eternal one, I do not. And so by virtue of that, as I look at these laws, they're not for children, they're for adults. If I'm going to take this seriously, I expect you to take it seriously.</p>
Hank Smith:	00:29:30	<p>Yeah. And a child, as much as I love my children, you need to be more mature in order to take things seriously. Just the fact that He's saying, "I want you to take this seriously," says I'm talking to people who can take things seriously.</p>
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:29:46	<p>That's exactly right. I was just going to say, and because of the placement of this and because it just kind of comes out of nowhere, and it doesn't really have the same setup, who knows when this was given? This might have been given earlier to Israel and said, "These are your expectations moving forward. So when I come in three days, here we go. Let's do this." These are just a set of principles that hold true regardless. This isn't a lower law, this is the law.</p>
Hank Smith:	00:30:08	<p>I love the pivot one you told us about, like the Sabbath day can be a mix between my relationship with God and my relationship with the community. Because from here on out, it's going to be community commandments. The Sabbath is going to be the transition. Never thought about that before.</p>
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:30:24	<p>You see in verse eight, you can see a connection between that and the Lord's original offering to Israel to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. So, now I'm going to give you the Sabbath and I want that to be kept holy too. And if we're looking at holy as that sense of not just separation, but of completion or wholeness, then it suggests that one of the purposes of the Sabbath is to help us become whole, to help us become complete. When you look at the creation of the Sabbath, it's an interesting place in the creation narrative. Talking about different sources there, seems to be two sources, Genesis one and then Genesis two, which have come at the creation from two different perspectives. What's the bridge between those two, is this institution of the Sabbath.</p>

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:31:06	And I've looked at the Sabbath before, as akin to a dedication. You can think of it as a dedication of the temple, then it becomes useful. Is the dedication of the temple an end of a process, or is it the beginning of a process?
Hank Smith:	00:31:22	Yeah, it's both.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:31:23	It's a liminal state. And if any of my students end up hearing this, they'll go, "Oh, liminal. Yep," eye roll right there. But the concept of liminality is that you've got these in between states that allow for transformation to happen. Liminality comes from a Latin term <i>limin</i> , meaning threshold or doorway. So if you stand in the doorway, are you in or out of the room? Neither, but its function is to facilitate movement from one to the other. And without it, you couldn't move from one state to another. Well, if you can think of it that way, believe it or not, ordinances are liminal in nature. These are in between states that allow us to move from one state to another. Does that make sense?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:32:04	Or you can think of the temple as a liminal space. You're not meant to stay in there forever, but does it lead to a transformation from one state to another? Yes, a student's asking sometimes, "Is the mortality state liminal?" And yeah, in the sense that it is a probationary state, a preparatory state, no, it's not permanent. But it transforms us from one state of eternity to another state of eternity. The Sabbath then, is a time period that is given to us that carries with a sense of liminality. It's this in between. Does it end a week, does it start the week, or does it do both? Is it like a dedicatory period, in which we can dedicate or end a particular period of time, and start a particular period of time in a new way than we did before?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:32:51	So, the Sabbath has a function, and that function is to bring about change and transformation. You can look at the creation story and see that even as we're looking at maybe two different versions, you got Genesis one, which really tells you about the physical creation of the Earth, and then you get Genesis two, which talks about the social creation moving forward, the creation of society, the creation of community. With the institution of marriage, with the institution of naming things. The animals are already created, but the naming of them gives them an identity and a function within society. And so, you have the creation of a social organization in Genesis two. What is the bridge between these two? The Sabbath. And so, we can look at the Sabbath the same way. Elder Bednar's talked about the Sabbath in similarity to the temple, that the Sabbath is a sacred time, and the temple is a sacred place, but they have the same

		function: to help us recognize holiness, and perhaps become more holy.
Hank Smith:	00:33:48	Tell me that word again, liminal?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:33:51	Liminal.
John Bytheway:	00:33:53	What is the origin of the word Sabbath, and what's the Hebrew of it?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:33:58	It's Shabbat. We're not sure exactly, because it shows up in Genesis two, the institution of the Sabbath, many believe that it is related to the Hebrew word Shabbat meaning seven, so seventh day. But whether or not that is an ideology, meaning it's just being associated with it in the narrative, it's unclear. So you've got rest, and an allusion with it, relationship to the seven. Ultimately, it's just the term that's being used to describe this. Now, for Israel, interestingly you have a number of things that can be referred to as Sabbaths, or that can carry with it a sense of Sabbath day transformation. In fact elsewhere, I've looked at again, 3 Nephi and the events of Christ's coming, of that first day particularly, really all the way through the end of it, as a Sabbath. Not in the sense that it happened on Sunday, the way we would recognize it, but it has all the characteristics of a Sabbath. Certainly of a dedication. That same kind of in between, starting anew, but also completing and finishing.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:34:58	If you look at the Sabbath in Genesis 2, there's a couple of activities that are actually associated with it. So, when we talk about it as a day of rest, it's an intriguing rest. A fair amount of biblical scholars don't believe it means that God just went to sleep, but it means it's a change of pattern of behavior. And so, if you look at verse three, God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Both of those would have happened on the Sabbath, suggesting that the acts of bless and sanctifying, becoming holy, are Sabbath day activities, blessing and sanctifying. And then as you can see there in verse one, there's an implication that groups were meeting. So, there's a sense of communal meeting, blessing, and sanctifying that happens on a Sabbath. These are three activities that can take place on the Sabbath.
Hank Smith:	00:35:42	That's from Genesis 2, verse 3?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:35:45	Genesis 2:1-3.

Hank Smith:	00:35:47	Blessing, sanctifying, communal meeting. That sounds like my Sabbath.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:35:51	Assembly. Yeah, I call it assembly.
Hank Smith:	00:35:53	Quite an explanation on the Sabbath day.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:35:55	Yeah, including in verse 10. So when I say that it's this playing dual purposes, both with your relationship with God and with the community, you can see that in verse 10 when it says this is to be a day of rest, then this new type of day for everybody. And I think one of the intriguing ones is even including the stranger that's in your gate. If you have a visitor who isn't even Israelite, but they're there with you in your household, they should be able to experience the blessings of the Sabbath, of rejoicing, and of blessing, and of sanctification and assembly. The Sabbath is not meant to be a day of just somberness.
Hank Smith:	00:36:29	There's some inclusion there too.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:36:32	There's huge inclusion. This is a day that is set apart for you to recognize the divine community, for lack of a better term, or something that Joseph Smith calls the economy of God, the understanding of the relationships of the divine community, which includes everyone, including the stranger. In modern Judaism today, the Sabbath is, there's a set apart day. And of course you could use a number of examples, but I'll use Fiddler on the Roof, which I think is a great, great musical. They have the Sabbath, and in the Sabbath, Tevye and his wife both bless the family, don't they? They open up with, they light the candles. It's kind of like we're recreating everything, it's dark and then they light the candles, it's a reminder of the creation. And then you have both mother and father blessing those that are gathered together. And it is a gathering, everyone's gathered together including the stranger, the one that came out of the blue, out of nowhere. You've got this concept that the Sabbath is a communal thing to be shared, in which blessing and sanctifying can take place. And it's everybody, whether you're Israelite or not.
Hank Smith:	00:37:40	You and President Monson both love Fiddler on the Roof. He would quote that all the time.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:37:46	But it does carry with a sense that in some ways, you're reenacting the creation story that was done by the Lord Himself.

John Bytheway:	00:37:52	I remember, they light the candles and they sing the song, and they do this in the musical. But I didn't know that was remembering the creation. I'm going to remember that.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:38:02	And that again, reinforces some of the things that we've talked about before with the other laws. The creation narrative is not a separate narrative from the history of Israel. In fact, when you get into Isaiah and elsewhere, the creation narrative, and for instance the splitting of the Red Sea, are going to be treated as the same events. They're on a continuum of the same type of thing. The creation story and the Exodus story are ultimately the same basic storyline to Ancient Israel.
Hank Smith:	00:38:30	Come out of the water, right? They both come out of the water.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:38:33	Coming out of the water. Older creation narratives where God is a warrior that fights the monsters, that's going to show up as a description of the Exodus story. So, you just have this idea that we're repeating the creation story. And by virtue of that, then you become similar to God. And if that's the case, then yeah, you're doing divine things on the Sabbath, just like God did.
Hank Smith:	00:38:54	It's a chance to be like Him, gives us so often anyway.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:38:58	If we're going to go back to something even earlier, it's possible that we could look at the Sabbath as a day where these experiences that you could have interacting with different members of the divine community, He set one apart. Now how many of us take advantage of that? I don't know. But it could be we have one day a week in which the Lord says, "I don't want you to worry about anything. Just concentrate on these things." We don't, I don't, I don't do it enough. But I always wonder what would happen if I could? According to the Book of Revelation, John receives revelation on the Sabbath.
Hank Smith:	00:39:28	The Lord's day, right?
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:39:30	What would happen if I actually took seriously the Sabbath, and used it for the way that it could be used? Could the blessings of Doctrine and Covenants 107 actually happen?
Hank Smith:	00:39:41	It's no longer a burden. It's a blessing.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:39:45	It's a blessing.
Hank Smith:	00:39:45	It's not weight, it's wings.

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:39:46	A place where the community can engage with God.
Hank Smith:	00:39:50	Now the next one is my personal favorite, which I quote to my children all the time, "Honor thy father and thy mother," so they don't kill you, "So your days will be long upon the land." He moves into family, from Sabbath day. This is kind of like creation, Adam and Eve, husband and wife.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:40:10	And covenant. Because again, family relationships are covenantally bound. This is the element of it, so this is, you are to honor thy father and thy mother. These are individuals that are covenant bound to you. And again, I can't say that Abraham chapter one, verse two is informing this verse. I don't think necessarily the writers are thinking of Abraham one when they're doing that, but we can look at that. And if a father is one who has the right to receive the blessings, and administer the same, to some degree that's a principle of what a father is, that is understood by a fair amount of women in the church.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:40:45	Meaning if you've listened to women's conferences in the past, they were often taught that you can be a mother without having offspring. And so, what that seems to reflect more than anything else is this covenantal nature to these two designations. A father and mother isn't just about one's genetic relationship, these are terms that are ultimately associated with covenantal responsibilities. I'll embarrass my boys a little bit here. When they all were in fifth grade and receive that maturation lesson that we all got, well, that meant they got to come to dinner with Dad, and sit down and explain the facts of life. And I'm a professor and I can do that pretty dryly and... They're like, "Oh, here we go."
Hank Smith:	00:41:30	Thanks, Dad.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:41:32	Yeah. My oldest boy Jack, he was good. My younger son, Sam, he had more questions, and I decided to bring Jack along with that. And Jack's like, "I'm so embarrassed, Dad, I can't." I'm like, "It's fine. We can answer these questions." What I would tell them ultimately was, and granted, this more ties into me trying to express their priesthood responsibilities, but I said, "Here's the deal: in the end, anybody can be a dad, but the Lord wants fathers. And that's a different ballgame, He wants someone who has the blessings of the fathers, and the right and the authority to administer the same. Anybody can be a dad, but he's looking for fathers."
Hank Smith:	00:42:10	It's not genetics, it's covenants.

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:42:12	If we look at it from that perspective, which granted, maybe is reading a little bit more into the text than perhaps what was intended. But honor thy father and thy mother would carry with those covenantal responsibilities that you have, for those family obligations that you have. And by the way, you can see that definition of fatherhood in the New Testament with the parable, the prodigal son. In that story, it's a fascinating parable, because that youngest son wastes his inheritance. And then when he realizes or comes to himself, it says, as he came back to himself, he realizes he needs help. So he says, "I'm going to go to my father," and then says, "And I will be his servant for I'm no longer worthy of being his son." That right there is an indication of an understanding that just because you're the offspring doesn't guarantee that you're a son. That son-ship is earned, and he's lost the rights to that.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:42:59	Now, that's the beautiful part of the rest of the parable, and that could be talked about on another day, about how the father without saying a word, accepts his offspring back as a son, and why the oldest brother has a problem with that. But that's a whole other story. The point is simply this, is that honoring thy father and mother probably ties back to some degree of covenant relationship, again. And for a funny version of this, is Jeremiah. In the book of Jeremiah, he's going to explain how he doesn't like having to do what he does. He doesn't like being a prophet, he doesn't have a particularly happy message to deliver to Israel. That's not his calling. He mentions, "Ah, I curse the day that the midwife brought me forth. I curse the man that ran to my father and said, 'You have a son.'" So he curses everybody except his mom and dad, involved with his birth.
Hank Smith:	00:43:54	Because he doesn't, he's not going to break the commandment.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:43:57	I'm not going to break... I can't curse mom and dad, but I'll curse everybody else involved with my birth.
John Bytheway:	00:44:02	That midwife.
Hank Smith:	00:44:05	Thou shall not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal. The Lord starts rattling off commandments at this point. Where the other ones got longer explanations, these ones come fairly quickly.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:44:17	They're somewhat self evident, I think. Thou shall not kill, that just holds true with any law code in any place. That's not necessarily unique to Israel's law code. Now, they will qualify this, obviously as you get into, in fact, in chapter 21 they're

going to give a bit of a qualification to this. And so to some degree, you can look at later elements of the law as further explanations or case studies based on some of these principles. But chapter 21 verses 12 and 13, 14, and even 15 for that matter, it continues on into this idea, suggests that there's such thing as manslaughter and involuntary manslaughter, and voluntary manslaughter. I mean, if you look at verse 12, "He that smiteth a man so he should die, shall be surely put to death." That's the law.

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|--|
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:45:02 | But then he goes on to say, "If a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand, then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee." So there is one exception into this, or at least in terms of manslaughter, two elements of this. One, if you weren't lying in wait, and lying in wait suggests premeditation. If a man lie not in wait, and God deliver him into your hand, then I will appoint thee whither that he should flee. If God delivers him into your hand and it wasn't premeditated, then we have two conditions by which the death penalty is avoided. What is intriguing, is those two are explicitly mentioned in First Nephi, chapter four. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:45:41 | That's what I was going to say. It sounds just like Nephi. "I went beforehand, not knowing the things which I should do." |
| John Bytheway: | 00:45:49 | "I will deliver him into thy hand." |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:45:51 | Yeah. And so, and that brings up some implications on the purpose of First Nephi chapter four. In other words, if the whole purpose of the chapter four was to simply let you know that the plates were received, then you never needed to tell the story about killing Laban, so the story has some meaning. By virtue of the fact that these two are so explicit in that narrative, suggests that there were individuals later that might have been accusing Nephi of murder, and so he gives you the full story. Now there's more to it, and part of it is a legal explanation as to what really happened. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:46:25 | It's almost as if Nephi has the expectation that I've read Exodus, right? |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:46:32 | That's the assumption, that you know the law and know it well enough to recognize. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:46:36 | Yeah. And I'm going to tell this story in words that will answer your objections right as I tell it, right? If you know Exodus as well. |

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:46:44	And then you have verse 14, it says, "But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor to slay him with guile," in this case it suggests that you weren't waiting for him pre-meditatively, or it seemed as if this was a spontaneous running into someone. But the Lord's like, "Ah, but you really did plan it," well, then that's still going to count as a murder.
Hank Smith:	00:47:05	Interesting. So He's giving these basic principles in 20, and then clarifying some things.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:47:10	Yeah. Clarifying elements of this. Because the Lord recognizes that there are different situations. And that's one of the great things I think about the law of Moses. Too often, it has been generalized. Oh, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. Well yeah, but read that passage and see the immediate context, and you realize that is not the law for everything. The Lord knows that mistakes happen, the Lord understands that things happened that were out of people's control, or that that was not the plan. And so, He's got those covered too. It doesn't mean there aren't consequences, but we got ways to help you out in those regards.
Hank Smith:	00:47:45	Does He do the same thing with adultery? He gives the principle in 20 and then do some explaining later? Or is this more self explicit? Don't...
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:47:55	Well, that one's pretty straightforward. But you will have later, not developments but expansions on this, like, "This is who you're not going to sleep with, this is who you're not going to sleep with, this is who you're not going to sleep with." When I say don't commit adultery, let's carry this all the way through. When you look at one of the more famous ones, the code of Hammurabi. So Hammurabi was a Mesopotamian king from Babylon, I want to say the Middle Babylonian period, though it's possibly the Old Babylonian period, but in any case he has a law code. And in there, adultery is mentioned in there, along with these are other people that you shouldn't engage with.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:48:28	And a lot of these, particularly these last five, these are just basic understandings to maintaining a social institution. You can't have a community if these are not in place. That just holds true regardless of whether you're the people of God, or the people of anything. You don't kill, you don't commit adultery, you don't steal, you don't lie, you don't covet thy neighbors stuff, which leads to envy. So, all of these are principles by which they just govern basic social behavior. And they have to be in place, otherwise you're going to have conflict.

Hank Smith:	00:49:04	And people are too vulnerable to live in this kind of society, where there's murder, and adultery, and stealing and lying. It's just, we kind of saw that back in Sodom and Gomorrah, this idea of it's unsafe even for strangers.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:49:17	And add another element into this too, at least from more of perhaps a Latter-Day Saint perspective, the coveting one is fascinating. The others are actual behaviors: don't kill, don't commit adultery, don't steal and don't lie. These are all actual behaviors that you engage in. But coveting is within, you can covet something and no one's going to know. So, you can even see further development of the 10 Commandments into there's the relationship that you have with God, both external and internal. There's the relationship you have with your fellow beings, both external and internal. What strikes me about verse 17 is how it might hint, even though the text doesn't bring it up here, just by virtue of being a community of God, and this is my assumption, and it's just my personal assumption, that ultimately they're expected to live a Zion like life.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:50:15	Every other community of God's been expected to live a Zion... The moral and ethical behavior of Israel is meant to be one of a Zion-like people. That doesn't change. Again, the law of God is the law of God. The moral and ethical behavior of Israel is held true, regardless of what dispensation you're in. And if that's the case, then it would seem to me that the ultimate end, whether or not they achieved it is beside the point. But the ultimate end of Ancient Israel was to bring about a Zion. And the law would point you towards Zion, like it does in every other dispensation and in every other community of God. And if that's the case, then it's possible verse 17 hints at Zion-like behavior.
John Bytheway:	00:50:57	It reminds me of the Beatitudes, where you've heard it said of old time, thou shalt not kill, this thesis, antithesis thing. But I say, this is a higher thing, and the Savior kind of brought them all in here. But as you mentioned, thou shalt not covet is an in here type of a thing. I like that, this is a Zion community area where we're one heart, one mind, even have all things in common.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:51:23	And to that Beatitude, this is a place where I'll deviate from I'm sure a number of my colleagues, but I don't look at the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount as Christ so much instituting a new higher law, as much he is restoring the significant principles of the law, of the Mosaic Law. Here's what I mean. If you look there in Matthew, those principles, this is verse 21: "You've heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of

the judgment. I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca shall be in danger of the council. But whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire."

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------|--|
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:52:08 | Now notice the next word in verse 23, it's therefore. And that means if we do not take into account verses 23 and 24, even all the way down through 26, if we do not put that into context of those verses, we're not fully grasping what Christ is saying. Does that make sense? The therefore it's a cause and effect. It's the same thing we've seen with therefores before. So having instituted this new, you shouldn't even call your brother a fool, here's why, "therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar and thou rememberest thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift and go fix it." In other words, it's put into the context of following the Law of Moses. If you are going to the altar, and if you are going to bring a gift or a sacrifice, then this is how you should be doing it. I'm not so sure that's the higher law, as much as it is what the law was meant to be and has been lost. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:53:08 | It maybe had been diluted a little bit over the years. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:53:11 | What's the great commandment in the law? Love God and love your neighbor. And that seems like a higher way to restate the 10 Commandments. |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:53:20 | And by the way, you can use the Book of Mormon to understand the function of this, because this same set of principles is in Third Nephi, Third Nephi chapter 12. And there the language is, "And you've heard it old time," this is verse 21 of Third Nephi 12, "That you should not kill, wherefore who should ever kill shall be in danger of the judgment. I say unto you, that who soever was angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment, and whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council, and whosoever shall say, 'Thou, fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore, if you shall come unto me, or should desire to come unto me and rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, go thy way." |
| Dr. Daniel Belnap: | 00:53:56 | In other words, the Law of Moses may have been fulfilled by Third Nephi. But the principle of coming to the altar and bringing a gift is in fact to come unto Christ. That's not Him instituting a new higher law, it's restoring the significance of the law. And points to what the Law of Moses was meant to do, at least in bringing a gift to the altar. When you do that, it's meant to come unto Christ, come unto Him. |

Hank Smith:	00:54:22	That's great. Because we often do, I think, miss-see, misunderstand the Law of Moses in the way we talk about it.
John Bytheway:	00:54:29	If love God and love your neighbor are Law of Moses, and they are, those are internal. Love is a feeling, but it's also a behavior manifested.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:54:37	And in fact, in Leviticus where you find the love thy neighbor, the same commandment shows up in the same chapter, to love the stranger. So if someone were to ask Christ, what are the three great commandments? They didn't, they only asked him two. But if they were to ask the three, I think he would have said love God, love thy neighbor, love the stranger. And they all tie together.
John Bytheway:	00:54:57	But wasn't that a dichotomy? They had their strangers and neighbors, and that's why the Good Samaritan was, "Oh, well, who is my neighbor? Ha, ha, ha." And then Jesus expands it to say, "Well, it's everybody, even Samaritans."
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:55:10	It's very possible that when Christ is saying that, by saying love thy neighbor, he's incorporating in the love the stranger commandment that was earlier in Leviticus.
John Bytheway:	00:55:19	Yeah, because a Samaritan is a stranger by that...
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:55:22	Right. So this concept of stranger, it plays a role throughout the Law of Moses. You're supposed to treat the stranger, and love the stranger and care for the stranger. And God loves the stranger, he says in Deuteronomy 10. So I love the stranger, I expect you to love the stranger. And He gives a reason why, because you too are a stranger. You know exactly how this feels, you know what this is like. And therefore you should be able to empathize with this stranger.
Hank Smith:	00:55:48	I wanted to throw something in on coveting. There's a great talk from Elder Holland called The Other Prodigal. So many of the Savior's parables are about not coveting, not getting jealous when other people get blessings. And he says in this talk, he quotes someone else. "One observer has written, in a world that constantly compares people, ranking them as more or less intelligent, more or less attractive, more or less successful, it is not easy to really believe in a divine love that does not do the same. When I hear someone praised, it's hard not to think of myself as less praiseworthy. When I read about the goodness and kindness of other people, it's hard not to wonder if I myself am good and as kind as they."

Hank Smith:	00:56:30	He goes on a little bit later and he says, "Most of the thou shalt not commandments are meant to keep us from hurting others. But I am convinced the commandment not to covet is meant to keep us from hurting ourselves." I love that insight, is that God is kind of giving, this is the relationship with you and I, this is a relationship with you and your community, and this last one is your relationship with you, and not hurting yourself by constantly coveting. "It's the same talk where he says, "You have to down another quart of pickle juice anytime anything good happens."
John Bytheway:	00:57:03	Every time somebody else has a happy moment.
Hank Smith:	00:57:06	Great talk, great supplement.
John Bytheway:	00:57:08	So many of the parables, like you said, or many of them, some of them are about comparing. The same with the laborers in the vineyard, everybody's happy with their wage until they, "Hey, wait," and they look sideways. And that's maybe another way to look at that coveting thing.
Hank Smith:	00:57:24	Dan, this has been a fantastic day. I am really just... Again, I feel like I see these chapters brand new. John, I know you feel the same way. You just feel like you-
John Bytheway:	00:57:36	Got a page of notes, and I just feel so blessed every time we do this, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:57:39	Yeah. It's just been new insights left and right. I think our listeners would be interested in the intersection of your education, your biblical scholarship and your Latter-Day Saint faith, and what that journey's been like for you.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	00:57:56	I guess I'd have to say I believe that during some formative periods of my life, like many, through high school, through my mission into later periods of my life, I've always loved reading. I've never struggled with reading and reading comprehension. Now, I start there for a reason. Because primarily scripture text is reading and comprehension. So, that's not a struggle that I've ever had. I know plenty of people do struggle with it. I know that it's not always easy to grasp scripture the way it's written, the way it's structured, the way it's even formatted. As personal as it sounds in my patriarchal blessing, and I guess that's where it started, it talked about my schooling believe it or not, that I would go to more than one school. And I always thought that was intriguing.

- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:58:47 And truth be told, when I was probably 12, 13 years old I found out that you could become a doctor without becoming a doctor. And thought to myself, I can pull that off, that might be something I'm interested in. So, I kind of already knew about this thing called a PhD, and I knew that I was going to end up one eventually, whatever I was going to do. On my mission, the first area that I went to, and I just remember this because it sounds kind of hokey, maybe a bit naive, but my mission president gave all the new missionaries blessings in front of their zones. And mine had a blessing in which the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven would be opened up unto me.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 00:59:30 Now, I don't know if I fully recognized what that means. Having said that, I had the opportunity to dive into scripture study on my mission that I never had before. Understanding text, understanding scripture, understanding new perspectives and new ways of doing it. So, I just devoured the scriptures on my mission. I read them a lot. And by that, I mean all of them, a lot. I remember we had the opportunity to meet with a minister of another denomination. And he said, "Tell you what: I'll read the Book of Mormon if you promise to read the Bible." But I went, "Done, done. I've done that. So, here's the book, let's go." And that love just kind of kept developing.
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:00:11 Now, my last interview with the mission president before he left, he sat me down and ended up, I guess, talking to me about some things that were not his normal set of advice given outside. So, my friends would go in and they'd say, "Well, he told me that I should go home and find a good woman, and move on in the plan." When he sat down, he looked at me and he says, "Dan, here's what you're going to have to do. You need to go to school, and you need to learn." He says, "Now when you do, you need to make sure that you always keep in mind the balance." And he says, "And the balance is, there's the spirit and there's the intellect. Now, these two work together, but you must balance them. And if you do not have them balanced, you will have failed."
- Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:01:04 And so, I left there going, my instruction was I need to go to school and I need to keep that balance. And so, that has just followed through, always loved the scriptures, I was planning on going into international relations, but got the opportunity to go to the Jerusalem program. Went there as a student, fell in love with the ancient world in a way that I hadn't done before, came back and decided to get my advanced degrees in ancient studies. Got married, my wife hadn't fully graduated from BYU yet, she was finishing up her last year, so I decided to stick

around. And doing that work on a master's degree at BYU, just to kind of prep, get some writing skills under my belt.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:01:45 And it was while I was there that Brent Top, who I think you guys have had on already, Brent Top, he had been one of the faculty at the Jerusalem Center. And he said, "So what are you doing?" And I said, "I'm just working for a professor, and now I'm working on this degree." He says, "How would you like to teach for us?" And I said, "Oh, that sounds fun. Yeah, I'll give it a shot." And so, I got two Book of Mormon classes that semester. I always feel bad for those students. I didn't even have a master's degree, so I slid into one of these adjunct professors that was teaching without any advanced degrees, five, six years older, trying to teach them the Book of Mormon. Some of the Hebrew training's now kicking in, things just started kicking in at about that time in my life, in terms of being able to understand, comprehend, collate and begin writing down some of the observations.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:02:36 And so, that's where it began. Did that for three years, and then it was off to Chicago for learning a set of skills there. And I took in a program in Chicago that trained me in languages. I'm not actually good at languages. I'm competent in them, that's why I needed to go to Chicago, was to gain competency so that when I would speak and write about these things, I felt confident in my competency. And so, that's what I did. I was always able to separate between what the theories of the academy or this scholarship was saying about these things, recognize them for the value that they had, and yet be able to put aside that which doesn't reflect the restoration, and the principles of the restoration. Scripture to me, at least the restoration, opens up a set of texts that I take as seriously as the Bible, therefore opens up my avenues to understanding.

Dr. Daniel Belnap: 01:03:29 It comes back to something I mentioned earlier. I really do believe in the importance of being able to see a far off, to be able to have this cosmic perspective to reality. I think that changes everything. I think it has the potential to bring about that great gift that Christ promises, which is peace. And He talks about peace in John, "This peace I've given to you, that's not like the world, but a divine peace." That peace comes from that bigger perspective. And that bigger perspective is enhanced with the more windows that you have. If all you've got is a biblical text, and if all you've got are academic methodologies, they limit the view you're going to have. They're limited to honestly, this particular time and space, and a very limited aspect of this particular time in space.

Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:04:18	But the restored scriptures, along with the Old Testament and New Testament, expand that horizon. They expand the context and the contours of these things. It's through Joseph Smith that we recognize the experience that Israel was given in the first place, is a very real experience. A very real one that we all can have, that we all can experience. Nephi's expansion on this, with a recognition that part of the gospel of Christ is having the father saying unto you, "You shall have eternal life," is a big deal. These are real experiences from real people, that become models for behavior moving forward. That grand vision of what Joseph called the economy of God, I think is ultimately absolutely essential to exaltation.
Hank Smith:	01:05:01	What a fantastic day. John, we have just been so blessed. I am sure that there are people out there just going, "I did not want that to end," because I didn't want it to end. So grateful for you, Dan. Thank you for coming and spending your time with us today.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:05:17	My pleasure, that was fun.
Hank Smith:	01:05:18	This is what we do for fun, everyone. This is our idea of fun, is chapter by chapter, verse by verse.
John Bytheway:	01:05:25	Yeah, so fun.
Dr. Daniel Belnap:	01:05:26	It's not a bad gig, that's for sure.
John Bytheway:	01:05:27	No, it's such a blessing.
Hank Smith:	01:05:29	We want to thank Dr. Dan Belnap for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and we hope all of you will join us next week on another episode of Follow Him.

WHY DOES THE GOSPEL HAVE SO MANY RULES?



Hank Smith:	00:05	Hello my friends, welcome to Follow Him Favorites. My name is Hank Smith, I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. And this year for Follow Him Favorites we're answering a single question. The question for Exodus 18,19 and 20, John, I get from my teenagers, you've probably got it from your children as well, I've had it from students, is, "My goodness, why does the gospel have so many rules?" And this is where we get the 10 Commandments, right?
John Bytheway:	00:30	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:30	The thou shalts in Exodus 20.
John Bytheway:	00:32	The bigger rules.
Hank Smith:	00:33	How would you address this idea of, oh, rules is where happiness goes to die, right? And yet God wants to give us all these rules and how are they supposed to make me happy?
John Bytheway:	00:43	Oh, this is such a good question, and I've heard so many different, beautiful ways to answer. One of my favorites is President Boyd K. Packer. I'm going to paraphrase a little bit, but he said, "Don't think of the gospel as the rules, the commandment's, a fence around love that says keep out. Actually, they are the guard rails on the highway to love and happiness with guideposts along the way." He said, that sort of a thing. I love to tell, how does Heavenly Father say, I love you? Sometimes he says it like this. "I love you." Sometimes he says it like this, "Thou shalt not."
Hank Smith:	01:16	Yeah.

John Bytheway:	01:17	"I'm going to save you from so much hurt, heartache and sorrow. I'll save you from so many problems and so many consequences." I just think the commandments are in a way, the easiest way to live. Somebody, "Oh, they're not easy at all." No, but it's easier than going through the consequences of not living them, I like to say. So if you only see the gospel as a list of rules, it's like looking at a library as a place where you can't talk and forgetting all of the knowledge and wisdom that's inside. Actually, the gospel is the pathway to maximum joy and happiness, right?
Hank Smith:	01:51	Right.
John Bytheway:	01:51	Adam felt that men might be, men are that they might have joy.
Hank Smith:	01:54	Joy. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	01:54	It's all about joy and happiness and rejoicing. Here's a way to keep you safe, some rules, right?
Hank Smith:	02:01	If you wanted a happy life, you want to have happy relationships. Well, the commandments seem to me to be all about first, the first ones, my relationship with God.
John Bytheway:	02:08	With God.
Hank Smith:	02:09	Thou shalt not have other God's before me, nor make any graven image. And then the rest of the commandments have to do with my relationships with my family and my neighbors. And God wants me to have healthy, happy relationships, so I can have a healthy, happy life. And that's really what the rest of the commandments are all about, right? Having good relationships.
John Bytheway:	02:27	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	02:28	And then the last one, thou shalt not covet, helps me have a good relationship with myself and my own life. I see the commandments as ways to have happy, healthy relationships, which in turn, equals a happy and healthy life.
John Bytheway:	02:41	Happy life. And it's interesting too, that when Jesus was asked, "Well, what's the great commandment in the law that he..." And there's, what is it, Hank? 613 separate commandments in the Old Testament.
Hank Smith:	02:52	Laws, yeah.

John Bytheway:	02:52	But Jesus answered, "Love God and love your neighbor." And compressed all of them into those two. And those two sounds like those relationships too, you just mentioned, our relationship with God and with our neighbors. And actually, it's a pathway to happiness, not a bunch of restrictions.
Hank Smith:	03:09	Absolutely. David O. McKay used to tell a story, maybe you've heard me tell this before, about a horse named Dandy. He said, "The horse was amazing under the saddle. He could do things other horses couldn't do." But he said, "Dandy, resented restraint. He hated ropes, fences and gates." He said, "Anytime someone put a rope on him or put a fence around him or closed the gate, he would do anything he could to get out of that rope, to get out of that gate or to push that fence over." He said, "We just couldn't keep that horse contained." And finally, it ended up Dandy getting hit by a car. He said, "I hoped that would cure him, but it didn't." I think the car got hit by the horse, actually. But he said, "At one point, Dandy got out and he took another horse with him and they got into a feed house, but it was baited with rat poison and-
John Bytheway:	03:58	Oh, no. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	03:59	"They ended up both dying." And David O. McKay just with tears in his eyes said, "That horse couldn't understand that fence wasn't there to restrain it, that fence was there to protect it." And that's the same thing with commandments. They're not there to restrain you, they are there to protect you. And they're there because God loves you. I like how you said that John, commandments are a way of God telling us he loves us and wants us to have a happy life.
John Bytheway:	04:24	Yeah. For those who are listening, ponder the meaning when Jesus said, "You'll know the truth and the truth will make you free."
Hank Smith:	04:31	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	04:31	What does that mean? One of the meanings could be free from a lot of bad consequences, that you will never have to worry about, because you've kept the commandments and that's a blessing.
Hank Smith:	04:41	God says in Exodus 19, I want to make you a peculiar people. And that's another reason for the commandments, is, "I'm going to make you different. People will look and say, what is it about you?"

John Bytheway:	04:52	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	04:52	"How come you have all these good consequences in your life?" And you can say, "It's because of the God I serve. And it's because of the commandments he has given me." Well, we have hope you'll join us for our full podcast with Dr. Dan Belnap this week. You can find us wherever you get your podcasts, it's called Follow Him. Join us next week for another Follow Him Favorites.