



*“The Redeemer Shall Come to Zion”*

## Show Notes & Transcripts

### Podcast General Description:

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

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

### Podcast Episode Descriptions:

#### Part 1:

What do the names for Jesus Christ in Isaiah teach about the Savior? Dr. Ross Baron explores how Isaiah brings hope and relates the blessings of fasting and the reality of the Savior's life and redemption.

#### Part 2:

Dr. Ross Baron continues to examine Jesus Christ’s role as our kinsman redeemer in Isaiah 58-66.

# Timecodes:

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Ross Baron
- 01:25 Introduction of Dr. Ross Baron
- 04:25 Dr. Ross Baron’s background as a Jew and Latter-day Saint
- 09:16 Isaiah 53 as testimony of Jesus Christ
- 11:01 Isaiah is a Christ-centered book
- 12:07 Dr. Baron’s family’s reaction to his conversion
- 16:42 How to approach these chapters in Isaiah
- 19:27 The names and titles for Jesus
- 23:15 Create a subject index
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- 49:08 Challenges to fasting
- 53:40 Dr. Ross shares personal story about Dallin H. Oaks
- 57:08 Holy envy and the Jewish Sabbath
- 1:02:29 Joy and the Sabbath
- 1:04:47 End of Part 1–Dr. Ross Baron

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Ross Baron
- 00:34 The Lord can save
- 04:12 God is in the people business
- 06:50 Justice and mercy
- 07:58 Dr. Ross Baron shares a personal story about presenting to antiLDS
- 15:28 We want to embrace and invite to Zion
- 16:46 Jesus’s mission call
- 21:41 The Lord’s healing power
- 25:02 Study one verse of Isaiah a day
- 27:04 “Beauty for ashes”
- 29:19 Cleaning the Sacred Grove
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- 40:48 The Second Coming
- 47:36 Preparing for the Lord's return
- 51:39 The Book of Mormon and the temple
- 55:01 The danger of going our own ways
- 57:59 Minister, share, invite, and unite
- 1:00:21 Dr. Ross Baron shares his journey as convert and Saint
- 1:07:38 End of Part II–Dr. Ross Baron

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## Biographical Information:



I was born and raised in Southern California. I joined the Church when I was 18 and served a mission to Argentina, Buenos Aires South which was divided, and I served in Argentina Bahia Blanca. When I returned home, I met, fell in love with, and married Kathleen Ann Bolton in the Los Angeles Temple.

We have nine children (five boys and four girls).

I received a bachelor's degree from BYU-Provo in finance, a master's degree, and a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California (USC) in Religion and Social Ethics.

I was involved in business and entrepreneurship before I went to work as a full-time Institute Director CES Coordinator in Southern California at the Glendora and Claremont Institutes for the Church. After twelve years as an Institute Director and Coordinator, I came to teach at BYU-Idaho in the summer of

2005. From 2018 to 2019, I was a visiting professor at BYU Jerusalem where our family lived in Israel for a year.

I love to teach and to learn. For me, there is nothing so exciting as being in a classroom with students who are anxious, bright, and ready to learn by study and by faith.

Unique things I have done:

Swam across the San Francisco Bay for the Escape from Alcatraz triathlon.

Went on The Price is Right and won a stove, a mop, and a barrel sauna.

Went on the History Channel to represent the Church.

Participated in a radio show in Southern California where callers could ask me any question about the Church.

Played the drums with a group of institute students at the Hard Rock Café in Los Angeles.

Played the Drums at Guitars Unplugged in the Fall of 2005 and the Winter of 2006 (Our group made it to the "Best of" both semesters).

Played chess in the US Open Tournament in 1991 in Los Angeles

Have spoken at Christian Colleges and Universities on the Church.

Led 6 Community Firesides about the Church where thousands attended.

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understandings or teachings, they in no way reflect criticism of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day leaders, policies, or practices.



Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:15	As together, we follow him.
Hank Smith:	00:00:20	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith, I am your host. And I am here with my co-host whom I shall describe like this. For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a co-host likened to John Bytheway. John, when I read that verse in Isaiah 64, I immediately thought of you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:46	Was it the Greeks who invented co-hosts?
Hank Smith:	00:00:51	I was going to make a joke about neither hath the eye seen, your favorite phrase is, I have a face that's perfect for audio.
John Bytheway:	00:00:58	Let's watch this on audio only.
Hank Smith:	00:01:01	Yes. What a beautiful verse, Isaiah 64 verse 4. Sadly, it's not about you, John. It's about the things that God has prepared for those who wait for him. We have been studying Isaiah now for the last, what, John? Has it been four weeks, we've been studying Isaiah? We're on our fifth and final lesson, so we needed somebody who could bring us home, give us a good finish to our Isaiah lessons this year. So, who's here with us?

John Bytheway: 00:01:25 I'm so excited to read this bio because it's so interesting. We have Dr. Ross Baron with us today. He was born and raised in Southern California, joined the church when he was 18, and served a mission, sounds like not much later, in Argentina, Buenos Aires South, which was divided and then finished in Argentina, Bahia Blanca.

John Bytheway: 00:01:45 When he returned, he came home, met, and fell in love with Kathleen Anne Bolton and they were sealed in the Los Angeles temple. He has nine children, five boys and four girls. Received a bachelor's degree from BYU Provo in Finance, a master's degree and a PhD from USC in Religion and Social Ethics and was involved in business and entrepreneurship before he went to work full-time as an institute director and CES coordinator in Southern California at the Glendora and Claremont Institutes.

John Bytheway: 00:02:17 And after 12 years as an institute director and coordinator, came to teach at BYU Idaho in the summer of 2005. From 2018 to 2019, he was a visiting professor at BYU Jerusalem where the whole family lived for a year. He said, "I love to teach and learn. For me, there's nothing so exciting as being in a classroom with students who are anxious, bright, and ready to learn by study and by faith."

John Bytheway: 00:02:41 And Hank, he listed some unique things that he has done. This is going to be fun to read. Swam across the San Francisco Bay for the Escape From Alcatraz Triathlon.

Hank Smith: 00:02:53 Okay.

John Bytheway: 00:02:55 He went on The Price is Right and won a stove, a mop, and a barrel sauna.

Hank Smith: 00:03:00 Oh, my goodness.

John Bytheway: 00:03:02 He went on the History Channel to represent the church. And some of these we've got to ask him about, participated in a radio show in Southern California where callers could ask any questions about the church. He played the drums with a group of institute students at the Hard Rock Cafe in Los Angeles. Played the drums at Guitars Unplugged in the fall of 2005 and the winter of 2006, and their group made it to the best of in both semesters. He played chess in the US Open Tournament in 1991 in Los Angeles.

Hank Smith: 00:03:32 My goodness.

John Bytheway: 00:03:34 I'm not done, Hank. He has spoken at Christian colleges and universities on the church. He has led six community firesides about the church where thousands attended. And this is the part that makes me want to jot this down, he's featured on the website fairlds.org. You can probably watch those firesides. And so, I'm so glad to have Dr. Baron with us today, with such a fascinating bio. Thank you for joining us today, Dr. Baron, from Rexburg right now?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:04:04 A little outside of Rexburg, Idaho Falls. We're a little farming community called Ririe.

John Bytheway: 00:04:09 Ririe. I've been to Ririe.

Hank Smith: 00:04:11 Welcome, Dr. Baron. We're happy you're here.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:04:14 Well, I'm thrilled to be with you guys. And I think you're doing a great work and I love listening to your podcast, so I'm honored to be with you today.

Hank Smith: 00:04:21 Oh, cool. Cool. We love it when the listener comes on, because they know exactly how this works. What we're going to do is turn this over to you. We want to be here, we want to listen. Maybe throw in an insight or two, but tell us what do our listeners need to know? If you're taking students into the book of Isaiah for even the first time, what do they need to know to get into chapters of Isaiah?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:04:46 Great. I wanted to do something interesting, I thought, to start. I was listening to your podcast with Shon Hopkin with respect to Psalm 22 and he kept bringing up Isaiah 53. And John, in my intro, talked about, I am a convert. I grew up Jewish. I grew up 100%. My mom and dad are Jews, my grandparents are Jews, my great grandparents are Jews. I 100% have a Jewish background. Went to Hebrew school as a little kid, had a bar mitzvah when I was 13.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:05:16 And so, when I was a senior in high school, what happened was, I don't know why 100%, but I decided to read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I can honestly say, growing up, we never had one single conversation about Jesus Christ in my home. Not one. And so, I was this curious kid, and I thought, "I'm going to read the New Testament," except we don't have one. I don't have access. I've never laid eyes on one.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:05:41 So, I went to my high school library and I went and asked if I could read the New Testament. And she gave me the Phillips

Modern English version of the New Testament. I didn't know there were different versions. It was, "Hey, man, come follow me. Yo, dude," the version. I thought, "Wow, Jesus is awesome. This is way easier than the Hebrew Bible." I read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I had an experience that using Latter-day Saint speak, I felt the Holy Ghost.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:06:08 Back then, I knew I was feeling something powerful, but it was testifying to me that it was true. So, I didn't know quite what to do with that. I had a friend in high school who was a Latter-day Saint. There were only four, I think, Latter-day Saints in my high school, four or five. We were going into a class, about five minutes before a class, I said, "Hey, Craig, what do you guys believe?" This 17-and-a-half-year-old gives me like the plan of salvation perfectly. I was blown away. It was so amazing how he laid it out to me.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:39 Wow.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:06:40 I said, "Hey, can I go maybe come over to your house?" Just one little backstory here. A couple days before, this born again Christian guy had invited me to the Maranatha Club, which was a high school club for Christians. I went to it and it was very nice. I didn't feel anything particularly well, but they were really nice people.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:01 And afterwards, one of the young men came to me and said, "So, Ross, what'd you think?" And I said, "Oh, thanks for inviting me," and all this kind of stuff. Then, he said something that literally changed my life. He said, "Whatever you do, don't read the Book of Mormon. It's the devil's book." That came out of nowhere.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:17 That guy has no idea how many baptisms he's responsible for. But in the end, that's why that next day, I was talking to that young man. So, I said, "Hey, is there a way I can get a copy of the Book of Mormon?" Like, "How do I get one? Can I buy one?" He goes, "No, no, no. Come over to my house after school. We've got a basket full of ..."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:37 We drove to his house after school and his dad was there. He was a fireman so he had that day off and we ended up talking for hours. And he goes, "Listen," I said, "Can I get a copy of the Book of Mormon?" Can you imagine if somebody goes, "Hey, could you please get me a copy of the Book of Mormon?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:51 Yeah, I can get you a copy of it. So, he gives me the Book of Mormon. And he said, "Well, you like to read?" I said, "I love to read." So, he gave me Jesus the Christ. He gave me Articles of Faith by James E. Talmage, and he gave me A Marvelous Work and a Wonder by LeGrand Richards.

John Bytheway: 00:08:02 Oh, my word.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:02 And so, I left his house and I was like, "Hey, thanks so much." And in about three weeks, I read the Book of Mormon, Jesus the Christ, Articles of Faith and Marvelous Work and a Wonder.

Hank Smith: 00:08:11 Oh, my word.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:13 I want to be clear, anybody who's read Jesus the Christ, I'm not saying I understood all of it.

Hank Smith: 00:08:17 Right. It's a big book.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:18 But I felt the power of it. It was while reading the Book of Mormon, I had another experience similar to what I'd had while reading Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I'd had this experience. And so I went, at three and a half weeks later, knocked on their door and basically said, "How do I join your church? What do I do?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:37 Now, I tell you all that, because when Dr. Hopkin was talking about Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, now, you got to remember I was raised with the Hebrew Bible, and so what happened was I had kind of immersed myself, Book of Mormon, all this kind of great stuff. I'd read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I was having missionary discussions.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:56 But then, all of a sudden, I kind of had to step back like, "Wait, is Jesus real?" And you know what the two chapters were that put me over the edge? Psalm 22, Isaiah 53. Oh, my word. When I read Psalm 22 through the lens of having read the Book of Mormon, Jesus the Christ, Articles of Faith, Marvelous Work and a Wonder, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and then, when I read Isaiah 53, it was the capstone for me and I cannot overemphasize the power and the way, again, my eyes were opened and I was able to see that this truly was talking about the master. It was talking about Jesus Christ.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:34 So, when you say, well, what do people need to know? What would someone need to know about Isaiah? I think what they need to know, and if we could, if you don't mind, if we could go

to first Nephi 19:23 to start, to me, this is what we would have to start with, so first Nephi 19:23.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:53 And a lot of times, what people will do is they'll focus on the idea of likening. But if I could just read this, this is Nephi speaking. I did read many things unto them, his brethren, which were written in the books of Moses, but this line, "But that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their redeemer."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:10:12 I did read unto them that was written by the prophet Isaiah. So, if somebody came to me and said, "Hey, Ross, do I need to know..." Look, I can tell you the time about Isaiah wrote and I can tell you some background about the kings that he was over and the area he was in. But I would say the single most important thing is that when you read Isaiah, you're going to learn more about Jesus Christ.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:10:35 You're going to learn more about the Lord, your redeemer than anywhere else. And if we could also go to second Nephi 11 verse 8, and this is when Nephi is about to introduce all of the kind of Isaiah chapters. And in verse eight, excuse me, verse two, we're going to read verse eight later. "And now I Nephi write more of the words of Isaiah, for my soul delighteth in his words, for I will liken his words unto my people and I will send them forth unto all my children."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:11:01 And then this line, "For he verily saw my redeemer even as I have seen him." So, in answering that question, I would say, there is no question that this is a Christ-centered book and that we can learn about Jesus, about his nature, his character, his attributes, his perfections. We can learn about the plan.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:11:22 Isaiah, I like to do a subject index with my students, but I'll talk about that a little later too. But you can learn about pre-mortality, mortality, post-mortality about Jesus in Isaiah. That was a long answer to your question, but yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:11:35 That's great. So, what's kind of fun about that is that clearly Nephi saw Christ in those Isaiah chapters and I suppose having them on the brass plates wanted to share that with everybody. But I love that to more fully persuade them to believe in their redeemer. And so, clearly he sees Jesus in those chapters.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:00 That's right. That's exactly right.

John Bytheway: 00:12:01 I want to go back to your conversion story. How did this sit with your family and everything? Was that difficult?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:07 Yeah, so I think that's a great question. And I would say this, that my mom and dad, I pay tribute to them. They were amazing parents, super loving. My grandparents, again, very Jewish. If you haven't come from that background, I mean, it was a very Jewish background. And of course they were freaking out when I joined the church. This was pre-1978, so the blacks hadn't got the priesthood yet. BYU is known kind of as a racist university. There was all these kind of things going on. So it was hard. It was a very difficult thing.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:39 What changed it for them, honestly, kind of funny. I was working for my father. My dad had a big medical distribution company. And I'd cut my hair and I'd done my dental work and I'd paid off my car. And my dad knew all that. I had received a mission call. He didn't know what that was. And he didn't know I'd received a mission call.

John Bytheway: 00:12:58 No kidding.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:59 I was working down in the warehouse and I got this like, Ross Baron, come up to the front desk, please, which meant my dad wanted to talk to me. So, I went up upstairs to the executive offices and my dad says, "Hey, I just want to just say we're so impressed. You've cut your hair and you paid off your truck." I was like, "Thanks dad."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:14 Then later that evening, he and my mom were talking to my sister and my sister, who's three years older than me said, "Oh, you guys don't know what that means?" And they're like, "What?" "He's going on a mission." And so the next day I got, Ross Baron, come up to the front desk, please.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:30 So I went up and my dad says, "You just need to be honest with me. Are you going on a mission?" And I said, "I am." He said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going to Argentina." "Well, can we visit you?" "No." All those kinds of things.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:43 But it was the mission when I got back from the mission and they saw the fruits of the mission. Again, another Isaiah passage, "The show of their countenance doth witness against them." I think Isaiah wouldn't be upset if we said the show of their countenance doth witness for them. And I think they saw that I had become a new creature in Christ. I'd become a new being.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:14:06 And to this day, my parents, they defend the church. They're in circles that none of us could ever get in Southern California and Los Angeles. And if somebody says anything about the church, man, they're there. They defend. They support. So, initially rocky and then grew to become amazing.

John Bytheway: 00:14:26 How beautiful. Wow. Hank, this has been a great podcast already and all we did was the introduction.

Hank Smith: 00:14:33 Yeah, this is fantastic.

John Bytheway: 00:14:35 What a great story. Oh man.

Hank Smith: 00:14:36 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:14:37 When you go out to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the King James Version did you still like it then?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:14:43 I did. In fact, I felt more, that's funny. I felt more at home. I mean, I liked the Phillips Modern. You're 17 and a half, you're reading that. But again, I was used to the Hebrew Bible. I was used to Hebrew. When I got the King James, it was a little more poetic, but beautifully written. It was a powerful experience for me. So, yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:15:03 Forgive my ignorance, but so you weren't Orthodox Jewish, but you were practicing. You were reading the Hebrew. You could read Hebrew.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:12 Yeah. So, in my family, we have a blend of orthodox, conservative, reform. So, we get all of them together. We had, of course, Passover and all the holy days, and we did all of that. I'll tell you, fast forward, when I was at USC getting my PhD, I took classes at Hebrew Union. They had a reciprocal relationship with USC.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:34 And I was essentially in rabbinic. I was with these Rabbinic students. I would come from institute, I would come with my white shirt and tie and my suit on. And I was with these other guys. And the guy that taught this particular class was David Ellenson, who was the president of Hebrew Union. Wonderful man.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:50 Now, they did not know that I was a Jewish convert, but I would say Hebrew things and I would even speak some Yiddish. And Yiddish is kind of the way Jews speak on the street, because Hebrew is the language of God. So, if you're Orthodox, you

don't speak Hebrew kind of with other people, you speak Yiddish. So, my grandparents spoke Yiddish, my great-grandparents spoke Yiddish, my parents spoke a little Yiddish. But anyway, so I knew enough.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:16:17 So, anyway, I would say the Hebrew word of the Yiddish word, and they'd be like, "Man, Latter-day Saints are amazing. How could you possibly know that?" I'd be like, and they're like, "Unbelievable."
- John Bytheway: 00:16:31 It was incredible. You learned this stuff in primary.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:16:35 Yeah. I mean, this is Sacrament meeting stuff, man, priesthood meeting.
- John Bytheway: 00:16:38 Wow, that's great. What a great story. Thank you for that. How do you want to approach these chapters? Ross, we want our listeners to love these chapters like you did.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:16:47 Yes. And they should love these chapters. It's incredible. I'm so excited. So, I teach writings of Isaiah at BYU Idaho. And this is how I kind of do my writings of Isaiah class. So, my students come first day and they always ask, hey, we read your syllabus and what book are we supposed to get? And I go, oh, you're going to get the book of Isaiah. They're like, really? Who wrote that? They get their pencils out. We're just going to read the book of Isaiah in the scriptures. No, no, no. We get that Brother Baron. We want to know what book though we should get. What commentary. I say, we're going to go the hard way. We're going to go and we're going to read the text.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:17:29 And at first that surprises them. But one of my things that I'd like to do, one of the purposes I'd love to do with you guys today is have John Bytheway, Hank Smith, Ross Baron kind of model. How we would look at a text or how we would look at the scriptures. And one of the things I do when I frame this is I say, you can take a chapter of say of Isaiah, the first thing I want you guys to do, these would be my students. I just want you to go through say the verses and just circle or write down every name that Isaiah gave for God.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:18:03 Anytime there's a name for God, write it down. And here's the deal, and I think you guys know this, but the Hebrew word for name is Shem. And it means more than kind of, I call John John or I call Hank Hank. It actually had significance in terms of status. So we know about name changes, Saul becomes Paul, Abram becomes Abraham, Sarai becomes Sarah.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:18:28 And these things have significance. New names mean something's happened in terms of your status. And we even know that, for example, in our world. If you get a PhD, people now call you doctor. So, there's been a change in the status of the name. So, I just say, we're just going to take a chapter, go through, find all the names for God.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:18:46 Okay. Now, one of the most amazing things about Isaiah, if you want to have a great experience, start in chapter one, go to chapter 66 and just create a name list. Isaiah is the most prolific name giver for God anywhere in scripture. No one has more names. And each name is a prism, is a window into who God is.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:19:12 So it's not just an academic exercise, it's literally to have you say, wow, I'm going to be more fully persuaded to believe in Jesus, because Isaiah's going to teach me about all his character attributes and perfections, and I'm going to learn about these names.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:19:28 So, for example, in Isaiah 58 through 66, here's some of the names for, and these are through all these chapters, God, Lord, Redeemer. Now by the way, Redeemer as a noun, Isaiah is the most prolific user of the word Redeemer of any prophet, okay. Lord, thy God. Here's another one, the Holy One of Israel. That's one you normally would think, oh yeah, Holy One of Israel. Guess who started it? Isaiah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:19:58 Now, the first mention of Holy One of Israel is second Kings 19. But second Kings 19 is Hezekiah as the king, Isaiah is the prophet. Now the psalmist uses Holy One of Israel as well, but we don't always know the dating of the Psalms. Are they post Isaiah, pre-Isaiah? We don't totally know, but in any way, holy one of Israel.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:20:19 Savior is also mentioned in Isaiah 58 through 66. Here's a powerful one, the Mighty One of Jacob. Wow, the Mighty One of Jacob, Lord God. Here's another one. It's a noun phrase, I that speak in righteousness. That's his name, I that speak in righteousness. That's Isaiah 63 verse 1. Also it might interest people. In Isaiah 58 through 66, our father, our father is mentioned twice. Our potter. He's the potter, we're the clay and God of truth.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:20:52 So, those are some names. So again, if we were in a class right now, we'd take a chapter. We're just going to go through, find the names, and then we're going to have a discussion. What do we learn from the names?

John Bytheway: 00:21:03 How does each name teach us something different?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:21:05 Tell me what you guys think when you hear the word redeemer, when you hear the holy one of Israel, I that speak in righteousness, all these beautiful phrases. So, I'd have them do that. The second thing I'd have them do is I'd have them go through and write all the place names.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:21:22 Every time a place is mentioned, I'd say write it down. So, you've got Jerusalem, Zion, Edam, Bozek, Tarshish. I'd have them write all the names down. And we live in an amazing time. I would have them go to bibleatlas.org and I would have them find out where those places are.

Hank Smith: 00:21:41 Where are those places?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:21:43 Where are those places? Where is Javan and Tubal? Where is Lebanon? Where are the fields of Sharon? Where are all these places? Why is Isaiah using them? I think he's using them for a reason. They're all there for a particular reason. So, that's the second thing I would have them do. So, they're going to go through and find all the names of God. They're going to also go through and find all of the place names.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:22:04 And the third thing I have them do is I wanted them to find weird phrases or words they just don't know, right? Just strange words. So for example, in Isaiah 58 through 66, you've got bulrush. That's a word that comes up, a bulrush. The high places of the earth, cockatrices' eggs, gross darkness, abundance of the sea, the forces of the gentiles, sons of strangers. Here's an interesting one, exactors, exactors, daughter of Zion.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:22:37 So, I would just say, okay, go through. And then you're going to look up what those words mean. We're going to find out what those words mean. So, we found names of God, place names, strange words or phrases that we're going to define. And then, my fourth and final thing I have them do is they've got to do a subject index for the chapter. So a lot of times when we read a narrative, we have a beginning, a middle, and an end whereas Isaiah of course, doesn't always do that.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:23:09 He much like John the Revelator, kind of unconcerned with a linear chronology and is willing to kind of go back even within a couple of verses, then jump forward. Right? And so, I basically have create a subject index. And they're like, Brother Baron, this chapter talks about the millennium, the first coming of Christ, the second coming of Christ and the restoration. I'm like,

awesome. That's amazing. This chapter's talking about the temples. That's correct. Good. So, we create a subject index.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:23:41 And then I want to give them tools. So, in second Nephi, chapter 25 verse 8, do we mind? Can we read that together?
- Hank Smith: 00:23:48 Yeah, let's do it.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:23:48 Hank, would you be okay reading that for us?
- Hank Smith: 00:23:51 I am a good second Nephi reader, 25 verse 8. "Wherefore, they," these are the words of Isaiah, "are of worth unto the children of men, and that supposed this, that they are not unto them will I speak particularly?" So, you who don't think, you, who doesn't like Isaiah, I'm talking to you. "And confine the words unto my own people for I know that they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days for in that day shall they understand them."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:24:21 Yeah. So, in that day, they shall understand them. So, I want to suggest that we live in a particularly interesting time where ... So for example, if you are in my class, you're 22 years old, and boom, you go through the names of Isaiah, then we go with place names and weird phrases, and now we do a subject index. I say, you can understand this. Now you do have to pay a price.
- John Bytheway: 00:24:47 There's some work involved.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:24:48 Yeah. It's not going to be had on the cheap. The nuggets, the treasures. And by the way, I would even say the peace and the power of the spirit that if you would take that time, you could tap into what President Nelson talks about Hear Him, that it is literally a conduit through which you could hear Him.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:25:12 And what I want to say is we have the gift of the Holy Ghost, number one, we have prophets and apostles number two. We have Latter-day scripture, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, the Old and New Testaments, all of these, the plan of salvation can frame. You've got footnotes. You've got the Joseph Smith translation. And then you might be surprised, I don't think you are, but we have technology today that 20 years ago you couldn't have got.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:25:39 For example, I know you guys know the scripture citation index that was put out by Stephen Little and Richard Galbraith, right? It's a free app. I think it's the greatest app since the Fall. I honestly do. I think there's no greater app since the Fall. So for

those of your listeners who don't know, scriptures.byu., I think it's .edu.

- Hank Smith: 00:25:59 Yep.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:26:01 And you can download it on your phone. It's free. It's a work of love. So, you can look at any scripture, tap on any scripture and now know what from Joseph Smith to Russell M. Nelson, what they've said about it.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:15 Yeah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:26:16 What?
- Hank Smith: 00:26:17 Unbelievable. Yeah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:26:18 What? Every six months, it's updated again after general conference. And it also has one of the best search engines we have. Like let's say you wanted to say holy one of Israel, you could hit search scriptures. You could just say, I want to see in the Old Testament. You can narrow it down the holy one of Israel. It'll tell you every single place that shows up. In addition, not only does it give you every single what every prophet apostle has said about a particular verse, it has an amazing search engine.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:00 Number two, the blueletterbible.org. I have no financial interest in it. It is a free site. Anybody here can go to blueletterbible.org. Now, the beauty of blueletterbible.org is if I'm listening to this podcast and I'm thinking, yeah, but Ross went to Hebrew school as a kid and he has an advantage I don't have. And maybe in some ways that's true, but I want to say we're at a time before the second coming of Christ in the latter days where we have access to things people have not had access to.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:17 So you can click on a verse in blueletterbible.org and it'll literally go word by word what the English word is, what the Hebrew word is, and what all the latitude of definitions are on that Hebrew word. You can have a PhD in Hebrew and that's incredible. Good for you. But if we're talking about somebody who's living anywhere in the world who's listening to this and they really want to do the work on their own, they can look at a chapter, break it down this way, and have this incredible, incredible experience with this technology.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:49 I talked about the Bible atlas, there's online dictionaries. In other words, I'm saying second Nephi 25:8 is in process of being fulfilled in a particularly unique way for us right now.

John Bytheway: 00:28:01 Yeah. The only thing needed is our work.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:28:04 Exactly.

John Bytheway: 00:28:05 That's the missing ingredient.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:28:06 He's given us this frame. And he is basically saying, literally there's everything out there for you. And you don't have to have somebody who's got a PhD in near Eastern Studies or in Hebrew. God knew that. Okay, so he translates the Book of Mormon by the Gift and Power of God through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and it's in English.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:28:27 And he knew that 99.9% of the members of the church wouldn't know Hebrew, but they're still going to benefit from it. And I think it's an amazing thing. Again, that was a long answer to kind of the intro there.

Hank Smith: 00:28:40 No, I love it. It's empowering to people. Doesn't have to go: well, that's Isaiah. I guess I just won't get it.

John Bytheway: 00:28:47 I can skip this part.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:28:49 Right.

Hank Smith: 00:28:49 Say no, there's tools available. Let's do this.

John Bytheway: 00:28:52 Yeah. When has it ever been easier? Was it President Kimball that said, "I believe the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions, of which the layman has hardly had a glimpse". And I think of what we're carrying in our hands, the citation index, the scriptures are all there, Come, Follow Me manuals. All of this is there. It's exciting what you said, Ross, it's just like, if you want it, for most of us, it's right there in your hand.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:29:15 Yeah. And by the second week of the writings of Isaiah class, the class is electric, it's on fire. Because these students come back into class having done the assignments, pre-class assignments, and they want to share this is what's going on. They've paid the price. They've had this experience.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:29:33 And I think in third Nephi 23, of course, when the Savior admonishes us, in fact, let's go there if you don't mind, third

Nephi 23 verse 1. And third Nephi 23 verse 1, of course the Savior's among the Nephites. And he makes specific mention of course, of Isaiah verse 1. John, do you want to read that for us?

- John Bytheway: 00:29:57 Yeah. "And now behold, I say unto you that he ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that you search these things diligently for great are the words of Isaiah."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:30:09 And my comment would be, he never asks us to read Isaiah.
- John Bytheway: 00:30:12 He says search.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:30:13 He tells us to search Isaiah. And that's a fun discussion about what's the difference between read, study, search. And he doesn't just say search, he says, search diligently. And great are the words of Isaiah. I mean, that's the Lord's stamp of approval on Isaiah. It's incredible.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:30:32 And so he's inviting us to come to know him through Isaiah. And Isaiah, I think, most of your listeners understand is that Isaiah, it's like the Doctrine and Covenants. Because if you say, well, where's Isaiah on the page? He's almost off the page. It's first person. God is speaking first person through Isaiah. It's thus sayeth the Lord. Isaiah's the mouthpiece.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:30:57 Just like if you read section one of the Doctrine and Covenants and said, well, where's Joseph Smith? He's not on the page. He's speaking through Joseph, he's speaking through Isaiah. I think Jesus is saying, I'm going to invite you to come to know me. I'm going to invite you to hear my voice. I'm going to invite you to search this diligently for the treasures, the nuggets that are there. But yeah, there's a price to be paid.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:31:20 And there's a quote from Elder Neil L. Andersen back in 2014. He gave it at a general authority evening with a general authority call. And this is the quote, this is from Neil L. Andersen, "Spiritually, the classroom of faith becomes less like a lecture hall and more like a fitness center." Cool analogy. "Students do not get stronger by watching someone else do the exercises. They learn and then participate. As their spiritual strength increases, they gain confidence and apply themselves all the more."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:31:55 That's again, February 28th, 2014, entitled A Classroom of Faith, Hope and Charity by Neil L. Andersen at the Quorum of the Twelve. I read that and I'm inspired, absolutely inspired. Okay, again, this is a pretty long intro, but I think it's worth it.

Hank Smith: 00:32:12 So do I. And it gets you excited. One big thing that John and I love is that our listeners are getting excited to say, I'm going to go give this a try. I would say don't bite off more than you can chew. It's okay to do a little at a time. Sometimes you look at all 66 chapters and I don't even know where to start. Well, start somewhere where you're familiar with maybe Isaiah 53 or Isaiah 54 or some of those Book of Mormon Isaiah chapters.

Hank Smith: 00:32:35 You'll get it over time. I imagine you Ross and you John didn't get this the moment you started to put forth effort. It takes a while, but you'll get a little more every time.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:32:44 It does. Here's the subject index that I created from Isaiah 58 through 66. Now again, I'm a gospel nerd. I love this stuff. Not like, love.

John Bytheway: 00:32:55 This is what we do for fun. It's a little bit weird.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:32:58 This is what I do for fun. So, proper fasting, blessings of fasting, Sabbath day, first coming of Christ, second coming of Christ, millennium, Christ's character attributes and perfections, Zion, the redemption of Zion, the ultimate triumph of Israel, the apostasy, the restoration, everlasting covenants, gathering of Israel, watchman on the tower, our identity, Gentiles, justice and temples. That's in Isaiah 58 through 66.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:33:28 Well that's pretty cool. If you have other you want to jump in, but I thought we could maybe start in Isaiah 58.

Hank Smith: 00:33:35 Yeah, let's take out some pieces of this and kind of walk through it, show how it's done, and then hope that our listeners are going to not look at it and go, oh, I hope I get stronger by listening. No, you get stronger by going in and trying some yourself.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:33:48 So, just as a side note in Isaiah 58, it is the single longest scriptural instruction and passage about fasting. So, you got Matthew four, the Savior fasts, right? Elijah fasts, Moses fasted. We know about fasting. There are some super interesting great comments. But if somebody said, well, help me understand what I need to do to improve my fast, or what warning signs should I be looking for to not fast a particular way? Isaiah 58 is the answer like there's nowhere else in scripture that has this thing.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:22 I would also say from my experience with young people over the last 30 years, fasting is the most underutilized tool that we

have to grow closer to God and to connect with him and to receive that piece that comes only from the spirit. Most underutilized tool.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:44 He starts us off. And I actually break it down into this question that Isaiah 58, the people seem to be addressing that he's going to kind of rhetorically use is we're fasting but you're not taking notice. We're afflicting our souls but you don't hear us. So I would create three columns. Column number one would say improper fast or fasting behavior, proper fasting behavior and then blessings from a proper fast. And then these incredible verses.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:35:17 So, verses three and four, "Wherefore have we fasted say they, and thou seest not?" That's kind of the key question. "Wherefore have we afflicted our soul and thou taketh no knowledge?" And then the answer, "Behold, in the day of your fast, you find pleasure." And then this interesting phrase, "and exact all your labors." Now the word for exact here is to drive people to work. And it comes from the word nagash in Hebrew, which is the same word used in Exodus when Moses is concerned about the people who are being the taskmasters who are over them are exacting them.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:35:56 So, the people are fasting, they're finding pleasure, they're exacting all their labors. You fast, verse four, for strife and debate to smite with the fist of wickedness. You shall not fast as you do this day to make your voice to be heard on high.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:10 There's a reason this fast is not working. Yeah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:36:13 This is not going to work. And then he goes through these absolutely beautiful verses in five through seven, five, he also has some critical stuff. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast and acceptable day unto the Lord."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:36:32 Now I would say that some people might say, well, aren't we supposed to kind of afflict ourselves in that way? But I think this goes back to the Savior in Matthew chapter 6. His criticism to them was that they were doing it for outward reasons, not really to connect with God. So, I think that's what's going on in that particular verse.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:53 It's a time to be humble.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:36:55 Exactly. He says, if you want to fast, anoint your head, Matthew chapter 6, Jesus teaches us our countenance should be upright, cheerful, not down. We're showing everybody how humble we are. But then, he goes in verses six and seven in these phenomenal verses, here's the fast I've chosen essentially verse six, "To loose the bands of wickedness to undo heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free that you break every yoke, deal your bread to the hungry," I'm in verse seven, "bring the poor that are cast out to the house. When thou seest the naked, cover him, that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:37:34 I mean, wow. So, we're talking about repentance, we're talking about ... I actually think we're talking to a certain degree about the mission of the church to proclaim the gospel, to take care of the needy, to live the gospel and to redeem, to unite families. I mean, isn't that what's going on here?

John Bytheway: 00:37:56 Interesting to me that he's connecting our fasting with taking care of the poor. As a kid, mom always said, well, we fast and then we give what we would've spent in our fast offerings. Was there some sort of a system or understanding in place back then that you're going to fast and help the poor? I mean, I see footnote seven and eight says alms giving.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:38:17 Yeah, it's not clear to me exactly the procedure by how that would've occurred, but I believe there was some form or some system. Clearly, for example in Mark chapter 12, when the widow puts her mite into the temple treasury, clearly they talked about taking care of the poor. It's not clear to me the mechanism by which all that was carried out like it is today in the church.

John Bytheway: 00:38:39 It's just interesting that the poor connected with fasting right here. I just thought, oh wow, look at that in verse seven.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:38:44 Yeah. And by the way, this is 740 to 700 BC. We're talking seven centuries before the master and they're talking about taking care of the poor and connecting that to fasting. I actually think it's brilliant. It's one of the most incredible things to be part of that and to see how a word and the word fast offering can truly be central to fulfilling our role as disciples of Christ, which essentially is the Abrahamic covenant. And that's what's going on here. We're connecting back the mission of the church, Abrahamic Covenant, Isaiah is talking about fasting and taking care of the poor.

John Bytheway: 00:39:18 Yeah, so if I pick this up, the people are saying, we are fasting and we're not seeing all these benefits from God. And God is

saying, no, you're going hungry. You're not fasting the way you should be fasting. Here is the fast I'm after. And if you want the blessings you got to do it my way.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:39:36 I love that. And I think it's interesting, if you look in the handbook of instructions, the church handbook, it says this, "A fast day typically includes praying, going without food and drink for a 24 hour period if physically able and giving a generous fast offering," 38.8 0.15.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:39:58 I like to tell my students and my family that there is a law that's decreed in heaven before the foundation of the world upon which all blessings are predicated. If I want the full blessing, I've got to be fully obedient. My students say, yeah, I had my Cheerios this morning on the way to church, but then I didn't eat during church and that's my fast. I'm like, good for you. Good start. But if we want Isaiah 58 blessings, we've got to do Isaiah 58 obedience.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:40:29 Look at the promises now. These promises are literally stand all amazed. Verse eight, "Your light is going to break forth as the morning. Your health is going to spring forth speedily. Your righteousness shall go before you. The glory of the lord's going to be," here it says rearward the footnote rear guard. We're going to get revelation because verse nine, you're going to call the Lord's going to answer. You're going to cry.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:40:51 He's going to say, here I am. But you got to take away the yoke. You can't point your finger at other people. Quit speaking vanity. If your soul's drawn out to the hungry, I'm in verse 10, you have the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity thy darkness be as the noonday. The Lord's going to guide you continually. Verse 11, satisfy thy soul and drought, make fat thy bones.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:41:13 And I love this image. Thou shall be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not. Wow. I don't know what image you brethren get, but that is incredible. A watered garden. And then verse 12, they that shall be of thee shall build up the old waste places. You're going to raise up the foundation of many generations. You're going to be called the repair of the breach, the restore of past to dwell in.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:41:37 So, we have how not to fast, how to fast and the blessings from fasting all laid out in beautiful, I actually think, relatively clear language about how I can change and be better to fast and to receive these blessings. But those blessings are phenomenal.

Hank Smith: 00:41:56 Fantastic. Ross, I've been using this tool that I use. I go to biblehub.com totally free.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:42:02 Yeah, beautiful Bible hub. Great.

Hank Smith: 00:42:04 And you can just click verse by verse and you can see, oh that's what that means. Oh, that's what that means. Just a little bit of a different translation can help out quite a bit. I love Isaiah 58 verse 11. If you fast the way the Lord is asking you to fast, he'll satisfy your soul, not your body. He'll satisfy your soul. And that ties directly to me to Enos my soul hungered, my body hungered a little bit, but my soul was hungry. I needed my soul satisfied more than I needed my stomach.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:42:35 When you think about the depression and anxiety, and I'm not minimizing or trivializing anybody going through those kinds of things, but to me, like I said to frame Isaiah 58, it's an underutilized tool. Verse 11, satisfy your soul in drought. If you talk to somebody who's involved feeling depressed or anxious, they feel like it's a drought. They literally feel like I'm famished, I'm in a drought. Here's a tool, here's a way that we can tap in. And I can just testify that it's true that it is an incredible way to connect. And like we talked about earlier, does it take some effort? Yeah. And are you going to get some hunger pangs? The answer is yes. Yeah, you are.

John Bytheway: 00:43:21 Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:43:24 You are.

Hank Smith: 00:43:24 Guaranteed.

Hank Smith: 00:43:25 And that's okay. That's okay. There's a talk linked to in the Come, Follow Me manual. It's from Henry B. Eyring, April 2015 general conference called Is Not This The Fast That I Have Chosen. It'd be a great thing to listen to this week as we're studying these sections. He quotes all of Isaiah 58 and now we have here an extra tool. We talked about Ross, all the tools we have. Here, we have a prophet, seer and revelator.

Hank Smith: 00:43:50 He says, "So, the Lord has given us a simple commandment with a marvelous promise in the church today. We are offered the opportunity to fast once a month and give a generous fast offering through our bishop or branch president for the benefit of the poor and the needy. Some of what you give will be used to help those around you, perhaps someone in your own family. The Lord's servants will pray and fast for the revelation to know

whom to help and what help to give that which is not needed to help the people in your local church unit will become available to bless other church members across the world who are in need."

- Hank Smith: 00:44:25 And then he quotes Spencer W. Kimball who wrote, "Rich promises are made by the Lord to those who fast and assist the needy." Notice how those are connected, again, John fasting and blessing the needy. "Inspiration and spiritual guidance will come with righteousness and closeness to our Heavenly Father. To omit, to do this righteous act of fasting would deprive us of these blessings."
- Hank Smith: 00:44:52 And it's a hard thing, especially maybe for a teenager or a young person listening. It's a difficult thing. But give it a try. Give it a try. Move forward. I know with my kids sometimes they don't make it their full 24 hours or whatever they set out for, but I tell them the Lord loves effort. Keep going. The Lord loves when we're trying our best. And then to offer something to the poor as a teenager, to put a little money in the envelope and hand that over and say, this offering is for the poor.
- Hank Smith: 00:45:20 There's something cleansing about that act to me that the Lord is offering here. It blesses the giver as much as it does the receiver.
- John Bytheway: 00:45:28 Hank, let's talk about that for a second. Let's say you're a mom and dad with small children. I'd love to hear what you do and what you both have done. How do you try to explain fasting to a young mind and a small stomach?
- Hank Smith: 00:45:43 Young mind and a small stomach? I love that. John. I think you and I did follow HIM Favorites on this before. And I remember sitting down and talking with my teenagers at least about what it feels like to be hungry and that being in the blessed situation we're in, we just don't have that feeling very often. Just it's not something that you and I struggle with, but people all over this planet hunger, millions of people hunger. And for just a moment we get to put ourselves in that position and know what that feels like.
- Hank Smith: 00:46:13 And when you know what it feels like, you long to help someone who feels in that position. So, for me, one of those teaching moments is the Lord is giving us an opportunity to be like him, to feel the pains and sufferings of other people and that like him automatically makes us want to reach out to help.

John Bytheway: 00:46:33 I've tried and I think I like yours better, Hank, but just to say that part of the challenge of life is to kind of get our spirits to be in charge of our bodies instead of the other way around. Like Jesus says that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. And this is one of those times when we are seeing if our spirit can be in charge and disciplined of when we're going to satisfy our hunger.

Hank Smith: 00:46:56 Practicing self-control, right? Gives us a chance to practice.

John Bytheway: 00:47:00 And see if our spirit can be strong here. I was curious to how explain that to kids because that can be hard. I'm so proud of them when they try so hard. But boy do they get hungry towards Sunday afternoon. And I think another thing that helps us is, and maybe we'll be talking about this Ross, is when there's someone that in need in the ward or an extended family member that's having a trial or a health problem or something that we try to focus on them. When we start to focus on our own hunger, we say no, I'm trying to ask the Lord to help this other person over here. Maybe you guys have some thoughts on that.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:47:38 Well one of the things I would add would be having nine children and going through this is they have to see you and your spouse doing it and doing it with joy. In fact, I like this in a classroom. I like in a classroom where kind of application questions organically come up because of how you've set the stage. And I think when me and my wife are fasting and joyful about it and we get to talk about, John, what you just talked about, sister so and so is sick and we're so grateful now that we can fast. And they're like, well, can we fast?

Hank Smith: 00:48:15 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:48:16 Wow.

Hank Smith: 00:48:17 The way you talk about it. Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:48:18 Let's go without breakfast today. Let's try that. It's going to be a little hard. I think number one, you have to model not only in that you do it, but you remember that talk, I'm trying to remember Elder Holland talked about. It can't just be the obligatory kind of drudgery, I'm going without two meals. I think you have to be able to say, man, we're going to read Isaiah 58. I need to talk to you guys about some of these blessings. And I am so excited to fast. And they're like, what? You're a weirdo. No, this is great.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:48:49 And do you guys remember this talk? This is an old one 1928 Melvin J. Ballard. And he gave this talk, I think, at the assembly hall.

Hank Smith: 00:48:59 Only John was alive for that one. John, do you?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:49:03 Well no. Brigham Young signed my mission call, so I think I'm older than John.

Hank Smith: 00:49:06 Okay, Both of you.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:49:08 I wasn't there for this one. I would think I was outside. But Melvin J Ballard talked about you and it. And he said you is your spirit and it is your body. And when you fast you get to tell it what's going on. And that's one of the things I explain. I go, what a great opportunity. So, when you get that hunger pang, that's awesome. And they're like, what? I said no, you then tell it what's up. And I go, by the way, every single time you plan on fasting, something will come up, you're going to get a headache or there's going to be a wedding reception that night and there's going to be that great cake. There's going to always be something that comes up.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:49:48 But this is where you, your real person, your spirit tells it what's happening. And I love that idea. I love that concept and that again, I got that idea from Melvin J. Ballard, but I love that.

John Bytheway: 00:50:04 1928.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:50:04 I think it's 1928. Yeah. There's something about fasting, spiritual, it's physical, it's social. We go to a fast and testimony meeting. I mean ideally if everyone came to that meeting fasting, like John said, we're fasting for the Smith family or we're fasting for so and so. Man, there's just something that ties you, that binds you in this covenant relationship with God and with others that creates these promises that come to pass. And so, it's true. I mean what Isaiah's telling us is true about this fasting.

Hank Smith: 00:50:36 Beautiful.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:50:38 So, that's my fasting piece of Isaiah 58. And I challenge my students to kind of go out and practice and then to follow up. And it's incredible the witnesses, the testimonies. And for a lot of these people, and I know you guys teach the same age, I do 18 to say 30 year olds, for some of them it's the first time they've ever fasted, really fasted. It's for some of them, if you'll

invite them and kind of talk about this and they do it, they're always amazed at the connection they felt and that there's this kind of feeling of accomplishment where I went 24 hours without food or drink. That's cool. And I connected with God in a different way. And I had some hunger pains. It wasn't easy. It's okay. That's good. Good for you.

- Hank Smith: 00:51:22 It's okay. You're going to eat again, I promise.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:51:25 You're going to. We eat every meal like it's our last. That's our motto.
- John Bytheway: 00:51:30 You know that first 10 there, there it is again, connecting it to the poor. If thou draw out the soul to the hungry, I'm fasting, I'm the hungry one. No, this is talking about something about fasting helps the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul. And, man, I can't stop reading this one then shall thy light rise in obscurity and thy darkness be as the noon day. A little parallelism there but I love how Jesus not only said I am the light of the world, but he said, ye are the light of the world. Our light can rise. Like you said Ross, countenance stuff witness for them or against them. It's interesting, your light, you become lighter somehow.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:52:17 That's right. I think it's an interesting thing. You remember in Alma 32:3 when the people are criticized and they say you're going to be like dross, you remember that, Alma 32:3, you're going to be like dross. And then, kind of John, this is exactly to your point. He then says in Alma 34, so Amulek is talking, he says, now behold, I'm in verse 28, my beloved brethren, I say to you, do not suppose that this is all, for after you have done all these things, if you turn away the needy and the naked and visit not the sick and afflicted and impart of your substance if you have to those who stand in need, I say to you, if you do not any of these things, now notice what he connects it to. Behold your prayer is vain and availeth you nothing and you are as hypocrites who deny the faith.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:53:06 So your connection with God is directly related to how we take care of the needy. And then the next verse, verse 29, therefore if you do not remember to be charitable, you are as dross. So, I love how the book end. You're dross because you guys are poor. And then Amulek turns it on its head and says, No actually let me give you really what dross is. You don't take care of the poor and the needy, you're dross.
- John Bytheway: 00:53:28 I think that's the only two times the word dross appears in the Book of Mormon, it's like we're dross. Look at the coarseness of our apparel. Or they were esteemed as dross. I think not dross

because you're poor, you're dross when you neglect the poor, right?

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:53:40 Exactly right. And it is the only two times, Alma 32 verse 3 and Alma 34:29 is the only time the word dross is used. That's the Rameumpton group. So, again, a little story, if it's okay, I got my degree in finance at BYU. My first job was in Houston, Texas. Worked in a big office building and I got an assignment to go see an executive at Phillips Petroleum. It was a big oil company back in the day. And I was super nervous. I mean, I was again, fresh out of BYU, probably three weeks in my job. You had to have a key to get on this particular floor. It was super high security.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:54:17 And this guy had this huge office overlooking Houston. Gorgeous View. And I walked in there and he could kind of tell I was trembling like Sebastian before King Triton. Thanks for laughing at that John. Anyway, that guy says to me, he says, "Where'd you go to school?" And I said, "BYU." And he goes, "Do you know Dallin Oaks?" Well, I know who Elder Oaks is but I personally don't know him. He goes, "Dallin Oaks is the greatest man I've ever met." I said, "What was your interaction with Elder Oaks?"
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:54:55 So, he proceeds to tell me he was on some horseback ride. I don't remember all the details. So, I leave his meeting and the guy, we didn't even talk about much except Dallin H. Oaks. We leave the meeting, I go back to my office and I think I should tell Elder Oaks that. So, I called the church office building with the dialup phone and I get ahold of the secretary and I said who I was and could I talk to Elder Oaks?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:55:20 She's like, "Elder Oaks is in a meeting." And I said, "Well, let me tell you what just happened." So I explained to the secretary, she goes, "Oh, Elder Oaks will want to know about that. Let me get your information." So I don't hear anything. But two days later I get a package from the Office of the Quorum of the Twelve.
- Hank Smith: 00:55:33 No way.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:55:35 And in it is a Book of Mormon. And on the inside he write, a little note from Elder Oaks. Dear Brother Baron, please deliver this book on my behalf to this man. And on the inside cover was Elder Oaks' testimony, which I promptly made a copy of and is in my file right now. Elder Oaks probably doesn't know that, but I did that. So anyway, I went and delivered the book to this man and he cried. And I think verse 10, and the other Isaiah verse

about the countenance like Elder Oaks' reflected light because he was a disciple of Jesus Christ. He reflected that light. That man knew it and he felt that power and I was able to give Him a copy of the Book of Mormon and have that experience.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:56:21 Again, going back to this idea of countenance and light that we get from connecting with the Lord, powerful.
- Hank Smith: 00:56:28 That is beautiful. For anyone still on the fence about fasting, because I know this is one of the more difficult ones, especially for young people. You remember second Nephi 26 verse 24, "The Lord doeth not anything, save it be for the benefit of the world, for he loveth the world." So remember, he loves you. He would not ask you to do this if it wasn't for your benefit. So, trust him. Trust the words we've been looking at here in Isaiah 58. And maybe for the first time, like Ross said, maybe for the first time, offer up a fast to the Lord. Try him out. What did the Savior say? If any man will do his will, he'll know. He was pretty confident in his doctrine.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:57:08 Amen. If you don't mind if we could just look at these two verses on the Sabbath. I know that Hank, I know you've been to the Holy Land many times, and I know John, you've been right?
- John Bytheway: 00:57:19 Yes.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:57:20 And who is the brother Krister Stendahl, who talked about holy envy, meaning we look at another religious group or maybe even another organization and we have appropriate envy towards some particular practice they have. And I'd love to take anybody to the Western Wall at Jerusalem on a Friday afternoon slash evening to have them watch ...
- Hank Smith: 00:57:45 Bring in the Sabbath, yeah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:57:48 ... and literally, and I think Latter-day Saints and others who are listening non-Latter-day Saints might not fully understand. They truly call the Sabbath a delight. In other words, their attitude, their heart, their focus, their singleness is this is the greatest day of the week without question. And they come in their best outfits and they come dancing and singing and there's a light in their eyes because it's the Sabbath. This is the Sabbath. And I think sometimes Latter-day Saints are like, oh, tomorrow's the Sabbath. We got to get to Walmart to get our five gallons of ice cream. And to watch to have that holy envy.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:58:35 Now I realize also that there are some downsides to some of the way the Sabbath is kept and some of the strictness. But I think the attitude, that's what I want to focus on, because Isaiah here is talking about, in verse 13, call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable honor Him. So, this, again, I think God is giving us tools. Tools to overcome the world. Tools to overcome the kind of the influence. This flood, the tsunami of information overload of social network and comparison. Connect with me, get vertical. You got to go vertical.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:59:18 And the way we get vertical, we're fasting and we're calling the Sabbath a delight. We're going to honor Him. And then he gives promises. The promises in verse 14, that President Nelson as the president of the Quorum of the Twelve, talked about. Number one, you're going to delight yourself on the Lord. Number two, you're going to ride upon the high places of the earth. And number three, you will be fed with the heritage of Jacob.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:59:42 Oh my word. So, from the Sabbath day, so, I honor the Sabbath. God honors me. I delight myself and him the high places of the earth for me, that's the temple. That's the temple. We're going to ride upon the high places of the earth. And what's the heritage of Jacob? Well, those are the promises of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These are all the promise. That's the heritage of Jacob. I get priesthood, I get the gospel, I get celestial marriage. I get the redemption, the ministry, the privilege now of serving. This is what I want in my life. It's what I want for my family.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:00:21 And again, we have these two small and simple things, Alma, 37:6 and 7, D&C 64:33 out of small things proceeded that, which is great. We're going to fast. We're going to call the Sabbath a delight. Wow. The multitude of promises. It's just overwhelming.

Hank Smith: 01:00:38 It's so fascinating to me that to the natural man, these are probably two of the most difficult things to do.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:00:44 That's right. That's right. Great insight. Yep.

Hank Smith: 01:00:47 Take away a full day that I could be using to do my things or to take away food that I could be eating. This is where you tame the natural man is in these two commandments and others of course. But in these two commandments, you can really, like you said, John, have your spirit be in control of your body.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:01:06 Love that. And I love the idea of it 100% in this time maybe not so much 60, 75 years ago, but it separates us from the world and it separates us. And it's good, right, we want to be in, but not of. And somebody might ask you, well, how am I in but not of? And one of my responses is fasting and Sabbath day observance. That's how you're in and not of. That's one way. That's correct. That's true. It makes you different. And I love this idea and I love how President Nelson said, I got rid of the lists, remember this, of all the dos and don'ts because it's a sign. It's a sign between me and God of how I'm going to keep that covenant. And he goes, that guided then all my decisions. What sign do I want to show God that this day is different?

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:01:59 I love that. That becomes principle based. And then the Hank Smith family, the John Bytheway family, the Ross Barron family, we're going to have to organize ourselves and determine how that's going to work for us. And I'm not going to judge you. I'm just going to have to say, am I calling the Sabbath a delight and how am I doing this? And I want those blessings. I want to ride upon the high place of the earth. I want the heritage of Jacob and I want to delight myself in the Lord.

Hank Smith: 01:02:23 Do I trust? Do I believe? I want those things?

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:02:26 Exactly. Beautiful.

John Bytheway: 01:02:29 I have something that Brother Truman G. Madsen wrote in his book called The Radiant Life. This is on page 72. "First, as I've indicated, they see the Sabbath as a sanctuary in time. Now it's true, they have strict requirements. And even now in Israel, there are hospitals which are so prepared, organized, and planned that they keep the Sabbath. If you care enough, it can be done. But all that discipline, all that thou shalt not is seen as an instrument to joy, a disciplined joy indeed but nevertheless, joy and celebration. Mind, says one of the great rabbis, is established by joy, by melancholy it is driven into exile. It is a sin according to Judaism, to be sad on the Sabbath. If that's startling language, I will startle you further. The talented says that we will be held personally accountable for the judgment of God for every legitimate Sabbath pleasure we did not enjoy, we are commended to have joy to miss the joy is to miss it all."

Hank Smith: 01:03:27 Wow.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:03:27 Wow.

Hank Smith: 01:03:28 That's beautiful.

John Bytheway:	01:03:29	So, when it says in verse 13, call the Sabbath a delight, that's what reminded me of that idea of we're going to be held accountable for the joy we don't feel on the Sabbath. And maybe like fasting, It's a change of our mindset toward it.
Hank Smith:	01:03:44	I think that's the key.
John Bytheway:	01:03:47	Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:01	Welcome to part two of Isaiah 58-66 with Dr. Ross Baron.
Hank Smith:	00:00:07	Now, guys, we have gone a good while. We've done one whole chapter. That's how we like it here on followHIM. We like to go verse by verse. But we can't do that for the entire block. Ross, what do you want to do next?
Dr. Ross Baron:	00:00:21	I'd love to focus maybe on the Savior, if we could, and talk about a couple of verses in Isaiah 59 and then jump to the Savior's mission in Isaiah 61. Is that okay?
Hank Smith:	00:00:33	That sounds great.
Dr. Ross Baron:	00:00:34	In Isaiah 59, we have another question guiding the chapter. The idea is that I think the people are basically saying, "Why don't you hear us?" Similar to Isaiah 58. The Lord tells you about who he is in verse 1. "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save." Here's the parallelism. "Neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear." You've got his hand not shortened. His ear isn't heavy. The point is he can save, and he can hear. But the problem is there's been rampant iniquity.
Hank Smith:	00:01:09	Your iniquities have separated you.
Dr. Ross Baron:	00:01:12	Exactly. 2-8... Really, I mean, it's just horrific. Somebody asked me, "When Lehi is teaching, and they have to leave..." He says, "Were the people that bad?" Yes. Read Jeremiah. They are bad. This is a hundred-plus years before Lehi leaves. But, I mean, you talk about there's murder going on, verse 3. Your hands are defiled. You're liars. There's no justice. Vanity is going on. Then, we get this great stuff about... They're trying to cover themselves, fake counterfeit atonements with other gods. Their feet, verse 7, run to evil. They haste to shed innocent blood. The way of peace, they don't know.
Dr. Ross Baron:	00:01:55	I love this verse in verse 14, "Judgment is turned away backward." What an interesting way to say justice standeth afar off. It's like you've got this personification of justice. By the way,

justice is always masculinized, and mercy is always feminized. I'll use the personal pronoun he. Justice is... He is standing outside. He's going away backwards because they've just rejected justice. Justice is a huge deal for Isaiah. It's another fun way to read Isaiah 1-66 is to look at how serious the Lord is about justice and how he ties that. The word for justice, mishpat, is very similar to... so the word "melchizedek," "zedek" is righteousness. Righteousness and justice are paired always. God loves justice. He pairs that with righteousness. This is the situation.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:02:55 Then, verse 16: "And he saw that there was no man; wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore, his arm brought salvation onto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained him." The Savior intervenes. The Savior's got to make the intervention.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:03:13 Then, sometimes we read a scripture that's super famous in Ephesians 6 about the armor of God. We think, "Wow, Paul thought of that." I'm not saying Paul didn't do amazing with it. But here we have in Isaiah, "The Savior put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation upon His head. He put on his garments of vengeance for clothing; was clad with zeal as a cloak."
- Hank Smith: 00:03:37 Wow! That's good stuff.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:03:38 I love this idea. The students reading the Old Testament will say, "God's a jealous God." I go, "Don't equate human jealousy with God-like jealousy." His jealousy is a zeal for your salvation. His jealousy is... He will do everything and anything for your salvation. It's not jealousy like, "Oh, I'm jealous because so and so..." the drama of a high school romance gone awry. We're not talking about that. We're talking about a zeal for our salvation.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:04:12 I always like to say God is in the people business. God is in the people business. He has a zeal for our salvation. That is what He's about. I love that He puts on breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation. He clothes himself with a cloak, and He has zeal for our salvation. Unbelievable! Then, He's going to do everything possible, and including some of that is going to be to scatter.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:04:38 Some of that is to create some recompense. Verse 18: "According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, fury to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies; to the islands, He will repay recompense."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:04:55 I love the way how Isaiah will couple the destruction. You quoted 2 Nephi 26:24, which is one of my favorites. "He doesn't do anything, Save it be for the benefit of the children of men," including the scattering, including that.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:05:09 In verse 20: "And the redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turned from transgression and Jacob save the Lord." You've got the nature of the Savior who's going to intercede. He's got the character. He's got the attributes. He's got the perfections to do it. Symbolically, it's been used as the armor of God. The Savior is the absolute epitome of that. He can reverse this situation, where even justice is standing afar off and walking away backwards.

Hank Smith: 00:05:38 Wow!

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:05:39 It can be redeemed.

Hank Smith: 00:05:39 What a dramatic chapter. It sets up this terrible situation, verse after verse after verse of how bad it is. Arming himself... He's ready to come in and turn the whole thing around. "Then to any who want to repent..." Verse 20, "Any who will turn from transgression in Jacob." That's an awesome chapter that I don't think I have ever seen that way before, Ross. That's really fun.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:06:02 Yeah, I love to frame it that way. Here's the horrible situation. What are we going to do? What are we going to do? Even justice walks away backward. Just standing outside, man. But the Savior will intercede. There's going to be consequences. Choices have to matter. But those choices... Again, whatever He has to do to them is ultimately for their benefit. If they'll turn from transgression, He can then redeem them. He is our kinsman redeemer. That is the covenant relationship we have with Him. Isaiah totally tapped into that idea. He is our kinsman redeemer. He has to redeem us. He's been given the double portion. The whole point of the double portion is to use it to redeem the family, to bring us back to the family of God. That's what's going on. Anyway, that's how I see Isaiah 59. That's beautiful.

John Bytheway: 00:06:50 Hey, can I throw something in here? When you said, Ross, that judgment is characterized with the male pronoun. I thought of Alma talking to a son, Corianton, Alma 42:24. Alma says to Corianton, "For behold, justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own. Thus, none but the truly penitent are saved." I've always thought, "Well, look! Justice is a male. Mercy is a female there and, I guess, consistent in the Book of Mormon. There's justice being called

male, and mercy meeting called a female, Alma 42:24. Just thought it was cool.

- Hank Smith: 00:07:31 I always tell my students Joseph Smith's the world's greatest guesser. Man, did he get a lot right?
- John Bytheway: 00:07:37 Just knew his Hebrew so well at that time.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:39 That's right.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:39 He just got that.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:40 In 1829, he knew his Hebrew well.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:43 That's right.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:44 That's the book you got to write: Joseph Smith's Greatest Hits.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:47 Yeah. Over and over and over again.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:50 Over and over and over again.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:52 Are we going to 61 next?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:53 I wanted to go to 61. I can't help myself. Can I do verse 60?
- Hank Smith: 00:07:57 Absolutely.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:58 I can't help myself. I'm sorry. When you read my intro, I've dealt for years and years going to... I'll go to different colleges or different divinity schools and get in the ring, as it were, with those that are antagonistic towards the church. I did a series of community firesides in Southern California. The first one was... There was a whole anti thing going on in our town. I was serving as the bishop at the time.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:24 A man came to me in my ward and said, "We got to do something." I said, "Well, we generally don't respond." But it was pretty intense. I said, "Well, let me think about it." I went to our stake president. I said, "Hey, President, what would you think if we had a fireside? But I want to do this different."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:36 He's like, "Well, what are you thinking?"
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:37 I said, "What if we took out radio ads and quarter-page ads in the newspaper? Now here's the thing. I'd be happy to speak about us being Christians. But here's the wrinkle. I want to do a

Q&A afterwards. Open forum Q&A. They can ask me any question, historical, theological, or doctrinal. It's okay."

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:00 The stake president: "Well, let me think about that."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:02 Anyway, "Okay. We're going to do it."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:04 Literally took out ads in the newspaper: radio ads. Then, we personally invited the mayor, the city council, all the local priests and teachers, and rabbis. Lo and behold, they came. I lived about two blocks from church. It was going to be at 7:00. I was eating dinner with my family, and I said, "Honey, I'm going to go to the community fireside."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:27 She goes, "Oh, you're going a little early."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:28 "Yeah, I'm going to walk over there."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:30 I walk over there, and the parking lot is full. I thought they've planned another activity. So bummed! I go the stake president's office, and I said, "President, what's going on?"
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:42 He looked at me and goes, "This is going on. You better be good. You better be good." 1400 people showed up for the first community fireside.
- Hank Smith: 00:09:52 Oh, wow!
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:53 They'd opened it up. There were people sitting... actually overflowing the Relief Society room. But it was just packed. There was just electricity. The row in the back of the chapel was taken up by this particular church that had really been riding it hard. I give my talk. We have a hymn, do all that thing. Then, we do the Q&A. The Q&A is just going. It's just amazing.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:10:18 Finally, my stake president... I mean, the Q&A went for quite a while. I thought people would leave. No one left. Finally, he signals to me: "Take your last question." The lead pastor for this anti-church is sitting on the back row of the chapel, not all the way back in the cultural hall. He raised his hand. I said, "Yes."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:10:36 He goes, "I have a quote here from Brigham Young that proves categorically that Latter-day Saints are not Christian." Then, he reads this quote, essentially, that says that if you don't accept Joseph Smith as a prophet, you can't go to this celestial kingdom. He goes, "Clearly then, these people aren't Christians. What do you have to say to that?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:10:58 I'm standing there. I prepared enormously for this thing. But I can honestly say I had not prepared for that. But I did do section 84:85. I had treasured up in my mind continually the Words of Life. I can honestly tell you both that I had it given to me in the very moment. What I'm going to say has nothing to do with anything I did. But this is what happened.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:11:19 He's standing there. You can imagine 1400/1300 plus people.

Hank Smith: 00:11:24 People are looking.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:11:26 He's got the question. By the way, he literally had a laptop with the Latter-day Saint info base on his laptop so he could pull up quotes and hand them out so that they could try to stump us. Here's the last question. I'm standing there. You could hear a pin drop. I said, "I will be happy to answer your question. But let me ask you one particular question first. He goes, "Okay."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:11:48 I said, "Imagine you're living in Jerusalem A.D. 33. It's the day of Pentecost. Christ has risen from the dead, and it's now Acts 2. He's like, "Okay."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:00 I go, "You're familiar?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:00 "Yes, absolutely."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:01 I say, "Okay. Now, Peter is preaching Christ and Him crucified. Can you reject Peter and accept Christ?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:13 Now, this guy pauses because I had the opportunity of what Jesus did to the Pharisees. He always out Phariseed the Pharisees. Because if he says, "I can reject Peter and accept Christ," what do you do with the Bible? You throw it away. If he says, "No, you can't reject Peter and accept Christ," then he knows that's the position we're in. He didn't say anything.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:12:41 I said, "Just like you couldn't reject Peter and fully accept Christ in A.D. 33, so in the Latter-days, you cannot reject the modern-day Peter, the prophet Joseph Smith, and fully accept Christ. 1350 people went, "Hmm."

Hank Smith: 00:13:01 That was awesome.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:03 I have to tell you guys. It was like I was standing outside myself watching that happen.

Hank Smith: 00:13:08 Wow. You're thanking the Holy Ghost, just going, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:13 I want to be as sincere and as clear as possible that I did not think of that or come up with that. That was given to me in the very moment. It was one of the most amazing experiences. In Isaiah 60:14, there's a prophecy Isaiah makes. He says, "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee. And all they that despise thee shall bow themselves down at the souls of thy feet, and they shall call thee City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:47 In other words, I see the parallel between Joseph, who is sold into Egypt, who is prophesied that they're going to bow down to you. There's no way that prophecy could be fulfilled. But of course, it is.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:59 In the Latter-days, the church has been despised/ridiculed. It's the constant source of anti-presses and all kinds of things. But guess what? The day will come when those people will bend the knee, and those that despise us will bow themselves down at the souls of the feet. I don't mean to say that in a proud or arrogant.

Hank Smith: 00:14:22 Like ha-ha-ha.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:14:23 No, ha-ha-ha. Not just like Joseph then embraced his brethren, so Joseph Smith will embrace those because they will turn from transgression, and then God can redeem them. We don't have to wring our hands. Let the antis do what antis do. We do what we're supposed to do. Every now and then, you'll get an opportunity to be in a position where I was in a position to have that amazing experience. But I love this verse in Isaiah 60. Sometimes we blow by it because it's... But boom! I think that's amazing. So.

John Bytheway: 00:14:56 Wow! It's beautiful.

Hank Smith: 00:14:58 Yeah. He goes on to say, "I will make thee an eternal excellency.

John Bytheway: 00:15:03 Eternal excellency.

Hank Smith: 00:15:04 Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:05 Ain't that beautiful?

Hank Smith: 00:15:06 You'll know that I am the Lord, your Savior.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:09 That's right.

Hank Smith: 00:15:11 Yep.

John Bytheway: 00:15:11 I feel like, Ross, it's-

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:12 Yeah, I'll tell you the-

John Bytheway: 00:15:13 ...all the more reason to be as charitable as we can in those moments. We're not antagonistic. We're not burning bridges because of that prophecy right there. Wow! I'm going to remember that story. That's amazing.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:28 We don't want to be proud. We don't want to be arrogant. We want to embrace. We want to invite. But like Elder Maxwell said, "We don't want to let people have uncontested slam dunks." Sometimes you do have to respond as guided. I tell that story too because it wasn't... I mean, I had priesthood keys behind me, and it was a beautiful thing.

Hank Smith: 00:15:46 Yeah. I love the ending, there, in 60:14, that everyone will be welcome in Zion.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:54 Again, those that turn from transgression, God embraces them.

Hank Smith: 00:15:57 Come to Zion.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:15:58 Come to Zion. Note: there is a Joseph Smith Translation. Verse 22: "A little one shall become a thousand, a small one, a strong nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in my time." I always like to point out with my students, "Make sure you find your Joseph Smith Translations because that is going to help you understand Isaiah and also will be evidence of the divine mission of the prophet Joseph Smith." In our 58-66, that's our first JST right there.

John Bytheway: 00:16:27 That's the first JST in the segments that we're looking at today.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:16:30 Correct. That's the first JST we're going to look at in these sections and in my time. That's that whole concept that Isaiah brings up earlier... I'm not covering in these chapters, of waiting on the Lord. I'm going to hasten in my time. Beautiful. Beautiful idea.

John Bytheway: 00:16:44 Perfect.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:16:46 Okay. Isaiah 61. Perhaps one of the greatest on par with Isaiah 53 in my view. When we went to Nazareth, we would take the students, of course, to the Church of the Annunciation. But I was not as thrilled with the Church of the Annunciation as I was with this little teeny church. You come out of the Church of the Annunciation. You turn right. You go through a Shuk, a marketplace. Then, there's this crusader church over where the synagogue was where Jesus reads Isaiah 61 out of the Bible. This is Luke 4:19. I mean, I'm stretching a little here, but I call it Jesus opening His mission call. This is the Savior opening His mission call. He's in Nazareth. It's His hometown. They know He's the carpenter's son. Of course, he reads these incredible verses where he lays out... I mean, basically, this is His mission. John, would you mind reading-

John Bytheway: 00:17:46 I would love to read this. Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:17:47 Would you read verse 1 and 2? Then, we're going to talk about it. But we've got to read three. We've got to read some of these other verses. Please.

John Bytheway: 00:17:55 I'm glad we're reading this in our Come Follow Me manual. It specifically mentions this verse in the opening statement. It says, "Early, in His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ visited a synagogue in Nazareth, the village where He was raised. There He stood to read from the scriptures, opened the book of Isaiah, and read what we now know as Isaiah 61:1-2. He then announced, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

John Bytheway: 00:18:21 When I set this up in my class, I like to ask them, "What's the best Old Testament verse you can think of to describe the Savior?" I don't even know what it is. Then, I always say, "Well, we don't have to look because Jesus chose the verse for us. He chose the one to describe Him. The minister gave Him the...or probably He asked for it. This is what He read. Isaiah 61:1: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:19:10 Wow! Wow! I mean, there's just so much here in terms of the Savior's mission. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me." I think we need to make sure we understand. In John 3:34, "The Savior..." Well, John is talking, "For he whom God has sent, speaketh the words of God," and then this phrase, "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:19:40 Now, there's a Joseph Smith Translation in John 3:34: "For God giveth him not the Spirit by measure for he dwelleth in him even the fullness." The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. We need to realize that the Savior in Colossians 1 and 2 talks about the Holy Ghost and the Father dwelling to the degree that the Father can send His spirit with the Savior in a magnificent way to be able to enable Him to do the things He could do.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:20:13 Then, He's the anointed of the Lord. When we talk about the Lord's anointed, we might talk about the prophet. But ultimately, we're talking about Jesus. This goes to the Greek Christos, which, essentially, is the Hebrew Messiah, which both have to do with the fact that you're the anointed. You're the anointed one. He is the anointed one to save us. What's He going to do? I love these verses. He's going to preach. He's going to bind up. He's going to proclaim liberty. He's going to open prison doors. He's going to proclaim, and He's going to comfort. To whom will He do it? These are the beautiful parallels: the meek, the brokenhearted, the captives, them that are bound, and all that mourn. I mean, everyone's included.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:20:53 I don't know about you guys, but when I teach 3 Nephi 11 and when the Savior... Or 3 Nephi 17. Well, 11 and 17. But in 17, He says, "Are any among you afflicted in any way? Come to me. I think, "Well, I might not be halt or maimed, but I'm going.

Hank Smith: 00:21:10 Yeah. I think it was "or in any other manner."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:21:15 In any manner, I'm going. It could be my heart. It could be my mind. What's the hymn? The wound concealed. I'm going up. I'm going to go up. There's no one who's left out here in terms of who the Savior will minister to if you want to be ministered to. This is His mission. This is incredible stuff to ponder about who the Savior is, to comfort all to mourn.

John Bytheway: 00:21:41 As we started, we talked before we hit the record button about that we hoped people would feel the Lord's healing influence. If they think of God as laws and commandments and judgment, yeah, that's part of it. But here, when Jesus chose the verse... But in the Luke 4, where He reads this. It says, "To heal the brokenhearted." I think of all the things the Savior wanted to announce when He got there, He came to heal broken hearts. Of all the things He could have said, He chose these beautiful words for Isaiah to announce His ministry. But that was the custom. The synagogue... You read a verse. But then, don't you sit down and make a comment.

Hank Smith: 00:22:22 Yep.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:22:22 You're going to comment.

John Bytheway: 00:22:23 What happened there?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:22:24 Well, Luke 4 is amazing because He says, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." They don't like it. One of the reasons they don't like it is when He gets done with the Sermon on the Mount, the comment Matthew makes, who's a Jew... He makes the comment that He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. What he means by that is that scribes and rabbis will always use other rabbis and rabbinic commentary to comment. But Jesus doesn't do that. He's his own authority. What Matthew is saying is He taught as one as having authority, meaning He doesn't need to get a rabbi to back him up.

Hank Smith: 00:23:06 He doesn't go get a reference. Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:23:08 He doesn't need a reference. He is the reference. He is the Word. When they're all in that synagogue... And you can imagine the spirit you must have been feeling. In fact, Luke I believe 4 says, "Their eyes were fastened upon Him." Then, He says, "This day, the scripture is fulfilled in your ears." I am this right here. This is me. But then, they want to take Him to the brow of a hill. They want to kill Him. Of course, He passes out. He passes through among them. What's really interesting in terms of the dynamic... He essentially leaves Nazareth and moves to Capernaum. Then, Capernaum becomes the-

Hank Smith: 00:23:44 Headquarters.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:23:45 ...the early headquarters of the church, which is on the northern part of the Sea of Galilee. I love that: how he leaves Nazareth. He basically has to leave Nazareth and then makes Capernaum the platform from which he will then preach the gospel. That's why that's so significant there.

Hank Smith: 00:24:02 I think these verses are so critical. I hope our listeners will go read them for themselves. Isaiah 61:1 and 2. Go read them. Read it slowly like John did there. Think about all these beautiful words and how Isaiah put them together. John, I wanted to just read a little bit more out of the manual. Whoever wrote the manual this time around, I got to give a shout-out because it's beautiful. It says, "This, like many other prophecies of Isaiah, continues to be fulfilled in our day. The Savior continues to heal all the brokenhearted who come unto him. There are yet many captives to whom deliverance must be preached. There is a

glorious future to prepare for, a time when the Lord will create new heavens and new earth and cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations." Those are both Isaiah quotes. Then, this last sentence, "Reading Isaiah opens our eyes to what the Lord has already done, what he is doing, and what he will yet do for his people."

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:25:02 Hank, I love what you said, if I may, about reading slowly. I teach a Hebrew class and will spend a day on one verse. Students, in the beginning, will be like, "Gosh, who can spend a day on one verse?" I'm not saying we should read all scripture that way. But sometimes, we go to a gospel doctrine class. It's like, "Today, we're going to do Jeremiah 1-47." No, you're not. No, you're not. You're actually not going to do Jeremiah 1-47.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:25:30 I think what you said: I love that idea. Take Isaiah 61. Read those two verses. Break it out. Parse it. Think about it. Ponder it. There will be a spirit that will accompany that. There really will be. We don't have to get the volume in, perhaps. But boy, this is power. I love, John, what you said. "What's your favorite Old Testament in scripture about Jesus? Well, Jesus is telling you about His favorite Old Testament scripture about Him. He chose it." If somebody was saying, "Wow! Okay, I can do two verses in Isaiah. Let me..." Well, these would be rich, fertile field. I love the idea from the manual. It was fulfilled and is being fulfilled and will continue to be fulfilled.
- John Bytheway: 00:26:12 Part of the amazing thing about Isaiah is its-
- Hank Smith: 00:26:15 Past, present, and future. Yeah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:26:17 Yeah. It's still going. Bruce R. McConkie said, "Isaiah is above all else the prophet of the restoration." First time I heard that, I thought, "What?" But so many of these things are still being fulfilled and are still underway. It helps us to see Isaiah that way. This is still relevant today.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:26:36 Well, 2 Nephi 6:4 tells us that he says He sees things as they really are and as they really will be, as they are to come. That's exactly right. Nephi was able to tap into that as well. But I love this conversation and the comment to take it slow. It's okay. We don't always have to read 17 chapters. Take two verses and slow down. That's a beautiful thing.
- John Bytheway: 00:26:58 Can we read verse 3 too?

Hank Smith: 00:26:58 Yeah, I was going to say. You're almost like, "Oh, I wish he could've kept going there in Nazareth.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:03 Yeah. Please.

John Bytheway: 00:27:04 "To a point unto them that mourn in Zion to give unto them beauty for ashes." That's poetry.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:12 Yeah. This is beautiful, right?

John Bytheway: 00:27:13 "The oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; that He might be glorified."

Hank Smith: 00:27:26 My God.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:26 Goodness. Yeah. Verse three.

John Bytheway: 00:27:29 It's poetry.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:30 It's some of the best poetry. It's some of the best. It's rich. It's incredible.

John Bytheway: 00:27:38 It's amazing that God can do that: to take something like ashes and turn it into beauty, can take some of the... What do they say? Sweet are the uses of adversity. Some of the hardest things can result in beautiful blessings. God is so good at doing that when we turn to Him. I know I've heard Elder Hafen use that phrase in one of his talks about beauty for ashes. When I saw beauty for ashes, I thought of Elder Hafen there.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:28:09 I thought of Elder Hafen, too, by the way, when you said that. The idea of the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. We live in a world of sarcasm, a world of criticism, finding fault, and this idea of the garment of praise. I think Elder Maxwell used to talk about this phrase, "the garment of praise," instead of the spirit of heaviness. Then, if I may, that they might be called trees of righteousness: I love trees. I've thought a ton about this. I want to be a tree of righteousness. I want to be the planting of the Lord. I think of Russell M. Nelson. The man is a massive oak tree whose roots go down to the center of the earth. He is literally a redwood. I wrote some things down about trees. Trees always grow toward the light. Trees require opposition to thrive. Trees are best grown in forests, not in isolation. Trees draw strength from previous generations of trees. Did you guys know that? Marlin Jensen, do you remember Elder Marlin K. Jensen?

John Bytheway: 00:29:19 Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:29:19 He gave a talk where he discussed the sacred grove. He mentioned the story... I'm paraphrasing; that some odd years ago, they had this idea to clean out the grove, get rid of all the fallen trees, clean out the grove so visitors can have nice clean pathways. They did. It started to create havoc in the grove. It actually diminished the vitality of what was going on in the sacred grove. Then, these arborists came along and were like, "Well, yeah. You can't do that."

John Bytheway: 00:29:53 What'd you do that for?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:29:53 'Why would you do that?'"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:29:55 "Well, we wanted to clean it up."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:29:56 They were like, "No, no, no, no. The previous generation of trees that have died actually provide rich, rich nutrition and growth for these younger trees."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:30:09 Trees draw strength from previous generations of trees. Trees bear fruit. Trees provide shade. Trees. Point upward. Trees use the power of the sun to provide oxygen for life.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:30:23 Trees of righteousness... Oh, my word! Here's the Savior's mission verses 1 and 2. I'm going to mourn in Zion. I'm repentant. I'm going to get beauty for ashes. I'm going to get oil of joy. I'm going to get the garment of praise. What does it result? It means that Hank and John become trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. Now, other people... "I'm a little weak in my faith. But I can get shade under your tree. I can temporarily use your treeness...." That's not a word, "to bless my life." The Savior says, "You're going to be the light of the world. You're going to be the salt of the earth. You're going to be leaven. Well, this is another one: trees of righteousness; the planting of the Lord.

John Bytheway: 00:31:07 Years ago, I read this book about teaching. I can't remember the author. But this guy was talking about trying to teach his children. One of Hank's favorite chapters that he often mentions is Jacob 5, the Zenos's allegory. Finally, this kid, in this moment of inspiration as dad's trying to do this home evening about Jacob 5... He goes, "Oh, I get it. Trees are people," because, over and over, the Lord of the vineyard says, "It grieveth with me that I should lose this tree." Trees are people. Then, you see Isaiah even having the Lord as a lumberjack in

one case. He's going to come and hew down the mighty, the cedars of Lebanon. There's mighty trees but trees of righteousness. The footnote is there, Hank, topical guide, Vineyard of the Lord. I thought of you because I know how you love Jacob 5.

- Hank Smith: 00:31:59 I did. I didn't love it as a kid. It was so long. It was one of those where you're like, "We're going to be here all day."
- John Bytheway: 00:32:05 Isaiah does that too. Isaiah 5 is at-
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:32:07 Yeah. 2 Nephi 15. Isaiah 5.
- John Bytheway: 00:32:09 What more could I have done for my vineyard? It sounds like Jacob 5. "It grieveth me to lose any tree." I like this.
- Hank Smith: 00:32:16 Yeah, I bet Elder Oaks likes this one. Don't you think? The trees of righteousness.
- John Bytheway: 00:32:20 Yeah. Probably the branch president. That's good, Hank.
- Hank Smith: 00:32:23 Thank you. Thank you. Welcome to FollowHIM.
- John Bytheway: 00:32:30 No. But thank you for those, Ross. I'm sorry. Thank you for that. They grow towards the light. They benefit from previous generations.
- Hank Smith: 00:32:37 Yeah, there's so much there.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:32:39 They grow toward the light. They require opposition to thrive. I know that you gave a timeout for women where you talked about this guy that had the Venus fly trap plant or something in your ward.
- John Bytheway: 00:32:49 Oh my goodness! That's right.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:32:50 You talked about pure water. Pure light. It has to have adversity.
- John Bytheway: 00:32:54 It has to have a cold period, he called it, Brother Wilson, in my ward. Thank you.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:33:00 Trees that require opposition... They're best grown, in forests not in isolation. I get these kids sometimes. Like, "Brother Baron, I'm in the annoying first ward."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:33:11 I'm always like, "Awesome, that's so great that you're in an annoying ward."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:33:15 They're like, "What do you mean?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:33:16 I said, "Listen, the ward and your family are the laboratory where you can develop faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, and diligence. You don't get those in isolation."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:33:30 I love this one. "I just go up on a mountain. I take my scriptures, and that's where I'm spiritual." Yeah, of course, lame-o. Who wouldn't be spiritual alone on the top of a mountain? But go live in a ward and go associate with people you wouldn't otherwise associate people. Go have teenagers, and now live the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's where you're going to develop those attributes. The idea of trees of righteousness... Trees do not grow well in isolation. They need to be with other trees because they provide some of that opposition. I love that. I literally want to be the planting of the Lord. The planting of the Lord is just... It's amazing.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:11 Again, I look at the first presidency, Dallin H. Oaks and Henry B. Eyring with President Nelson... They are trees of righteousness. They are the planting of the Lord. I hope they wouldn't be offended by that. I don't mean that in any way irreverent. I mean, that is absolute compliment to them.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:27 If we look at verse 10, we have these beautiful ideas that the Lord will keep reemphasizing here. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My soul shall be joyful in my God." He's done all these things for us. We've got the mission of Jesus. "For He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation." Okay. I'm clothed. "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:53 Kafar... I know you guys have talked about this on the Come Follow Me podcast so far, that we're being covered, which essentially is the Hebrew word for atonement. Yom Kippur is the day of covering. You brought up Alma 42. But I also love Alma 34. "If I don't repent, I'm exposed. If I do repent, I'm encircled." Naked versus clothed, just different ways of saying it. Here he's saying I'm clothed with the garments of salvation. I've covered me with the robe of righteousness. How? "Like a bride groom decketh of themselves with ornaments and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewel."

Hank Smith: 00:35:33 Wow!

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:35:34 Again, this beautiful poetry of me turning from transgression, accepting what the Savior's offered me: His mission. Now, I'm

getting everything he said in verse three: "As I move to the Savior, and He covers me." It's just another way of saying I get beauty for ashes, oil of joy for mourning, and garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He's just reiterating what he's saying. We're learning more and more. We're being persuaded to believe more in the Lord, our Redeemer. I think that's what's going on there.

- Hank Smith: 00:36:09 Sounds a little like Ammon. "I will boast of my God. I will greatly rejoice in my Lord."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:36:15 Love that. In Isaiah 62, if you don't mind, I sometimes like to look at... So what is God asking me to do? Here's the Savior's mission. Here's a prophetic mission. Here's the church's ultimate destiny. This is what's going to happen to Zion. But what do I need to do? You go to 62. In verse 10, I think the Lord gives this quick one verse. I think it's a beautiful verse about what I'm to do. Hank, would you be okay reading that?
- Hank Smith: 00:36:47 62:10. "Go through! Go through the gates. Prepare ye the way of the people. Cast up! Cast up the highway. Gather out the stones. Lift up a standard for the people."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:36:58 Wow! Isaiah has a gift. In one verse, he gave me some great stuff. It's the imperative: "Go through! Go through!" What am I going to go through? I'm going through the gates. Now, I know that Isaiah was writing in 747 B.C. Gates... Shaar HaRachamim. Sha'ar is gate. It's the critical point of any city. It's the pathway by which you entered. I want to suggest to you that he's using this as a double metaphor. That the gate is literally entering into covenants with our Heavenly Father.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:37:32 Before I can truly help in the work, I've got to enter in by the gate. I've got to participate in ordinances. "Go through! Go through." That's imperative. It's a command form. What am I to go through? Go through the gates. You got to get into the ordinances. Once I get through, I can now prepare the way of the people. I'm going to now turn to others. How am I going to do that? I got to make the highway smooth for people, gather out the stones, and then I've got to lift up the standard. I've got to be a proclaimer of truth.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:38:06 I love the missionary department: love, share, and invite. How do I lift up a standard for the people? I love my neighbors. I share organically the gospel whenever I have an opportunity, and I invite. That's how I do it. How do I cast up the highway and gather out the stones? I believe by me repenting, by me being a better person. I don't have to worry about other people. I'm

going to cast out the stones on the highway by... I have to become a better person. I love to look at some of these verses in terms of what is it we can do. I think that's super practical.

- Hank Smith: 00:38:39 I was just reading in the contemporary English version. We talked about using our tools beforehand. It says, "People of Jerusalem, open your gates. Repair the road to the city, and clear it of stones. Raise a banner to help the nations find their way." I like that.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:38:56 Same here.
- Hank Smith: 00:38:57 Help people find their way.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:59 The idea of a standard has always been fascinating to me because you get invited to speak at a standards night. You think, "Am I talking about the basketball standard? What am I talking about?"
- Hank Smith: 00:39:08 What's the standard?
- John Bytheway: 00:39:09 The idea of that, of being a flag or a banner that says, "This is whose side I am on. This is who I represent. This is who I am as a person, or this is my people, and to raise that standard." The opposite of stand is to shrink or buckle or wilt or compromise. To stand for something... I just love the idea of "raise a standard." I like that banner, an ensign in another place, probably. Here's the gathering point, or here's who we are, and here's where we're going to gather so that we can march. I love the idea of a standard as a statement of "this is who we are" type of a thing.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:39:47 It's uncompromising. It's the rallying point. There's a certain uncompromising thing. Right now, the world hates that. Even a lot of our students are concerned about that. But what you said. There's no shrinking. There's no compromise. It is the standard. By the way, again, going back to 2 Nephi 26:24, Hank, because that will be the benefit for the children of men. That'll bless us.
- Hank Smith: 00:40:17 It even says in verse 12, "You'll be sought out." People want that standard.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:40:22 By the way, that standard that we see, obviously, we could talk about some of the nature, but the proclamation of the family is a standard. I love, John, how you said that. It's uncompromising. It's a rallying point.

John Bytheway: 00:40:34 Let me give us a footnote for that. This was a youth theme a few years ago. Section 115 of the Doctrine and Covenants 5: "Arise and shine forth that thy light may be a standard for the nations."

Hank Smith: 00:40:48 Awesome. That is perfect. Ross, I'm looking at the rest of the chapters here, 63-66, and according to the chapter headings, at least, we are talking Second Coming. Is that right?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:41:04 We are. Not only are we talking about Second Coming. We're talking about the ultimate triumph of Zion: talking about the Second Coming. We're also talking about the millennium. I'd like to comment just about Isaiah 63. The first couple of verses are like a Q&A. Then, the Savior makes this, I think, really important comment in verse 3. "I have trodden the wine press alone. Of the people, there was none with me, for I will tread them in my anger and trample them in my fury. Their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments. I will stain all my raiment."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:41:37 When I was in Israel, and those of you have been, you know that there's these massive wine presses. The idea that one person would tread a wine press is ridiculous. They just don't do that. Isaiah is making a stark image that would've resonated with them at that time. But maybe now, people don't fully get what that means. I just love this idea of him treading the wine press alone. If I could read from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland April 2009 general conference entitled None Were With Me.

Hank Smith: 00:42:11 I remember that. Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:42:12 Yeah. "I speak of the loneliest journey ever made and the unending blessings it brought to all the human family. I speak of the Savior's solitary task of shouldering alone the burden of our salvation." There is the idea of "alone." Rightly he would say. Then, Elder Holland quotes Isaiah 63:3, "Thus of divine necessity, the supporting circle around Jesus gets smaller and smaller and smaller. He had to feel what it was like to die, not only physically but spiritually, to sense what it was like to have the divine spirit withdraw, leaving one feeling totally abjectly, hopelessly alone. Because Jesus walks such a long lonely path, utterly alone, we do not have to do so." Again, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, None Were with Him, April 2009, general conference.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:43:04 That is just so powerful. Then, the phrase in verse 9, in terms of the Second Coming but also in terms of what He suffered and what He did, Isaiah testifies, "In all their afflictions, He was afflicted." This is maybe one of the more powerful verses: that in all their afflictions, He was afflicted. Then, of course, we do

have Second Coming things here. Then, after the Second Coming, I think this idea where He's going to testify to us that doubtless you are our Father. That there is this idea that He is our Father.

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:43:41 There is a Joseph Smith Translation in verse 17 that I think we need to focus on just for a second. "Oh, Lord." I'm reading the King James Version. "Why hast thou made us to err from the ways and hardened our hearts from thy fear return for thy servant's sake the tribes of divine inheritance." Then, the Joseph Smith Translation, footnote A, "Oh, Lord, why hast thou suffered us to err from thy ways and to harden our heart?" In other words, we're the ones who choose to harden our heart, not the-
- John Bytheway: 00:44:12 The agency.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:44:13 Yeah. Yeah. Agency. Again, just Isaiah 64 is this, I think, eternal prayer that the righteous have throughout the ages. The prayer is, of course, "Oh, that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:44:30 I would alert your listeners to section 133 of the Doctrine and Covenants, starting in verse 40, going, say, all the way to verse 53, Joseph Smith, in a revelation, basically reorders and even reworks some of the verses in Isaiah 63 and 64. I think if somebody wanted to do that or on their own, I would say it's not a correction as much as it is just an alternative way the Lord wants us to look at it. Does that make sense?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:45:05 In D&C section 35, when Sidney Rigdon shows up with Edward Partridge, right after they've been baptized in Kirtland, in verse 20, the Lord gives a revelation and says that... "Sidney, you're to write for him," for Joseph and the Joseph Smith Translation. "You're going to write for him the things which are in my bosom for the salvation of my Saints and the Latter-days. In other words, I think that's one of the best definitions of what the Joseph Smith Translation is.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:45:30 Sometimes people think, "Oh. If I had the original manuscript, it would say exactly what the JST says. Maybe not because it's those things, what God has in his bosom for the salvation of his elect in the Latter-days. When I look at section 133 and some of the reworking of Isaiah 63 and 64 and some of the reordering of the verses and even some additions in the language, I don't think it's necessarily saying those were wrong and this is right. I

just think that's part of what God has for us in the Latter-days as a response to that, if that's okay.

- Hank Smith: 00:46:02 Oh, yeah. I think that's a great way to describe it.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:46:05 Yeah. Then, verse 8 in chapter 64: "But now, oh, Lord, thou our Father. We are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of the hand. Amen." So good.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:46:16 Now, I want to add something if I can. Chapter 65, the Joseph Smith translation... The footnotes of the appendix doesn't contain the entire manuscript of the Joseph Smith Translation. I was looking at the Joseph Smith Translation. I want to share with you, and for your readers, if you want to use the citation index, it has the complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament on there. I'm not sure if you guys were aware of that, but it does.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:46:43 Isaiah 65:1 reads, "I am sought of them that asks not of me. I am found of them that sought me not. I said, 'Behold me! Behold me unto a nation that was not called by my name.'" I've struggled with that verse. What is going on? But the Joseph Smith Translation says, "I am found of them who seek after me. I give unto all them that ask of me. I am not found of them that sought me not, or that inquireth not after me." Thank goodness. Thank goodness. Oh, my word.
- Hank Smith: 00:47:18 That clears that up perfectly.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:47:19 Doesn't it? I mean, it's just like, "Okay, we're good." I just love that. I just wanted to alert your listeners that you can look on the citation index. The Joseph Smith translation does have that verse changed. I think it's super critical, so if that's okay.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:47:36 I wanted to look, if you will, at verse 11 because I think it's a warning to us. We're prior to the Second Coming. We want to be his covenant people. "But ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, and that prepare a table for that troop."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:47:53 Now, if you look at your footnote for troop 11A, it's an idol. I think it's interesting that the Lord... His covenant people have forsaken Him. They forget the temple, and they make other gods their priority. Well, so what's the result?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:48:10 Look at verse 13 and 14. "Therefore, thus sayeth the Lord, God, 'Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry. Behold,

my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty. Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed. Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:48:29 Now, I don't think we're talking about physical things here. We might be. But I think we're talking about the servants of God are eating the bread of life. We're drinking from the living water. We are rejoicing in the God of Israel. In other words, we're not ashamed because we're covered. Does that make sense? That when we forsake the Lord, forget his temple, and make other gods a priority, we receive consequences. Those are some of the consequences that Isaiah lays out. The rebellious are going to be hungry, thirsty, ashamed.
- Hank Smith: 00:49:04 You're going to be hungry, thirsty, ashamed.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:49:04 You're going to cry for sorrow of heart and vexation of spirit.
- Hank Smith: 00:49:07 These idols cannot provide you what you're seeking.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:49:10 Yeah, that's exactly right. Again, talking about the Second Coming and going to Isaiah 66, there are some amazing things here. There's a very famous prophecy in Isaiah 66 and this idea of a nation being born in a day. We've got verse 7: "Before she travailed, she brought forth. Before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:49:39 Verse eight, "Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." Then the Lord asks, "'Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth?' saith the Lord, 'Shall I cause to bring forth and shut the womb?' saith thy God."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:50:01 I've looked extensively at the prophetic commentaries on that. Spencer Kimball, Orson Pratt, Orson Hyde, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and others have talked about how ultimately, at the Second Coming, Gentiles, Jews, and Lamanites... There will be some major conversion going on. If I can, I would add Islam. I would add some of these other things. I don't totally pretend to know how that's going to work. But I still think we're in the preparatory phase in terms of missionary work on both sides of the veil. I think that Isaiah is seeing a bigger picture, and I think it's ongoing now. But I think it will really explode at the Second Coming.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:50:45 I think a lot of people think, "Oh, well, there won't be any missionary work at the Second Coming." No, no, no. Major work at the Second Coming, major work at the millennium. In the millennial day, there will also be major missionary work. Brigham was very clear that there would be those not of our faith during the millennium because why? Because the agency is always honored. He goes through. He starts talking about all these things.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:51:08 But I'd love to have your comments and your thoughts. He talks about verse 15, "The Lord will come with fire with His chariots like a whirlwind to render his anger with fury and His rebuke with flames of fire. Going through all this, He knows our works." But then verse 19, "For I will set a sign among them." 3 Nephi 21, "The Lord says, 'I'm going to give you a sign.'"

Hank Smith: 00:51:38 Words of the book.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:51:39 Yep. I'm talking about the Book of Mormon. I will set a sign among them: the Latter-day token, the Latter-day sign, the Book of Mormon. "I will send those that escape of them." What an interesting phrase. "Those who accept the sign and escape the world are going to be sent." Where are we going to be sent? "Tarshish, Pul, Lud, Tubal, Javan, the isles afar off, those that have not heard the fame, neither have seen the glory of the Lord." To do what? "To declare my glory among the Gentiles."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:52:15 Then, here's the cool thing. What is the offering you and I make in the Latter-days really? "They shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations." I think if President Nelson was here on this podcast, he'd say from both sides of the veil.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:52:34 Isaiah 2, "All nations flow into the house of the Lord," the house of the God of Jacob. The Hebrew word: all nations "river" into it. They all river into it. What do we do in the Latter-days? He gives us a sign. Those who've accepted the sign then go to all nations. Then, what do we do? We bring an offering to the Lord. What's the offering? People from both sides of the veil. From where? From everywhere. Where do we bring it? In the middle of verse 20, "To my holy mountain, Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." I think Jerusalem becomes a proxy holy city for all of our holy temples, a proxy holy city for all of our stakes of Zion, so what we do is we bring our children. We bring our family. We bring ourselves, and we bring everyone else on both sides of the veil as a holy offering. That's the requirement in the

Latter-days: for us to be able to do that. I just absolutely love that.

- Hank Smith: 00:53:34 Ross, was he describing something very similar in chapter 65:17. "I create new heavens and a new earth. Be glad and rejoice forever for which I create. For behold, I create Jerusalem, a rejoicing" I love verse 19. "I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard. The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her nor the voice of crying."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:54:01 Well, in Isaiah 65, he also taps into some of the Deuteronomy promises in Deuteronomy 28. Isaiah is very connected to that. They're going to build houses and live in them. They're going to plant vineyards and eat of the fruit of them. They're not going to labor in vain. They're going to be the seed of the blessed. They're going to have prayer and revelation. All these things are tied to the promises Moses gave. He said, "If you guys will do these things, God will be your God." Isaiah seems to be tapping into this idea that premillennial and then post-millennial, these things can happen as well.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:54:32 I'm interested also in Isaiah 66:3, where, at the end of verse 3, he says, "Yea, they have chosen their own ways and their soul delighteth in their abominations." They've chosen their own ways.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:54:49 If you think, again, bookends, go back to Isaiah 2, where he talked about "everyone walketh in his own way, but we go to the temple, so we learn the Lord's ways." They have chosen their own ways. Then, what does he say? Verse 4? "So I also will choose their delusions and will bring their fears upon them." Why? "Because when I called, none did answer. When I spake, they did not hear." That is also a theme in Isaiah, starting in Isaiah 50:2, where He goes through. Then, here, in Isaiah 66, and also he brings up this idea of "He keeps calling, and people are not answering." I think He's calling... Remember section 43 of the Doctrine and Covenants? Every voice possible. He's using every single avenue possible to call people to Him. He will measure out His mercy and His love and His justice in accordance with our capacity, I think, and our opportunity to hear. But some people have heard and reject. This idea at the end of verse 3... They have chosen their own ways. I don't know. I think you, brethren, have heard this phrase, "You do you."
- Hank Smith: 00:55:59 Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:55:59 You've heard that phrase.

Hank Smith: 00:56:00 Oh, yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:56:00 You do you. I had a kid in my class say that recently. "You do you." I said, "I 100% disagree with that." I don't want to do me. I'm lame. I'm fallen. I want to do what Jesus wants me to do. That's what I want to do because I could be wrong. You do you. I'm pretty lousy at knowing what exactly I need and what I want. I want what God wants for me. In fact, that's why I'm a member. That's why I'm in covenants because I want what God wants. I want prophetic direction. I want ordinances and covenants. I want that. I want to choose the way of God. Even the Savior, the ultimate example, had to bend. He didn't want to do him. He wanted to do the will of the Father.

John Bytheway: 00:56:46 I've told my class, "Jesus never said you do you. He said you do me."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:56:51 Exactly.

John Bytheway: 00:56:51 He said, "What manner of men ought ye to be even as I am?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:56:55 Amen.

John Bytheway: 00:56:56 But what you just said adds another dimension. I do only the things that please the Father. First thing he said when he showed up to the righteous in the new world... "I've done the will of the Father from the beginning."

Hank Smith: 00:57:10 Yeah. Ross, I loved what you said. The Lord is pleading to be chosen. He doesn't want to punish. That's 66:16. The Lord pleads with all flesh.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:57:22 God wants us to want Him. He calls in every possible way. I mean, literally calling us. But then, there's this sadness to it. We get this sadness. "I've called, but no one answers. I've tried. I've tried." This goes back to Jacob 5. "What more could I have done?" By the way, when I get to that in Jacob 5 with my students. I go, "What's the answer?" The answer is nothing. There's nothing more you could have done.

John Bytheway: 00:57:52 The same, in Isaiah 5. It's, "What more could I have done?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:57:56 Nothing.

John Bytheway: 00:57:56 Same thing.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:57:59 These verses speak of this beautiful millennial day. But I love the idea of the offering that we bring in the Latter-days, are other children of God, and that we waste and wear out our lives to serve the Savior, to minister, to love, share, and invite, to unite the family of God, to live the Gospel of Christ in our own lives. That is the message of Isaiah. Remember, Elder Uchtdorf just gave this beautiful thing with the Teaching the Savior's Way. They kept the four points of: love your students, teach the doctrine, teach by the Spirit, invite diligent learning. But they added... The overarching one is no matter what you teach, teach about Jesus Christ. No matter what you teach, teach about Jesus Christ. Isaiah is the epitome of that, from 1-6. He echoes through the ages. No matter what I teach, I'm going to teach about Jesus Christ.

John Bytheway: 00:58:57 I love to tell my students, "Look at His name. His name means Jehovah is salvation, or, in bumper sticker language, Jesus saves." Abinadi quotes him because the wicked priests thought that the law saved, the law of Moses saved. No. Then, he reads him Isaiah 53. I was going to add, too, that there is a sadness here. But it's like, "Wow! The deadline... It actually comes. It actually happened." When I teach 2 Nephi 28, there's no devil. There's no hell: all of those lies that Satan tells. I always like to add... Here's another one that's not in there, but I like it. There's no hurry.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:59:32 That's great.

John Bytheway: 00:59:34 No, there is because, look, eventually, it's going to be too late. It'll be everlastingly too late. Get your act together while there's still time.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:59:44 Well, and that's an Elder Holland. Remember, Elder Holland, at the end of one talk, he said, "There's always time as long as the master says there's time. Hurry up. Time is running out."

Hank Smith: 00:59:53 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:59:54 That's right. Right at the end of the talk. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:59:56 Ross, this has been a fantastic day going through these verses of Isaiah, some of these chapters that I can't say I really understood before. I feel like I have a grasp on. Right, John? Just...

John Bytheway: 01:00:07 Oh, it's just been great. I think I've taken more notes today than for a long time. Now, I'm motivated to go back. I got to look at

this again and try to get some of this inside. But thank you so much, Ross. Amazing.

- Hank Smith: 01:00:21 Ross, I think our listeners would be interested in your journey as both a Latter-day Saint, as a Jew growing up in a Jewish family converting and becoming a Latter-day Saint, and also being a bible scholar. What's that journey been like?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:00:35 Well, I'll tell you. Remember I told you that I was reading the Book of Mormon and Jesus the Christ and all this stuff? I was so fired up. This was in Southern California, and I lived in the San Fernando Valley at the time. I went to a Christian bookstore, not knowing that they wouldn't have books about the church except that were anti. I literally didn't know that. I walked in, and I was like, "Hi." The lady behind the counter was like, "I'd love to read books about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." She just handed me a headlamp and said, "Go in that dark area over there." No, she didn't really do that.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:01:11 I went to this bookshelf, and it was all anti stuff. I bought three books. I read them. I had a yellow pad. I mean, I'm 18. I'm not a member of the church. I've got my pen out, and I've got these anti books. I'm reading them. There's an interesting thing. I have read antisemitic literature. I've been exposed to that in my family, of course, the Holocaust. I realize that the spirit of antisemitism, the vitriolic that was there was similar. I remember thinking, "Wow! These guys are wackos."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:01:54 I still remember there was three or four questions. I read these three books. I took my yellow pad. There was about three or four questions I did actually have. I went to the missionaries. I said, "Hey, I have these three or four questions." It wasn't super problematic. I was able to overcome that.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:02:11 When I was getting my Ph.D., essentially in philosophy and theology, I was asked by members of my ward, "Is this hard for you? Is this hard on your faith?" I can be totally honest with you. I would leave classes with chills because I would say, "Joseph Smith, the restoration, answers these questions." I literally left with chills.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:02:34 I'll tell you a story. I had a friend. His name was Royce Grubic: this big tall guy. We were getting our Ph.D.s together. We used to walk back to our cars and be in classes together. He goes, "Ross, I know why you do this."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:02:46 I was like, "Do what?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:02:47 He's like, 'I know why you're so immersed in the Ph.D. program, and you read everything. It's just one more arrow in your quiver for Mormonism.'

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:02:57 I was like, "Royce, dude, that is sweet. I'm going to use that." One more arrow in your quiver for Mormonism. I literally try to take everything I learn and use it to build the kingdom. I love your point. Oh, if you knew what I knew. I guarantee you I know more than what they think I know. I guarantee you I've read it. There's no new anti argument. It's all the same rehash. It's all based on certain assumptions and certain premises.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:03:26 I take a view that you don't ever have to worry about truth. But I do like to learn certain skills. I want to be source-critical, and I want to be careful. But boy, if it's true, I want to embrace it. I'm not going to be afraid of it. But I got to still pay the price. I have to know my text. My message here is that's not because I'm a scholar or not because I have a Ph.D.. It's because I pay a price reading my text, listening to the words of prophets, and apostles and doing my darnedest to understand the Word. I believe the man in Guatemala or anybody else in the world can do that exact same thing.

John Bytheway: 01:04:04 It helps me. I think it helps all of our listeners to know there are those out there who have paid that price. We're all still working on it. But it's so nice to know there are those who have read it all.

John Bytheway: 01:04:17 I remember Robert Millet saying he would have students come to him. "Hey, did you know about this?"

John Bytheway: 01:04:22 "Yeah, I knew about it."

John Bytheway: 01:04:23 "Oh, you do? Oh, okay."

John Bytheway: 01:04:25 That was enough because they knew I know about it. I've studied it, and it's not a deal breaker.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:04:29 Right. I know you guys have thought about this. But in John 6, of course, you know He's fed the 5,000. They want to make Him a king because they want free food. Then, He says, boom, "Except you eat my flesh and drink my blood. You have no part in me," and then doesn't explain it. Can you imagine, John, if you and I were, let's say, disciples, I would go up to Peter and be like, "Hey, Peter. What the heck?"

John Bytheway: 01:04:58 Was that a metaphor? What was that?

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:05:01 What's going on? I think Peter would've said, "I don't know. I don't know."

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:05:06 "Well, what do we do, Peter?"

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:05:09 "You know what we do? We follow Jesus because He is the Christ."

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:05:15 "I don't totally get it. Peter! Peter! I don't totally get it. But he's the Christ."

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:05:21 Beyond just being somebody who's paid a price in the text and beyond a price I paid in other areas, you have to get a witness and settle it in your heart. You have to get a witness by the power of the Holy Ghost and settle it in your heart. I am settled in my heart. I love the Lord. I love his prophets and apostles. I love the church. I love this conversation we're having.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:05:46 I always tell my students, "Look, you can ask me any question in class. But know one thing. I'm under the umbrella of faith." I teach a class in philosophy every single semester because of my Ph.D. I always tell them first day, "In my class, we will study philosophy. You will know as much as anybody about Kant or Aristotle or Schopenhauer, whoever we're studying. But we will do this. We will judge the philosophers by the gospel, not the gospel by the philosophers." They look at me. I go, "Are we clear? We're never going to judge the gospel by Aristotle. But we're going to judge Aristotle by the gospel." I go, "We're not going to diminish our rigor. We're not going to know less than somebody who went to Harvard. We're going to know just as much." But at the end of the day, what the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us trumps all those other things.

John Bytheway: 01:06:35 I'm transferring to Rexburg, Hank.

Hank Smith: 01:06:38 Thank you, Dr. Ross Baron. I can feel the power all the way up there in Rexburg. I can feel the warmth of your testimony. We want to thank Dr. Baron for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen. We want to thank our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. We hope all of you will join us next week. We're coming back with another episode of FollowHIM. We have an amazing production crew we want you to know about: David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Nielsen, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Cuadra. Thank you to our amazing production team.

## HOW CAN I ENJOY THE SABBATH MORE?



- Hank Smith: 00:05 Hello everyone. Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. If you've been following us this year, you know that we take a single question from each week's lesson. John, this week's lesson is on the last handful of chapters in Isaiah. And we chose a question from Isaiah 58 where Isaiah says, "We need to call the Sabbath a delight." And yet, for a lot of our listeners, especially our young listeners, the Sabbath isn't so delightful. John, how do you help someone who's a little bit younger say, "I want to make the Sabbath Day holy. I want it to be a delight, but it just seems to make me bored." What do you do? How do you help someone see the Sabbath as more of a delight?
- John Bytheway: 00:46 I love the way you asked the question. Make it a delight. And I think first you make a decision, "I'm going to make it this way. I'm going to make my Sabbath wonderful." I think I learned so much from a talk, Hank, I was down at BYU in 1990 and President Nelson was Elder Nelson gave a talk called Reflection and Resolution. And my memory is in that talk, he quoted Ezekiel 20:20, which sounds like good vision, 20/20, that also sounds like a year we just had that wasn't that great. But he said that in Ezekiel 20:20 says, "Hallow my Sabbaths and they will be a sign between me and thee that you may know that I am the Lord your God." And the whole idea was it's our sign to God that we're thinking about him. And I begin to think, "What if God was watching me on the Sabbath, would he be able to tell that I was thinking about him? Had I made a decision to make the Sabbath different?"
- John Bytheway: 01:40 And I used to think it's a day of rest. And then I became a bishop for a while and I wasn't very restful. And I thought I needed to change the way I thought of rest too. It was resting from worldly things and worldly stuff to think about and worldly shows or movies. It was about making God a bigger part of it, and reading something different, and finding somebody we could go serve and minister to and things like that. And that made it more of a challenge to me. I think if you really want to make it a delight, you can get on your knees and ask the Lord, "How could I make this more of a delight?" And I bet he'll give you some answers.

And it might be not only in how you spend your time, but who and what you think about during that time.

- Hank Smith: 02:28 Yep, absolutely. If we can learn to see this as an opportunity to do things differently. I know that perhaps your family doesn't play video games, or doesn't watch TV, or doesn't do something that they usually do on the other days of the week on Sunday. And you can focus on that and focus on what you're missing, but it's going to be more of a delight to you if you see it as an opportunity to do things differently. For example, I love to write emails to missionaries on the Sabbath because I just don't have a lot of time during the week. And the pausing of that day gives me a chance to help those missionaries who love letters. They love hearing from people back home.
- Hank Smith: 03:09 I also think as I've read the New Testament, I see Jesus healing a lot on the Sabbath. And I've thought if it heals a relationship, and if it heals a marriage, if it heals someone by administering, then that will become a delight to you. If you're doing some healing on the Sabbath, I think the Savior would be delighted if we could do that. But I can see why it's difficult. I have five children and, "Why can't we do this? Why can't we do this? Why can't we do this?" I think Elder Holland said, "If you focus on what you can't do, that's a pretty pathetic view of the Sabbath. Let's focus on what we can do and how we can make this different," and be creative. It doesn't mean you have to just sit around and say, "I'm bored. I'm bored." It can be time to say, "Okay, this is a chance for me to be a little bit creative and find things that will be both delightful for me and for the Lord."
- John Bytheway: 04:04 Instead of saying, "What can't I do? What can I do?" And that's a totally different way to look at it and, "How can I set the day apart?" I love the idea of being set apart, not set aside. Somebody saying, "Aren't I supposed to be set aside?" No, no, no. Supposed to be set apart, but setting the day apart and saying, "I'm going to make this a better day. I'm going to make this a delightful day." And we, I think both of us don't want to start giving lists of things to do because everybody's different. We got people all over the country and all over the world. How can you make it a delight, and do some healing, some blessing, and make it joyful and delightful? Good way to start.
- Hank Smith: 04:42 Absolutely. I think the one not to do, that I think the Lord would be okay with if we made a single item list, it would be, "Don't judge others on how they practice the Sabbath." You focus on you and what you can do to make it a delight. And then if other people, let them do it their way. Don't worry too much about

what other people are doing to make it a delight for them. You just don't know what's going on in their life.

- Hank Smith: 05:08 John and I are hoping that you feel more motivated to say, "I want to keep this commandment," because sometimes we feel like we're sacrificing a lot. We're sacrificing what we would normally do if we had the day to choose for ourselves. We're like, "Oh, this is what I would normally do." But remember, sacrifices often turn into investments that pay dividends. Sacrifices often turn, I remember President Hinckley saying that, "What seems to be a sacrifice, what you think is a sacrifice is actually an investment." It's going to pay you back for a long time in the future.
- John Bytheway: 05:43 And Hank, we've both been to the Holy Land and when you see the Orthodox Jews coming to the Western wall to usher in the Sabbath, I watch them and I think, "We're doing it wrong. We got to have more joy and more delight in the Sabbath." And that sight alone motivates me to say, "I'm going to work on making the Sabbath a delight."
- Hank Smith: 06:02 That's beautiful. All right. You know where to find us. We'll be back next week with another FollowHIM Favorites. Come join us on our full podcast, it's called "FollowHIM." You can get it wherever you get your podcast and on YouTube. Come find us. And then join us next week, we'll do another FollowHIM Favorites.