



“Seek the Lord, and Ye Shall Live”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

How do our trials allow us to turn to God? Dr. Ryan Davis examines the importance of covenants, prophets, and the essential nature of relationships.

Part 2:

Dr. Davis continues exploring how covenant relationships include connections with God, family, and our fellow men and women.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Ryan Davis
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- 02:57 Background to Amos
- 04:35 Review of the Divided Kingdom
- 06:49 Hanks shares a personal story about a lion
- 09:24 Who is Amos?
- 11:40 Amos prophesies about nations around Israel
- 16:40 The Lord warns against treating people like objects
- 19:15 The Lord warns Judah
- 23:31 The covenant people aren't taking care of the poor
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Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Ryan Davis
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- 04:51 The Book of Mormon refers to doing good
- 07:06 The covenant was supposed to make Israel different
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- 44:24 President Hinckley and Eyring on service
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- 53:47 End of Part II–Dr. Ryan Davis

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Biographical Information:



Ryan Davis received a PhD in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East from the University of Texas at Austin in 2016. He specializes in the prayers and rituals of ancient Israel and Mesopotamia. Since 2015, he has been an adjunct instructor in the department of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University, teaching on both the Provo campus and the BYU Salt Lake Center. His most recent publication was titled, “The God of the Psalms and the Broken” published in *Old Testament Insights: The Sacrifice of a Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit*, edited by Kenneth L. Alford, Gaye Strathearn, and Mary Jane Woodger (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 2021).

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Hank Smith:	00:01	Welcome to Follow Him, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you. As together-
John Bytheway:	00:16	We follow him.
Hank Smith:	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 who is a servant of the Lord. John, did you know that the name Obadiah means servant of the Lord?
	00:33	And when I learned that, I thought I might call John Obadiah, my co-host, Obadiah.
John Bytheway:	00:39	I think our listeners, they know by now that iah at the end of a name in the Old Testament means Jehovah, right? So servant of the Lord, Servant of Jehovah. That's what Obadiah means.
Hank Smith:	00:50	Yeah. I think I'd call you O be two instead. I mean, O be one has been taken. So I don't think I could take you O be one, but you be O be two.
John Bytheway:	00:59	No. O be one's brother is actually mentioned in the Book of Mormon and the book of Jacob. "O be wise, what can I say more?"
Hank Smith:	01:07	Oh, yes.
John Bytheway:	01:07	So there's O be wise and O be one. Yeah, they're brothers.
Hank Smith:	01:12	Oh, it never gets old.

John Bytheway: 01:13 Yet it does.

Hank Smith: 01:15 Yeah. And we do as well. John, we are in the books of Amos and Obadiah today. Probably not books that I would say our audience is super familiar with. So we had to bring in someone who could help us become familiar with this. Who is joining us today?

John Bytheway: 01:32 Yes. We're so happy to have Dr. Ryan Davis with us today. He received a PhD in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East from the University of Texas at Austin in 2016. He specializes in the prayers and rituals of Ancient Israel and Mesopotamia.

01:52 Since 2015, he's been an adjunct instructor in the Department of Ancient Scripture at Brigham University, teaching on both the Provo Campus and the BYU Salt Lake Center, which is where I teach. So that's really fun. I've run in to Ryan up there.

02:06 His most recent publication was titled The God of the Psalms and The Broken, and that's published in Old Testament Insights: The Sacrifice of a Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit that's edited by Ken Alford, Gaye Strathearn and Mary Jane Woodger. We've had a couple of them on the program here.

02:23 How interesting, the prayers and rituals of Ancient Israel and Mesopotamia and to get Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near East from the University of Texas, your PhD. We're so glad to have you here. Ryan, thanks for joining us.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 02:37 I'm glad to be here. Thank you.

Hank Smith: 02:38 Yeah. Ryan comes highly recommended by his biblical scholar peers, especially one, Josh Sears, who people love on our podcast. I asked Josh, "Hey Josh, who do you know who can teach us about Amos and Obadiah?" And he said, "Oh, there's only one person I can think of, Dr. Ryan Davis. I was like, "Let's do it."

John Bytheway: 02:55 Wow, wonderful.

Hank Smith: 02:57 So, yeah, yeah, you come highly recommended. So how do you want to go about this, Ryan? Is there anything our listeners need to know before we jump in?

Dr. Ryan Davis: 03:05 I think that there's value in just kind of jumping in right into the book of Amos. The nice thing about prophetic books is they

always have a little bit of an introduction right in verse one to orient you a little bit of who's speaking and what the context is.

- Hank Smith: 03:18 Okay, let's do it.
- John Bytheway: 03:21 I think it would be great just to give us a timeframe, that one of the things I think our listeners are getting now that's been so wonderful is, okay, I know about the Assyrian captivity and I know about the Babylonian captivity and one's in 721 BC. One's in about 587 BC after Lehi took off. So where does Amos fall in that timeline of the Old Testament?
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 03:43 So right here in verse one, it tells us that he prophesied in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah in the days of Jeroboam, King of Israel. Jeroboam II, the King of Israel, he reigned from about the 780s to the 740s BC.
- Hank Smith: 04:02 That sounds like it's just before Isaiah.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 04:04 Yeah. So Isaiah begins his ministry at kind of the tail end of Uzziah's reign.
- Hank Smith: 04:10 Okay. Amos hands the baton over to Isaiah.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 04:13 That's right.
- John Bytheway: 04:14 And yet the book of Isaiah comes before this in the Old Testament.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 04:18 That's right. So things aren't always chronological and that's one of the things that makes it a little bit hard to read.
- Hank Smith: 04:25 Yeah. So we're jumping back in time to when the kingdom was divided. The Syrians haven't come yet. Babylon hasn't come yet, but they are still divided. They have two kings.
- John Bytheway: 04:35 Let's talk about that divided kingdom just a little bit. So we've got Israel in the north, that political Israel, the country Israel, not the person but the country Israel in the north 10 tribes and Judah in the south with mostly Judah and Benjamin. So we call that the divided kingdom ever since the end of King Solomon.
- Hank Smith: 04:57 Good. I like reviewing. The repetition is the law of all learning, I think President Hinckley said so. Yeah, I think it's good for everybody. Okay.

05:05 So we've already covered one verse. Look at us you guys, we're killing it. Ryan, you can call on us to read or you can read. Tell us what you want to do.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 05:14 Let's start with verse two. I'll go ahead and read this and it says, and he said, "The Lord will roar from Zion." So this kind of sets up Amos's prophecies and it helps us think about the Lord or Jehovah as a lion. So this again makes me think about C. S. Lewis and The Chronicles of Narnia.

05:38 We're thinking about Jehovah as a lion and he's roaring, and this immediately kind of makes us think, okay, why is the lion roaring? This also ties to other parts of Amos. So if we kind of flip over to Amos 3, this is where we kind of get the one scripture. If anyone knows any scripture in Amos, we get Amos 3:7.

06:03 And in that chapter in verse four, says, "Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?" Amos begins to tell us that lion's roar for a reason. So if you hear a lion roaring, there's a reason he's roaring. This kind of sets us up to think, okay, if God is the lion and he's roaring, then we need to wonder why.

John Bytheway: 06:33 Something is up.

Hank Smith: 06:35 Yeah. The lion is roaring, something has happened or is about to happen.

John Bytheway: 06:38 I heard you give the most fascinating talk about a lion roaring once.

Hank Smith: 06:42 Oh, well.

John Bytheway: 06:46 How the volume of it was shocking.

Hank Smith: 06:49 Yes. There was one time, Ryan, I'm sorry to subject you to this story, but there was one time I decided there was a zoo and it had an open cage. It was bars instead of glass. You could see the lion in there and he could see you and he could hear you and you could hear him.

07:06 And I was a missionary at the time and I thought it would be funny to lean forward as close as I could get to those bars. And I kind of went, rah, just to see what it would do. And it was looking at me and it went back and forth along the bars. It was

kind of rubbing along the bars and every time it would come near me, I'd go, rah.

- 07:24 Well, at one point this thing stops. It was imprinted on my mind forever because it blew up its throat like a balloon and just roared. And it literally shook my body. It was so scary. I remember falling down. And I won't go into it, but it's an unbelievable sound up close. It literally shook my head, shook my whole body. John, I can't believe you brought that up.
- John Bytheway: 07:56 You go past that so fast and the Lord will roar, but you've heard a roar before.
- Hank Smith: 08:01 Oh, yeah. Within 10 feet.
- John Bytheway: 08:03 Maybe those who were writing, maybe Amos, maybe others in his audience had heard a lion roar. And it's not the cat meows or the dog barked. It was-
- Hank Smith: 08:12 Insanely, it's so loud and scary.
- John Bytheway: 08:15 So I think that helps. That helps me make it real.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 08:18 This goes with Amos 3:7 and 8, and then we'll go back to our chapter one. But it says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"
- 08:39 We hear when the lion roars, you have to respond. And that's how Amos feels, that he has been called by God and that call for him is a roar and he has to respond to it. So in the same way God is roaring to the people of Israel and they're going to have to respond to what he's saying.
- Hank Smith: 08:58 That's fantastic. And having had personal experience I would say the same thing. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? Oh man, if you were close to that, I promise you, you would fear.
- John Bytheway: 09:12 Tell us about Amos. We know Isaiah was a poet and a statesman and an advisor to kings, but here we've got Amos was among the herdman. Is he just a simple farm agriculture guy?
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 09:24 Yeah. So here in verse one, I guess we kind of skipped over that, but it says that he was a herdman of Tekoa. We get a little bit of background to who Amos is. He's from Tekoa, so he's from the southern kingdom of Judah.

- 09:39 He is called to go to the northern kingdom and prophesy to them, but he himself is from the southern kingdom, so Tekoa is south of Bethlehem. Yeah. So it says he's a herdsman here. And in chapter seven we learn that he takes care of cattle as well as sycamore trees. So there's fruit that grows on those sycamore trees and he takes care of them.
- 10:04 He's involved in both agriculture, taking care of animals. So a very rural lifestyle. He's called and taken to go prophesy to the north. But of course for him, his experience with lions is going to be a little different. If you're in charge of animals, lions are dangerous and they're a threat.
- John Bytheway: 10:25 Yeah, I like that. So it's like I didn't ask to be a prophet here. I was taking care of my herdsman, but when the lion roars, what do you do? I have to respond.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 10:35 That's exactly right. This is one of the themes of Amos is about our relationship with God, that God does things and it's our choice to respond. And we're going to see in Israel's history, in their covenantal story, these are acts of love and deliverance that he reaches out to Israel and invites them to respond.
- 11:01 We've been talking about the lions roar, but at the same time, most of the time God is reaching out to us. This is to lift us up and to help us and we respond. Amos I think is responding and going somewhere that he's not familiar with to a people that may be enemies, but he's doing this because of his relationship with God. He's willing to respond.
- Hank Smith: 11:26 It looks to me like he still uses the same parallelism though as Isaiah, is that right? Looks like he says he repeats himself quite a bit.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 11:34 Yeah. So still poetry. So we're going to see a lot of parallelism in the book of Amos.
- Hank Smith: 11:40 The lion has roared.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 11:42 And so our question is, okay, what is the lion saying? What is God saying to the northern kingdom? And this is where we begin in verse three. And what's interesting-
- Hank Smith: 11:53 Back in chapter one?
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 11:54 We're back in chapter one, and Amos is not immediately addressing the northern kingdom. He begins by talking about

the Lord's prophecies against the nations around Israel. And we're going to see that this is a bit of a setup because he wants them to compare their behavior with the nations around them.

- 12:21 And he also wants to lull them a bit of a false sense of security because-
- John Bytheway: 12:25 He's scolding everybody else.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 12:27 Yeah. And they might feel good about themselves, but it's going to turn on them and they're going to learn something about their own behavior. Okay. So in verse three, says, "Thus sayeth the Lord; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." He begins by prophesying against Damascus.
- 12:49 So this is Syria, these are the Arameans to the north, this expression, three transgressions. And for four, this gets repeated throughout chapter one and chapter two, and the idea is they deserve what they're getting for three transgressions, but they've done four.
- 13:05 So they even deserve it even more. And what they've done is it says, "Because they have thrust Gilead with threshing instruments of iron." Gilead is a region on the other side of Jordan. And what the Syrians or the people of Damascus have done is attack them and they've treated the people of that region like you would treat grain.
- 13:34 So it says they've threshed Gilead with threshing instruments. With threshing instruments, this is like a sledge. So a sledge is a sled that has iron spikes on the bottom. And after you harvest the grain and you put it on the threshing floor, you drag this sledge over the grain to separate the grain from the stocks.
- 13:58 It's pretty violent because you're trying to separate these. It's brutal. What the people of Damascus have done is something so violent to the people of Gilead that they likened it to how they process agricultural food.
- 14:14 And this also helps us understand that this is one of the problems with the nations around Israel is they treat people as either opportunities to exploit or obstacles to eliminate. They're treating the people like they would treat food processing.
- 14:34 This is something that you do in order to get more use out of them. We're going to see some of these other nations are also

selling these people into slavery. This is how they're treating those around them. Because of this, in verse four, "The Lord says, I will send fire into the house of Hazael," which is one of these kings of Syria, "Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad."

- Hank Smith: 15:00 So that would make maybe the kingdom of Israel feel like, oh good, they're going to get theirs.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 15:05 Yeah. I mean, think that's terrible. That's horrible. Of course, they deserve what they're getting.
- Hank Smith: 15:10 Okay.
- John Bytheway: 15:10 Damascus is the capital city of Syria, we say that?
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 15:14 Yes. And in verse six, we move on to another nation, we start hearing about the cities of the Philistines. So it begins with Gaza. It says, "For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof."
- 15:31 And we read that they carried away captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom. So here they've taken prisoners of war and they're going to sell them to Edom, which is another nation close to Judah.
- Hank Smith: 15:48 So very similar the Lord's like, they're going to get theirs too.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 15:52 That's right. Again, they're treating the people of Gilead as a commodity that you go and you harvest them and you sell them and you do this for gain.
- Hank Smith: 16:04 I've noticed that in my scripture study and my study of the gospel through the years, that when you treat people like objects, that's one of the times the Lord is going to react. He's going to roar like a lion.
- 16:16 For example, if you look at pornography, it's using people as objects and treating them as if they don't have a soul or a future or a past or parents. This seems to me that maybe we don't do things like this. We don't sell people, we don't attack them, but we can sometimes use people as objects. And we've got to watch out for that, we don't do that.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 16:39 That's right. I think that this is going to be one of Amos's messages is that core to what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to make people our focus. People are not a means to

an end, people are the end themselves. That's what we're here to do, is to take care of people.

- Hank Smith: 16:58 They're not a commodity.
- John Bytheway: 17:00 I think I've heard it put that you treat people like things and things like people. Here it is Mormon 8:39, "Why do you adorn yourselves with that which have no life, treating things like people and yet suffer the hungry, the needy, the naked and the sick."
- 17:17 And I want to add in my Book of Mormon, "Who have life and the afflicted to pass by you and notice them not." So I've got in my margin. You treat things like people and you treat people like things. And sounds like that's exactly what Amos is saying here.
- Hank Smith: 17:31 So Ryan, it sounds like he's going to keep doing this. He does it again in verse nine. He does again in verse 11, are these all nations around Israel and Judah?
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 17:40 Yes, they're all the nations around them and he keeps doing this and eventually he's going to get us to Israel. You see in Ammon, it talks about the violence of war, that they've killed pregnant women.
- Hank Smith: 17:54 That's chapter 1:13.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 17:55 Yes. And in chapter 2:1, it moves to Moab, and this is also an interesting one. It says, "For three transgressions of Moab and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime." What this seems to be talking about is that they've treated the ancestors of the edomites this way.
- 18:20 That they've gone into their tombs, taken their bones out and burned them. And it says they've done this into lime or plaster. So again, plaster is something you can use. And what's interesting is that for the nations around Israel, bones were sacred.
- 18:37 For many of these nations, the state of the bones was connected with the state of the person in the afterlife. What's interesting is this even makes the Lord angry, the way the Moabites have treated the ancestors right of the Edomites. This is something that makes him angry that their treatment of the dead.

Hank Smith: 19:00 That's interesting because none of these people are Israelites yet, but the Lord is still talking about them. He's still concerned about everything they're doing. This is interesting to me that we're not just focusing right in on Israel as if you're the center stage here. He's watching the whole world.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 19:15 That's right. In verse four, and this is where we start to focus on Judah. It's not quite Israel, this is the southern kingdom, but it says, "For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment there because they have despised the law of the Lord and have not kept his commandments."

19:35 Now it doesn't elaborate and explain well, but we're to understand that what's happened here is sort of on par with what he has already called out these other nations for doing, that they have taken people as slaves, sold them, mistreated, killed people, dishonored the dead.

19:56 They've treated people this way and he's kind of equated not following the law of the Lord and not keeping his commandments with that. Immediately we think, well, what commandments? What are they not doing that is so terrible compared to this?

20:10 And that's where we get to verse seven, where we get he turns to Israel and we're going to hear exactly what has made the Lord roar in the first place. In verse six, he says, "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof because they sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes."

20:37 But there's a lot of things happening here. One, we've heard about how all the other nations have treated other countries, how they've exploited them. But now we turn to Israel and we find out that Israel is doing the same thing but not to a foreign captive.

20:55 They're doing the same thing to their own people. When we hear about them selling the righteous for silver or the poor for a pair of shoes, we're thinking about debt, slavery. So in the ancient world, if you had to borrow money, there was no bankruptcy.

21:13 If you couldn't pay back, you couldn't file bankruptcy. If you couldn't pay a loan, then the consequences could be your family members being sold into slavery or you yourself being sold into slavery.

21:29 At the end of that verse that they sell the poor for a pair of shoes. So let's say you've borrowed money, you can't pay back enough for a pair of sandals, which again, you're thinking you go to Old Navy and buy a pair of flip flops for cheap, that's not a very large sum of money.

21:47 And even if these people couldn't pay back that little sum of money, they would be sold into slavery because again, these people are seeing these people not as someone suffering that needs their help, but as someone to exploit, someone to get some use out of.

Hank Smith: 22:05 These are honorable, innocent people. I mean, it's not like they went and borrowed 10,000 talents from the New Testament. The punishment doesn't fit the crime.

John Bytheway: 22:15 It sounds like all those sins against charity. Again, you're treating people like things.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 22:20 Yeah, that's the problem here is that the covenant people are not understanding their obligation to help take care of the people around them. And instead they're seeing the poor as someone to exploit. Or if you go to the next verse, it says, "That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor."

22:41 So another way this has been translated is something similar to that they trample into the dust, the head of the poor. So again, they're either opportunities to exploit or obstacles to eliminate.

22:55 If they're in their way, just trample over them and they turn aside the way of the meek. The meek here can also be translated as oppressed. People that are suffering, get them out of your way. If they're there, move them or trample over them.

Hank Smith: 23:11 Yeah. And this is the Lord's covenant people. This is not good.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 23:15 They have not understood what they're here to do. In verse eight we also hear that this translates into their relationship with God. And of course your relationship with those around you and your relationship with God are very much connected.

23:31 And it says in verse eight, they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god. And so the word God there is lowercase in the King James version, but it may also be an uppercase G because the Hebrew word behind it is Elohim.

- 23:54 They could be going to the altar or to the house of God, but the problem is that they're going and feasting. So temples were also a place of celebration, of feasting. And what they're doing is they're laying down on clothes that are taken in a pledge.
- 24:11 So if you borrow money and sometimes you would need to put down some collateral to show that either you're going to pay this back or if you don't, that's going to be taken. Someone that doesn't have very much may even give you the shirt off their back.
- 24:25 The person that has given their garment to their creditor, the creditor takes this and lays down on it and celebrates drinking wine and celebrating in the house of God basically on the backs of the poor. This is a difficult situation.
- 24:42 So Amos finds himself going to a nation where they are exploiting the very people that they're there to help take care of. A place where they don't take care of each other. This is a survival of the fittest kind of society where no one has each other's back, where you're just looking to get what's yours and don't care about how this is going to affect the people around you.
- John Bytheway: 25:07 Could I share the first paragraph in the Come Follow Me manual, because I love how it says this. "God chose Abraham's seed to be his covenant people so that they would be a blessing to all people, but instead by the time of Amos's ministry, many of the covenant people were oppressing the poor and ignoring the prophets, making their acts of worship empty and meaningless. True the nations surrounding them were also guilty of great sins, but that has never been an excuse for God's people. So God sent a herdsman from Judah named Amos to preach repentance to the kingdom of Israel."
- 25:43 So just like you said, here's all these other nations. But look, you're doing this where you can know where a people are at is by how they treat the poor and the helpless. And that's what he seems to be calling them out about.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 25:55 Yes. And the reason that Israel needs to be different, and this is where Amos pivots here or the Lord reminds Israel, why they should be different is because of what God has done for them. And this is where we get to verse nine, that it goes to their relationship with God.

- 26:14 He says, "Yet I destroyed the Amorite before them." Meaning these are the Canaanites, "Whose height was like the height of cedars and he was strong as the oaks, yet I destroyed his fruit from above and his roots from beneath. And also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you 40 years through the wilderness to possess the land of the Amorite."
- 26:36 This reminds us that the way that God began his relationship with Israel was by an unearned act of love and deliverance. That he rescued them out of Egyptian slavery, that they were in bondage, they were suffering and God went to them because they needed help.
- 26:56 He rescued them. He reached out to them and lifted them out of their trials and invited them to help lift other people up out of their trials. Jesus, he's the kid on the playground that saves us from the bully. And then afterwards says, "Will you be my friend and will you help me rescue other people?"
- Hank Smith: 27:23 Who are being bullied, yeah.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 27:25 And that's I think really the foundation of what it means to have a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ. That our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ reach out to us in love and deliverance and after they've rescued us, say, join with me.
- 27:40 Help me find people that are suffering and help them in the same way that I've helped you. Don't wait for them to earn it. Don't wait for them to deserve it. Just go and help them no matter what.
- Hank Smith: 27:54 What a fantastic lesson so far. I mean, yes, everyone around you is doing these terrible things, but you should be different. You should be different. You've received blessings that they haven't received.
- 28:08 You're no different than they are at this point. You're treating people like objects. And man, that example of I saved you when you needed me, when you needed help. And why aren't you doing this for others? Ryan, that's a fantastic lesson from these first two chapters.
- John Bytheway: 28:24 I like that. Do what you've seen me do. The, "I am the light ye shall hold up, that which ye have seen me do." The 3rd Nephi 18. I like what you said, Ryan, the bully rescues you and then says, "Now do what I do. Let's go rescue others. Let's do the same thing." That's a good way to put it.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 28:41 And this reminds me a lot of basically what King Benjamin taught his people when he talks about our debt to God that he does his best. King Benjamin tries to explain to them all the things that God has done for them. And again, thinking about things in economic terms, because remember the problem is Israel is thinking about people in terms of dollars and cents.

29:06 What can you do for me? How can you pad my pockets? And King Benjamin uses kind of a dollars and cents analogy when he says, "You know what, you guys are unprofitable servants." In the sense that God spends his life serving and blessing and doing everything he can to take care of us.

29:27 And the question is, why? There's actually no economic benefit for God. He doesn't get much out of it. We don't make him richer in the cosmic sense. And I think about this in terms of our relationship with our small children. I have four daughters, 10 and younger.

Hank Smith: 29:45 That's a lot of princess movies I bet, Ryan.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 29:48 That's right. Small children don't pad your bank account, they don't pay your mortgage, they don't help you sleep at night, they don't make your life less stressful. The question is, why do we spend our entire life loving and serving and taking care of these little ones?

30:08 And the answer is because we love them and it makes life meaningful and beautiful. That's what life's about. And the same reason why does God spend his life serving us and loving us and taking care of us if we don't pay the mortgage, if we're unprofitable servants is the reason is that he loves us and we make his life meaningful and beautiful.

30:33 And when he has rescued Israel out of Egyptian slavery, when he's reached down to them, taking them out of a terrible situation, he's helping them step into a new world. I think this is what the Book of Mormon says or means when it says that we've been spiritually reborn, that we step into a new world, a world where people love and take care of one another, not because of what that person can do for us, but because they need help and we're here.

31:02 And because Jesus Christ has done that for us, what it means to be a covenant follower of him is to do the same for others. That we look and we find people that are suffering that need our help and we rescue them regardless of what they can do for us.

John Bytheway: 31:19 Yeah. Has been recently articulated and emphasized by President Nelson is the work of salvation, doing the work of salvation. And we used to talk in President Kimball's time about the threefold mission of the church and then President Monson that had care for the poor and needy.

31:36 And somebody pointed out this, I thought, oh, it's really true. Because right now the way the work of salvation has been defined is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ, care for those in need, invite all to come unto Christ and unite families for eternity.

31:53 And somebody pointed out that the first one is personal, but all of the rest are focused on others. It's live the gospel, that's what I have to do. But then it's care for the poor and needy, that's others. Invite all to come unto Christ, that's others.

32:08 And unite families for eternity, that's kind of a temple work thing that's in this life and in the next. I appreciate that focus that we're supposed to have on others, that sounds like Amos is talking about here and that's where they've kind of failed.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 32:22 Yes. One thing that's really struck me that I've learned from the Old Testament so much is the importance of relationships. That it's their relationship with God that should inform what their relationship with those around them is about.

32:39 And that relationship with God begins with love. It begins with taking care of someone because they need help. And that's how we need to relate with those around us.

John Bytheway: 32:51 The two great commandments both begin with the same three words, thou shalt love.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 32:57 Yeah. And you can't love someone without a relationship, or at least loving someone is most beneficial to them when you're their friend. Really the only thing that you can take with you into the next life are your relationships.

33:14 That's why we go to the temple. We make relationships with God through covenants and we make relationships with our family members. Every day we think, what am I going to do, how are my relationships with people going to be strengthened? And these two things are intertwined.

- 33:29 You can't have a relationship with God unless you have good relationships with those around you, that you need to take care of people.
- 33:38 And this is one of the messages of Amos, is that these people are often going to the temple, that they're often trying to do what we would consider kind of the outward relationships with God. But they've forgotten that if they really want to worship the Lord, they have to take care of people.
- Hank Smith: 33:57 Wow, that's great. If you really want to worship the Lord, you have to take care of people. You think like Elder Holland, Ryan. In October, 2014 general conference in a talk called Are We Not All Beggars? Quoting King Benjamin, just like you did, Elder Holland says, "Down through history, poverty has been one of humankind's greatest and most widespread challenges. It's obvious toll is usually physical, but the spiritual and emotional damage it can bring may be even more debilitating. In any case, the great Redeemer has issued no more persistent call than for us to join him in lifting this burden from the people. As Jehovah, he would say, he would judge the house of Israel harshly because the spoil of the needy is in your houses."
- 34:43 A little bit later he goes on to say, "In our day, the restored Church of Jesus Christ had not yet seen its first anniversary when the Lord commanded the members to look to the poor and the needy and administer to their relief, that they shall not suffer." Note the imperative tone of that language, they shall not suffer. And then he says, "That is the language God uses when he means business."
- 35:07 I think we've hit the heart of this message here. And Ryan, I've noticed, he says, "I brought you out of Egypt. I've raised up prophets for you, and look what you've done with them. You've gotten the Nazarites to break their vows. You've told the prophets, stop prophesying. Prophecy not." That's verse 12.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 35:24 Yeah, it takes us back to the reason the lion is roaring. God, as Elder Holland said, "When he means business, that's the language he uses." And here the lion is roaring because this is really at the center of the gospel of Jesus Christ is taking care of people.
- 35:41 It's not just something that you do on the side. I think sometimes we think, oh, I can live the gospel in my bedroom. I can read my scriptures, say my prayers and do what I need to do, but that's prelude to the work of salvation. And the work of

salvation is literally helping people, rescuing them out of hard times.

36:03 If we kind of skip over to Amos 5, there's two words that are really important to what it means to live a covenant relationship with God. So in Amos 5:7, we'll come back to this, we're kind of pulling this out of context, but he's addressing, of course, the northern kingdom here.

36:21 He says, "Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth." So the two words we want to talk about there is judgment and righteousness. So it says they've turned judgment. The word here that they're translating, I think it might be better to translate as justice.

36:41 So the word justice, and they've changed this to rather than being something that is a blessing, they've changed it to wormwood, something that's bitter and righteousness. And rather than it being here to bless the world, they've instead neglected it or cast it down.

37:00 These two words justice and righteousness, they mean a little bit different in an Old Testament context than they do to us. So in order to put this into a little bit of context, when we think about righteousness, we usually tend to just think, I'm keeping the commandments. And that's a part of righteousness.

37:19 But righteousness in the Old Testament context means more to have right relationships with those around you, a right relationship with God and a right relationship with people. And the way that you have a right relationship is by taking care of people who are suffering, by helping them and being there for them.

37:43 And God is talked about a lot in the Old Testament as righteous. And the reason he's righteous is because he helps those who suffer. One of the ways to think about righteousness, and we're going to jump out of Amos for just a little bit here, hopefully that's allowed. But if we go to Psalm 98:2.

Hank Smith: 38:05 Let's check our followHIM rule book just to make sure.

John Bytheway: 38:08 Okay.

Hank Smith: 38:09 What are the bylaws on that?

John Bytheway: 38:11 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 38:13 Where are we going, did you say?

Dr. Ryan Davis: 38:15 Psalm 98:2. One of the things that we're going to see is that righteousness is often paired with the word salvation. So in 98:2 it says, "The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen." And so you can see there's a couplet in that verse and that's separated there by a colon right after salvation.

38:45 But the Lord made known his salvation, so he's making it known. And then it says, "His righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the nations or the heathen." That's two words. Righteousness and salvation are synonyms in that verse.

39:00 The reason they're synonyms is because righteousness moves us to rescue and to save those who need help. And in the Old Testament, when you see the word salvation, they're not just talking about being saved at the last day, they're talking about being rescued from any trial, any trouble, anything that we're going through.

39:26 For God to be someone who is righteous means that he wants to rescue you and gets you out of every situation that is difficult and where you are suffering. That's why God is righteous.

Hank Smith: 39:42 And these people are doing the exact opposite. They're exploiting those in these positions. No wonder the lion is roaring.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 39:49 They've forgotten what righteousness really means. In fact, I love the way in Psalm 34, this is a well-known scripture. In Psalm 34:18, it says, "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Sometimes we think about this in positive terms, but to have your heart broken and your spirit crushed, you're someone that's in a real tough place.

40:22 You're someone that's suffering and you need help, you need healing. But it says here in this verse that the Lord is nigh, he's close to those who feel that way. And that's because he's righteous. That's because he saves those kinds of people and that's what he asks his covenant people to do.

40:41 He says, "Work alongside me. I am down here doing my best to bind up the brokenhearted, setting free the captive, helping those who need help." And I need help. The field is white already to harvest, as the scripture says. There are people

suffering right now that need us to help them. You don't need to wait three months until the harvest.

41:04 There's people that need help. And that's what he asks us to do as his covenant followers, to work alongside him in bringing righteousness to the world. We don't do that by sitting on our thumbs. We do it by finding people and going out and doing our best to lift them out of difficult circumstances and being their friend, giving them love, hope, encouragement.

Hank Smith: 41:27 This is fantastic, Ryan. I want to go and ask my neighbors how they're doing right now. I want to go knock on the doors and say, "Hey, how are things? How can I help?"

John Bytheway: 41:38 This idea of righteousness being right relationships with God and with other people, I wrote that in my margin. Because I was thinking about just how King Benjamin's speech again was such a paradigm shift maybe for them to say, when you're in the service of your fellow beings, you're only in the service of your God.

42:01 In other words, if we wanted to, we could say, this world is so wicked and things are getting so dark and worldly, let's hide. Let's take all of our holy books and let's go build a fortress somewhere and hide. That's not righteousness, that's not serving anybody, that's not helping anybody. We can't be a light to the world if we're hiding from them.

42:22 And so I love how King Benjamin would say, "That's not how you serve God. The way you serve God is by serving each other," and makes us know we've got to be in the world. We're not supposed to be of the world, but we're supposed to have right relationships with people. I appreciate what you added to my footnotes there, Ryan.

Hank Smith: 42:40 Yeah, that was a fantastic insight.

Dr. Ryan Davis: 42:42 And it's interesting as you were saying that it reminded me not only is the way that we serve God by helping and taking care of people, King Benjamin also teaches us, that's how we repent as well.

42:54 He says in Mosiah 4:26, "And now for the sake of those things which I've spoken unto you, that is for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that you may walk guiltless before God." So I mean, we can think about retaining a remission of your sins and thinking about as repentance.

- 43:11 And he says, "This is how you're going to do this." He says, "I would that you should impart of your substance to the poor. Every man according to that which he hath such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief both spiritually and temporally according to their wants."
- 43:28 So in that sense, if we're serving God, we're taking care of people. And that's also what repentance is. One thing I like about that is repentance isn't just thinking, oh man, I messed up and what do I need to do differently?
- 43:44 Repentance is thinking, what is going on in my family's life? How can I help them? What is going on in my neighbor's life? What can I do to be a part of the solution?
- 43:55 What can I do to better work alongside Jesus Christ in lifting the children of God in this world? Because repentance isn't just turning away from something, it's putting something in its place. And what do we put in its place? We put righteousness and this is what righteousness is all about.
- John Bytheway: 44:13 Hank, I need to go repent. Why don't you guys carry on.
- Hank Smith: 44:16 Yeah. I've got some people to go take care of. Yeah. Yeah, what are we doing sitting around talking? Let's take a break and go mow some lawns and go rake some leaves.
- John Bytheway: 44:29 Anyway, great insights. Thank you.
- Dr. Ryan Davis: 44:32 So we've talked about the righteousness aspect of that word, but the other aspect is also justice. We think about justice a little differently in our culture. We tend to think about justice in the sense of just punishing a wrongdoer. We call for justice, we usually think about somebody getting what they deserve, but justice is more than that.
- 44:55 It includes that aspect, but it's more than that in the Old Testament. So if we go to Psalms, and we'll get back to Amos, but this is a way for us to help understand the words that Amos is using to teach us. But if we go to Psalm 146, this is a beautiful Psalm.
- 45:10 It talks about the things that the Lord does for us. And it sounds a lot like the list King Benjamin just listed of what we ought to do for other people. But if we go to Psalm 146:7, and that starts

out talking about the Lord which executed the judgment for the oppressed.

- 45:30 And that word judgment is our same word justice. He does justice for the oppressed. And of course we think about judging and these kinds of things in negative terms. Nowadays we say, "Oh, don't judge me." But in the Old Testament to judge someone means to make sure that justice happens.
- 45:51 So if you're judging the oppressed or you're providing justice for them, you're protecting them. You're making sure that they're not abused or taken advantage of. And we go back to thinking about Amos, where the nations around Israel are using and abusing the people around them for their own benefit, but Israel is supposed to be different.
- 46:14 Israel is supposed to protect. Israel is supposed to be the people that are looking out for the oppressed, that are looking out for the people on the margins that are not included, those that might be vulnerable and taken advantage of.
- 46:29 And the covenant people of the Lord are supposed to be there to protect them and to make sure that they are not taken advantage of, to make sure that they are given righteousness. When I think about, again, when Jesus in The Beatitudes, when he talked about those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, we can also think about this in terms of somebody is waiting for someone to care about them.
- 46:58 Someone is waiting for someone to show righteousness to them. They're hungering and thirsting looking for someone. And the reason Jesus says that blessed are you, if you hunger and you thirst after righteousness is because this is what the covenant people of the Lord are here to do for the world.
- 47:18 We're here to find those that are hungering and thirsting and to give it to them through our friendship, through our love, through our service, being there for them as they need it. If you're hungry, we'll feed you. If you're naked, we'll clothe you. If you are sick, we'll heal you. And these kinds of things, this is what the covenant people of the Lord are here to do for the world.

Hank Smith: 47:47 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two of Dr. Ryan Davis, Amos and Obadiah.
- John Bytheway: 00:05 You know what this reminds me of? The parables in Matthew 25. The last one is separating the sheep and the goats. And it's easy to think sheep, goats, righteous, wicked. But when you actually look at it it's those who served and those who didn't. It's a more specific kind of righteous or wicked. When saw we the naked and afraid or in prison and fed. And then the opposite is also in there. And inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, you've done it unto me. But then it also says, inasmuch as ye have not done it, ye have not done it unto me. And it's not just about wicked/righteous, the sheep and the goats, it's about serving people. That parable's stronger when you realize it's taking care of others.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 00:53 That's excellent. So in the Old Testament, they use the idea of justice and righteousness as the very purpose of what the covenant people of the Lord are here to do. So in Genesis 18:19, it talks about one of the reasons that Abraham is chosen is because he's going to walk the way of the Lord by doing justice and righteousness. And this is what we're here to do for the world. We're here to make the world a better place, as Jesus said, right? We're the salt of the earth. That the whole world should taste a little better because we're here. Don't worry about high blood pressure or anything. It's going to taste better.
- 01:34 And we're here to make a difference in the world. And it reminds me, there's a quote from Elder Holland from the April, 2020 conference where in this talk it's called A Perfect Brightness of Hope. He talks about the blessings of the gospel in the last 200 years, from 1820 from the first vision on what wonderful blessings the restoration has brought to the world. And then he looks forward and thinks, what other blessings, what will the next 200 years bring for the world? And I love what he says, this is just part of it. But he says, "Thus our look back at 200 years of God's goodness to the world. But what of our look ahead, we still have hopes that have not yet been fulfilled even as we speak. We are waging an all hands on deck war with COVID-19. And he says later, when we have conquered

this, and we will, may we be equally committed to freeing the world from the virus of hunger, freeing neighborhoods and nations from the virus of poverty.

02:44 May we hope for schools where students are taught, not terrified they will be shot. And for the gift of personal dignity, for every child of God unmarred by any form of racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice, undergirding all of this is our relentless hope for a greater devotion to the two greatest of all commandments. To love God by keeping his counsel and to love our neighbors by showing kindness and compassion, patience and forgiveness. These two divine directives are still and forever will be the only real hope we have for giving our children a better world than the one they now know." I mean that's powerful of course in a way that only Elder Holland can be. But what struck me about that is when we think about the blessings of the gospel for the world, I don't always think about those things. And what Elder Holland is telling us is that the great issues of our world, of poverty, of racism, of hunger, of keeping people safe, these are the issues for the disciples of Christ.

04:00 If there is anyone in this world that is supposed to tackle these issues head on, it's those that have made a covenant relationship with their Heavenly Father and with Jesus Christ. This is what we're here to do and this is what the Lord is trying to teach through Amos to the people of the northern kingdom of Israel that you are different. You were chosen, you were rescued from Egyptian slavery so that you would feel what real love is like and you are going to take that love to the world by rescuing people in their hard times. And when people feel that love, they're going to want to join with us. They're going to say, you know what? I want to be a part of this. I want to do some good in this world. How do I get involved? Why are you like this? And we can tell them, I'm like this because this is what God has done for me.

04:51 This is why I do it. And then people will come to Christ. They'll feel not just our love but his as well and they'll want to do this for others. In the Old Testament, they talk about this justice and righteousness. In the Book of Mormon, they use a little bit different language. They often talk about doing good. And I think that these are the same ideas, those of King Benjamin, we've talked about King Benjamin a lot. And I think that that has a lot of application to what we're learning here in Amos. That the people of King Benjamin, after they had felt God's goodness when they had realized what God has done for them, it says the spirit of the Lord had changed their hearts. They had no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. And that's

what it means to be a disciple. That we've realized what God has done for us and now we want to do good for others. We want to stand alongside Jesus in helping him do good here in this world.

- John Bytheway: 05:50 I think of the talk that President Nelson gave in May to the young single adults. Remember at the very end he talked about these three identities. You're a child of God, you're a child of the covenant and you're a disciple of Christ. That sounds like what Amos is teaching us, what King Benjamin is teaching us. This is what it means to be a disciple. As you have said, this is what Jesus did. This is what we're supposed to do.
- Hank Smith: 06:18 And I've noticed Ryan, the rest of two is the Lord is unhappy and there's consequences coming for Israel.
- John Bytheway: 06:26 After the roar.
- Hank Smith: 06:28 Yeah.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 06:29 That's one of the things that Amos is here... I mean, Amos kind of gets a bad rap as being a all doom and gloom. He's a bit like poor Jacob who is given the tough assignment that he has to tell them everything that they're doing wrong. And there doesn't seem to be a lot of icing or sugarcoating what's happening.
- John Bytheway: 06:50 Some of you have come up to hear the pleasing word of God, the word which healeth the wounded soul. And I have to enlarge the wounds of those that are already wounded. Don't you feel for Jacob because of that? I had another talk prepared, but I have to give this one.
- Hank Smith: 07:06 And now Amos as well. I'm like, I would hate to give this message. You were supposed to be different. You weren't, so here comes destruction. These terrible consequences are coming. Is the rest of the book like this because we've gone an hour here and we're two chapters in. So I want to make sure we cover anything that might be different in the rest of the book. But is that really what the rest of the message is? Is this doom and gloom that's coming because they're not being different.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 07:35 Most of the message is that your relationship with God should make you different and it hasn't. But of course, even in that negative... In putting it in that way, there's still so much that we can glean from that that we can understand what this means.

Hank Smith:	07:55	I noticed in my reading Ryan, that in chapter four he calls them fat cows-
John Bytheway:	08:00	Kine-
Hank Smith:	08:01	Them chapter four, verse one. Yeah, he says, Ye kine of Bashan. And I was like, what does that mean? So I went and looked at Bible hub just to see how other translations read that. And it just says the new living translation, listen to me, you fat cows living in some area. I'm like, wow, I didn't know that's what it meant. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt, but I was like, whoa, that's interesting. You oppress the poor, you crush the needy, but yet you're feeding yourselves. I can tell.
Dr. Ryan C. Davis:	08:33	Yeah, yeah. I mean if we go over to chapter five, verse 14, we're told to seek good and not evil that you may live so the Lord, the God of hosts shall be with you as he hath spoken.
Hank Smith:	08:46	So there's still a chance for those who want to repent.
Dr. Ryan C. Davis:	08:50	And that's always in the Old Testament. No matter how terrible things may seem, that there's always a chance to change things around. Nothing is ever quite set in stone. I mean I always think about Jonah who I think he prophesied to Ninevah that in 40 days you're going to be destroyed and then the people repent and God's like, Oh, well good, let's not do that. Yeah, you guys did it.
John Bytheway:	09:14	And it kind of bugs Jonah. He's like, That was too easy.
Dr. Ryan C. Davis:	09:21	Yeah. I guess if we go to just again reiterating, if we go to starting in verse four of Amos chapter five. It says, For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel seek ye me and ye shall live. This is what he's telling them, look for me. The question is how. What they've done is, in verse five he says, Seek not Bethel nor enter into Gilgal. And these are of course our places of worship, places in the northern kingdom that they would go. The problem is they go to these places, they're not going to find God. They're going for another reason. Because for them worship is about going to their sanctuary and celebrating and doing what is there and that's their relationship with God. But God is trying to help them understand, and this is what we've been talking about and this is where verse seven comes and he says, But ye who turn judgment to wormwood and leave off righteousness in the earth.

- 10:23 So if you really want to have a relationship with me, then you need to begin by showing justice and righteousness to those around you. This is how you're going to find me. One of the images I love in verse 24 of this same chapter, he says, but let judgment, and again that's our word justice here. Let judgment run down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream. We've got a parallelism there, we've got a mighty stream paralleling waters. And the idea is that justice and righteousness are constants in the life of a disciple because a mighty stream is different than a wadi. So in Israel they often have rivers that will only run for part of the year. If you are one of these wadis where you know, oh, it'll be there when the times are right and when the conditions are favorable, there'll be some righteousness, there'll be some justice.
- John Bytheway: 11:26 The cloud burst once in a while.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 11:29 So God's covenant people need to make sure that justice and righteousness are always there. We're not fair-weather disciples we're there all the time no matter what.
- John Bytheway: 11:41 This is reminding me of when we looked at Isaiah, do you remember Hank. Then should thy peace be as a river and thy righteousness as the ways of the sea. And we even talked about that idea, the ways of the sea, just constant never ceasing type of a thing. But I like the comparison of a wadi and a river and wadi is w-a-d-i. There's a cloud burst so the water runs and then it might only run for a day or two a month or something like that.
- Hank Smith: 12:10 And then it's gone. Yeah, the rainy season. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 12:13 That's a good comparison. A wadi versus a river.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 12:16 And again it brings us back to the teachings of Christ about who we show judgment or justice and righteousness to. And when we do, if we go to Matthew five and the Sermon on the Mount, and I think this is the context where we get that commandment of be ye therefore perfect even as your father which is in heaven is perfect. And of course that word perfect means complete. And I think one of the ways to read this is that we need to be complete in our love. Not partial but love all people all the time. Because in verse 43 of that chapter it says, ye have heard that it hath been said thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.

- 13:04 But I say to you, love your enemies. Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you. Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. So again, that water imagery, right? God is here providing rain to everyone and in the same way we need to provide love and justice and righteousness to everyone all the time. Now we're not partial.
- Hank Smith: 13:41 I love that Jesus uses the weather to talk about righteousness. He's like, take a look around. The sun is up on everybody, the rain is on everybody. Let's be like the weather and God controls the weather, let's be like him. I have to think that's a classic example.
- John Bytheway: 13:56 And I think rain, I don't know about this, Ryan correct me if I'm wrong, but I think we in a western culture might think of the perfect day as not a cloud in the sky got the sun in my eye, right? But in a desert, you want the rain, don't you when he sends rain. And the other thing I was thinking about that I've heard Dr. John Lund lecture on those last verses about be ye therefore perfect in context. It doesn't sound exactly the same in the Book of Mormon, but here it sounds as the be ye therefore perfect is about being perfectly loving. Like you just said, sending rain on the just and on the unjust in Matthew five it sounds more like it's how we love others is the be ye therefore perfect.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 14:39 Yeah. And in Luke six there are similar teachings to what we find on the Sermon on the Mount and in Luke chapter six verses 35 to 36 is that same teaching and it says but love ye your enemies and do good and lend hoping for nothing again. And your reward shall be great and ye shall be the children of the highest. For he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil be ye therefore merciful as your father also is merciful. So there in Luke, rather than perfect it says merciful. So I think that's also a good way to understand that scripture of perfect. We can insert merciful into there.
- John Bytheway: 15:19 The whole complete finished I think is what the footnote says. Great stuff.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 15:24 Because I often think, I mean at least for me in my life, if I spend my life trying to be perfect, I'm going to fail every time and probably feel worse afterwards. But if I spend my life trying to love people and to take care of them, I'm probably still going to fail just as much, but I'm going to be better and the world's

going to be better off for it. When that sense, it's a equally unattainable or a equally difficult task to love your enemies and to be there to show justice and righteousness to everyone. It's a very difficult task, but it's one that's going to make the world better.

John Bytheway: 16:09 The verses just before Matthew 5:48 are so good, for if ye love only them which love you, what reward have you do? Do not even the publicans... it was like tax collectors can do that. Right? And if you salute your brother and only what do ye more than others? I mean anybody can be... Some people are easier to love than others. I think that's what he's saying there. So be perfectly loving, be ye therefore perfect.

Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 16:36 And this takes us back to Amos. If we're only having relationships with people because they have something to offer us, then we're not being true disciples of Christ because Jesus Christ is the great example that he rescued us from sin and death before we could do anything to deserve it. And this helps us understand his character. I love thinking about terms and things in terms of transaction. Elder Christofferson in the last conference talked about that God is not a cosmic vending machine and a vending machine is the greatest example of what a transactional relationship looks like. I put in my money, you give me my soda and we're on our way. I don't care too much about the machine, but a real relationship cares about the person, not what they're going to give you.

Hank Smith: 17:31 Wow. That's really well said. I wanted to maybe compare two verses if that's okay. Amos 3:7, surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets. It sounds like, Ryan, what you're saying is the lion has roared and he's called on me, Amos is saying, and he's revealed it to me what to go and say. And then I look at the reaction. I looked at Amos 7:12, I don't know who this is, Amaziah says to Amos, Oh thou seer, go flee away into the land of Judah and there eat bread and prophesy there, but don't prophesy here anymore. Is that kind of the reaction that Amos gets from most of Israel? Oh thou seer, flee away, go away.

Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 18:20 Yeah, I mean Amos is saying things that are inconvenient and unpopular. And this is part of what Amos is trying to help them understand. I'm not doing this because it's fun. I'm doing this because the lion has roared and I have to respond. God's done something for me and now I need to do something for him. And I'm not here because I'm a professional prophet. He says, I'm not a son of a prophet. I'm here because God's called me. And for Amaziah, he said, well go get your livelihood, go make your

money somewhere else, there's no openings for a prophet around here. We're full. Thank you.

- Hank Smith: 18:58 There's no openings.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 19:00 Yeah, Amos is trying to say, I'm not here for a job. Right? I'm not here to apply. I have this message. Because what Amasaiah says is don't prophesy. And that's exactly what God has said that Israel has done, is that they've taken the prophets and told them, don't prophesy.
- Hank Smith: 19:19 And this is verse 15 of chapter seven. The Lord took me as I followed the flock. Almost as if, I'd rather be back home. And the Lord said unto me, go prophesy unto my people Israel. I love that Ryan. I thought you said there's no openings here. Why don't you go on your way? John, did you have some thoughts on living prophets?
- John Bytheway: 19:39 Oh, absolutely. I just think how critical it is to understand as part of the restoration of the gospel that we have living prophets. I look forward to general conference. I'm amazed at how things had unfolded prior to COVID with doing home centered, church supported Come, Follow Me and everything. And I see that phrase, Oh thou seer and a seer is someone who sees. And just recently I was teaching the war chapters in my Book of Mormon class and there's a fun chapter where it says we'll dig a ditch around the whole city. Okay, now let's put a work of timbers in. Are we done yet? No. Now let's put a frame of pickets up on top of the work of timbers, on the interbank of the ditch. Or are we done yet? No. Now let's put a tower on top of the frame of pickets on top of the work of timbers on top of the ditch.
- 20:28 Are we done yet? No. Let's put a person in the tower. And what can a person in the tower do that somebody down below can't do. They can see. They can see far off. And so imagine the absurdity if somebody up in the tower, the watchman in the tower says, behold danger approaches at two o'clock. Imagine the absurdity if we look up and say, I don't see any danger. Well, that's exactly right. That's not your job. You're on frame of picket maintenance. You don't see it. My job is to see, and I was thinking of the verse, in fact I was looking for it that we touched on in Isaiah, which sayeth to the seer, see not, prophesy onto us smooth things prophesy deceits. Remember that one? And it reminded me of this one, oh thou seer go flee away. Elder Holland in October of 2006 said this, "as the least of those who have been sustained by you to witness the guidance of this church firsthand.

21:26 I say with all the fervor of my soul that never in my personal or professional life have I ever associated with any group who are so in touch, who know so profoundly the issues facing us who look so deeply into the old, stay so open to the new and weigh so carefully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully everything in between. I testify that the grasp this body of men and women have of moral and societal issues exceeds that of any think tank or brain trust of comparable endeavor, of which I know anywhere on the earth. I bear personal witness of how thoroughly good they are, of how hard they work, how humbly they live. It is no trivial matter for this church to declare to the world prophecy, seership and revelation. But we do declare it. It is true light shining in a dark world and it shines from these proceedings." Was in general conference.

22:27 And I have another one, Hank. And then more recently April of 2022. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said, "Of course, in our present day, tremendously difficult issues face any disciple of Jesus Christ. The leaders of this church are giving their lives to seeking the Lord's guidance in the resolution of these challenges. If some are not resolved to the satisfaction of everyone, perhaps they constitute part of the cross Jesus said we would have to take up in order to follow him. It is precisely because there would be dark days and difficult issues that God promised he would out of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night guide prophets, give an iron rod, open a narrow gate leading to a straight path and above all grant us the power to finish the course. So please, please stay for the whole feast. Even if you're not sure about the broccoli. Bask in his light and lend your candle to the cause. They have it right in Primary. Jesus really does want you for a sunbeam. Isn't that great?"

Hank Smith: 23:35 It's good stuff.

John Bytheway: 23:37 I think that if I were to ask my students, do you know any verses from Amos, what would they all say? Amos 3:7. And that's where I was thinking about those quotations. But I love that right after it says the lion... Amos 3:8, the lion hath roared. I love that that comes right after.

Hank Smith: 23:56 And I wonder how many of us are like this. You called him Amazaiah, is that what you called him Ryan? I want to make sure I get his name right. How many of us are kind of like him say with some of the talks we hear? Oh, I don't like that, flee away. Go talk about that somewhere else. So that's I think an interesting reaction to this prophet Ryan. So how does this book end? We've got a couple of chapters left, seven, eight, nine, and

ten. Is it pretty much what we've had before or is there anything new we need to see in these chapters?

- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 24:25 Well, it ends on a hopeful note. So the prophets are not here just to be doom and gloom on one generation. The prophets and the Lord have a much larger view. They know that God's relationship with his covenant people is stronger than any temporary setback. And of course the Old Testament is the story of temporary setbacks, of God trying to help his people. Something doesn't work out. God tries plan B, plan C, plan D, right? That's the allegory of the olive tree in Jacob 5 that God will never stop trying.
- Hank Smith: 25:08 These are his chosen people and he will make it happen, but it might take a while.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 25:13 And he knows though that there is a happy ending that will come at the end of chapter nine, verse 11. It says, In that day, I will raise up the tabernacle of David that has fallen and close up the breaches thereof. I will raise up his ruins, I will build it as in the days of old, looking forward to a time when he's going to build up his people again. They're going to come back to the land and they're going to have their happily ever after experience. They're going to live in the promised land with God among them. And this is what he's been trying to do.
- 25:49 This is the kind of community that God is trying to... Has been trying to establish since the beginning. He took them out of Egypt, not because they were done with their Egyptian slavery practice. They came out of Egypt because he wanted to create a community with them. He wanted to create a kind of community that was different than anywhere else in the world. A place where people took care of each other, where they loved each other and where he could be a part of it. That's why the tabernacle and the temple is such an important part of this community is because God is a part of it.
- Hank Smith: 26:27 He lived with them.
- John Bytheway: 26:28 And I love that illustrations of that that we saw of having the tabernacle in the center and all the tribes around it. It was such a beautiful visual of this is how it's supposed to be, God is with you. And that's what he kept telling him. I'm with you and I'm going to even move with you as you go. I'm right here. I saw the pictures of that somebody illustrated recently and thought, oh, I missed the message until I saw the visual. I'm with you wherever you go.

Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 26:58 And that's the consequence of Israel not listening to what God has to say to them. Back in chapter eight, I guess we kind of skipped over this. This is another scripture that we kind of know from Amos in chapter 8:11-12

John Bytheway: 27:13 11 and 12.

Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 27:15 Yeah. Behold the days come saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land. Not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And this is the danger. If you don't listen to the Lord, then you might stop hearing him speak to you. But what's hopeful, I guess in some sense is that Amos is telling us a way back that if you can't hear the Lord, then remember what he said. You can hear his voice in the voice of those that are hungry. You can hear his voice in the voice of those who need help. And that's what he's asked you to do. That's what the covenant people of the Lord are here to do is to help those who suffer. And if we as disciples of Christ have gotten away from that, right?

28:11 If we feel like we need God in our life a little bit more, if we feel like we need to hear his voice, then we need to look around ourselves and think who needs help, right? Because as Jesus says, if as you mentioned John in Matthew 25, if you do it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you've done it to me. And if we need Jesus, if we need our Heavenly Father in our life a little bit more, then find someone who's suffering. Because we learned in Psalm 34, he's close to those people. He's close to those that have broken hearts and crushed spirits. So if you want to be close to God, go find them. And of course that's yourself too. If you're going through a tough time, reach out to him. He'll be there for you. That's how he begins his relationship. That's how he continues his relationship with you, and that's how he wants you to go help other people as well.

Hank Smith: 29:11 That's fantastic. And they will come back, he says. One day they will come back. This is Amos 9:14. I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel and they'll build up these waste cities and inhabit them. They'll plant vineyards, they'll drink the wine thereof, they'll make gardens. They'll eat the fruit of them. So it does finish on an uplifting note that maybe the people of that day aren't going to see it, but a future people will see this fulfilled. This is great. I love the book of Amos now.

John Bytheway: 29:42 It reminds me of Isaiah's call where it sounds, Isaiah 6, where it sounds like you're going to go and nobody's going to listen. But in the end, the last verse, a tenth shall return. And there's this always this promise of they'll come back.

Hank Smith:	29:55	There's a good ending, ish.
Dr. Ryan C. Davis:	29:57	Feels a bit sometimes when you're trying to do scripture study or family home evening for your kids, like they're not going to listen, but one day they'll remember and it'll be useful.
Hank Smith:	30:09	That's a great-
John Bytheway:	30:09	I remember my father to have taught me.
Hank Smith:	30:11	Yeah, he said something about that-
John Bytheway:	30:14	Alma the Younger. Our official Come, Follow Me manual, has us read all of Amos and all of Obadiah. But how much is there in Obadiah? There's one phrase out of Obadiah that I think we all know, but tell us about Obadiah, Ryan.
Hank Smith:	30:30	A whole 21 verses of Obadiah.
Dr. Ryan C. Davis:	30:33	Well, Obadiah is difficult because there isn't a lot of context. We saw before in Amos 1:1, you at least got to hear where Amos's hometown was, where he was being called to. But here we don't get a lot of context. All we know the servant of Jehovah is his name, and we're told that he has a message from the Lord against Edom, which is again one of Israel's neighbors. Okay, So this is not specifically addressed to either the kingdom of Judah or the kingdom of Israel. This is actually addressed to the people of Edom. But again, God is the God of the world. So he doesn't quite care where you end up. If he's got a message for you, then you're going to hear it.
	31:23	And there seems to be... What he's talking about here is that the Edomites, a likely time period that this is, it's a time that Jerusalem has suffered some type of calamity. So probably it might be after the Babylonian destruction in 586. So the problem is that the Edomites who really are their brothers, their neighbors, remember in Genesis we learned that Jacob or Israel was a brother to Esau and Esau is the ancestor of Edom. So they have this kinship, right. A literal kinship between Edom and the people of Israel.
	32:07	Rather than helping them, they went and saw what they could get out of it. So it says, starting in verse ten, for the violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots upon

Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. For thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger. Neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction. Edom rather than being a help to Israel-

- John Bytheway: 32:49 Kind of watched it happen.
- Hank Smith: 32:50 They just kind of watched. Yeah, it sounds like they just looked over and went, Oh wow. Yeah. You should have been there to help.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 33:00 Obadiah though sees... But of course because Israel is God's covenant people, God hasn't given up on Israel. And even though Edom wasn't there for them, God will be there for them eventually. And this is why starting in verse 17, we hear, but upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance and there shall be holiness. And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. Israel will again return and deliverance will be on Mount Zion. And Mount Zion is the mount where the temple was in Jerusalem.
- 33:42 Mount Zion is a place where God, where his presence is. And he tells them that deliverance is going to be there on that mount. Where God is that's where rescue happens. We hear about kind of a happy ending where Israel's enemies are going to get what they deserve, but Israel is going to be taken care of. So the very last verse that we know well is, and saviours shall come upon... Or shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau and the kingdom shall be the Lord's. The image here is that it takes us back to the time of the judges. So the word there for Savior in Hebrew is actually the word that is often used for the judges in the time of the judges. An example, if we go to Judges chapter three, verse nine-
- Hank Smith: 34:40 We're dusting off some memories here from-
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 34:43 Yeah, that's right.
- Hank Smith: 34:45 Earlier this year.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 34:47 So in chapter three verse nine it says, and when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer. The word deliverer is the same word as Savior. So we could translate that as he raised up a savior to the children of Israel who delivered them. Even Othniel, the son of Cannas, Caleb's younger brother. So this kind of helps us understand that this

vision that Obadiah sees is where just like in the days past when God would raise up a savior, this is when Israel would be in captivity. When they were in, they needed help. And when they asked for help, God would provide someone that could free them from captivity, that could again take them out of and bring them to the safety of Mount Zion, where that is where deliverance, where God's presence would be. And it says there that rather than having a human king, the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

35:56 Just like in the book of Judges, the king, there is no king. The king is the Lord. And so they're going to return back to those days when God will deliver them and he will be their king. One of the fun things about this is we read this often, and that's the thing we've talked about with prophets, and I know that has been mentioned on this podcast before. The prophet's words can mean more than one thing. They can echo through time. Isaiah's words were described. We can think about this... It's been talked about as our work for the dead. I think that's a beautiful application to this scripture. One of the ways to kind of add some context to this is that when we talk about being saviors on Mount Zion, that again in the Old Testament, going back to the idea of judges, oftentimes the judges, what gave them power to deliver Israel was the Spirit of the Lord.

36:58 So it talks about the spirit of the Lord coming upon the judges. So back even in Judges chapter three, the very next verse in verse 10 says, And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. In the stories about Sampson. Sampson's not always the best positive role model to have, but every time he had strength to do what he needed to do, it came because the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and gave him his strength. So we often talk about, well, it's his hair, but it wasn't the hair, it was the spirit of the Lord that gave him the power to do what he needed to do. When we think about what does it mean to be a savior who stands on Mount Zion? Well, a savior in this sense, a deliverer, someone that rescues others from captivity is one that has the Spirit of the Lord come upon them.

37:51 And as disciples of Christ, that's one of the things that were given just like Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ was baptized, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and really began his ministry. And in the same way as we come out of the waters of baptism and we have hands placed on our head that we are told to receive the Holy Ghost when it descends upon us, one of the things that the Spirit does is empower us to now become disciples of Christ, to give us the power that we need to rescue Israel from captivity. And that's I think where we see the

gathering of Israel tied into this. Because this is what the deliverers or the saviors did in the time of the judges is Israel was in captivity. And when the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, they were able to bring them out of captivity because of the power given to them by God.

38:51 In fact, this is really what the mission of the Messiah is to do. To add some context to this, if we go to Isaiah 61 verses one through two, this is the scripture that Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth when he was kind of beginning his ministry. That's right. This scripture ties the gathering of Israel with what we've been talking about, about helping those that are wounded and those that are suffering. In fact, these are not two different missions. It's not just that we gather Israel on this part and then we help other people over here that those are one and the same. That when you're in exile, when you are in captivity, you're in a place that you don't belong. You are suffering because you are a captive of war. You are wounded, you are looking to be out of this captivity. So in verse one, it says, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

39:51 So again, the Messiah is the Savior, just like we've talked about these judges, that the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him and this gives him power to now rescue Israel out of the captivity that they are in. It says here, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek so we can think good tidings. You also can translate that as gospel and to the meek, that's the oppressed, those that are going through hard times. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, 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.

40:38 This is what the mission of Jesus Christ is, and it's also our mission as disciples of Christ. The reason that blessed are those that mourn is because those are the people that Jesus has come to help. Those are the people that the Messiah has come to comfort. When we think about a savior standing on Mount Zion, if we can think about that as ourselves, as disciples of Christ standing on Mount Zion, it's our mission to find those who suffer to comfort them, to bring them to the Lord, to Mount Zion where they can be healed and taken care of.

41:15 Our mission to rescue scattered Israel on both sides of the veil is the same mission that both Amos has been talking about, about finding those who suffer by helping them, by healing them. And we do this also for the dead. Those that have passed on that need the ordinances in order for their relationship with our

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ to move forward. And if we can do this for them, that they can also be released from prison and from captivity. Just as the Savior has done for all of us we get a chance to do that for the dead and the living because the gospel of Jesus Christ and this gathering of Israel as President Nelson has often reminded us, happens on both sides of the veil. We compartmentalize things often. Oh, that's missionary work. That's member work, that's temple work.

- Hank Smith: 42:11 That's service, feeding others, but it's all the same.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 42:14 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 42:15 Yeah. Unite families for eternity is both sides.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 42:19 Living the gospel of Jesus Christ is about doing justice and righteousness as Amos tells us. And that's justice and righteousness to everyone. It's to the dead, to the living. It's to our enemies, it's to our friends. It's all the time for all people. That's what it means to flow as a mighty stream.
- Hank Smith: 42:42 Yeah. To be a savior on Mount Zion. I love it.
- John Bytheway: 42:47 I love the way you set this up, Ryan, because we have talked about this a lot on this, especially I think when we were talking about Isaiah, that there can be multiple levels of fulfillment and application and so forth. And I like the way that the Come, Follow Me manual said it. President Gordon B. Hinckley gave one possible interpretation of the phrase saviors on Mount Zion, and you've expanded that for us. Here's one that President Hinckley gave. Connecting the phrase to temple and family history work.
- 43:16 Okay, here's the quotation. "In the temple, we literally become saviors on Mount Zion. What does this mean? Just as our Redeemer gave his life as a vicarious sacrifice for all men and in so doing became our Savior. Even so we in a small measure, when we engage in proxy work in the temple, become as saviors to those on the other side who have no means of advancing unless something is done in their behalf by those on earth." So that was in October of 2004, general conference when President Hinckley said that. But I like Ryan how you've expanded that and we all become as saviors or deliverers when people are captive, even if it's by sin or by an addiction or something like that. We can try to do what the Savior would do for them.

- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 44:03 I feel like sometimes captivity can also just be those hard times that we're going through when we feel like we're in a rut. We don't know how to get out of things, how to make things better. That's what we're looking to do for other people. To see people that are going through a hard time, to be their friend, to help them through those hard times.
- Hank Smith: 44:24 Do you remember the story told by President Hinckley that his father used to tell him? I think they made a video of it where there was a man out working in a field and two boys came upon him and they saw his shoes. One of them said, let's hide his shoes and then we'll see what he does. And the other one said, No, let's not hide his shoes. Let's put, was it two silver dollars? Let's put two silver dollars in his boots and let's hide and watch. President Hinckley said his dad used to tell him that story. And that just reminds me of what you said, Ryan, is that as the boys watch and the man comes back and he kneels down right there and says a prayer out loud, that's a type of gathering of Israel. That's being a lowercase S savior to someone on Mount Zion. It's a beautiful, beautiful story.
- John Bytheway: 45:11 I met a sister and she just kind of showed me her phone. She said, every morning this question comes up on my phone. Who needs me today? It wasn't, does someone need me today? It was who needs me? And she would think of something prayerfully, somebody I can call or text or do something. What can I do? And I thought, wow, that's amazing. Who needs me today? And you've reminded me of that, Ryan, with what you've taught us today.
- Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 45:41 That reminds me of what President Eyring has shared a story a couple of times where he had a conversation with a priesthood leader, I believe that gave him some advice and said that when you're talking with people, if you assume they're going through some great crisis in their life, more than half the time you'll be right. And President Eyring got, that's kind of pessimistic, but he says that his life has gone on. He's found that to be true. And I think that we don't have to go out of our way to be disciples of Christ. They're there. They're in our way, the people that need us. We just need to open our eyes and realize that there are people that are hungering and thirsting for righteousness right next to us. And we need to remember as Amos tells us what our covenant obligation is and we need to give them that.
- Hank Smith: 46:31 I've told my students Latter-day Saints get together a couple times a week to lie to each other about how they're doing. How are you? I'm doing great. How are you? I'm doing great. People are really actually suffering. They're going through things and

maybe we need to be a little more vulnerable and share when we are suffering so people can come to the rescue and help us.

John Bytheway: 46:52 It reminds me that story sister Michelle Craig told about waiting in line. Spirit nudged her and said, put away your phone when you're in line. And she started talking to the guy in front of her who was buying cat food. Is that right?

Hank Smith: 47:04 I think it was. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 47:05 Didn't he kind of say, it's my birthday. For somebody to recognize that, I mean people that are hungry, hungering, thirsting after righteousness, Ryan, or even maybe just for someone to say, how are you? Or something nice to them to recognize another human being. I got to be better at that. I feel humbled and motivated by this today. I feel called to repentance and excited to try and do better.

Hank Smith: 47:30 Ryan, this has been absolutely fantastic. I can't say I knew a lot about Amos and Obadiah coming into this today, but I walk away saying, man, I love this. I love what we've learned. I think our listeners would be interested in your story of your education and your faith. Here you are a Bible scholar and also a faithful Latter-day Saint. What's that journey been like for you?

Dr. Ryan C. Davis: 47:54 It's been fun. I mean, because I was an Ancient Near Eastern Studies major as an undergraduate at BYU. I learned to start looking at the scriptures from an academic perspective in an environment of faith. I had great professors that were also faithful Latter-day Saints that opened a window into looking at the scriptures maybe a little differently than we do in Sunday school. And it's been a lot of fun. It's rich, it's beautiful. As I've learned more and more, I've had to learn to be comfortable with not knowing things. And I've realized that that's really what faith is. Alma says faith is not to have a perfect knowledge. That's one of the things I feel like my studies have taught me and given me an opportunity for faith. It's given texture to the scriptures which has helped me establish my relationship with Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father.

48:53 That's one of the things that I feel like the scriptures have really taught me. I've gotten a bachelor's, a master's, and a PhD in the Old Testament, and I've had an opportunity to strengthen my relationship with God. That relationship is based in faith. Faith is trust. I don't always know the answer to every question, but I do know the Lord. I'm okay not having the answers to all my questions. But I do know that He's there and I know I'm a disciple of Jesus Christ and I'm just excited to be on His team

and working next to Him to do good. And I feel like that's something that my studies have allowed me to do is pull things out from the scriptures that I never knew were there. To see things that I would've never have known unless I had spent time learning by study and by faith. It's been a beautiful time for me, but at the same time, I'm a Latter-day Saint.

50:00 That's the bedrock of who I am and what I'm learning in all this has helped me better understand what it means to be a Latter-day Saint. When I read articles or I see new perspectives from people from other faiths, I think, wow, that's great. I should incorporate that. And that's something that I need to learn. Right? It's never threatening. And I think that's something that has changed from before my journey until now, is that sometimes you'd hear someone that either wasn't a believer or someone from another faith and you think, wow, that's true. Should I feel threatened by that? I think about what President Hinckley often said when he says, bring all the good that you have and let's see what we can add to it.

50:41 And I realize that there are so much good, so many people of other faiths have spent centuries reading the scriptures and have valuable and wonderful insights. And it's enriched my testimony and it's enriched my relationship with Jesus Christ. More than anything, my studies has helped me realize that it's my relationship with my Heavenly Father and my Savior Jesus Christ is what really matters in life. And that relationship will see me through every difficulty. And I've learned from Amos along with you that that means I have to do something for those around me. And I'm trying to do that.

Hank Smith: 51:26 Perfect. Absolutely perfect, Ryan. Thank you. Thank you. What a fantastic day, John. How did we get this lucky to just sit at the feet of these incredible guests and learn and then come away feeling uplifted. I come away feeling motivated. I think that's the power of the Spirit.

John Bytheway: 51:44 Yeah. I think President Eyring said once, Don't be surprised if when you feel the spirit, you feel a little bit of a rebuke. Yeah. Because you can feel that and you can also feel I got to do better. But I love it. I'm being invited to higher ground. That is a good thing. I realize I can do better. I'm being invited to higher ground and I felt that today. Thank you, Ryan.

Hank Smith: 52:06 We want to thank Dr. Ryan Davis for being with us today. We want to thank all of you for listening. We also need to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen and our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And we hope all of you will

join us next week. We're coming back with another episode of followHIM.

52:27

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.

WHAT DOES "A SAVIOR ON MOUNT ZION" MEAN?



- Hank Smith: 00:05 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the amazing John Bytheway. Welcome John Bytheway.
- John Bytheway: 00:12 Thank you.
- Hank Smith: 00:13 I just think you're the best. Hey, John. This week's question comes from Obadiah. Obadiah is a book in the Bible. It's only 21 verses long, but on the very last verse, there's a phrase that says, "A savior shall come up on Mount Zion." So, John, my followHIM question of the week for you is, what is the savior upon Mount Zion? What does that phrase mean to you?
- John Bytheway: 00:39 I used to hear that when I was a kid. I remember being told, "You can be a savior upon Mount Zion." What? And if you look at the verse, notice that saviors, it's a small S. It's not "The Savior". There's one savior that is Jesus Christ, of course, but we can act in that role. And what helps me, what is a savior on Mount Zion, is to look at that footnote there. The Topical Guide says, "Genealogy and temple work, mission of Latter-day Saints, and Salvation for the Dead." So the idea of a savior, I think, if I'm getting this right, is to do something for someone they can't do for themselves or maybe that they can't do right now for themselves. We can go to the temple. We can be a proxy for someone who did not have the opportunity to be baptized on this earth and can be baptized for them, or receive an endowment for them in that way. That's what I understand. We can be a savior upon Mount Zion. I guess Mount Zion means the temple. Am I getting that right?
- Hank Smith: 01:38 Yeah, I think so. I think, John, we love Jesus so much. We talk about him and if we were to just sit down with anybody listening, they would say, "I absolutely love Jesus. Well, why? Because of what he has done for me." Well, in that same vein, we can become, like you said, lowercase S saviors for other people who will look at you very similarly as the way they look at the Savior and say, "I love you. Why? Because of what you have done for me in doing my work at the temple." And remember, there's some blessing that comes for us as well, that

Joseph Smith said, "They can't be saved without us." I totally understand that. They can't be saved without us. They don't have physical bodies. But then he added, "We can't be saved without them, that they are doing work for us on the other side."

02:27 And I think you're the one who taught me that Elder Holland I think said, "Never underestimate your family on the other side of the veil. Never underestimate what the other side of the veil is doing for you." But in order, I think, to take part in that and have more and more part of it is get yourself to the temple so you can be closer and closer to that veil and to that connection.

John Bytheway: 02:47 Yeah, I think that those people that we get to do work for, I think they'll want to find us one day. In the journal of Horace Cummings, he wrote that Joseph Smith said that those who had done the work for them, they would pull at their feet, embrace their knees, and manifest the most exquisite gratitude, which just is a fun thing to look forward to. You see those folks at the temple who go every week and have done thousands of names and think of those people and the greeting they will get. But I like that you said that.

03:22 I remember after my father passed away way back in 2004, I was talking to Dr. Robert Millett, Brother Millett that we've had on our program before, and put his arm around my shoulder and said, "Your father will be able to do more for you now than he could have here." And I'd never considered that before, so I'm glad you brought that up. So we need each other and the Lord has arranged a way for us to help each other, and part of that for us right now is to go to the temple.

Hank Smith: 03:52 Yep. We hope anyone listening right now will just get your calendar out and make an appointment to go to the temple. Or if you have free time today, don't wait any longer. Go get in the car or go get your shoes on, if it's not too far away, and get yourself over to the temple so you can take part of this saviors upon Mount Zion role.

John Bytheway: 04:13 And if that's a step you need to take, if you don't have a recommend right now, I know the Lord and the Bishop are eager to give you one. I mean, I experienced that. The Lord wants this person in the temple. I used to feel when I was conducting those interviews as a bishop, if that's a step you need to take, oh, go take that step because there's just blessings within those walls.

Hank Smith:

04:35

Go renew that recommend and make it a trial of your faith. Say, "Well, I don't have time to go to the temple." Well, it's a good moment of your faith to say, "Well, I'm going to make time. I'm going to make time to get over there. I'm going to cut out some sort of entertainment or I'm going to cut out some other activity and I'm going to get myself to the temple and I'm going to test the Lord on his promises." And he'll make good on those promises. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called Follow Him. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. And join us next week as we come back for another FollowHIM Favorites.