



"The Promises . . . Shall Be Fulfilled"

Show Notes

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 Sunday.

Podcast Episode 18 Description:

Part 1:

Does opposition lead to more revelation? (Hint: Yes!). The Saints move to the Ohio and experience opposition, false reports, and hardships. Dr. Brent Top discusses how the parallels the opposition the Saints are experiencing parallel the Last Days. Dr. Top reminds listeners that the Saints should rejoice because the Lord's promises are listed four times more than the desolation prophecies. Join us as we learn why Advocate is John's favorite title of the Lord.

Part 2:

Will the Lord come like a "woman in travail" or a "thief in the night?" Dr. Brent Top continues his discussion of the signs of the times and teaches how the Lord encourages us four times more than warnings. Join John, Hank, and Dr. Top for Part II as they discuss how our relationship to the Lord is what we should focus on and then we will be in a position to recognize when He comes because we will be near Him.

Timecode:

Part 1

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- 00:19 Illustrious John
- 00:49 Brent Top Introduction
- 03:53 Background to the Section
- 06:39 Opposition Starts
- 08:44 JST brings Second Coming Understanding
- 10:08 Karl G. Maeser Joins Church Due to AntiMormon Book
- 12:29 Opening of the Revelations Are the Lord Are Hearken and Trust
- 14:52 The Lord Has Bled for Us--He Has Our Back
- 18:30 Mercy is Something We Haven't Earned
- 20:13 Advocate: The Title John Loves
- 23:03 Scripture Bridge to Old Testament and Enoch
- 25:59 JST Intertwined with Doctrine and Covenants
- 32:02 First Word is Hearken in Section 45
- 33:02 Joseph Smith Matthew is Bridge and Commentary to Doctrine and Covenants 45
- 35:00 Section 45 Teaches the Gathering of Israel Takes Place on Both Sides of the Veil
- 38:06 Desolating Sickness to Cover the Land in the Last Days
- 45:01 Why the Saints Shouldn't Be Troubled by These Trials
- 46:28 The Fig Leaves are Sprouting by Jesus has Our Backs
- 47:46 When Jesus Appears on the Mount of Olives He Will State He Was Crucified in the House of My Friends
- 49:50 End of Part I

Part 2

- 00:00 Welcome to Part II
- 01:13 Ratio of Lord's Counsel vs. Warning in Section 45
- 05:00 Dr. Top's Confidence in God Helps with Anxiety
- 06:07 God Will Be With Zion in the Last Days and Will Swallow Up Any Threat
- 09:22 Reminder That Section 45 Isn't a Negative Section
- 12:14 Prepper Kits Won't Help Us If We Haven't Filled Our Souls with Righteousness
- 13:51 Virtue is the Power of Christ: Not Just Moral Cleanliness

- 15:08 Dr. Top's Personal Experience as a Temple Sealer
- 17:21 Hank Shares How Parable of the Ten Virgins Relates to Us and Why We Can't Share Our Oil
- 19:45 Two Metaphors for Jesus's Sudden Return Depend on Our Relationship: Laboring Mother or Thief
- 23:31 Why We Can't Put the Signs of the Second Coming in Sequential Order
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- 28:51 Gathering Includes People From All Faiths
- 32:13 Jesus Appears to the Lamanites in the Americas
- 33:20 Bishop of Stockholm Great Friend to the Church
- 34:20 Holy Envy of Great Parts of Other Faiths
- 38:40 Dr Top Shares Story of High School Friend Who Joined Church But Didn't Know Dr. Top was LDS
- 43:00 Dr. Top's Closing Testimony
- 58:53 End of Podcast

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Biographical Information:



Brent L. Top was a Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University and was Dean of Religious Education. He serves as a Richard L. Evans professor of Religious Understanding. Born and raised in Idaho Falls, Idaho, he served a full-time mission in the Denmark Copenhagen Mission. He received all of his degrees from BYU: a BA in History, an MA in Instructional Media, and a PhD in Instructional Science and Technology. Prior to joining the BYU Religious Education faculty in 1987, he worked for the Church Educational System as a released-time Seminary Teacher, an Institute Teacher, and an Administrator. Dr. Top served as Associate dean of Religious Education from 1997 to 2002. He held the Endowed Professorship in Moral Education for two years prior to his call as President of the Illinois Peoria Mission (2004-2007). He was appointed Department Chair in June 2009. He and his wife, Wendy, are the parents of four children and reside in

Pleasant Grove, Utah, where Brother Top served as the President of the Pleasant Grove East Stake.

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EPISODE 18 • PART I

Dr. Brent L. Top



D&C 45

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

John Bytheway:	<u>01:10</u>	... in the Church Educational System. Remember that number 45. We're going to use that today. The last 34 being at BYU. He's the author of more than 20 books and scores of articles and chapters in books. He's married to his high school sweetheart, the former Wendy Cope. They served a mission together in the Illinois Peoria Mission from 2004 to 2007 where Brent presided over that mission. They and their family have also lived in the Holy Land where Brent taught at the BYU Jerusalem Center. He has a great love for all of Heavenly Father's children, and much of his career has been spent in building bridges and in dialogue with scholars, religious leaders, and people of other faiths.
John Bytheway:	<u>01:53</u>	He and Wendy are kept busy with their growing family of four children, 24 and a half grandchildren, and their first great-grandchild. Imagine that.
Hank Smith:	<u>02:01</u>	Wow.
John Bytheway:	<u>02:03</u>	Brent, this is perfect today because Brent's most recent book is called <i>Watch and Be Ready</i> and that's, get ready for the Second Coming language. And in Section 45 today, we've got a lot of wonderful stuff about that. I also want to comment that a book that has been deeply helpful to me and my family members is one called <i>Glimpses Beyond Death's Door</i> . Brent and his wonderful wife, Wendy, did research on near-death experiences and then the gospel and said, how do these and how can they correlate? Where do they correlate? And it was fascinating and testimony building. But today is more of a "watch and be ready day." And we're really excited to have Dr. Top with us. Thanks for joining us today.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>02:49</u>	Oh, thank you, John and Hank. It's a pleasure to be there. When you mentioned the book, <i>Glimpses Beyond Death's Door</i> , and then [inaudible 00:02:59] asked me to follow up and did a little book called <i>What's On The Other Side?</i> But my children mocked me, my son, I don't know where they get the sarcasm and the mockery because I am just down the line straight arrow. I never tease anyone. And so my son says that with all of the research about death and the spirit world that I've done and written about that when I die and get into the spirit world, I'm going to be wandering around saying, "Well, it wasn't like this in my book."
Hank Smith:	<u>03:36</u>	That will be funny. You'll be like, "Oh, I was right about that. I was right about that."
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>03:37</u>	Yeah. I didn't get that one, but no, I'm just so pleased to be with you and love what you're doing and I love the gospel and

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

Hank Smith: 03:53

Let's jump into the *Come, Follow Me* lesson this week. Since we have a brilliant mind here, I'm going to take advantage of this. This week's *Come, Follow Me* lesson, John and Brent, focuses on a single section of the Doctrine and Covenants. That happens a couple of times this year. Brent, can you give us some background here? Remind us of what brought Joseph Smith and the Church to Ohio, and then anything else that leads up to this section we need to know.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 04:25

I think all of your listeners will remember in previous discussions that the Lord reveals to the prophet Joseph Smith that they are to gather to the Ohio, because those early missionaries had had such success with some of the religious leaders and people of Ohio, Sidney Rigdon being one of them, and many of the others as the saints in New York were really in two different geographical areas. During this period of time, there is great opposition to the church coming from outside, of course. And with the converts in Ohio, it becomes that there's really a greater future and more members in the Ohio and the Lord reveals to the Prophet Joseph. And in that spirit of gathering, the Saints have been very, very focused on gathering and establishing Zion. And so the revelation is that they are to move to the Ohio is how it is called.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 05:38

But the opposition to the Church follows wherever it goes. And that's true today. We gather to Zion, we gather to stakes in Zion. We have geographical areas where there are many Saints, but the opposition to the Church and the critics of the Church are in every geography, in every area. And Section 45 is coming at a time when the Saints are under a great barrage of what we would call anti-Mormon efforts. And so the prophet, and you see in the heading of the revelation and it's actually more expanded that we can get in the Joseph Smith Papers that Joseph says that there were many false reports and folly stories were published and circulated to prevent people from investigating the work or embracing the faith.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 06:39

I think that you see that here in this spirit of anticipation of establishing Zion, now the opposition follows them and they are in this spirit of wanting to have a Zion experience and yet Satan does never leave them alone. And there continues to be the opposition, falsehoods being published and all kinds of opposition. And you can only imagine how that would be for individuals. So you see it against the Church in general, but all of us have experienced how that opposition can have a very

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Brent L. To...: 13:33

And so verse three, "Listen to him who is the Advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him." That is powerful. We have an Advocate that stands up for us. And then that word pleading with the father, that isn't just a lawyer that has been assigned because we're poor and have nothing to offer to get a good lawyer to get us off. We have a lawyer, an advocate, a friend who is pleading for us. That passion shows us the depth of the love of the Lord. Then the next verse tells us why we've got a chance. I think holy cow, if Top were to stand in front of the bar of justice right now, I'm toast. I am absolute toast because I've got nothing really to bring. My assets are really nothing and my debts are everything. And so listen to my advocate, and he tells me why I've got a chance.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 14:52

Saying, "Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin and whom thou wast well-pleased. Behold the blood of thy Son, which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gave us that thyself might be glorified." He's saying to his Father, "Behold them, look at them, I'm pleading in their behalf because I have shed my blood for them. I have done what thou hast sent me to do for them." I've got a chance, not because of Brent Top and anything I've said or done, but he's got my back because he bought me with his blood. I am his now. And so then he can say to the Father, and I think this is so important to remember, he's got our back. He's bought us with his blood. He's presenting us to the Father. He's pleading for us.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 15:57

And then he says, "Father, spare these, my brethren." And then comes the key phrase. This is all we've got to do, that "believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life". And so the Lord is saying to these Saints, all that is going on around you, listen to me, believe in me, hold on. And then as you jump down in verse nine, all of the verses in between have some great things there, but he says, "I have sent my everlasting covenant into the world to be the light of the world and a standard for my people and for the Gentiles to seek to it." And he's reminding them, they have embraced that covenant that is going to lead to those glorious promises and blessings. And they have a role, don't be discouraged with the false reports. Don't be discouraged with the quote, 'anti-Mormon attacks', believe on me. The light will shine forth and your job is just to trust in me and keep pressing forward.

Hank Smith: 17:13

Brent, I love this. You came to my memory one of my favorite verses in the Book of Mormon where Lehi is blessing his son,

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

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

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

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

Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>24:30</u>	That is Moses Chapter 6 and 7 that is coming during this period of time of the translation. And so those Saints that are, I guess you'd say being persecuted or filled with doubts and concerns and yet looking for the hope of establishing Zion, God is comparing them to the people of Enoch. And they're saying, "Listen to what I taught the people of Enoch." And I think the Lord could also then be saying, I want to lead you to the same place that the people of Enoch arrived.
Hank Smith:	<u>25:09</u>	I think repetition is the law of learning. We asked Dr. Millet this, but let's ask you this as well.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>25:14</u>	I rarely agree with Bob on anything. I was his Associate Dean and then at that same time, he was a Stake President and I was his First Counselor.
Hank Smith:	<u>25:26</u>	Oh [inaudible 00:25:26].
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>25:26</u>	So I basically just carry his water. I just carry his bag. So whatever brother Millet says, that's the law.
Hank Smith:	<u>25:36</u>	He's going to laugh when he hears this I think. We asked him this, a lot of people, I don't think understand the connection between the JST and the Restoration. They kind of see them in two separate boxes. One was a project and the restoration was kind of separate from that. How would you explain the JST project in its... How did it influence the Restoration?
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>25:59</u>	Okay. I think you might also, if we use that same reasoning, and I don't mean this in a derogatory way, but no one would say, well, there was the Restoration and then there was this side project called the Book of Commandments and the Doctrine and Covenants. Nobody would do that because we're saying those revelations are the Restoration. They are the ongoing Restoration. And the JST project or the New Translation as it was called was the means by which God continues to speak to his prophet and to the Saints. And so it is intimately intertwined with the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and the activities of the Church in that period. So it is not just a tweaking of a word here and there, which sometimes that's what it was, was just a word here or there, or just some clarifications.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>27:03</u>	But as we pointed out and as John jumped in and said, wait a second, that's Moses, Chapter 6 and 7. Some of the greatest revelations of the Restoration are in what we call today the Pearl of Great Price in the books of Abraham and Moses. And so the Joseph Smith Translation was as important in the ongoing

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

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

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

John Bytheway: 30:20

I'm going to quote myself.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 30:22

So I've got to find a way... No, I'm joking, John. That's wonderful. But the idea here, and I don't want this to be too facetious, but look at what he's just saying is starting right there in verse 16, he's now saying to Joseph and the Latter-day Saints, "I will show it plainly to you as I showed it to my disciples, the 11," okay? The 12, assuming that Judas is there. As I stood before them in the flesh and spake unto them saying... Matthew 24. This is Matthew 24 and 25 to some degree, I find it fascinating. This is a revelation quoting another major revelation, which is then also a precursor to the Joseph Smith translation of Matthew 24. So you basically have three revelations rolled into a package here in Section 45.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 31:31

And they're all saying much the same thing, which I think is probably saying you ought to pay attention to this because I said it on the Mount of Olives, Joseph translates it under the influence of the spirit and divides it up to ancient and modern applicability. And then we have section 45. Hey, pay attention. No wonder the first word in Section 45 is "hearken."

Hank Smith: 32:02

"Hearken." I would guess that a lot of our listeners are going, wait, what's that third revelation? That becomes what we call Joseph Smith Matthew.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 32:11

That's it.

Hank Smith: 32:12

Which some people have never even looked at, but it's the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew Chapter 24.

Dr. Brent L. To...: 32:18

And then that's exactly what the Lord is quoting in Section 45. And so that's why I say you've got three revelations for the price of one.

John Bytheway: 32:28

And you kind of need this because Matthew 24 by itself, how's this going? Now, is this about the destruction of Jerusalem or is this about the last days?

Dr. Brent L. To...: 32:39

Yup. Exactly.

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

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

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

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

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

Hank Smith:	<u>41:07</u>	Me too. Me too. In fact, we had a fire come about 20 feet from our house last fall, and man, I was searching for my scriptures. Sarah's looking for the kids and I was looking for my scriptures. [crosstalk 00:41:21]-
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>41:22</u>	Oh, absolutely. Verse 33. "Earthquakes in diverse places. Many desolations. Men will harden their hearts against me and they will take up the sword against one another." Holy cow. What have we seen in city streets? What in the world is going on as they kill one another? Okay? Now I want to jump down purposely, you're going to say, well, you're missing the best part. No, we're going to get to the best part, but now come down in verse 40. "And they shall see signs and wonders, for they shall be shown forth in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. And they shall be whole blood and fire and vapors of smoke. And before the day of the Lord shall come, the sun shall be darkened and the moon be turned into blood. And the stars shall be from heaven."
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>42:17</u>	Holy cow. All the things that are going on. I'm not done yet. Okay? Section 29, you thought you had it all with eyeballs falling out, but now we got more. Okay? And so now what's going to happen is when the Lord comes and stands on the Mount of Olives and the earth trembles to and fro... And look at verse 49, "And they that laugh shall see their folly." Okay. So that becomes the transition that with all these things that are going on, those that are losing their faith, those that are mocking kind of like in the Book of Mormon when the Saints that were looking for the sign of the day, the night and the day, and they're going to be put to death because of their belief, the same thing's happening here is people are saying, "How can you believe this stuff?"
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>43:23</u>	How can you believe this? This is folly. And now Section 45, the Lord has got the great message for us.
Hank Smith:	<u>43:31</u>	Brent, you mentioned the Book of Mormon, that's Helam in Chapter 1, I thought of Korihor who said, "What is this? Your faith is from a deranged mind."
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>43:40</u>	Exactly.
John Bytheway:	<u>43:41</u>	"This derangement of your minds comes because of the traditions of your... It's frenzied, deranged, yoked, bound, foolish."

Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>43:51</u>	I don't want to say to those that may be struggling with the difficulties of the day, of today. And they're struggling with their faith and they're being bombarded with all those things. We're not saying you're deranged like the most bitter enemies.
John Bytheway:	<u>44:08</u>	Oh no, totally different setting.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>44:10</u>	That's in a separate category, but I think it's this idea that may be little by little, my faith reservoir is leaking. And I'm starting to lose drop by drop instead of adding drop by drop to that reservoir of righteousness. And I think it's natural. I think all of us are going to wonder, how long is this pandemic going to go on? When am I going to be able to live life normally again? When is there going to be peace in the streets and civility and courtesy in discourse? We all are having those things. I think the Lord is trying to say you're not much different than my disciples. So now jump back to verse 34 and you'll see why I did the goofy thing of going, this hardship, this trial, this abomination.
Hank Smith:	<u>45:11</u>	This one. This one.
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>45:11</u>	And I'm bouncing it around. And he then says in verse 34, "And now when the Lord had spoken these words unto my disciples, they were troubled. You think, holy cow. And I said unto them, and they saying unto us, "Be not troubled. When all these things shall come to pass, ye may know that the promises which have been made unto you shall be fulfilled. And when the light shall begin to break forth, it shall be with them like unto a parable of the fig tree. And you shall see them with your own eyes. And you say when they begin to shoot forth and their leaves are yet tender that summer is nigh at hand." Be not troubled. I don't think I'm a spiritual giant. And it's probably been made obvious in this discussion today. But I've had some of my own children with so many of the things that are going on and they will say, "Mom, Dad, why are you just not even... It's like you're not even paying attention."
Dr. Brent L. To...:	<u>46:28</u>	And I say, "Oh no, we're paying attention just like you are. We're seeing the fig tree, the leaves starting to sprout. We see the exact same signs that you see." But as for me, and I think I can speak for Sister Top, of course there is compassion and there is being difficulties around us, don't bring joy to me in any way, but I don't have that pandemic paranoia and stress because I have had the experiences of seeing the promises of God fulfilled in my life over and over and over again that I know that he will fulfill his word and that when he says, "Be not troubled, I've got your back," he means it. And so while I am not looking at all the difficulties and the surrounding suffering that we see lightly or

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

Dr. Brent L. To...: 47:46

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

Dr. Brent L. To...: 48:57

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

John Bytheway: 49:50

Please join us for Part II of this podcast.

EPISODE 18 • PART II

Dr. Brent L. Top



D&C 45

- John Bytheway: 00:02 Welcome to Part II of this week's podcast.
- Dr. Brent Top: 00:06 Jump over to verse 55. We begin that glorious Millennial reign. We're going to read more and more about this in the Doctrine and Covenants and other revelations. Section 101 is one of the great revelations on the Millennial. That it really comes down here as he tells the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Remember we talked about that this was Matthew 24 and Matthew 25. When I was working on my book, *Watch and Be Ready*, I looked particularly at Chapter 25. Even when we look at Section 29 and 45 and 101, we tend to focus on the Signs of the Times that are challenging difficulties, and we look at the tribulations. We joke about the eyeballs falling out and all of those kinds of things, but the revelation itself uses those maybe as, for lack of a better way of saying it, it's not a great metaphor, as hors d'oeuvres.
- Dr. Brent Top: 01:16 Chapter 25, the parables of preparation is the main course. In fact, in chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew, and I haven't counted it up, but I think section 45, it may be the same ratio. But when I was working on my book, *Watch and Be Ready*, as I went through that carefully, because there's so many people that distressed about the signs of the times, the Savior's words concerning preparation and not being troubled, the ratio of those two... the negative signs of the times is 4:1. The Lord's counsel to us and his promises to us appear in the Revelations four times more than the desolation prophecies. Doesn't that tell you what we ought to focus on?
- Hank Smith: 02:17 Yeah.
- Dr. Brent Top: 02:18 And so then you go to the revelation, when he talks about the Ten Virgins, and we're all so familiar with that parable of Matthew 25 there, but there are three parables of preparation there and all of them are counsel that the Lord is saying to us, "You got to be ready for this." Now, at the first of Section 45, he said to us, "All you got to do is believe me." Well, that's really

what he's telling us here. So you now to go over to verse 57, where he's now going to give us part of the interpretation of the parable of preparation that we get in Matthew 24 in Joseph Smith—Matthew.

Dr. Brent Top: 03:03

Look at this. "The 10 Virgins, for they that are wise have received saved the truth, believed on me, accepted him, embraced the everlasting covenant. And then they've had hands laid upon their heads, confirmed members of the church and commanded to receive a gift. And we believe on Christ and we press forward and believe him that he's got our back. And then what happens? They take the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived. Barely, I say unto you. They shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day."

Dr. Brent Top: 03:50

So I go back when my children or grandchildren or students, or stake or ward members are stressed out by all the signs, all the falsehoods that are happening in 2021, just like they were in 1831 or in century one. If they have the Spirit and they treasure up the words of the Lord, "They shall not be deceived." So mom and dad, I'm thinking of my own kids, are not just not paying attention, but as we have the spirit, we can be not troubled. We can have confidence even though we have concern about the effects and the things that are going on around us. Confidence is what is going to give us greater trust. Doesn't mean that the pain is any less.

Dr. Brent Top: 04:52

I've had, I'm trying to think, I think I've had 11 members of my family that have had COVID, some more than others. So I can't say, "Oh, that's no big deal." Can't say that at all, but I have the confidence on the promises of God. That's really the message of Section 45. And so as you look down at the end there, verse 58 of 45, "And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance. And they shall multiply and wax strong and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation." Every time I read that verse and thought, "Why did we start our family now?"

Hank Smith: 05:34

Into Millennium.

Dr. Brent Top: 05:35

Why didn't we wait? Yeah, that would have been a whole lot better raising our kids then, but here in verse 59, "For the Lord shall be in their midst and his glory shall be upon them. And He will be their King and their lawgiver." When President Nelson talks to us about the difficulties may surround us, you will have difficulties, he says, "I'm not saying it's easy." But then when he talks about the glorious promises that await." And so we look at

Section 45, we see "The wars and rumors of wars and the wars in our own land." Now look down to verse 66, "When Zion is established, look at the glorious promises, look at the power."

- Dr. Brent Top: 06:35 And so while we see people around us that verbally, online, with literature, terrorize us and our beliefs and mock us, ultimately, they're the ones that are going to be afraid because, "The glory of God will be with Zion." And then I just love this part in verse 67. "And the terror of the Lord also shall be there because God's power is so strong." It is so incredible. It swallows up every other attack or tribulation upon us, including death will be swallowed up. That terror will swallow up any of those things that have bothered us. And those that are wicked that have not trusted in God's power and promises will not come unto it because they will recognize the strength and power of Zion.
- Dr. Brent Top: 07:43 Verse 71. "And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion singing the songs of everlasting joy." In Section 29, as you read and studied that, there was a ton of stuff there wouldn't be songs of joy. The things we've highlighted in Section 45, there's not... There could be R-rated movies for the violence and for the difficulties. And we're witnessing it around us, but I think the Lord is saying to us, "Hang on because the glorious promises are more than you can imagine right now."
- Dr. Brent Top: 08:36 And while we may have those moments of fear and wonder of how we're going to make it day to day, I think Section 45 is a reminder that Zion is a place of safety, Zion is a place of peace, Zion is a place of power, incredible power. And our job is to believe in Christ, accept the everlasting covenant, follow Him to Zion and stay put. I think that's Section 45. That's Brother Top's Cliff Notes version.
- Hank Smith: 09:22 Oh, Brent, it was just absolutely wonderful to recognize that this isn't a negative section. It's almost like when you read the Book of Revelation and you realize it's our hopeful message. The message is of the Second Coming.
- Dr. Brent Top: 09:36 Yeah, victorious.
- Hank Smith: 09:38 Yeah. We focus on the scourges and the desolations and the earthquakes, and no one ever gets to the end where the Lord says, "Oh, you got..." the end is the best part.

John Bytheway:	<u>09:49</u>	I think there's something settling to have the Lord say... to tell us even the bad stuff, "This is going to happen. This is going to happen." Actually, it can strengthen our testimony because we can look around and say, "Wow, that's what the Lord said would happened. Wow, that's what the Lord said would happened." And instead of saying, "Where is God?" We can say, "Whoa, the prophecy works. This is exactly... so stay close family, because he is preparing us."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>10:17</u>	That's right. Well, and you can just see, in the Church, how the Lord prepared us for the pandemic and we didn't even see it.
John Bytheway:	<u>10:27</u>	Oh my goodness! The Home Church and everything.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>10:29</u>	All of those things. And so, as you pointed out, John, is that if you're seeing all these things being fulfilled around us, that ought to give you greater confidence, not fear that it's going to turn out okay. It's like bookends. And so in Section 45, the bookends where... Remember, we started out our discussion today saying, "I'm your Advocate." And then he's saying, "Zion is established and I'm in your presence" Well, all the stuff in between those two bookends, those ought to say to us, "Wait a second. I had the preface that told me he's got me and I've got the ending that tells me he's with me. All I've got to do is stay true to those promises and hang on." That's my simplistic approach to Signs of the Times.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>11:26</u>	So if you wanted a book that says, "On Thursday, April 1st, this will happen, on Friday, April 2nd, this will happen," it's not there because four times more preparation counsel from the Lord to his disciples than signs. And so I'm personally going to observe the signs around me, but with four times the spiritual and emotional and physical energy, I'm going to focus on the preparation that my soul will be saved at the harvest.
Hank Smith:	<u>12:06</u>	I think it was Elder Oaks once who said, "A 72-hour kit is useful, but a 72-year spiritual kit is much more useful."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>12:17</u>	That's right. Maybe I'll get in trouble, but I have a line in my book there about having guns in the bomb shelter and having your prepper supplies won't cut it if we haven't filled our souls with the reservoirs of righteousness that the Lord has asked us to.
John Bytheway:	<u>12:40</u>	Because I love the Book of Mormon, and I love the War Chapters. You will watch Captain Moroni. It is always spiritual preparation first. It is always, get your act together. Oh, and

then, let's make some swords and some forts and some fortifications, but get your minds faithful to God then we'll go to the next part. And that's why I like the comparison of the 10 Virgins there. I was going to say something else too. I think I've heard Robert Millet use this example, but have you ever watched a football game where you knew the outcome, but maybe you were protecting other members of your family. Can't watch it until later. And they don't know what's going to happen and they are unsettled and up and down and you are just laughing inside because you know your team's going to come back and win.

John Bytheway: 13:28

I feel like that's how the Lord's prepping us, "Hey, this will happen. This will happen." And we can look and say, "That's true. That's true." But in the end, the Savior is the Savior. He is the victor as promised. And that's why I love the way you've put this together. The bookends. There's a lot of stuff here, Section 29. But look at the beginning, look at the end. We know what's going to happen in the end.

Dr. Brent Top: 13:52

If I could just build upon that, John, you can see all throughout the scriptures those promises that should strengthen us. And that's why the signs should not overly trouble us. You remember where the Lord says, "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly." I know the two of you and I have spoken to youth a zillion times about those phrases, but it's not just moral cleanliness. Virtue is the power of Christ. "Let the power of Christ garnish thy thoughts unceasingly."

Dr. Brent Top: 14:39

And then you wonder when people are doubting or thanking, "Brother Top, you have this Pollyannish view of the world, this naiveté that isn't real." No. Remember the Lord said, "If I am letting the power of Christ permeate my thoughts and my being," he says, "then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God." That's what Section 45 is about also, is there's stuff happening, but thy confidence can wax strong when you understand the promises in the Everlasting Covenant.

Dr. Brent Top: 15:24

If I could just maybe, in a personal vein without being too personal or too inappropriate, as you mentioned, John, in my introduction, I serve as a sealer in the Mount Timpanogos Temple, one of the most incredible blessings in my life. The authority and the power that was conferred upon me is truly awesome; truly awesome when you think about it. And so when I have the... This week, I have this privilege again with a couple that knelt across the altar. And I asked them to make a covenant, the covenant that is mentioned in Section 45 and throughout the Restoration, that New and Everlasting

Covenant. And then I seal upon them blessings and promises that are beyond comprehension of the mortal mind. That is what the Lord is doing for us.

Dr. Brent Top: 16:36

He's saying, "Will you take this covenant? And if you will take this covenant, then I'm going to bless you with the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all that that entails." That is awesome in the truest sense of the word. And so that's how I look at the revelations and those... If you put all the "negative" things in the Doctrine and Covenants, in that context then can our confidence wax strong as we face the future.

Hank Smith: 17:19

Man, that was so just powerful and wonderful. I was thinking of when I teach the Parable of the Ten Virgins in my New Testament class, I try to make it personal for the students. A lot of them are getting married or just recently married, and I'll ask someone, "Who's been recently married? And they'll say, "Maddy, raise your hand." And I'll say, "Maddy, who's your best friend in the whole world, your best friend?" And she'll say, "Oh, it's so-and-so, it's my friend, Julie." I'll say, "Did Julie come to your wedding?" "Oh, yeah. She wouldn't miss it." "What if she missed it? Would you be worried about her?" "Yeah." "What if she told you the next day, 'You know what? I just couldn't make it. I just couldn't make it. I missed it. I'm sorry.'" She said, "That would hurt."

Hank Smith: 18:07

And I think in a way, the savior in the Parable of the Ten Virgins is saying, this is my big day and we're friends. I want you to be there. Be ready. This is my big moment. And when we are foolish, we think, "Oh, it's no big deal. It's no big deal. I'll do other things." To me, it's a personal relationship where the Lord is saying, "Be like these wise single girls," that's what a virgin in the New Testament-

John Bytheway: 18:33

Right. A maid.

Hank Smith: 18:35

... "Be like these wise girls and care, just care. And get involved and take the Holy Spirit for their guide. The idea of that's your oil, store it up, store it up and involve yourself with me."

Dr. Brent Top: 18:52

That's beautiful, Hank. I love that because when you say the word "care," we could add another one to that. The reason why my best friend is going to be at my wedding, or hopefully my best friend is going to be at my funeral, is because of love. And if we love the Lord, and you use the word care, and I think they're synonymous there, is that I wouldn't miss it because I love him so much.

Hank Smith:	<u>19:25</u>	That's exactly right. When the door is shut, some of my students say, "Oh, he's so mean when the door is shut in the Parable of the Ten Virgins." And I think the mean one is those who didn't show up.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>19:36</u>	Right. They don't care.
Hank Smith:	<u>19:39</u>	It's my wedding. They don't care.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>19:40</u>	When you say, "Well, they were filling their oil lamps," that's not like a checklist of saying, "I got to go to church three times this month to count it. I've got to read my scriptures five days out of seven to count it." As we've taught seminary, we've fallen into that category a time or two [crosstalk 00:20:00] of focusing so much of, "A star on the forehead for this and do this." If I had to prepare myself or to travel a certain distance because I loved my best friends so much, I would not view that as a checklist burden of a bunch of things that I have to do. That would be, "I am glad, I am honored to be able to do this because I love my friend so much."
Hank Smith:	<u>20:31</u>	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	<u>20:31</u>	I am aware of two metaphors for the last days of Jesus' coming. In verse 19, "But verily I say unto you that desolation shall come upon this generation as a thief in the night." And another one that I heard is, "as a woman in travail." And I always like the latter one because the woman in travail knows, and she has known for months. And the very fact that the Lord is telling us all this puts us more as the woman in travail. We know the signs, we're watching for it, whereas a thief in the night, you have no idea when that's going to come. Could you comment on that?
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>21:11</u>	I agree with you totally. And I think for those that do not know the pregnant woman that is in labor, it will be like a thief at night [crosstalk 00:21:24], but if you're close and you're relatives, or you know this woman that is about to give birth and you're part of that extended family, for lack of a better way of saying it, then it doesn't come as a thief in the night; it is coming in a way that we can see this. As you mentioned, I'm a Gospel Doctrine teacher. Last time I was teaching was section 27 on the sacrament. But I pointed out to my ward that there's a lot more to the latter half of Section 27, when the Savior's talking about the great last Sacrament meeting that he's going to attend with us at the end of the world. And as you have Elder McConkie's Commentary, it is Adam-on-di-Ahman.

Dr. Brent Top:	<u>22:17</u>	And so if you think about that, those faithful covenanted Saints are going to be like those surrounding the woman in travail. We're seeing the signs of labor and delivery. And so I don't know exactly what hour or maybe even what day she gives birth, but when I'm at that sacrament meeting at Adam-ondi-Ahman, whatever way God uses technology to get us all there, I don't think we're going to be too shocked that the glorious Second Coming is nigh at hand.
John Bytheway:	<u>23:02</u>	Yes. I think that's a great way to look at all of this, is the Lord loves us and cares enough. He could have... "I'm not going to tell you, you're just going to be surprised after the surprised," but instead he's saying, "You're going to see this, you're going to see this, you're going to see this. But don't worry. But you're going to see this and you're going to see this, but don't be troubled because I got ya." That is a nicer way of looking at it, that, "Well, thank you for telling us what to expect so that we don't lose hope."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>23:31</u>	In fact, I've got... What you've said is right on target, and I've got maybe a more simplistic way of saying it in my own life, is that as I had never gotten into signs of the times that much as a focus of my study, in some way. I had a very, very prominent member of the Church when I was serving as Dean, and I've got to be careful how I say this... No, he will not be speaking at General Conference, but maybe he did in the past. Called me and wanted me to review a manuscript or coauthor a work with him that would put the signs of the times in the proper sequence.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>24:21</u>	I refused to do it respectfully because, one, I don't think you can, I don't think the Lord has ever really done that for us in the scriptures. And then my personal philosophy has been and it really doesn't matter. And so with the Second Coming, and even with all of the parables of preparation and the latter-day revelations that we have, it really doesn't matter in that if I am faithful, and if I am continually repenting, and changing, and trying to improve, and trusting in the Lord, and trying to keep my covenants, I will be a participant in the Second Coming. Period, exclamation point, and with whatever great emoji and gif you could add to it.
Hank Smith:	<u>25:22</u>	I love that because you don't have to be a Second Coming scholar, having listed out every sign, and that's not what the Lord is asking here.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>25:30</u>	That's right. Exactly.

John Bytheway:	<u>25:31</u>	So are you saying this dry erase board I've got behind me, I can just erase this? I like to tell my students, "Rather than wondering when Christ will come, let's just come on to Christ. And then it doesn't matter when he comes, because we will already be with him."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>25:47</u>	And no, it was not John that was submitting the manuscript for me to look at. No, but with my students, I would emphasize over and over again what the Lord emphasized to the disciples in the Olivet Discourse, but also in section 29, 45, 101, other places when he says, "No man knoweth." And I often quote President Ballard when he says, "I would think that if the Lord was going to reveal it to anybody, he would reveal it to the living prophet, the First Presidency, and the Council of the Twelve." And he says, "We haven't heard that, and I don't know."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>26:30</u>	And so I emphasize over and over again, thief in the night, woman in travail, whatever, it's we just don't know. And he wants it to remind us, "You don't know." But he will say, "It's nigh at hand." And I often say, "If it was nigh at hand in 1831, it's nigher at hand in 2021."
John Bytheway:	<u>26:52</u>	I started looking at the end of all these sections that are in the '30s. "I come quickly, I come quickly. I come quickly." You know?
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>26:59</u>	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	<u>26:59</u>	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	<u>26:59</u>	"You've been saying you're coming quickly for 190 years."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>27:03</u>	That's right. Exactly. And-
John Bytheway:	<u>27:03</u>	Maybe that word does not mean what you think it means, you know?
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>27:06</u>	Well, and one day is a thousand years to the Lord, oh man
John Bytheway:	<u>27:12</u>	But the point is, "Stand in holy places, be not moved."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>27:17</u>	Right.
Hank Smith:	<u>27:18</u>	John, it probably wouldn't be very good of him to say, "Well, it's not anytime soon. So don't worry about it."

Dr. Brent Top:	<u>27:25</u>	But isn't that really what people are saying when they're saying, "Well, how much time have I got before I really get serious
Hank Smith:	<u>27:36</u>	The Lord doesn't leave that room. He doesn't leave that room
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>27:38</u>	And so that's why I always go back to Section 64 and I'll tell the students, "Well, I've told you nobody knows, but I know and the Lord tells you right here when he says, "Tomorrow I come cometh."
Hank Smith:	<u>27:52</u>	Tomorrow.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>27:52</u>	Tomorrow I come cometh. And then he said, "For you, labor while it's called today."
Hank Smith:	<u>27:59</u>	So good.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>28:00</u>	And today is today until the Second Coming. And then he comes tomorrow. My tomorrow may not be Hank's tomorrow. Hank's tomorrow may not be John's tomorrow. Or it may be that we're all caught up with the savior tomorrow. We don't know. But in the meantime, let's trust in the Lord and hold on for dear life.
Hank Smith:	<u>28:24</u>	We have today. I have a comment. I would love to hear what you think it, Brent, because I know you're a bridge builder with other faiths. This section is two members of the Church; that's the audience. I do see some very cool mentions of other faiths. First, he mentions the Jews. I have a couple of wonderful Jewish friends, as do both of you, because we spend a lot of time in Israel. And one of them, I bet you've met him, he's a Scottish man named Alan. You know Alan, don't you know, John?
John Bytheway:	<u>28:52</u>	Yes.
Hank Smith:	<u>28:52</u>	He speaks Hebrew with a Scottish accent. And it's really fun.
John Bytheway:	<u>28:56</u>	It's really something.
Hank Smith:	<u>28:57</u>	I remember one time I asked Alan, he said, "I'm an open book, ask me anything." And he's a very faithful Jew. And I said, "Tell me about Jesus. Alan, tell me about Jesus." And he said, "Oh Jesus, he's a great man, a great teacher. He's awesome." "Is he the Messiah?" "No, no. Jesus was not the Messiah." And I love that... He's a good man. Alan is a good man and he loves God. And I love here, the Savior, he is non-condemnatory to this reference to Zechariah, when he says, "These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends, I am he

who was lifted up by him, I am Jesus that was crucified." There's something inclusionary there that he doesn't say, "And now you're done. You're wiped out." He teaches them-

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| John Bytheway: | <u>29:47</u> | Look at verse 54. "The heathen nations- |
| Hank Smith: | <u>29:50</u> | Will be redeemed will be redeemed. |
| John Bytheway: | <u>29:52</u> | ... will be redeemed will be redeemed." |
| Hank Smith: | <u>29:53</u> | In verse 71, you were talking about Zion and he says, "And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations." To me, that seems very inclusionary of all faiths. |
| Dr. Brent Top: | <u>30:06</u> | I think it's very perceptive to see that. In fact, in my inter-faith work and in my bridge building with those that are of other Christian denominations, as well as people that are not Christians, the group of religious educators from universities in Saudi Arabia, and the women wearing the burqas where you can only see your eyes, and yet as they would talk about their values and their faith and their goodness, and the way that they're raising their families, I'm involved in a very official way with a Jewish dialogue. And I am so inspired with holy envy of so many of the things that I learned. And then I'm involved in dialogues with Latter-day Saints and evangelicals that can be spirited at times, but I have holy envy for so many of their beliefs and their passion and their love for the Lord Jesus Christ. |
| Dr. Brent Top: | <u>31:14</u> | I have a group right now in my capacity as the Richard L. Evans Chair for Religious Understanding that we're discussing what constitutes Zion, and the prophet Joseph Smith clearly envisioned a Zion that was broader than just The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Now, we know the covenant and the covenant path, but I never refer to my interfaith dialogues with scriptural terms like heathen nations. That usually doesn't build bridges right out of the chute. But I think we see the promises of God truly are inclusionary. And it may very well be that many of us at the Second Coming will be surprised at who is caught up to meet the Messiah that maybe they didn't even recognize in mortality. I don't know. |
| John Bytheway: | <u>32:13</u> | I have stopped saying something I used to say too often, just about the Book of Mormon, "Oh, when Jesus appeared to the Nephites." And I don't say that anymore because there were Lamanites. And he told them all, "All ye that are spared because you are more righteous than they." So I try to say now, "Well, |

Jesus appeared to the righteous in the new world," and then he tells us what that cutoff was and the cutoff wasn't very high.

Hank Smith: 32:38

That's good, John.

John Bytheway: 32:38

It was like, "Those of you who didn't stone the prophets, you're the ones..." And then he tells them, "Will you please repent?" So it's not like they were perfect either. The bar was pretty low. "Those of you who haven't murdered anybody lately, will you repent now?" But anyway, I love that.

Dr. Brent Top: 32:55

I hope that's still the bar, because I haven't stoned any prophets.

Hank Smith: 33:01

That's true.

John Bytheway: 33:02

I like that. And that he remembered the heathen nations. Wasn't another section we were just reading, "He will remember the heathen and all are likened God." They're remembered. They're loved. Will you explain that term, holy envy? I think I remember where it came from. Was it Krister-

Dr. Brent Top: 33:20

It was Krister Stendahl, who was... he was a Bishop of Stockholm. He had been the Dean of the Harvard Divinity School. And when the Open House for the Stockholm Temple was taking place and there were so many protests against the Latter-day Saints as we see all the time that... Brigham Young taught that when Latter-day Saints are building a temple, the bells of hell will ring. And Brigham said, "I love that sound. Let the bells ring."

John Bytheway: 33:53

Love to hear them ring.

Dr. Brent Top: 33:54

I used to teach my missionaries, when I was Mission President, that the greater the opposition to your message, the more Satan is worried about you. If Satan isn't really tempting and opposing you-

Hank Smith: 34:11

That's a problem.

Dr. Brent Top: 34:12

... that's a real problem that you've.

John Bytheway: 34:13

What does that tell you?

Dr. Brent Top: 34:15

Well, in any event, it was all of that turmoil with regards to the Stockholm Temple, and it was Krister Stendahl who came to the defense of the Church in a news conference, if I remember

right, or to the press and to the protestors when he gave the three rules of religious engagement. And he said, "You always compare your best with their best, not their worst against your best. You always let them tell their own message, not you tell their message." And then the third one was, "You have holy envy that other people have things that you would envy to have in your own worship, in your own practice." We can't go to the Holy Land without having holy envy, the devotion and faith and passion.

Dr. Brent Top: 35:14

Or even back in the old days when I was able to even go into Sinai, and we don't get to go to Sinai, and climbing Mount Sinai thinking I was going to die. And my students were mocking me that I was huffing and puffing the last third of climbing up that mountain. And they said, "Come on, Brother Top, you're not as old as Moses was." And I had to remind them that Moses was caught up to the top. He didn't climb to the top. But then I get up to the top huffing and puffing, and here's a 70 plus-year-old Italian woman who is on a pilgrimage that has climbed that to show her love and devotion for her God.

Dr. Brent Top: 36:00

You see it all around you when you use that phrase, "More righteous than me." I find that often, there are good and honorable and wonderful people that are going to be on the earth after the Savior's coming that haven't come on to the New and Everlasting Covenant. But that's all the more reason why I am going to learn from them, and hopefully in my love and friendship and bridge-building, they will desire to learn of me, which may or may not lead to them coming into the kingdom.

Hank Smith: 36:39

Come to Zion. They'll see it. They'll see Zion. They'll say, "That's where I want to be."

Dr. Brent Top: 36:44

Well, we see that with... I've hosted hundreds of religious leaders and scholars when I was dean, and they come on the campus of BYU and they say, "I feel something. I feel something." And it's really true, there is a spirit of the why or the spirit of the gospel. And then that spirit leaves them when the cart is going past the testing center.

John Bytheway: 37:13

There's a void in that area. There's a-

Dr. Brent Top: 37:16

Then the dark clouds envelop them.

John Bytheway: 37:20

... I'll bet Heber J. Grant would really like us to change the name of that building.

Dr. Brent Top:	<u>37:24</u>	Yeah. No kidding.
Hank Smith:	<u>37:25</u>	He's like, "Why did I get the Testing Center?"
John Bytheway:	<u>37:26</u>	Why did he have to associate this with...
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>37:28</u>	Why couldn't we at least name that building for Lucifer?
John Bytheway:	<u>37:34</u>	This is the Adversary Building.
Hank Smith:	<u>37:38</u>	That is great.
John Bytheway:	<u>37:39</u>	I'm glad you talked about Holy Envy, because I don't think a lot of people have heard that. And I think I saw a video of Krister Stendahl actually explaining that, and I thought that's a... So that it doesn't sound like an oxymoron, tell them what you mean. Thank you for doing that.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>37:53</u>	Right.
Hank Smith:	<u>37:53</u>	Yeah, that was cool.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>37:53</u>	Well, Krister Stendahl was also a dear friend of Truman Madsen. And so maybe what you've seen was Truman was innocent.
John Bytheway:	<u>38:00</u>	It was a Truman Madsen video, I think, and they showed him...
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>38:06</u>	He was a very dear friend of the church.
John Bytheway:	<u>38:08</u>	When I was in high school, he was a rock solid Presbyterian and close friend and kept <i>The For the Strength of Youth</i> , just like we did. And I had to look around and try to explain to him why there were Latter-day Saints that weren't keeping them. That helped me a lot through high school to have this just rock solid Presbyterian, and so I'm grateful for his influence.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>38:39</u>	Well, let me share with you a similar experience, but maybe not as positive reflection on me, but my senior year in high school, and I know it's hard to believe now, but I was actually a basketball star, and I was a great athlete. And my kids say that the older I get, the greater I was in my memory. So in my Senior year there was one Junior that was on the starting five of my high school team with me, and I told how the Junior... I said, "As an underclassman, you have one job when you're on the floor, and that is you are to rebound and you are to pass me the ball." Those were the only two things that you do.

Dr. Brent Top:	<u>39:27</u>	And so we would banter back and forth. And he was not a member, and I don't think he was a believer in just about anything, but we had a prayer before one of our basketball games. I don't know whether we could even do that today, but in those days, all of our sporting activities, we had a prayer. And they called on Howell, my friend, who was on the starting five, was not a member of the Church in a predominantly LDS community, I think most everybody on the team was, and the coach said, "Howell, would you be willing to pray?" And he said, "Yeah." And he said, "Dear Lord, please bless the other team that they won't feel bad when we kill them. Amen."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>40:12</u>	And we had been on a 10-game losing streak, and that night we went out and wiped out this team that was supposed to beat us. And so Howell became our designated prayer.
John Bytheway:	<u>40:23</u>	You got to pray every time.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>40:24</u>	Unbeknownst to me, when I was on my mission, Howell had gotten involved in Seminary activities and become friends with a lot of the youth kids, joined the Church, went on a mission and after I'd come home from my mission and had married Wendy, lo and behold, he comes in and I see him first time since he was a Junior in high school. And I say, "Howell, [inaudible 00:40:49] so wonderful. I am so proud of you. I wish I would have been the one to share the gospel with you." And Howell said, "Well, Brent, to tell you the truth, I didn't know you were a member of the Church."
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>41:02</u>	Now, it hit me in that I was living the gospel, but I was passively living the gospel rather than actively living the gospel. And when you see in Section 45 there some things about the "light shining in darkness," I was just happy to go along, to get along. I wasn't doing anything bad. I was a good Latter-day Saint youth, but I was not letting the covenant shine brightly in my life and from my mouth.
John Bytheway:	<u>41:44</u>	That's a story of. Reminded me Elder Holland's talk about a prayer for the children where he said some of the adults are making their fate for their children too hard to detect.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>41:56</u>	Right. Exactly right.
Hank Smith:	<u>41:59</u>	That really was. I have a good friend who is a Jehovah's Witness. I sometimes do corporate work, and I met him through some of my corporate speaking. And we meet up once or twice a year, we'll be at a corporate event, we'll go to lunch. And my

goodness, his faithfulness impresses me to know, and that's all he wants to do, is what he calls his ministry. And he says, "What are you doing? What are your goals?" And I'm going, "Well, I build the kingdom of Hank." And I said, "What are your goals?" And he said, "Oh, if I could, I'd just love to go full-time in ministry. Right now I only get..." I think he said, "I only get 30 hours a week because of my job to do my ministry." That to me was so impressive. And I thought, "This is a good, good man who loves God."

- Dr. Brent Top: 42:50 Yeah, that's holy envy.
- John Bytheway: 42:53 Evangelicals who just love Jesus and know the word.
- Hank Smith: 42:59 Well, let's go to our last question. Dr. Top, you're a historian, you're a gospel scholar. There's no doubt about that. You've been teaching the scriptures and Church History for, you don't look it, but it's been four and a half decades.
- Dr. Brent Top: 43:16 Yeah. I started when I was minus six. So I'm 39.
- Hank Smith: 43:20 You don't want to count all the pre-mortal teaching as well.
- Dr. Brent Top: 43:26 Exactly. That's right.
- Hank Smith: 43:26 You've been Dean of the Religion Department at BYU. I know you have rubbed shoulders with the General Authorities in that role. You've served as a bishop, you've served as Stake President, you've served in Mission President. I don't think we talked about that you were in Nauvoo, around Illinois, for three years. You know, as much as anyone, about the history of the Church, about Joseph Smith, about their highs and their lows, about their triumphs and their tragedies. And you are a faithful Latter-day Saint. I think our listeners, I personally, and I know John would, would love to hear your personal thoughts on Joseph Smith, on the Restoration of the gospel and what it has done for you as a husband and father and as a son of God.
- Dr. Brent Top: 44:17 Oh, thank you. First of all, it's debatable about the knowledge that I have, what you have introduced. I do not profess to be a historian, but I try my best to stay up on some things and to read the scriptures. But clearly, there are those that know tons more, but let me just share an experience that I had when I was serving as the associate dean to... Bob Millet was the Dean of Religion at that time. And some of your listeners and you guys are maybe even too young to remember, but the Southern Baptist Convention had their National or International

Convention in Salt Lake City. And President Hinckley was President of the Church and asked that we be good neighbors and really help them to feel the spirit of Salt Lake City and that we not engage in Bible bashes or other kinds of things.

Dr. Brent Top: 45:20

And it was interesting that... I think the convention went quite well. At the end, Channel 2 in Salt Lake City, they had a reporter that had a news show and his name was Rod Decker. And Rod always would pit people against each other to get both sides of an issue. And it was always very, very interesting. And Rod was a very, very interesting and provocative reporter. And Rod had invited one of the participants of the Baptist Southern Convention on his show. And then they had invited Robert Millet, the Dean of Religious Education to BYU, to represent the Latter-day Saints. And it was set up to be somewhat of a debate. And so-

John Bytheway: 46:15

In this corner?

Dr. Brent Top: 46:16

... Yeah, exactly. It wasn't quite that overt, but everybody knew what was going down. And so you had a very knowledgeable Baptist, a Pastor, and a very knowledgeable Religion Professor who happened to be the Dean of Religion at BYU and had happened to written a lot of books. Well, in that television half-hour program, and I say this with all due respect to my Baptist friend that was interviewed, that Bob ate his lunch. It was just amazing how Bob was able to do things.

Dr. Brent Top: 46:55

Well, that aired on a Sunday night, the last night of the convention, and Monday morning Bob had received a phone call from another Baptist minister saying, "That other Baptist last night on that program did not represent us well. I need to talk to you and we need to discuss the issues that I have with Mormonism." We could use Mormon in those terms back in those days. And he said, "I'd like to talk with you. Have you got some time where I can pose my questions to you that didn't get asked last night?"

Dr. Brent Top: 47:33

Well, we knew immediately where that was going. Bob walked down to my office as Associate Dean and said, "Would you be willing to sit in on this?" We spent four hours going over... There were amazing questions and discussions, and Bob knew this guy's literature better than he knew it. I think he was actually shocked that here were a couple of Mormons that actually knew a few things and were a little surprised, he was a little surprised by it. When we got all done and we'd had a very spirited, interesting discussion and it... Mostly my job was when Bob taught a really great point, I would say, "Yeah, that's right."

And that was about all I contributed to the discussion. Well, not quite.

- Dr. Brent Top: 48:28 And when we got done, this wonderful Baptist Minister who had posed every difficult question that has come up over and over and over and over again, he looked at us and he looked around in the Dean's office and all of Bob's books, all around the walls and compared to my library, it's nothing. And the difference is Bob had read all those books and in my library, mostly they're there for show. But he said to us, he said, "I can't believe that you two believe, knowing you know all know." Now, look at that phrase again. "I can't believe you believe considering all you know."
- Dr. Brent Top: 49:26 Now, I know he was discussing it in an intellectual academic sense. I put myself a little bit with Bob on that. Both of us know a few things, and both of us have studied a lot through the years. And the more that I study, the greater is my belief. The more that I study the Book of Mormon and study the Doctrine and Covenants, the more I am absolutely amazed at the words that come through the Prophet Joseph Smith that we have recorded in the standard works.
- Dr. Brent Top: 50:08 Now, more than that, besides putting Moroni's Promise to the test, and I've had that confirmation over and over and over again, I have come to discover that most of the time, the people that have the questions and deep, deep doubts, and I have those in my own family, I understand that they're struggling, I understand the depth of their pain in trying to come to some resolution there. And maybe I don't fully comprehend where they are in their faith journey and their faith crises.
- Dr. Brent Top: 50:48 I understand that I may not fully be where they're at, but I've also learned that most of the time, it's not about getting answers, because there are answers. Every question that has been posed to me through 45 years as a religious educator, every question that were posed to me as a Mission President. My missionaries thought, "Oh my gosh, we've got a Religion Professor. We're going to have him answer all of our investigators questions. And we will lead the Church in baptisms." And they would ask me to come and say, "We know, President, that if you would just answer this one question, our investigator would be baptized." Never once happened. And I could spend hours and hours with people. Mostly, it is not about the answers. Now, for some, it is.
- Dr. Brent Top: 51:45 Mostly people will think, "Oh, the Church lied to me about this or that." And I'll say it, "No. I knew that. I read that." Maybe we

were running in different circles in some way, but the answers were there. Most of the time, it was really a struggle, and I like the word, a crisis of faith. It is not a crisis of knowledge, it is not a crisis of information; it's a crisis of faith. And at certain points in our lives, we may not have enough faith in Joseph Smith or the Restored Gospel or the Church, or we may have been treated badly by someone or had a bad experience by something.

Dr. Brent Top: 52:38

But for me, it still boils down to the faith; that I have had far more experiences that confirm my faith and strengthen my faith than those that challenge my faith, or even challenge my intellect in that regard. When I was Stake President, I used to say to the Bishops as we would train them, is that I would say, "Living the gospel of Jesus Christ is not hard, living with the consequences of not living the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is hard."

Dr. Brent Top: 53:21

I have in my own life, I have the spiritual witnesses that come by the power of the Holy Ghost that I have them again and again, and again, and they're burning in the bosom. I have those intellectual witnesses as I study the words of Joseph Smith, as I study the faith and devotion of those pioneers and subsequent profits, yes, there are warts, yes, there were mistakes, but you cannot question faith and devotion. I have those intellectual witnesses and testimonies, but most of all, I have a witness that comes from the fruit of gospel living. The fruit is sweet. My life is better.

Dr. Brent Top: 54:09

I have a daughter that has left the Church and she made a very interesting observation. I don't think she intended it as a compliment or as a positive, but she made a very interesting statement. She said, "When I was in the Church, I felt like I had an anchor weighing me down of all the things that I thought I had to do." Now, that that said to me, I guess, as a dad, I didn't do a very good job of teaching her about the grace of Christ. And she felt that she could never, ever measure up. And so she said that she felt this anchor pulling her down. And that was the source of her crisis of faith.

Dr. Brent Top: 54:52

When she made the conscious effort with her husband to leave the Church, she then made an interesting observation and she said, "And now I feel like I don't have any anchor to anything." Now, that was profound. To be anchorless in this day and age is not only painful and problematic and difficult and dangerous. You got to have faith, as the song says, you got to have faith. For me, I press forward in faith. I have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I have faith in the truth claims of the Church and of the

Prophet Joseph Smith. I have faith because my life has so been so deeply and richly blessed.

- Dr. Brent Top: 55:50 Now, that same daughter in the midst of all this pandemic would never say to me or to my wife, because of that authority figure barrier there a little bit, but she said to her sister who then said to us that she said, "I wish I could have the faith that mom and dad have so that I can have the peace that mom and dad have." I bear testimony of that piece. And so I press forward in faith because with greater faith leads to greater confidence in the Lord and trust his promises, which leads to greater peace in life. I bear that testimony to you.
- Hank Smith: 56:48 Dr. Top, I don't know what to say other than we are so grateful. I know everyone listening right now is just saying, "I'm so grateful." I am so grateful for you.
- Dr. Brent Top: 57:00 Thank you.
- Hank Smith: 57:01 Your time, your knowledge and your testimony have been just... I just feel like I'm almost floating on my chair, John, how do you feel?
- John Bytheway: 57:13 Oh, wonderful. Couldn't be better. Thank you for your friendship and your kindness to both of us.
- Dr. Brent Top: 57:20 Well, I view you as dear friends. And while I love to tease you and say that I am responsible for your super stardom, I honor you for your efforts to build the kingdom and bring people to Christ.
- Hank Smith: 57:38 That's what we're about.
- Dr. Brent Top: 57:42 If we, like Alma, could sound the trumpet to all the earth, that would be my desire, too. I'll just have to do it in a different way now. I'll do my podcasts from a purple flamingo floaty on the pool of my house in St. George.
- Hank Smith: 58:02 Retirement is sweet. That's a beautiful idea. The next time we bring you on to the podcast, we'll be live from the poolside.
- Dr. Brent Top: 58:12 From the [inaudible 00:58:13] Utah pool, with my cold beverage on my pool floaty.
- John Bytheway: 58:20 It's a bring your own floaty party. We'll all be in the pool.
- Dr. Brent Top: 58:24 Exactly. Exactly right.

John Bytheway:	<u>58:24</u>	Solar powered electrical equipment.
Dr. Brent Top:	<u>58:27</u>	Exactly right.
Hank Smith:	<u>58:27</u>	Man, what a good day! What a good day we've had! We want to thank all of you for listening and joining us today. We're grateful for your support. We want to thank our producers, of course, Steve and Shannon Sorenson. We want to thank our production crew: David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Nielsen, Kyle Nelson, Will Stockton and Andrew Morton. We hope that you will join us soon on our next episode of FollowHIM.