



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 Wednesday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

How did we forget the Lord? Dr. Gaye Strathearn examines key questions, ideas, and context to encourage understanding of Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision.

Part 2:

Dr. Gaye Strathearn continues to explore the Savior’s invitation to receive the blessings of the Savior’s Atonement in 1 Nephi 6-10.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Gaye Strathearn
- 00:54 Dr. Strathearn previews the episode
- 02:00 Introduction of Dr. Strathearn
- 02:55 Harkening to the Lord
- 04:08 The context for Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision
- 07:02 Lehi thinks about posterity
- 08:42 Hope as catalyst for Lehi’s Vision
- 11:35 Recording only things of worth
- 12:35 Nephi’s questions to Laman and Lemuel
- 15:36 How have we forgotten the Lord?
- 17:37 Sister Browning and President Kimball on the word “remember”
- 19:14 The Sacrament
- 21:35 The faith of Ishmael’s family
- 24:32 Dream language
- 27:16 The Lord answers prayers and expects work
- 28:46 Being humbled
- 31:15 Faith, forgiveness, and sacrifice
- 36:27 Lehi’s Dream and the Small Plates
- 39:44 Dark and light
- 40:40 Trees and temples
- 44:38 The fruit
- 47:50 The path and the Iron Rod
- 49:14 The Garden of Eden parallels
- 54:17 Numberless concourses
- 56:58 Worshiping in the prone position
- 1:00:11 Not choosing Jesus
- 1:03:42 End of Part 1–Dr. Gaye Strathearn

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Gaye Strathearn
- 00:07 The rod of iron and the river symbolism
- 01:33 Garden of Eden parallels
- 03:58 Dr. Strathearn shares a personal story about Covid
- 08:13 The Great and Spacious building
- 10:04 Human self-sufficiency vs. belief in God
- 13:26 Residents of the Great and Spacious Building
- 15:56 Korihor
- 16:40 Approval of God vs the approval of man
- 18:33 John shares a story about missionary in a prison
- 20:31 Staying at the Tree of Life
- 24:47 Activity vs passivity

- 28:21 The four groups in Lehi's dream parallel four types of ground
- 30:40 Nephi asks regarding Lehi's Dream
- 34:05 Lehi teaches about the seed of Laman and Lemuel
- 39:13 Jesus saves from the darkness
- 42:39 The Allegory of Zenos
- 46:54 Understanding the Fall
- 48:51 Allowing the Spirit to teach as we study
- 52:53 End of Part II– Dr. Gaye Strathearn

References:

“2023 First Presidency’s Christmas Devotional.” newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org. Accessed January 7, 2024. <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/event/2023-first-presidencys-christmas-devotional>

Belnap, Daniel L. “‘Even as Our Father Lehi Saw’: Lehi’s Dream as Nephite Cultural Narrative.” “Even as Our Father Lehi Saw”: Lehi’s Dream as Nephite Cultural Narrative . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/even-our-father-lehi-saw-lehis-dream-nephite-cultural-narrative>

Belnap, Daniel, Dana M. Pike, Jennifer C. Lane, Eric D. Huntsman, Jason Robert Combs, Avram R. Shannon, Jan J. Martin, et al. “Sacred Time: The Sabbath as a Perpetual Covenant.” Edited by Gaye Strathearn. Amazon, 2023. https://www.amazon.com/Sacred-Time-Sabbath-Perpetual-Covenant/dp/195030437X/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1SMPOIT566WOK&keywords=gaye%2Bstrathearn&qid=1704515241&srefix=gaye%2Bstrathearn%2Caps%2C113&sr=8-1

Belnap, Daniel L. “‘Ye Shall Have Joy with Me’: The Olive Tree, the Lord, and His Servants.” “Ye Shall Have Joy with Me”: The Olive Tree, the Lord, and His Servants | Religious Studies Center. Accessed January 7, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-7-no-1-2006/ye-shall-have-joy-me-olive-tree-lord-his-servants>

Brown, S. Kent. “Recovering the Missing Record of Lehi.” Recovering the Missing Record of Lehi . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/jerusalem-zarahemla/recovering-missing-record-lehi>

Bytheway, John. “Lifestyles of the Great & Spacious: Finding Your Path in Lehi’s Dream.” Amazon, 2013. https://www.amazon.com/Finding-Your-Path-Lehis-Dream/dp/1609073711/ref=sr_1_4?crid=3JR4IJKF2LFKF&keywords=lehi%27s%2Bdream&qid=1704515508&srefix=lehi%27s%2Bdream%2Caps%2C144&sr=8-4

Davies, W. D., and Dale C. Allison. "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew." Amazon, 2004. https://www.amazon.com/Matthew-1-7-International-Critical-Commentary/dp/0567083551/ref=sr_1_1?crd=283F2AZ8YI9QH&keywords=matthew%2Bin%2Binternational%2Bcritical%2Bcommentary%2Bby%2Bdale%2Bc.%2Ballison%2C%2Bjr.%2Band%2Bw.%2Bd.%2Bdavies&qid=1704674151&srefix=%2Caps%2C173&sr=8-1&ufe=app_do%3Aamzn1.fos.006c50ae-5d4c-4777-9bc0-4513d670b6bc

Dickens, Charles. "A Christmas Carol." The Project Gutenberg eBook of A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens. Accessed January 7, 2024.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46/46-h/46-h.htm>

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "Lehi's Dream." Holding Fast to the Rod, October 1, 2011. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2011/10/lehis-dream-holding-fast-to-the-rod?lang=eng#p19>

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "Lehi's Dream." Holding Fast to the Rod, October 1, 2011. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2011/10/lehis-dream-holding-fast-to-the-rod?lang=eng#p19>

Elder Kevin W. Pearson of the Seventy. "Stay by the Tree." Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2015. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/04/stay-by-the-tree?lang=eng#kicker1>

Elder Kevin W. Pearson of the Seventy ImageElder Kevin W. Pearson. "Stay by the Tree." Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2015. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/04/stay-by-the-tree?lang=eng>

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "'Becometh as a Child.'" Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 1996. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1996/04/becometh-as-a-child?lang=eng#p2>

Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "Circles of Exaltation." Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January 1, 2004. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teaching-seminary-preservice-readings-religion-370-471-and-475/circles-of-exaltation?lang=eng#p2>

Halverson, Jared M. "Lehi's Dream and Nephi's Vision as Apocalyptic Literature." Lehi's Dream and Nephi's Vision as Apocalyptic Literature . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/lehis-dream-nephis-vision-apocalyptic-literature>

Hardy, Grant. “Prophetic Perspectives: How Lehi and Nephi Applied the Lessons of Lehi’s Dream.” Prophetic Perspectives: How Lehi and Nephi Applied the Lessons of Lehi’s Dream . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/prophetic-perspectives-how-lehi-nephi-applied-lessons-lehis-dream>

Hilton, John. “The Book of Mormon: A Masterclass.” John Hilton III, December 27, 2023. <https://johnhiltoniii.com/>

“January 15–21: ‘Come and Partake of the Fruit.’ 1 Nephi 6–10.” January 15–21: “Come and Partake of the Fruit.” 1 Nephi 6–10, January 1, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-home-and-church-book-of-mormon-2024/03?lang=eng>

King, Seth J. “Illuminating a Darkened World.” Illuminating a Darkened World . Accessed January 5, 2024.

<https://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/illuminating-darkened-world>

“The Lion King (2019 Film).” Wikipedia, January 4, 2024. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lion_King_\(2019_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lion_King_(2019_film)).

Maxwell, Neal A. “But for a Small Moment.” BYU Speeches, July 12, 2023. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/neal-a-maxwell/small-moment/>

Maxwell, Neal A. “Meeting the Challenges of Today.” BYU Speeches, July 11, 2023. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/neal-a-maxwell/meeting-challenges-today/>

McConkie, Bruce R. “Doctrinal New Testament Commentary: Volumes 1-3.” Amazon, 1960. <https://www.amazon.com/Doctrinal-New-Testament-Commentary-Volumes/dp/1570085595>

Nibley, Hugh. “Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, Vol. 5: Lehi in the Desert - The World of the Jaredites - There Were Jaredites.” Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book. Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://www.deseretbook.com/product/P1511851.html>

Pike, Dana M. “Lehi Dreamed a Dream: The Report of Lehi’s Dream in Its Biblical Context.” Lehi Dreamed a Dream: The Report of Lehi’s Dream in Its Biblical Context . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/lehi-dreamed-dream-report-lehis-dream-its-biblical-context>

Pike, Dana M. “Lehi Dreamed a Dream: The Report of Lehi’s Dream in Its Biblical Context.” Lehi Dreamed a Dream: The Report of Lehi’s Dream in Its Biblical Context . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/lehi-dreamed-dream-report-lehis-dream-its-biblical-context>.

President James E. Faust Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “The Weightier Matters of the Law: Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 1997. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1997/10/the-weightier-matters-of-the-law-judgment-mercy-and-faith?lang=eng#author2>

President Russell M. Nelson President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “The Everlasting Covenant.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2022/10/04-the-everlasting-covenant?lang=eng#title6>

Schade, Aaron P. “The Strait and Narrow Path: The Covenant Path of Discipleship Leading to the Tree of Life.” The Strait and Narrow Path: The Covenant Path of Discipleship Leading to the Tree of Life . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/strait-narrow-path-covenant-path-discipleship-leading-tree-life>

Seely, David Rolph, and S. Kent Brown. “Jeremiah’s Imprisonment and the Date of Lehi’s Departure.” Jeremiah’s Imprisonment and the Date of Lehi’s Departure | Religious Studies Center. Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-2-no-1-2001/jeremiahs-imprisonment-date-lehis-departure>

Skinner, Andrew C., and Gaye Strathearn. “Third Nephi: An Incomparable Scripture.” Amazon, 2011. https://www.amazon.com/Third-Nephi-Incomparable-Andrew-Skinner/dp/1609089073/ref=sr_1_3?crid=1SMPOIT566WOK&keywords=gaye%2Bstrathearn&qid=1704515241&srefix=gaye%2Bstrathearn%2Caps%2C113&sr=8-3

Strathearn, Gaye, Anthony Sweat, and Jared Halverson. “Y Religion Episode 75 – Holiness to the Lord (Gaye Strathearn).” YouTube, March 2, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6khl7_A7ULg

Strathearn, Gaye, Daniel L. Belnap, and Stanley A. Johnson, eds. “The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision.” The Things Which My Father Saw. Accessed January 5, 2024.

<https://rsc.byu.edu/book/things-which-my-father-saw>

Strathearn, Gaye. “2023 BYU Easter Conference - Gaye Strathearn.” YouTube, April 28, 2023. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1pKG_spRsU

Strathearn, Gaye. “Gaye Strathearn.” BYUH Speeches. Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://speeches.byuh.edu/gaye-strathearn>

Strathearn, Gaye. “Looking at the Endowment and Atonement Through a Different Lens .” Amazon, November 13, 2014. <https://www.amazon.com/Looking-Endowment-Atonement-Different-Interpreter-ebook/dp/B00PLYM5XU>

Strathearn, Gaye. “Our Covenantal Mandate to Care for Those in Need.” Our Covenantal Mandate to Care for Those in Need . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/fall-2023/our-covenantal-mandate-care-those-need>

Strathearn, Gaye. Sacred Time. Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/sacred-time/sacred-time>

Strathearn, Gaye. ““He That Hath the Scriptures, Let Him Search Them’: .” “He That Hath the Scriptures, Let Him Search Them” . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-2-no-1-2001/he-hath-scriptures-let-him-search-them>.

Strathearn, Gaye. ““Holiness to the Lord’ and Personal Temple Worship.” “Holiness to the Lord” and Personal Temple Worship . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-23-no-1-2022/holiness-lord-personal-temple-worship>.

Swift, Charles. ““It Filled My Soul with Exceedingly Great Joy’: Lehi’s Vision of Teaching and Learning.” “It Filled My Soul with Exceedingly Great Joy”: Lehi’s Vision of Teaching and Learning . Accessed January 5, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/things-which-my-father-saw/it-filled-my-soul-exceedingly-great-joy-lehis-vision-teaching-learning>

“Truth Will Make You Free.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - For the Strength of Youth: A Guide for Making Choices, 30–33.), January 1, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/for-the-strength-of-youth/07-truth?lang=eng>

Biographical Information:



Gaye Strathearn is a professor in the Department of Ancient Scripture and in the Ancient Near East Studies program at BYU. She has taught at BYU since 1995, including a year at BYU’s Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies. Dr. Strathearn received her bachelor of physiotherapy from the University of Queensland (Australia, 1982), a BA and MA in Near Eastern studies from BYU (1990 and 1992), and a PhD in religion (New Testament) from the Claremont Graduate University (2004). Her research centers primarily on New Testament topics, especially those of interest to Latter-day Saints.

Fair Use Notice:

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

No copyright(s) is/are claimed.

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

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

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

Note:

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



Me, Me, Me or Thee, Thee, Thee?

GUEST: GAYE STRATHEARN



- | | | |
|----------------------|----------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:04 | Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHim. My name's Hank Smith and I'm your host, and I'm here with my dreamy co-host, John Bytheway. John, we're back, another episode of followHim, Book of Mormon. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:00:16 | I know why you said dreamy. I was hoping you'd say Banana Creamy. Those are really good, but we'll take dreamy. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:24 | I'll take dreamy. Hey, that's good, John. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:00:26 | Daydreamy. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:29 | Don't do that today. John, we have had a lot of fun. Our first two lessons in the Book of Mormon have just, to me, been absolutely exciting. I'm learning so much. How are you feeling so far? What are you looking forward to today? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:00:42 | I've taught the Book Mormon a lot and so have you, but it's so fun to have a scholar come in and tell me things and for me to go, "Never saw that. Never knew that." So I'm looking forward to that again today. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:54 | It is so fun, John, to have such insightful guides with us. It's such a benefit. Speaking of insightful guides, John, we have an insightful guide with us today, Dr. Gaye Strathearn. Gaye, thank you for being here. What are we looking forward to today in our lesson? |
| Dr. Gaye Strathearn: | 00:01:14 | What I love about this, and I've noticed a little bit recently as I'm talking about it, is how important this dream is, dream vision for Nephi, and I'm really glad that we've split it off from Nephi's version of this because I think what is happening here with Lehi is really, really important in its own right as he's thinking about his family. This dream vision, I think, is very much for him, although later he's going to see the more expanded implications of what he sees. |

Hank Smith:	00:01:49	This is something that I think many of our listeners have read many times, Lehi's dream, yet I think there's some things that we're going to learn today that perhaps we've never seen before.
John Bytheway:	00:02:00	Gaye is a professor in the Department of Ancient Scripture in Near Eastern Studies at BYU. We've had her on before. She's taught at BYU since 1995, which is an important year for me. That's the year that someone consented to marry me.
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:02:13	Sweet.
John Bytheway:	00:02:15	Deeply appreciated that, including a year at the Jerusalem Center. Dr. Strathearn received her bachelor in physiotherapy from, I love this, the University of Queensland in Australia and bachelor's and master's degrees in Near Eastern Studies from BYU and a PhD in New Testament from Claremont Graduate University, and her research centers primarily on New Testament topics, and that's why we've had her here before, especially those of interest to Latter-day Saints. We're really glad to have you back, and I believe you're also an associate dean. So I'm going to sit up really straight and do my best to be a good employee today.
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:02:51	Thank you, John. It's good to be here. Thanks for having me back.
Hank Smith:	00:02:55	We love having you here, Gaye. Really, it's such a treat. I'm going to begin here, Gaye, with the Come, Follow Me manual, and then let's dive in and see where you want to go. It says this. Lehi's dream, with its iron rod, mists of darkness, spacious building, and tree with most sweet fruit is an inspiring invitation to receive the blessings of the Savior's love and atoning sacrifice. For Lehi, however, this vision was also about his family. "Because of the things I have seen," they're quoting Lehi here, "I have reason to rejoice in the Lord because of Nephi and Sam, but behold Laman and Lemuel, I fear exceedingly because of you."
	00:03:33	When Lehi finished describing his vision, he pleaded with Laman and Lemuel to hearken to his words that perhaps the Lord would be merciful to them. Even if you have studied Lehi's vision many times, this time, think about it the way Lehi did. Think of someone you love. As you do, the security of the iron rod, the dangers of the spacious building, and the sweetness of the fruit will take on new meaning, and you will understand more deeply all the feelings of a tender parent who received this remarkable vision. What a beautiful opening paragraph

there from the manual. Gaye, how should we approach our lesson today?

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:04:08 Well, I've said it before that I'm a context person, so I always like to set what we're talking about in the larger context of what's happening in the Book of Mormon. I think that there's some really fun things going on here that help me, at least, appreciate just how important this dream is for Nephi. I always look for things that jump out in scriptural texts and say, "Why is this happening?" In this case, it's that Lehi's dream is set in a section of scripture where we have two chapters, one before and one after, that seem to come out of nowhere. They interrupt the flow.
- 00:04:52 Why is Nephi writing and putting chapter 6 and chapter 9 here? Both of these chapters are talking about plates and Nephi having two sets of plates, that he's having a large set of plates where we all know he talks about the history, but then he's also made these small plates, which he does about 30 years after the family leaves Jerusalem. This is now what Nephi is writing on.
- 00:05:24 What he said is that up until now, he's been abridging Lehi's plates. He's not including everything in it. He has chosen out of all of the stuff in Lehi's plates to include this dream in the small plates. I think it's important then for us to go through to remind ourselves about these small plates. Whereas the large plates deal with history and politics, Nephi is really clear that he is using these plates to choose things that are of great worth, that are pleasing to God. He says that the things will persuade people to come to the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob that they might be saved.
- 00:06:14 Nephi has set up the vision by talking about that either end of the dream vision, and I see them as bookends. The technical term is inclusio. So if it starts with the importance of what's on the small plates and it ends with the importance of what's on the small plates, then it suggests to me that Nephi is wanting his audience to see just how important this is. He's reinforcing to us that this dream vision is of great worth, that it is pleasing to God, and that it will bring us to God to help save us. So it gives us the context, I think, through which to think about what's going on in the dream vision. That's the first thing that I think is really important.
- 00:07:02 Then the second one is in chapter 7, we have an introduction to what's setting up the dream. Lehi has sent his sons back to Jerusalem again, this time to get wives. We don't see them balking at that too much like they have previously, but it's clear

that Lehi is thinking about seed. The word seed is used all over the place in these chapters. They go back to get Ishmael and his family. We learn that the Lord softened Ishmael's heart and that of his household, which is reminding us a little bit back to what the Lord did for Nephi in chapter 2. Nephi, it seems, was struggling just as much as Laman and Lemuel, but he reacted differently and the Lord softens his heart so that he did not rebel.

00:07:59 Here, we have Ishmael's family also being softened so that they'll want to participate with Lehi and his family, but we are hearing as we get to the end of chapter 7 that as they're on their way back, Laman and Lemuel and some of Ishmael's family are going to rebel. This sets up the sense for me that Lehi is really concerned about his family, his posterity, and what's going to happen to them. This dream, for me, is initially so focused on Lehi's concern for his family, and particularly Laman and Lemuel. That's the second introductory thing.

00:08:42 Then the third is just a question I have, and I don't know that I can answer it definitively. Lehi is having this revelatory experience. I wonder what was the catalyst for this experience. Visions don't usually come out of the blue. They usually come because people are asking questions or they're reading scripture, and that leads to questions itself. So I've looked at the larger context of this dream vision. I'm thinking back to chapter 5 where the brothers have returned with the plates, the brass plates. I see there in chapter 5 that Lehi is really, really anxious to read them. It's almost like they come back and he immediately goes away in his tent and starts reading them. God is commanding him to study and search these plates, and I'm wondering if it is what he's reading on the plates that is acting as a catalyst for this dream vision.

00:09:54 My next question is, well, what would it have been on the brass plates that might have sparked this experience for him? My thought is I think that he was reading Zenos' Allegory of the Olive Tree. I hope in our discussions we can talk a little bit about that because Zenos' allegory, at least Jacob's version of it, is asking the question, is there hope for the house of Israel who have rejected the Messiah or the stone upon which they should build, and having then rejected it, Is there any hope for them? That's how Jacob introduces the allegory of the olive tree in chapter 5. So that's the end of chapter 4. I'm wondering again whether Lehi is wondering, "Is there any hope for Laman and Lemuel? They're rejecting things, but is there any hope for them?" That's how I see things as I think through this vision in its context.

Hank Smith:	00:11:05	Gaye, that's an interesting point that you bring up. 1 Nephi 5, right at the very end, we obtained the records, we searched them, we found them, they were desirable, great worth unto us, and then they're searching them, and it connects it to their children insomuch that we would preserve the commandments of the Lord unto our children. You can see what you just said in Lehi there, searching them and thinking about his posterity.
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:11:32	I think that that really is the motivating factor here.
John Bytheway:	00:11:35	I love that idea. It was after Lehi went through these that he maybe had his mind on his own family and then this dream came. 1 Nephi 6 is short. There's only six verses, but I love the sixth verse where Nephi says, "I shall give commandment unto my seed that they shall not occupy these plates with things which are not of worth unto the children of men." I like to read that to my class and ask them, "Do you think that Nephi's posterity kept this commandment?" and they all say, "Yeah," and they say, "So there's something of worth in the war chapters, huh? Let's go find it." There's something of worth in every chapter, and if you don't see it, the writer saw it. Our job is to search and ponder and find those things which are of worth. I just wanted to give a shout out to 1 Nephi 6:6. I love that verse.
Hank Smith:	00:12:27	If we are going into it thinking, "Well, I don't think this has any value."
John Bytheway:	00:12:31	No, there's a reason it's there.
Hank Smith:	00:12:34	Keep looking. Keep searching.
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:12:35	I've also been thinking about chapter 7 because chapter 7 and chapter 8 also align in some other ways. When Laman and Lemuel and some of Ishmael's family begin to rebel, Nephi reaches out to them and he asks them a series of questions. I love the questions and I think that they're applicable for all of us. He can't understand how they can be rebelling at this point and so he says in verse 8 of chapter 7, "How is it that ye are so hard in your hearts and so blind in your minds? How is it that you have not hearkened unto the word of the Lord? How is it that you have forgotten that ye have seen an angel of the Lord? How is it that ye have forgotten the great things that the Lord has done for us in delivering us out of the hands of Laban, and how is it that ye have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things according to His will if people will just exercise faith in Him?"

- 00:13:48 Then he goes on and says, "Let's be faithful," and he's working with them because he says that there's great blessings in choosing to follow God. Is it going to be hard? Absolutely, but we will receive a land of promise if we're faithful, we're going to know that about Jerusalem's destruction, and we're going to see the hand of God in saving us from that because we've listened to our Father, and if you return to Jerusalem like you want, you're going to be destroyed. Of course, Laman and Lemuel are just angry with Nephi about that and that shouldn't surprise us because it happens quite a bit. They want to lay their hands on him and have him die by wild beasts and things like that, but Nephi's faith and prayers in that lead to seeing another evidence that God is involved in their lives and He's not just some theoretical being, but He's intimately involved.
- 00:14:47 So I like to see that because Nephi, like his father Lehi in the next chapter, is really, really concerned about his brothers. He's trying so desperately to help them see as he sees and understand as he understands. Nephi and Lehi never give up on Laman and Lemuel, and that I think is a beautiful part of these early chapters of the Book of Mormon as well, and they teach me something about God, and hopefully that He is not going to give up on me even though I do stupid things sometimes and sometimes I fail to see, but that He's always there for me if I can just wake up and remember how great He has been in my life.
- Hank Smith: 00:15:36 I think the Holy Ghost might ask me some of those same questions, "How is it that you have forgotten? How is it that you're so quick to forget?" I think Mormon says later in the Book of Helaman, "How quick we are to forget." Gaye, you said something earlier that I wanted to ask you about. You said Nephi made these plates 30 years after these events. Do you see that impacting the way he writes because he knows how this plays out? As he's writing this story, he knows how this is going to end. Perhaps seeing the heartbreak already, seeing where the decisions led them and the break that they have in opening chapters of 2 Nephi, that might influence the way he describes what happened with them.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:16:23 That's absolutely true. With the value of hindsight, we are able to see little things along the way that we might not have seen while we're in the midst of things, and that's why I think it's important to see these editorial choices that he makes because he's doing it with hindsight. So how can I make sure that people don't miss this story? How do I make sure that readers don't just jump to Nephi's version of it, which is different than what Lehi is doing? How do I set this apart so that it stands out in the

minds of the readers and sees how really, really valuable I see this dream vision?

- Hank Smith: 00:17:04 So he chooses to highlight it by putting those bookends on either side. Of course, in the original text, there's no chapter breaks as we would see it. It would be one cohesive section, inclusio, with these highlights on either end that would make that stand out. As you read along, he would say, "Look, I'm starting this story and here I finished this portion."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:17:26 We do that with chapter breaks in our minds, but the ancients had different ways of highlighting the really important stuff. This is one way to do it.
- Hank Smith: 00:17:36 Excellent.
- John Bytheway: 00:17:37 I'm glad that both of you mentioned those three verses in a row. 1 Nephi 7: 10, 11, and 12 that all begin, "How is it that ye have forgotten?" You might remember the First Presidency Christmas Devotional, Sister Tracy Browning quoted President Spencer W. Kimball, who made this great observation. He said, "When you look in the dictionary for the most important word, do you know what it is?" and he said, "It could be remember." Think of all the things we learned in New Testament. All the feasts were to help them remember the Exodus and their deliverance and parts of that.
- 00:18:13 A fun way to go through the Book of Mormon or something to watch for is for the words remember and forget, the opposite. You'll see there, "O remember, remember my sons," but you'll also see, "Don't forget these three verses here," and it seems like we need reminders of how merciful God has been. Right on the title page that we talked about a couple of weeks ago, the idea of remember the great things the Lord has done because it's easy to forget. I think, Hank, we also talked about journals, didn't we, and how President Eyring said that you document the hand of God in your life and a journal will help us remember those things too.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:52 Excellent. Absolutely excellent. You can almost hear Nephi saying, "You have forgotten, but I remember. I remembered to hearkeneth to the word for the Lord. I remember you seeing an angel. I remember the great things the Lord has done for us in delivering us out of the hands of Laban."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:19:08 "And because I remember, I will go and do even the hard things that the Lord invited."

Hank Smith:	00:19:14	John, as you made that comment, I thought of all the ways the Lord brings a remembrance. I just think all the things I've asked to do are probably, at least in part, helping me remember. Isn't that a big part of the sacrament that they will always remember?
John Bytheway:	00:19:30	That's exactly what President Kimball said in the latter part of that quotation is that you got to go to sacrament and hear the priests pray that we will always remember. Isn't it nice that the sacrament is every week? We don't pull the tables out of the storage by the cultural hall every Christmas and Easter, but it's every single week, every single week, which is also just evidence of the Lord's mercy like, "Come back, let's do this again. You're going to need this. Let's never forget. Let's remember."
Hank Smith:	00:20:00	John, this is going to be a little fun quotation, but I thought of it as you were making your comment. The movie Lion King, where Simba checks out-
John Bytheway:	00:20:08	"Remember who you are?"
Hank Smith:	00:20:09	... gets far away. Mufasa, "Simba." "Father?" "Simba, you have forgotten me." "No, no. How could I?" "You have forgotten who you are and so forgotten me." Let's see if I can channel my inward James Earl Jones. "Look inside yourself. Simba. You are more than what you have become." "How can I go back? I'm not who I used to be." "Remember who you are. You are my son and the one true king. Remember who you are."
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:20:40	Well, that's really impressive, Hank, that you could quote all of that.
John Bytheway:	00:20:43	You must have children.
Hank Smith:	00:20:48	So Gaye, I just wanted to mention one thing. I wanted to ask you about this. It's interesting to me when they go back to talk to Ishmael's family, they go back to Jerusalem, Nephi mentions that they journeyed into the wilderness with Laman and Lemuel-
John Bytheway:	00:21:02	Verse 6.
Hank Smith:	00:21:03	... Nephi, Sam. He lists all these people, but Zoram does not go with them back, at least it's not mentioned. I've wondered if Zoram is a wanted man in Jerusalem.
John Bytheway:	00:21:15	A crime suspect, right?

Hank Smith:	00:21:18	Laban's been killed, the plates are missing, and the one guy who's gone is Zoram. So I've often thought, I wonder if they brought a wanted poster back with them said, "Hey, Zoram, they're looking for you back there."
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:21:32	Well, that's an interesting possibility.
John Bytheway:	00:21:35	You have to admire Ishmael and their family, and clearly, the Lord softened their heart, but, hey, Lehi, probably a cousin, don't the scholars think, or some relation to Lehi? My cousin had a dream everybody pack up or leaving. I just think this is amazing, especially when people were so tied to the land that God gave them after the Exodus and to just pack up and leave. Must have been ... We do that now. Our kids go off to college, they meet somebody, they get married, they move off somewhere, but back then, do you just move like this?
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:22:12	No, and especially as you noted, leaving from Jerusalem and from the Promised Land. We see this later in the Book of Mormon where they seem to be really wrestling with the implications of this move and leaving behind their covenant lands, seeing themselves. They're going to reinterpret scripture, reinterpret Isaiah and other places according to their experience. That's really important to understand because they're seeing themselves as part of the scattering, but they also want to understand Isaiah and not just the scattering but part of the gathering. Whereas Isaiah, it's gathering back to the land. There's this realization that they're never going to come back to this land, and now they're looking for their gathering in another land and trying to understand it.
	00:23:10	While they're interpreting Isaiah, and it might be easy for us to say, "Oh, well, this is what Isaiah originally intended," I don't think that that's the case. I think that they're just interpreting the scripture according to them and their needs and trying to see meaning of it, and they're seeing it in the scattering, but more importantly, the gathering of Israel. Of course, the Savior, when He comes to 3 Nephi, is going to reiterate that. It is such a difficult thing for it that they've got to look at scripture, their scripture through new eyes and see things a little bit more uniquely for them.
Hank Smith:	00:23:48	I've wondered if Lehi and Ishmael had already discussed this journey earlier and Lehi says, "I'll go out into the wilderness and then have your family come join us." I don't know if that happened or not, but there's one thing about talking about something and it's an entirely another issue to actually follow

through and do something so drastic. The faith of Ishmael and his family has to be mentioned and thought of.

- John Bytheway: 00:24:14 I think about these mission leaders too that have to go tell their kids, "Hey, we're going to Argentina," that are called when they still have children in school. These kids that say, "Okay, mom and dad, we'll go." There's a lot of amazing families out there that do something similar, I think.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:24:32 I put this at the beginning of chapter 8 when he's coming into the dream, and verse 2, "Comes to pass while my father tarried in the wilderness, he spake unto us saying, 'Behold, I have dreamed a dream,'" or in other words, "I have seen a vision." Now that language is really interesting. From my schooling, I remember this and I have no idea why I remember it, but is stuck in my brain, but dreamed a dream is a cognate accusative. Why I remember that? I have no idea, but it's all throughout the Book of Mormon, but it's also throughout the Old Testament where they're having visions and especially interpretive or symbolic visions. That's the language that they use.
- 00:25:15 As I thought about this again in the context of what's happening here, this language of dreamed a dream is meaning that Lehi's family are going to go, "Oh, this dude's a visionary man." So the book opens with a vision that he has, and what's the result of this for Laman and Lemuel? They have to leave Jerusalem and leave all their wealth behind. They're murmuring against Lehi and they say, "He's a visionary man." They're saying it in a very, very negative way because there's a cost to them because of the vision of their father.
- 00:25:53 The next time we see this, he's going to say to his sons, "I've had another one of these visions. Go back to Jerusalem and get the plates." The result of this is Sariah is going when she thinks her sons are dead because they're taking so long to come back and she starts to complain, and what does she complain? "Lehi, you are a visionary man and there's some costs involved with that," and you can see Lehi going and he says to his wife, "I know that I'm a visionary man. I'm going to own that, but this is not just a negative thing. This for me is an important thing. It's because I'm a visionary man that I've seen the goodness of God" and those kind of things.
- 00:26:35 So far, every time he said this, there's been some negative consequences, at least from the perspective of his family. When he gets up in chapter 8 again and said, "I have dreamed a dream," I can only imagine what is going through Laman and Lemuel's minds. They're going, "Oh, no, not again. What's going

to be the cost to us this time because of what's going on? Oh, gosh." I can see the dread kind of going through them, but I can also imagine that Nephi is anxious to hear this revelatory experience of his father.

- Hank Smith: 00:27:09 "No, you need to stop having these dreams."
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:27:14 That's right.
- Hank Smith: 00:27:16 "Stop dreaming. Stop sleeping." Gaye, I wonder if they're frustrated as well that Nephi is becoming a visionary man, "Oh, no. We've got a second one coming up through the ranks." Back in chapter 7, Nephi says, "They sought to take away my life out in the wilderness on their way returning with Ishmael's family." Back when I was a younger seminary teacher, I had a student in my class say she just really loved verses 17 and 18. I said, "Why do you love it?" and she said, "Well, notice that Nephi prays, 'Give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound.'" That's verse 17 and verse 18 she pointed out to me that it says, "When I said these words, the bands were loosed from off my hands and my feet."
- 00:28:06 She said, "I just really like that because sometimes we expect our prayers to be answered in a certain way." Nephi wants bands bursting, hitting people in the face like the incredible Hulk moment. Instead, the bands did come off, but they were loosed. Just a little insight that a student showed me years and years ago that I've never forgotten that pray for something to happen and then be okay if something different is the result.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:28:35 Because the implication is Nephi still has to do some work. If they're burst, then God has done all of the work, but there's still a little bit of struggle for Nephi to have the desired result.
- Hank Smith: 00:28:46 I've noticed also, Gaye, that one thing we can watch for is what it takes to humble Laman and Lemuel. It seems that it takes more and more throughout 1 and 2 Nephi. Right here, it just takes one of the daughters of Ishmael, the mother, some of the sons, "Pleading with my brethren," and it softens their heart, but later it's going to be a storm that's threatening their lives that softens their heart. So just maybe something to watch for as we go through. One other thing in chapter 7, Gaye, I wanted to ask you about is this how quick Nephi is to forgive and how do we get to that point, "I did frankly forgive them all that they had done," as if it's that easy.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:29:33	Well, I think that this speaks to Nephi's love for his brothers. I think that I would be struggling a little bit with that love part given that all that they have done to him, but it's not just ... He's been beaten, not just bound, but beaten, and to be able to forgive them with all of these things just speaks to the love that he has. I would see this as him having a sense of with his maturing himself spiritually and in preparing for the time when he will take over the prophetic mantle, but these are all tutoring opportunities that the Lord is giving him to practice loving as God loves, to having that agape type of experience because he has to learn it. I don't think it happens automatically given their responses to him.
Hank Smith:	00:30:32	So interesting. We can see some of these early experiences as tutoring for what he's going to become. I really like that.
John Bytheway:	00:30:40	I like in verse 20 how, "They did bow down before me and plead that I would forgive them." I'm reminded of who is it that bows down to Peter? "Hey, we are men of passions like yourselves. Don't bow down to us." Nephi does that same thing, verse 21, "I told them to pray unto the Lord their God for forgiveness." I like that thing. "What are you bowing down for me for? Ask God for forgiveness." I'm reminded of Peter. Doesn't that happen to Paul too?
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:31:05	It does happen to Paul. They think that they're gods and he says, "No, I'm not a god."
John Bytheway:	00:31:11	"No, no, no, no. Don't bow down to me. Bow down to God." So I like that Nephi does that too.
Hank Smith:	00:31:15	I have a little thought from James E. Faust. This is back from the 1900s. I don't know if you guys-
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:31:19	1900.
Hank Smith:	00:31:22	... can remember that far back. He said, "Those who extend judgment, mercy, faith, and forgiveness exhibit a greatness of soul, a greatness of soul and mind consistent with the spirit of the Lord's teachings." I liked that phrase, a greatness of soul. Forgiveness can be difficult, but it can exhibit that idea that I'm really taking in the teachings of the Lord and it's changing my soul, it's changing who I am.
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:31:50	Sacrifices, as we know, was a really, really important part of, well, the gospels, not just the Mosaic stuff from the Book of Moses. We know they were doing this very early on. The giving

of an animal, there was always a cost involved to an individual. Even if they owned their own herds, there's a cost because if you give an animal and the best of the animals to offer up as a sacrifice, that means they're not only decreasing the numbers of their herd, but it also means that they're losing everything that might come from that animal, whether it be milk or whether it be further offspring or whether it's sheep, the wool or something. They're losing access to that and they're giving it to God. That was always going to be difficult for people even with some money, but imagine those who don't have that.

00:32:50 So why does God want to do that? Why is He asking us to do that, especially in our poverty or especially as we're itinerants wandering in the desert? At least part of it maybe, God, of course, would have to speak for Himself on this, but I think generally, mortals are very self-centered. I'm sure that there's a reason for that in terms of protection and being able to survive difficult things, but we think about ourselves, "What is it that I need to survive? What do I need to help me along?" It's about me, me, me, but what God is asking us to do is to stop and say, "Hang on a minute. It's not just about me. Life is so much more than that. This is also about giving. It's about God. It's about those around us," and sacrifices were a way to show God that we're committed to Him and that He will use His sacrifices to bless the lives of others who are also in need.

00:33:54 So I think in some way these sacrifices were about us getting out of the self-centeredness and help us to see that there are other needs and there are some things that are more important than us.

Hank Smith: 00:34:06 There seems to be something about sacrifice that changes the individual. I can't imagine the Lord is saying, "Hey, I need this from you." I think He's saying, "You need this from you." I think about tithing. The Lord doesn't need it. I need it. I need to pay my tithing. In this Old Testament times where they burn the entire animal sometimes, I can't imagine. I can't imagine taking a bunch of cash to the bishop and he just burns it. That would be so, "What did we just do?" but that was essentially part of what they did at times.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:34:43 One of the things though that I think we sometimes don't always appreciate when we're thinking about sacrifices, particularly under the Mosaic law, that it was always the intent that the sacrifice was an outward manifestation of what's going on inside of ourself. We talk about a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and certainly, the Savior when He comes, He's going to talk about, "Well, this is the sacrifice that I want to concentrate

on now," but that was always, always a part of the Mosaic law. We often think of it's just the outward sacrifices, but when the prophet's talking about people of broken covenants and things like that, they're talking about, at least in part, sacrifices and you haven't done it the way that I intended. You've just done the outward thing without having this outward being a reflection of what's happening internally.

- Hank Smith: 00:35:39 I remember last year for our lesson on the Garden of Gethsemane, Dr. Dan Belnap taught us something that had great impact on me. He said, "In the ancient world, sacrifice wasn't giving something up, it was making something holy. It was, 'I'm going to make this thing holy.'" That really had impact on me as I think about the time that I give to callings and temple attendance and church attendance. Instead of giving that time up, I'm making that time holy. The money that I give, it's not giving it up, it's making it holy. That really had impact on me.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:36:15 Leviticus tells us that in the process of doing that, we become holy. It's not just the sacrifice becomes holy, but we become holy as God is holy. That's the whole point of all of this is becoming holy.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:27 Gaye, we've spent time in chapter 6, chapter 9, and chapter 7, and just a tiny bit in chapter 8, and I know that as you and I discussed this interview that chapter 8 was really the jewel of this lesson. So I want to give you plenty of time in chapter 8. How should we go about reading this incredible experience Lehi has?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:36:49 I think if we work through it methodically, there's a couple of things I think are important. Then what I'd like to do is also jump to chapter 10 because as I read this at least, this is Lehi's interpretation of what he's just experienced. So I think we get some really good stuff and, of course, that's going to have a huge impact on Nephi because then he desires to see and hear and know the things that his father saw.
- Hank Smith: 00:37:20 So we have the vision in chapter 8 and the interpretation in chapter 10.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:37:25 That's what I think is happening there. We've already mentioned that as a result of this dream vision, Lehi has great hopes for Nephi and Sam and Sariah, but also has great fears for Laman and Lemuel. Then he goes and he talks about this experience that he had. One of the first things I want to notice is we've talked about the plates and how we're now on the small plates, how precious the space is here and things like that.

What is interesting to me here that at least for the first part of the vision, as Nephi is recording this, he chooses to do it in the first person. He's not just summarizing what Lehi had experienced. He is doing specifically it's Lehi speaking, and that goes up until verse 29. Nephi says, "And now I, Nephi, do not speak all of the words of my father," but from that point on, it goes to third person. Nephi seems to be summarizing what his father says, but early on, this is first person and that's important to him.

00:38:44 In verse 5, "It came to pass that," notice it, "I saw a man," Lehi, "and he was dressed in a white robe and came and stood before me, and it came to pass that he spake unto me and bade me follow him." Lehi is getting a guide here. We don't know whether this man is an angel because we're in a dream, we're in the symbolic world rather than the world as we know it, but he's getting a guide here, but we don't see the guide doing very much, which is very different from Nephi's experience later on. He just says, "Come and follow me." "And it came to pass that as I followed him, I beheld myself that I was in a dark and dreary waste. After I had traveled for the space of many hours in darkness, I began to pray unto the Lord that He would have mercy on me according to the multitude of His tender mercies."

00:39:44 We don't really know a whole lot of what this dark and dreary waste is. It doesn't sound wonderful. I think it's in great contrast to when he sees the tree, and so that offsets things, and in symbolic things, you often like a dark and a light to contrast what's really important here. I think Lehi is going to refer to that later in his interpretation and we'll leave that for then.

Hank Smith: 00:40:12 Gaye, I would think to myself, "Hey, that's the last time I'm following that guy."

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:40:14 That's right.

Hank Smith: 00:40:15 He said, "Follow me," and then he disappears and went into the dark.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:40:21 That's my experience.

Hank Smith: 00:40:21 Right. That's a lot.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:40:22 It goes on for hours. It's not a short thing. It's ongoing.

Hank Smith: 00:40:26 Is it a little bit like Joseph Smith's experience, that contrast between, "I was seized upon by a power that had such

astonishing influence over me to bind my tongue I couldn't speak and then the light comes"?

- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:40:40 That's very, very important. He sees, "It came to pass that after I prayed unto the Lord I beheld a large and spacious field." So we're getting his coming out of this darkness. Exactly what the field is, I don't know, but he still has to go a certain way until verse 10, "It came to pass that I beheld a tree." Now, this tree, we don't know what it is. Lehi doesn't ever tell us what it is, but I am going to jump ahead to Nephi, at least for this one verse, and he's going to call it the tree of life.
- 00:41:14 I think that that's a really important thing to do. Trees in the ancient world often had this symbolic sense of importance, and the tree of life was very, very ubiquitous in the ancient world, and there's lots of ways to understand it, but a tree was symbolic of a conduit between the earth, the underworld, and the heavens. So it was often seen as something like that's called an axis mundi, but a place where all three spheres can be connected in some way.
- 00:41:50 Trees or a tree of life is often associated with temples, and we see them there all of the time. I think that that's a really nice image of connecting heaven with earth and the underworld as well, the living on earth, the dead, and the heavens, so this connection is conduit between them. In the Hebrew temple, this tree of life is symbolized by the menorah that was in the holy place. So this is a very prominent symbol, and it's often associated with this idea of life, an eternal life, and the opportunity for people to receive that, which I think works really nicely here given ultimately what we see.
- Hank Smith: 00:42:34 Gaye, what a fascinating idea. I remember in the Book of Revelation John says they couldn't find someone to open the seals of the book so they looked in heaven and in earth and under the earth, and there you've got a tree that reaches the heavens, it touches the earth, and it goes under the earth. What a beautiful insight. I've never seen that before.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:42:57 Remember, I wanted to connect this with Zenos' allegory. So we have lots of trees there in that, and the roots are really, really important for the tree, and in Zenos' allegory, it's the thing that lasts even when the tree begins to die, is the roots representing of the covenants. Israel itself will have fruitful and decaying times, but as long as the roots are strong, then olive tree can come back and to regrow, and that's what this Zenos' allegory is all about and why the olive tree is often associated with eternal

life because an olive tree, the roots can survive for a thousand years even though the tree decays and grows back.

00:43:44 So there's lots of symbolism in that tree, but just again as in Zenos' allegory, it's the tree is important, but the tree is important because of the fruit that it produces. Nephi is going to spend a lot of time talking about this fruit. It is described as it was desirable, to make one happy, the fruit was most sweet above all that Lehi had ever tasted, and the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all of the whiteness that I had ever seen. Alma later on is going to pick up in that same kind of language when he's talking about the seed and the seed growing into a tree and a tree producing fruit. He uses that same kind of language about the fruit thereof.

00:44:38 As he partook of the fruit, "It filled my soul with exceedingly great joy. Wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it as well." The purpose of the tree is to provide the fruit here, and this is something that Lehi had never experienced in his world. He's clearly had trees. He's had olive trees. They would've been around there, but this tree and this fruit is very, very different. He has made this journey to the tree. It's been difficult for him, but what he's seeing is even though he went for hours in this dark and dreary waste, that didn't matter because this fruit is so supernal for him.

John Bytheway: 00:45:26 I often throw this out to my students, "Why would a man in a white robe, that sounds like a positive thing, and he bade me follow him. That sounds like a positive thing. Why would he lead you to darkness?" We have concluded that he wasn't leading him to the darkness, but perhaps he was leading him through the darkness. Maybe this is symbolic of the fall or something like that. Throughout the scriptures, there's this idea that you've got to go through the wilderness to get to the Promised Land.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:45:55 Absolutely.

John Bytheway: 00:45:56 I love the idea that it's dark and then he prayed, and then after he prayed in verse 9, "After I prayed, I beheld." It's like the Lord turned the lights on. "It was dark, I couldn't see, but after I prayed, I could see. After I prayed, I beheld." That's the first time he mentions a large and spacious field. So it sounds like the Lord flipped the lights on after he prayed. I want to believe that it was the right thing for him to do to follow this being in the white robe, but maybe He was leading him through the darkness, not to the darkness.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:46:32	<p>Part of that is that this is representative of mortality, and that mortality is meant to be difficult. It's meant, because how are we going to learn if we don't have to struggle with things. Mortality is something God wanted for each and every one of us so that we could progress, but we couldn't progress in the pre-mortal world because we needed these kind of challenges. We needed to learn how to choose God in mortality even when there's a veil put upon us so that He gives us a world of choices. Agency is very, very important in God's eternal plan, but the reason we have agency is not necessarily so that we can choose everything or anything.</p>
	00:47:17	<p>Lehi teaches us in 2 Nephi 2, "But we have agency so that in this world we can still choose God." Are we willing to do that even when there's a veil on us? Are we able to do it? I think we are able to do it when we have guides, but it's difficult. We have to learn in the process. We've got to embark upon this journey through difficulties so that we can better appreciate the fruit and the tree when we come to it.</p>
John Bytheway:	00:47:50	<p>That's an opposition in all things message. I always like to emphasize this part because when we think tree of life, we think, "Oh, yeah, tree, rod of iron, path, building," but don't forget the first part. He went through this darkness first. In the story of Job, what does God say to him? "Were you there when the sons of God shouted for joy?" and Elder Maxwell said, "Now that we're here, we're wondering what all the shouting was about on earth." I think, yeah, we chose to come through mortality and, boy, it begins like this. It's going through a lot of darkness, but if we will pray, we can behold. God will help us see the light literally and see what this is all about, but immediately, there's an opposition in all things as the vision starts.</p>
Hank Smith:	00:48:33	<p>You both are showing me things I've never seen. John, you're absolutely right. He says, "I followed this man who dressed in a white robe, told me to follow him," and he says that's not when he's introduced to the darkness. If you read 7 closely, he says, "It came to pass that as I followed him, I beheld myself that I was in a dark and dreary waste." It's almost as if he was already in the dark and dreary waste, didn't know he was until this man showed up and he said, "Oh, I was able to look around and see things as they really are, that I was in this dark and dreary waste. I didn't know that I was until I followed that man." That was really good, both of you.</p>
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	00:49:14	<p>So there's one other thing that I think is important here, and that's if we're calling this tree the tree of life, which Nephi does,</p>

and we're talking about fruit and the tree of life, I hope that there's all sorts of bells going off in our head thinking about another place where there was a tree of life and there's fruit. Everybody who was reading this in antiquity and I hope in the modern day should be thinking, I think, of the experience in the Garden of Eden, where they had the opportunity to experience things, they chose to partake of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but when that happens, they're cast out of the garden and a cherubim and a flaming sword is placed to guard the way, and the word in Greek, the derek, the path to the tree of life.

00:50:08 So in the Genesis story, they are prevented. It seems like God doesn't want them to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and that seems to be very different than what's going on here in Nephi's dream vision because God wants Lehi to partake. Lehi wants his family to partake. So as I was looking at and thinking about why in Genesis it's a negative thing to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, why is it so positive here in Lehi's experience where he thinks it's great to partake of it and so much so that he wants to invite his family to join with him. I was thinking about some of Alma's teachings to his son, Corianton, where he's talking a bit about the tree of life, and starting maybe in verse 4 where he's just talked about the cherubim and the flaming sword that he should not partake of the fruit.

00:51:09 Thus we see that there was a time granted unto man to repent, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God, for behold, if Adam had put forth his hand immediately and partaken of the tree of life, he would've lived forever according to the word of God. So he would've lived forever in his fallen state, according to the word of God, having no space for repentance. That to me explains Genesis. So what is different then from what's going on here in chapter 8 is because it's not that God never wants humans to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, but He doesn't want them to do it in a fallen state. He'd rather he did it in a redeemed state. In a redeemed state, then the full force positive sense of the fruit can take hold of a person and the person can be transformed into a spiritual being.

00:52:14 What I think is happening is Lehi and at least Sariah and Sam were good people, they understand about Christ and what He's doing, they want to listen, they're open to revelatory experiences here, and that they're being beckoned and having the opportunity because they're in this redeemed state. It doesn't mean that they're a perfect state, but in a state of redemption because of Christ's Atonement on their behalf that

they can partake of the full value or the full extent of partaking of the fruit. I think that that's a really, really beautiful idea.

00:52:53 It may also explain why Laman and Lemuel have no desire to come to the tree because they have rejected God. They've rejected His prophets. They've rejected what God wants for this family, they stay away. Then it's very interesting to me, and actually, I just read this last night as I was preparing, I was reading one of my colleague's work, Joe Spencer, talking about this vision and he makes something that I had never thought of before, that this dream vision seems to be in two parts.

00:53:33 Initially, this is about Lehi and his family. He's worried about his seed, and Laman and Lemuel are an important part of that. They refuse in verse 17. He was desirous that Laman and Lemuel should come and partake of the fruit also, "Wherefore, I did cast mine eyes towards the head of the river that perhaps I might see them, and it came to pass that I saw them, but they would not come unto me and partake of the fruit." I like that come unto me, "They refuse to come unto me," come unto me not just as their father, but as God's mouthpiece on the earth for them at this point. They refuse that invitation that God was extending to them through their father.

00:54:17 Then Lehi seems to see more things. He sees a rod of iron, he sees the narrow path, he sees the head of the fountain. Now, we've extended this is no longer becoming just about Lehi and his family. Now, we're seeing numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward and trying to get to the tree. One of the things that Joe said here that I just never thought of, these numberless people is Lehi here not just seeing people in general, but seeing the seed of Laman and Lemuel and how the struggle it is for them to come maybe because of the rippling effects of Laman and Lemuel's choices, but their struggle is very different than what Nephi, Lehi, Sam go through.

00:55:23 Certainly, there's a dreary world that they have to go through, but this just seems to be a struggle after struggle, but God has put in place aids for them in this struggle to get to the tree. So the rod of iron then becomes something for them to hang onto and to guide them through the mists of darkness, something for them to hang onto even though people in the great and spacious building are mocking them and things like that. Is this dream then about the consequences, this is the second half, the consequences of Laman and Lemuel's rejection of the opportunity and the impact that that has on their posterity as they go forward?

	00:56:07	Some of them try and succeed. Some of them may even get to the tree, but then they clearly aren't totally committed to it. They might've experienced some great things of God, but the pull of the world continues to have an impact upon them. Some of them just never make it to the tree because the mists of darkness become so difficult for them. Elder Bednar has talked a lot about this like the different people. There's people who grab onto the rod but then let go. We have them clinging to the rod of iron but they get there and then they walk away and then he comes down, and he particularly notices that there are those who are pressing forward, who are catching hold on the end of the rod of iron in verse 30.
	00:56:58	The important part that Elder Bednar points out is that they're continually holding to the rod of iron until they come down and fall down and partake of the fruit of the tree. Again, we have this sense of this proskynesis that we see throughout the Book of Mormon and the biblical record of people falling down on their face. Prone is what you do when you enter the presence of God. This is a form of worship reserved for kings, but more particularly for Gods, and these fall down at the tree as they partake of it because they're recognizing that they're entering the presence of God.
	00:57:39	This tree and the fruit then becomes even more powerful, and I think connects us more powerfully even with the temple because the purpose of going to the temple in antiquity and modern day is not just to get baptized, it's not for others. It's not just to get sealed. It's not just to make an endowment. All of those are critically, critically important, but they're a means to an end. They're not the end in and of itself. We go to the temple to enter the presence of God, and all of these things help us on the journey. If we lose sight of that fact, then we've missed the very heart and soul of what temple here. So in this case then, the tree represents the presence of God and all of the fruits and blessings that come from paying the price to enter into His presence. The blessings of eternity become manifest, which is what the temple is all about for us, I think.
Hank Smith:	00:58:43	Beautiful.
John Bytheway:	00:58:44	I love that the tree is an eternal symbol. Where do you find the beginning of a tree? Well, it comes from a seed. Okay, where'd that come from? Well, it came from a tree. Well, where did that come from? Well, it came from a seed. You can't find the beginning of a tree. We're not there yet, but the great and spacious building is something man-made, but the tree is something God created and it's this eternal symbol, as you

mentioned so beautifully. I love that when Lehi, as soon as he partakes of the fruit in verse 12, he says, "Where's my family? I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also." Have you ever been to a restaurant and you've tasted something and you're, "Oh, oh, you've got to try this. Here, swallow that. You have got to try this."

Hank Smith:	00:59:29	You're almost forcing it like, "You've got to ... Here, here."
John Bytheway:	00:59:31	You're so willing to share something because you want someone else to have that joy that you just had. So I think it's such a natural reaction that Lehi tastes it and, "Where is my family?" When he sees them in verse 14, "I beheld your mother Sariah and Sam and Nephi," and then this wonderful line, "They stood as if they knew not whither they should go." I put in my margin, Doctrine and Covenants Section 123 verse 12, where that letter from Liberty Jail, "There are many yet on the earth who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it." So where do you look? You look to a prophet who says, "Come unto me."
	01:00:11	As Gaye pointed out, verse 18, this is a gut-wrenching verse. They would not come. It's not they could not come, it's not something was preventing them. What's the difference between could not and would not? They chose not to come. That's a hard verse, that's a hard reality for lots of family members who are enjoying the fruit of the gospel and inviting some to come and they would not come. They will not come. They choose not to come.
Hank Smith:	01:00:40	I noticed in that time, John, that Lehi doesn't leave the tree to go get them.
John Bytheway:	01:00:45	Elder Kevin Pearson gave a talk about stay by the tree. You see in 19, 20, 21, "The tree by which I stood, the tree by which I stood, the tree by which I stood." So it's like as soon as Lehi found it, "I'm not going anywhere."
Hank Smith:	01:01:01	As a parent, you might be tempted, "Let me go where you are," yet Lehi seems to understand something, "The only way I'm going to get them here is by staying here, staying by the tree."
John Bytheway:	01:01:16	In verse 15, he beckoned unto them with a loud voice, "I'm staying here, but I'll invite you with a loud voice, come unto me."

Hank Smith:	01:01:26	That's great, "By which I stood, by which I stood." Gaye, these four different groups, do they feel all inclusive to you? Does it feel like, "I'm going to find myself in one of these four groups"?
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	01:01:41	I think so. I would also say that this is typologically speaking, but if I'm honest with myself, then I see myself in each of them. It's not one or the other for me. Different times in my life, sometimes different days, sometimes even different times of the day, in my experience, that I am more enticed by the things of the world, that if I'm not intentional can pull me away from the rod of iron, from the word of God. I love thinking about the word of God with John 1, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God, and the word is Christ." We have this tree here that can be a representation of Christ, but this rod of iron is also holding on to Christ in this mortal experience is representative.
	01:02:35	So it can be scriptures, it can be patriarchal blessings, the rod of iron, but I think, ultimately, it is holding onto Christ that enables us to come into the presence of God and participate in the full blessings of eternity. Even though that I know that that's what I want and that's what I hope for, there are still moments of being mortal that I experience elements of each of these four groups, except I hope I'm not somebody who gets there and partakes the fruit and then walks away, but honestly, there are times when I do that. I feel the spirit so strongly, but then the pull of the world comes at me again. That's one of the reasons why I think that Lehi and Nephi don't give up on Laman and Lemuel because there's always this hope that they will make a better choice and come back.
Hank Smith:	01:03:37	Coming up in part two of this episode.
John Bytheway:	01:03:41	"Listen, back when I was drinking and partying, I had a good time", he said, "I had a great time, I have to admit, I was in the great and spacious laughing at you guys." He said, "I did 25 years of field research in the great and spacious building."



Lifestyles of the Great & Spacious

GUEST: GAYE STRATHEARN



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to Part 2 with Dr. Gaye Strathearn, 1 Nephi 6-10.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 Gaye, as we go through this, I just maybe ask you to comment on the items and the different things that are seen. Just like you said, Gaye, as the family part of the dream seems to transition into the very macro part of the dream between verses 18 and 19, that's when you have all these other symbols you might say appearing. When he says, "I held the rod of iron extended on the bank of the river," what comes to mind when you think of those two things, the rod of iron and the river?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 00:39 As in most things, river could have positive and negative connotations, and symbols often do that. If I'm remembering correctly, later, Nephi is going to say that it was dirty water and that Lehi didn't see it quite as well. Clearly, I think the rod is not just to keep them on the path, but to help prevent them falling into the river. The other thing I think about, particularly if we see it in a more negative sense, is this seems to me to be a barrier between the tree of life and the great and spacious building. Even though it might come from pure water, a fountain that is good, but it becomes impure as it goes down and-
- Hank Smith: 01:31 Yeah, tainted.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 01:33 In some ways, I see the river, and this is coming back to my thoughts about the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. In some ways, I wonder whether this river might be analogous in some way to the cherubim and the flaming sword to keep the fallen people out of the way so that they don't become eternal or eternal life in a fallen state. Somehow the people in the great and spacious building would have to leave the building and make a journey, and maybe through the dark and dreary waste of their own and mists of darkness, but to show their commitment to pressing forward and continuing to go even when things get rough but realizing that there is a price to be paid. But as Lehi is trying to tell them, the benefits of those

difficulties are absolutely worth any cost that it takes to get there.

- John Bytheway: 02:37 The rod of iron comes up in verse 19 there. Like Gaye said, I like to call it's a guide rail and a guard rail. It's both, a guide and a guard. It's going to protect you from falling into the river but it's also a guide to the tree of life. One of the things I've noticed as I've pondered this is the rod comes up first and the mist of darkness doesn't come till verse 23. It says it arose, which I think light comes from above. This darkness comes from beneath. There arose a mist of darkness. One of the things that impresses me here is if you are not already holding onto the rod of iron, when the mist of darkness comes, you may not be able to find it. That's what it says. Those who commenced in the path, they lose their way and they wandered off.
- 03:27 All of us will encounter mists of darkness. Hopefully, we are already holding on to the rod of iron and that will take us right through it. That's what verse 24 says, "I beheld others pressing forward. They came forth, caught hold of the end of the rod of iron, and did press forward through the mist of darkness." That's the guide rail part, but we've got to be holding on even in our easy times so that when our hard times come, we've got the guide rail and we can get through.
- Hank Smith: 03:58 Excellent. Let's keep going here. Our first group is a numberless concourse of people pressing forward so they can get to the tree, but then the mists of darkness come, like you mentioned, John. Gaye, what do you make of this mist of darkness? Is it block their view of the tree? They can't see the tree anymore?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 04:15 Yeah. I do think so or they distort the tree, because in a fog, we can still see things and we can still even see lights, but they're distorted and they're harder to see. What are the mists of darkness? That it could be lots of things, but I think it's mortality. You haven't got to be in the great and spacious building to come across difficulties in mortality. Sometimes these mists of darkness are just a result of living in a mortal condition. Maybe COVID was a mist of darkness in our day. Well, I'm just talking personally here. As a single person, COVID was particularly difficult for me. One of the things that was most difficult was that, for months, I wasn't able to take the sacrament because there was no one in my household who could do that. It just wasn't available to me. That means, for months, I didn't have the opportunity ritually to go back to the sacrament table and to petition God for a further endowment of his spirit that the sacrament promises me.

	05:30	Part of that meant that I felt myself thinking, I can do this no church on Sunday thing. I got used to it because I saw things in a distorted way, I think, but I couldn't wait until we were able to go back to church, because I knew that if I had stayed in that position much longer, it would've been so much harder for me to come back. I remember that first day being with the saints again symbolically, but also literally being shoulder to shoulder with them, communally, coming before the sacrament, how powerful that was for me and I had forgotten that. I think that was some mists of darkness for me, but I am so grateful that I got to go back to remember, and to experience that personally, and to be reminded that I'm not alone, and that there is power in the communalness of attending church that I don't get when I'm just alone.
Hank Smith:	06:47	Wow, Gaye. What an insightful experience to make this come alive. John, I've heard you say something once where you said the mists of darkness, as Nephi describes them, "The temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men." I've heard you say before that the mists of darkness can be very isolating. That's what Gaye talked about.
John Bytheway:	07:10	Yeah. That you can't see in front of you, you can't see behind you. It's not just a mist in the darkness, it's a mist of darkness. I mean, I imagine it not like a dark smoke or something, therefore the decision to press forward becomes very individual for all of us. One of the things that our friend, S. Michael Wilcox, pointed out once is that if it was a low-lying fog or mist like is in the Middle East, you could look up and see. The only thing Satan still wants you to see, he said, was the great spacious building. Also, the mist of darkness wouldn't do anything to your hearing, but you could still hear the mocking coming from the building and you're isolated and you're alone. It's just an interesting metaphor for am I going to press forward or not becoming an individual decision? I just love Lehi's dream. It is so deep, it's so amazing. Yeah, I think the mist of darkness isolates everybody, and eventually, it becomes a decision. Will I press forward or not?
Hank Smith:	08:13	Gaye, that's our first group. And then he says, "I beheld others pressing forward. They caught hold of the end of the rod of iron," we've talked about that, "pressing through the mist of darkness." Then they get to the fruit, they partake of the fruit of the tree. After they had partaken of the fruit of the tree, they start to look around. Lehi seems to notice for the first time a great and spacious building in verse 26. What is Lehi seeing here? What do you make of this building? We talk about the

building all the time. In fact, I have a book on my shelf called *Lifestyles of the Great and Spacious* by John Bytheway. I have that book on my shelf. This is a building we talk about often. What do you make of it?

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 08:58

The first thing I notice there is it's told, is it stood as it were in the air high above the earth. I want to contrast that to the tree which is firmly rooted. We've talked about the importance of those roots, to give its strength, to give its stability through the things that mortality can throw at us. But the spacious building has no foundation that suggests that it is whimsical, it's not grounded in anything that's internal, that it doesn't have a foundation that will give strength in times of winds, or storms, or things like that. But it's high in the air, it's looking down. The people are looking down at those who are on the path to the tree so that there's a sense of superiority maybe there that we know more than you guys, you idiots, on this path.

10:04

I teach an introduction to the ancient Near East. As part of that, we look at the metamorphosis or the change over time between, say, the New Testament, where people believed in God and they read scripture through the lens of a belief in God, and the evolution where God eventually gets taken out of the equation in reading the scriptures because we can't prove God. Human self-sufficiency rises up. We see the transition from, "You need to read scriptures. You need to do it in the right attitude of praying and seeking help from God," to the point where a humanistic view, you don't need God. You don't need to pray before you read the scriptures. You just do it with your reason, your logic, your things, and how we see these cracks and then becoming wider and wider between groups as they're thinking about the scriptures. I think, from a worldly perspective, we live in a very humanistic world. What humans can see and understand is all we need and all we see is a very limited view of eternity, a very small portion of eternity.

11:29

People will tell you, "Well, that's all you need to know." But the Savior says, "No. I came to Earth," Gospel of John, "to help you see that mortality is only a sliver. I've come to give you the eternal perspective from which you can make your choices." But if I only see like this and I think that this is reality and this is my reality, I miss things. That's why I think, for me, personally, I don't understand eternity very well. My brain can't cope with it. I can give a talk on it and I can quote scriptures and things like that, but the idea of eternity is just bigger than my mortal brain can comprehend. When I have questions or the world tells me that I should have questions, I don't know the answer to that,

but my response, at least I hope my response, is not to say, "Okay," walk away because of your questions.

12:35 My response is if I hang on, maybe I'll learn some more stuff that God sees and God knows and those questions I have will no longer be questions, they'll make sense because God has an eternal perspective, whereas I only have a mortal perspective. It's worth hanging on. It's worth pressing forward continually to the iron rod, understanding that the more I know of God and about God and from God, the more I'm going to have an eternal perspective. Those questions, I have total trust and faith that they will make sense once I see them as God sees them. People in the great and spacious building aren't looking for that eternal perspective, in my opinion.

Hank Smith: 13:26 Wonderful. A couple of questions about the great and spacious building. It's on the other side of the river of water. The people in it are old, young, male, female, and their attitude towards those partaking of the fruit of the tree is mocking and pointing their fingers. What is Lehi getting at? John, let's go to you, and then Gaye, let's go back to you. What do you see in the great and spacious building?

John Bytheway: 13:57 It's fascinating to me that the description of the occupants of the great and spacious building in verse 27, it says, "It was filled with people, both old and young." There's moms and dads out there trying to do Come, Follow Me with junior high students and high school students. I think if a bunch of old people came and said, "I don't like the way you dress," I don't think they would care. But what if it was someone their own age or some one their own age talking to them about why do you go to seminary or some one their own age giving them a hard time? There's a peer pressure element here when it talks about that they're old and they're young, they're male and they're female, and they have the best clothes on.

14:37 Of all the things you could do in a building that's spacious, you'd think there'd be, Elder Maxwell said, more to do in such a spacious building, like maybe a bowling alley. But the activity of choice is to go to the windows and point. There's got to be more to do in there. The other thing that I find fascinating is what Gaye pointed out, it's in the air. Thank you for these awesome footnotes. There's a footnote to Ephesians 2:2. It has one of the strangest names for Satan that I've ever seen. It calls him the prince of the power of the air.

15:15 I got out my McConkie New Testament commentary once to see what does that mean. I just thought, how did he see this

coming? That the influence of Satan will be in the very air around us. I thought, oh my wife, the great and spacious building is in the air. Wow. Elder McConkie wrote that in the '70s, that it would be in the very air around us. That's a very modern way to look at that footnote ties it to the modern age of the great and... It's on the air, it's in the air, it is everywhere.

- Hank Smith: 15:56 Interesting. When it comes to the people in the building and the mocking and the pointing of the fingers, what comes to mind? For me, I see Korihor in this, Alma 30. The way he comes at the people is this foolish and vain hope.
- John Bytheway: 16:15 Yolked and frenzied and deranged.
- Hank Smith: 16:17 Yeah. It's the effect of a frenzied mind. He says the derangement of your minds, it's over and over. It seems to me that if I can get you feeling insecure, if I can get you feeling even stupid for believing, I'm going to rock you a little bit off the path. Is that what you see here, Gaye?
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 16:40 Yeah. I don't want to feel alienated from my peers. I still struggle with wanting the approval of the world at times because it can be immediate. Sometimes when you're thinking about eternity, sometimes the approval of God is a little less immediate. It's sometimes in a still small voice when I live in a very loud world. In other words, I've got to be very intentional to put myself in places where I am welcoming the spirit into my life and I've got to be intentional about listening. I've got to be intentional about remembering. I've got to be intentional about seeking for it. These experiences don't usually come when I'm passive. These experiences come when I'm seeking to be with God and to do His will, not mine. Sometimes the things of the world are in your face, and it's hard to turn away or walk away and to disassociate from it, but I can't disassociate into nothingness. The only way I can disassociate is an intentionality to come unto God and to do things His way, not mine. That's hard sometimes.
- Hank Smith: 18:12 John, I went and grabbed behind me my copy of the book. It's called Finding Your Path in Lehi's Dream. So I apologize. Lifestyles of the Great and Spacious is not the title. It's called Finding Your Path in Lehi's Dream. John, I'm guessing, in writing the book, you thought a lot about this great and spacious building. Talk to me a little bit more about it.
- John Bytheway: 18:33 I had first moved into this ward and I had a wonderful guy stood up in the back of the room in High Priest Quorum one day, and said, "Listen, back when I was drinking and partying, I had a

good time." He said, "I had a great time. I have to admit, I was in the great and spacious laughing at you guys." He said, "I did 25 years of field research in the great and spacious building." He said, "You name it, I was addicted to it." He said, "And then it turned on me. I lost my marriage, and I lost my job, and I lost the chance to raise my two daughters. In 25 years, I spent \$500,000 on drugs and alcohol." I'm, "Who is this guy?" I look around and I see he's got a missionary tag on. His name's Steve and he's an addiction recovery missionary at the prison.

19:24 What I love about Steve is he goes to the prison. Guess what he teaches them? Members or not, he teaches of Lehi's dream. In the dream, we don't see people leaving the great spacious and coming to the tree, but it happens all the time. It happened to Steve. I've been to the prison a few times with him to speak at a home evening. I'm grateful that it's possible to leave the building and come to the tree. He says, "Hey, I was there and there's nothing there. I lost just about everything there, but now I'm at the tree." He's been doing that out at the prison for more than 20 years now.

Hank Smith: 20:05 It reminds me of one of those last chapters of Revelation. Before the building falls, the Savior says, "Come out of her, my people, that you receive not of her plagues. Come out of her."

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 20:17 Well, I was just looking at verse 33 and it says, "And great was the multitude that they'd enter into the strange building." I thought that was interesting. It's a strange building.

Hank Smith: 20:27 Strange building to Nephi and Lehi. Yeah.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 20:31 "And after they did enter into that building, they did point the finger of scorn at me." Now it becomes personal, but then I love the response. It's point the finger of scorn at me and those partaking of the fruit also, "but we heeded them not." That's the hard part, but that's part of the intentionality. If we're focused on Christ, we're focused on the tree, then it's easier to heed them not, but it's hard. John, what you were saying there about people leaving the building, I really think that Lehi is going through this dream hoping that his sons will leave the building.

21:19 But he comes to the realization, "He exceedingly feared," verse 36, "for Laman and Lemuel. Yea, he feared lest they should be cast off from the presence of the Lord. And he did exhort them with all of the feelings of a tender parent that they would hearken unto the words, that perhaps the Lord would be merciful unto them and not cast onto them. Yea, my father did

preach unto them." Again, he never gives up on them. This dream is not positive for his hopes. He never gives up hope on his sons just as the Father doesn't give up on us.

- John Bytheway: 21:58 Yeah. Do you know what I've always wondered about this, Gaye? You mentioned this before. It reminds me of A Christmas Carol. It reminds me of when Ebenezer Scrooge says to the spirit of Christmas future, "Are these the shadows of things that must be or are these the shadows of things that might be?" It sounds like Lehi, his interpretation was these are things that might be if things stay as they are this. That's why he could persuade them with all the feeling of a tender parent, because he believes there's still an opportunity for Laman and Lemuel to not become what the dream seems to show.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 22:39 Yeah. Oh, yeah. I think that that's reflective, when we go to chapter 10, where I see him doing his interpretation of it.
- Hank Smith: 22:48 Gaye, you mentioned earlier Alma 32 and how Alma taps into this language a little bit. You also mentioned earlier tasting of the fruit of the tree and then leaving it behind. They're ashamed and they fall away into forbidden paths and how that can be scary. The idea that I can have these experiences, partake of the fruit of the tree and then that somehow I can be drawn away from that, that's a scary idea. As I was looking at it, in Lehi's Dream, Lehi says in verse 28, that this group of people had tasted of the fruit of the tree and they were ashamed.
- 23:29 But if you go to Alma 32, Alma says, "Once you have this fruit," this is Alma 32:42, right at the end he says, "you shall feast upon this fruit until you are filled, that you hunger not, neither shall you thirst." I wonder if there's a key there to understanding how to stay at the tree. If you really want to stay at the tree, you don't taste of the fruit. You feast until you are no longer interested in the building. Eat and eat and eat. I think of Nephi, Nephi's over there eating the fruit. He's making tree of life jam, tree of life pie. This is all he's interested in, is this fruit. When that becomes your focus and you are filled with the fruit, the building loses its pull.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 24:19 Lure. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 24:19 Yeah. It loses its attractiveness. You're just, "Why would I go there? It's strange." I like that you pointed it out. Why would I go over there? That's a strange place to be. That's a strange building. For anybody like me that's worried, I don't want to partake of the fruit and then end up walking away. I don't want

to be in that group. Keep feasting. Just keep feasting every day. As you do that, Gaye, don't you think the building loses its pull?

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 24:47

Absolutely. I can't just walk away from the building and be passive. I've got to be actively involved in finding ways that can engage me and give me opportunities to feel the spirit and to feel of that love, but that's something I've got to be intentional about.

Hank Smith: 25:05

Yeah. I picture Nephi there with his fruit. His mouth is full all the time and he's looking at the building. "Do you want some fruit? Well, I'm going to stay here and keep eating. This is really good."

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 25:19

It could be easy in the gospel to be passive. I go to church, I warm a seat, go through the motions, and I don't do it. I can also say that, from experience, when I do that, I walk away and go, check, I've been to church. But when I'm actively involved, whether it's in a sacrament meeting, and I don't have to be actively involved in terms of giving talks or anything, but when I'm actively involved in the experience of sacrament and of partaking of the sacrament, and when I'm actively involved in the experience of either Relief Society or Sunday School, I come away from church feeling very differently. Instead of it being a checkbox, I come away thinking, I love this gospel. I'm grateful for a Heavenly Father who loves me, for His Savior, and for a Restoration, and living prophets. It's a different thing than when I'm just being passive.

26:23

There were two New Testament scholars, Davies and Allison. They talk about this metaphor that a disciple of Jesus Christ is not a passive spectator sitting in the grandstand and watching the game going on down in the field. Instead, a disciple of Jesus Christ is somebody who has skin in the game, who is down in the field giving their all to help the success of what's going on. I've thought about that. I'm a nobody, but the church is made up of nobodies who, every day, do things that helps the Kingdom of God move forward in incrementally small ways but important ways. That's what I mean about being engaged in it. I'm not going to be speaking at general conference. I might be in the nursery, but those are the things that help move the Kingdom of God forward in its manifested destiny. That's where I need to be engaged in the trenches because I have a vested interest in the outcome of what happens rather than being acted upon.

John Bytheway: 27:48

Oh. We had Justin and Aislin Dyer here. Was that John, John, John, and Jude?

Hank Smith:	27:54	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	27:54	I can't stop thinking about something that Aislin said that I thought was so good. She said, "An adult is someone who contributes more than they consume." Elder Bednar has talked about this. He talks about his wife going to church and finding somebody that I can lift and help and serve, and being really engaged, like you just said. Not to check the box but to go, there's somebody here I can lift or talk to or help. I'm going to contribute more than I consume.
Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	28:20	I love that idea.
Hank Smith:	28:21	Me too. Hey, real quick before we get onto the interpretation in chapter 10, have either of you noticed, and this is just something to think about, that the four groups in Lehi's dream almost match perfectly the four soils in the parable of the sower? You've got these first people who want to get to the tree, but the mist of darkness comes and that fits the stony ground, then you've got these people who get to the tree, but then the things of this world choke the word and it becomes unfruitful. You've got people who are not interested in the tree at all. They're trying to get to the building, but that would be the wayside. You've got those who go to the tree and end up staying there, similar to the Savior saying those that have the good soil and bring forth fruit, just something to chew on.
John Bytheway:	29:13	Hank, that's one of my hot buttons. This is just average Brother Bytheway talking. Lehi's dream is part four of a four-part story. It's the soil, the seed, the season, then the supper. The soil is Matthew 13, parable of the four kinds of soil. When Alma notices the Zoramites, he doesn't teach them the parable of the sower. He sees that they're good soil, the poor among the Zoramites. He turns and says, "I'm going to tell you about this word I want you to plant in your hearts based on what I just heard on the Rameumptom you don't believe in, but if you'll give place that this word, this seed may be planted in your hearts." He tells them to plant this word, which is Christ.
	29:59	The season, he says, "You're going to need faith, diligence, and patience. That's the fertilizer FDP to grow this." He says, "If you neglect the tree, you will never partake of the fruit of the tree of life." There's part four right there. I think they're all connected. I think, of course, the four soils correspond with the four groups in Lehi's Dream because it's the same story, in my opinion. It's so fun that, in all the standard works, we have the soil, the seed, the season, and the supper all connected that

way. To me, that's thrilling to see how that all works together and how they correspond so perfectly.

- Hank Smith: 30:40 Well, I'm glad I wasn't crazy with that thought. Gaye, you mentioned that chapter 10 is Lehi's interpretation. I don't know if many of our listeners, me included, attach chapter 10 to chapter 8. We can just leave chapter 8 on its own and then we move on not bringing it with us. You're saying bring Lehi's dream with you into chapter 10.
- Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 31:02 Absolutely. There's a reason we don't often make the connection, because Nephi has put chapter 9 in there which breaks things up. Chapter 10 is he's saying, "Okay. From this point on, I'm going to talk about my stuff. I'm not just abridging my father's stuff anymore." But what does he do? He immediately goes to his father. This, again, is important to him. I'm on the small plates and I'm doing my stuff but I'm still going to talk about my dad. One of the reasons why I think that this is the interpretation is because if we go to the end of chapter 10, we've got this segue from what Lehi is teaching to Nephi and his experience, and then him going to segue into his vision experience. After he hears his dad teaching in chapter 10, notice what we have in verse 17, "And it came to pass that after I, Nephi, having heard all the words of my father concerning the things which he saw in a vision," the rest of the chapter has been talking about what might be seen as other things.
- 32:14 But he's saying, "No, I'm listening to him talking about his vision and also the things which he spake by the power of the Holy Ghost, which power he received by faith on the son of God, and the Son of God was the Messiah who should come," and as we'll see that's going to be important in this chapter, "I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men. For he's the same yesterday." And then verse 19, "For he that diligently seeketh shall find, and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them by the power of the Holy Ghost." As I read these verses, we know later on that Laman and Lemuel had absolutely no idea what their father is talking about.
- 33:10 "Have you understood this?" They said, "No, we have no idea" Nephi is going to say, "But have you asked?" They're going, "No, God doesn't make anything known to us." But the response is Nephi seems not to have fully understood either, and so he says, "I need to not just have my dad talk about it, but I need to have my own personal experience with the Holy Ghost. I'm

going to seek to do that. I was desirous that I might see, and hear, and know these things. I don't want to just hear what dad's saying. I want to see what he saw so that I can know not just vicariously from my dad's experience but from my own personal experience. I know I'm going to have to pay a price for that and I'm willing to do it." That leads us into chapter 11.

34:05 My interest in here is going, okay, we've seen the vision dream, but what do we have in chapter 10? Verse 2, "Behold, it came to pass after my father had made an end of speaking the words of the dream and also of exhorting them to the diligence, he spake concerning the Jews." Now what I think is happening, and when I get upstairs, I'm tracking Lehi down, because I want to ask him point-blank what is going on here, but this is how I'm reading it. I think he's had his dream and he started off because he was thinking about his family, his immediate family. We've talked about how it segues into not just people in general, but more specifically probably the seed of Laman and Lemuel. But now I think that Lehi is starting to think broadly. "What is it that is going to help if there's a possibility for my sons to come back?" If there's a possibility that God can be merciful to them and to their children who are bearing the impact of the rippling effects of their choices, is there hope for them?

35:23 I want to connect that with Zenos's allegory because this is the same way that Jacob is going to introduce them to the allegory. Frankly, in Romans 11, when Paul seems to be giving a shortened version of Zenos's allegory, he's asking the same thing. Is there hope for Israel who have broken their covenants and turned away from God? Paul's going to give the CliffsNotes version of the allegory. I wonder whether Lehi is thinking likewise, because notice verse 3 in what he goes to, "Concerning the Jews, that after they should be destroyed, even the great city of Jerusalem, and many be carried away captive into Babylon, according to the own time of the Lord, they should return again. Yea, even brought back out of captivity, and that they should be brought back out of captivity that they should possess again the land of their inheritance."

36:27 Now, all through the Book of Mormon here, we've had Lehi prophesying that it was important for us to leave even though Laman and Lemuel didn't like it because Jerusalem is going to be destroyed, then Nephi telling Laman and Lemuel when they're in the rebelling, "If you can trust in God, then we're going to see the benefit of what has come from listening to a prophet and following through." Then the vision comes up and it starts talking about, we talked about this, that this man in a white robe led them through a dark and dreary place. How does Lehi

open his teaching, his open teaching here? He talks about the destruction of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in what would be considered to be one of the darkest times in all of Jewish history up to the Holocaust. What does he talk about here?

37:34 He's starting, "This is our dark and dreary wasteland." The impact of that is not just for a day or two, but this is years that come from it. Not only has Jerusalem become desolate, but the people are taken away. They're in Babylon, they've got to exist in Babylon, and it's going to take about 70 years before they come back. When they come back, what do they find of Jerusalem? They weep for once what was a great and wonderful city and temple, but it's all gone, so he brings it back to this. That's why I see the connection. He goes on and says, "But there will be a return." Can there be a return for Laman and Lemuel? Is it possible that there's a return for them or for their posterity because the Lord does return again. "Yea, even he brought them back out of captivity, and after they should be brought back out of captivity, they should possess again the land of their inheritance," which is difficult for Lehi and his family because their inheritance is going to be different. We talked about that.

Hank Smith: 38:56 Gaye, verse 3, this destruction of the southern kingdom of Judah and maybe the entire scattering of Israel, and even verse 6, "all mankind were in a lost and fallen state." I'm seeing the dark and dreary waste. What a fascinating connection.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 39:13 Yeah. What is it that brings them out of this? In the dream, it is Lehi praying and eventually then being led to the tree. But here, verse 4, again, it's going to take some time but, "Yea, even 600 years from the time that my father left Jerusalem, a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews, even the Messiah or the Savior of the world." This is the hours in the dark and dreary place, but the hope of the tree is the Savior. "He also spake concerning the prophets and how a great number testified these things concerning this Messiah, of whom he had spoken, or this Redeemer of the world. Wherefore, all mankind," as you said, "was lost and fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer." He spoke also of another prophet and he's going to talk about John the Baptist here.

40:21 He's going to talk about how he prepares the way for the coming of the Messiah. I've thought about how Lehi, in a very real sense, for his family, is like John the Baptist, preparing them for the tree, going there ahead of his family to partake of the

fruit, to get a sense of it, to know how joyous it is, and then invite people to come to participate with him, acting in very John the Baptist way. "Preparing the way of the Lord, making the paths straight, for there standeth one among you whom you know not, and he's mightier than I, whose shoe's latchet I'm not worthy," helping him see that this isn't any ordinary tree. "And my father said he should baptize in Bethabara with water."

41:16 Even the Messiah is this, the water of the fountain as it originally comes out, the cleansing power of the clean water. "And after he baptized the Messiah with water, he should behold and bear record that he had baptized the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world." How would that resonate with Lehi as he's thinking about Laman and Lemuel and thinking of the hope that there is for them because of the coming Messiah of Jesus Christ?

Hank Smith: 41:53 Gaye, this is awesome.

John Bytheway: 41:55 That's really great.

Hank Smith: 41:57 The dark and dreary waste, the hours in the dark and dreary waste, the Messiah, the tree is introduced. How did I not ever see this? "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," right out of the dream.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 42:11 For Lehi's family, that's okay because they can go directly to the tree. It's the others that have this path and need the rod and everything.

Hank Smith: 42:20 I beheld a straight and narrow path. I mean, it's right out of the dream. I feel so frustrated sometimes when something's right in front of me and I've never seen it before. The water, the baptism of Christ, this is playing out almost exactly like the dream.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 42:39 Yeah. Verse 11, he talks about, the dwindling of the Jews in unbelief. "And after they have slain the Messiah, who should come, after he had been slain, he should rise from the dead and should make himself manifest, by the Holy Ghost, to the Gentiles." And then this, notice the language, "Yea, even my father spake much concerning the Gentiles and also concerning the house of Israel, that they should be compared like unto an olive tree, whose branches should be broken off and should be scattered upon the face of all the earth." Where have we seen that language before? Well, we haven't seen it yet, but we all know it. This is Zenos's allegory. This is another reason why it

makes me think is this what Lehi has been reading, studying, searching, thinking about?

Hank Smith: 43:29 What has he been thinking about that led to the vision that led to the dream?

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 43:36 Yeah. 13, "Wherefore, he said it must needs be that we should be led with one accord into the land of promise, unto the fulfilling of the word of the Lord, that we should be scattered upon all of the face of the earth." Again, this is Lehi seeing things a little bit differently, and then verse 14 about the scattering. "And after the house of Israel should be scattered," us, "they should be gathered again but in a different place, or, in fine, after the Gentiles had received the fullness of the gospel, the natural branches of the olive tree, or the remnants of the house of Israel, should be grafted in, or come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer." Again, that's Zenos's allegory.

44:24 We are being scattered. My family is being scattered, but we will be gathered, and it will be gathered as we come to know about the true Messiah and the Lord and Redeemer. They're the two places where I'm thinking again that this is the allegory is motivated. It's when Nephi hears this that he says, "I need to know more. I don't understand that, but I need help," and he's willing to pay the price to have that experience. An experience similar to his father ends up being way more expansive than even the experience of his father. I love this stuff. I love this stuff.

Hank Smith: 45:09 Man, Gaye. It's almost like I think in my own teaching and reading, I go directly from Lehi's chapter 8, Lehi's dream to Nephi's vision, chapter 11, and I've never looked at chapter 10 the way you have shown it here, and said, "Look. Look, he's interpreting the dream."

John Bytheway: 45:29 I think you're right. Lehi must have had Zenos's allegory on his mind. Usually, when you get scattered, I like to call it, you get scattered brain, you lose your testimony, then you lose your real estate. Except, in this case, Lehi was scattered to preserve this part of the house of Israel. The Zenos's allegory can answer the question of, well, we haven't lost our testimony but we're getting scattered, so how's this going to work? Zenos's allegory answers that, so no wonder that's on his mind. See, Hank, I'm like you. I sometimes rush through chapter 10 to get to 11-15.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn: 46:06 The goal of Zenos's allegory is the fruit. It's not the tree, it's the fruit that comes from it. How is it that Israel, even though they

have these ups and downs, but God is doing this, is orchestrating all of these things he does so that he can get as much fruit as possible, as many souls of the children of men to return to him and partake in eternal life. I love that part because I hope that I'm one of them even though I have my dream experiences too.

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------|---|
| John Bytheway: | 46:42 | Just another reason to send the boys back to get the plates of brass, because Zenos's allegory was on there and then Lehi reads it and all this comes out. This is great. Thank you. |
| Hank Smith: | 46:54 | Yeah, this has been absolutely fantastic. You pointed out chapter 10:6, they're lost and fallen state, and they're going to stay there unless they rely on the Redeemer. We tie that back to Lehi being in the dark and dreary waste seeing the tree. You'll know this quote exactly. President Benson said, "You need to understand the Fall before you can truly desire the Atonement." Man, I love this stuff too, because, John, you pointed out earlier that the angel, the man in the white robe, showed Lehi where he was. It didn't necessarily lead him to that. |
| John Bytheway: | 47:36 | He led him through it through the darkness. Yeah. |
| Hank Smith: | 47:39 | Yeah. "Look, this is where you are. You are in..." Lehi comprehends the Fall in chapter 8:7, "I beheld myself, I'm in a dark and dreary waste." I never saw the Fall in the dark and dreary waste until Gaye pointed out chapter 10's relationship to chapter 8. This is expansive. I love this stuff. That really just made my day, all of it. For me, in my Christ and the Everlasting Gospel class, we spend a full day, if not a day and a half, on the Fall. Because if you don't understand the Fall, Jesus is a great guy and he teaches great things, but I don't know if I need Him. |
| John Bytheway: | 48:21 | I feel like the church goes through a Fall. The apostasy was the Fall and the Restoration was the Atonement to bring it all back. It's another pattern. That's why when you teach Lehi's dream, don't skip that part about going through the darkness because that's, "I need help. I need the tree." |
| Hank Smith: | 48:42 | Goodness. I've had these scriptures for 20 something years and I never wrote the Fall by chapter 8:7, never once. |
| Dr. Gaye Strathearn: | 48:51 | Can I just say though, as part of this, that I've thought about bits and pieces of this over the years for a number of years, but preparing for today, the Spirit helps you see and teaches you things that you just don't see sometimes. He does it because you're being intentional, trying to understand. It is a reminder |

to me of how powerful the scriptures are and can be when we let the Spirit teach us. It doesn't mean that we don't have to do some work on our own in preparation. Again, this is the intentional part, not being passive. The Spirit doesn't teach me when I'm being passive, but it does teach me in powerful ways when I'm a seeker, and the scriptures are such a wonderful source.

49:47 You can spend a lifetime studying these things, but there's always something new that the Spirit can teach us always. I think that will go on for eternity. I don't know when it'll stop, if it'll stop, because I'm a Bible person. I love the Bible and I spend a lot of my time on there, but these experiences are a reminder to me of why I also love the Book of Mormon and need to spend time in it for my personal growth and spiritual journey to the tree, so I can partake of the fruit that happens when the Spirit teaches me.

Hank Smith: 50:23 Yeah, I would describe my experience today being taught, sweet above all that is sweet. It is the fruit. This is part of partaking of the fruit. John, I'm shocked on chapter 10.

John Bytheway: 50:36 Yeah, that's really cool. I've got notes all over my margins now that tie it back to the tree of life, tie it back to Zenos's allegory. Okay, like this flew out of Joseph Smith's imagination, right?

Hank Smith: 50:48 Yeah. Gaye. What a treat. I mean, what a fruit, I should say, it has been.

John Bytheway: 50:57 What a feast.

Hank Smith: 50:59 Yeah, a feast really. I feel so full. In this moment, this space that I'm in right now, the building has lost its appeal. I want to keep doing this. I don't want to stop. Oh, what a good day. What a good day, John.

John Bytheway: 51:15 Yeah. I love this, because now I'm seeing that's why they needed the brass plates, and then Lehi reads Zenos's allegory that we have in Jacob 5. "How's this all going to work? We just got scattered. How do we get back?" Sees the dream and then summarizes it again, 1 Nephi 10, "This is how it's going to work and how we'll come to the knowledge of the true Messiah in the end." Never saw it that way. That's so good.

Hank Smith: 51:39 Wow, yeah. Gaye, thank you for your time, not just your time here with us, but for the decades you've spent studying.

Dr. Gaye Strathearn:	51:48	All glory goes to God. All glory. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	51:53	Thank you for spending your time with us. It has been time well spent. We want to thank Dr. Gaye Strathearn for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. Join us next week. We're in the next few chapters of the Book of Mormon on followHIM.

HE WASNT WEIRD, HE WAS RIGHT!



- | | | |
|----------------|-------|--|
| Hank Smith: | 00:02 | Hello, my friends. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. This year we are telling a single story. Last year we answered a single question from this week's lesson. This year, we're going to tell a single story from this week's lesson. John, we are in First Nephi 6 through 10. The center of the lesson being the Tree of Life, Lehi's dream. What story comes to mind? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:25 | Oh, so many Hank, but the one that stands out to me, Sister Elaine Dalton, in April conference of 2008, she gave this talk called At All Times In All Things and In All places, and she talked about a young man named Jess who was a student body president at a large university. He went back to Chicago to some sort of a student body president convention council and thing like that, and they had a get to know you game at the beginning, and we've done those at EFY and FSJ. And this get to know you game, they're in an open area with grass. They have four trees with a sign in front of each one, strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree. They start throwing out issues facing today's youth and everybody's running to the tree. And you get to know, "Oh, I like that too," as you're running to each tree. I was surprised they would do this, but they threw out, "Pre-marital sexual relations are okay. Go". And here's Jess, member of the church, he runs to strongly disagree, and he gets there and he turns around, and guess? |
| Hank Smith: | 01:26 | He's the only one there, I'm guessing. |
| John Bytheway: | 01:29 | That's exactly what she said. He was the only one there. And she said that other kids were laughing and pointing, "Are you serious?" or, "Did you hear the question?" |
| Hank Smith: | 01:39 | He must not have heard the question, right? |
| John Bytheway: | 01:41 | He's like, "No, no, I'm serious. This is how I feel." And she said there was stunned silence, which I love because that's a chance for the conscience to say something. There was stunned silence that they went on. But I'm laughing going, "Okay, so here's a kid |

standing alone by a tree, while other people are laughing and pointing. Does this remind you of anything?"

02:05 And so he goes through that and Sister Dalton, she makes it really profound. She said he felt alone and he felt weird, but Sister Dalton said he wasn't weird. He was right and he wasn't alone. She said during the rest of the week, several of the student leaders came to him privately and said, "Oh, I wish I'd known that years earlier." I love this story. The phrase Lehi uses, "The tree by which I stood." Stay by the tree. Even some people that are laughing and mocking might inside be going, "Ooh, I wonder if he's right about this?" That's the story that comes to my mind.

Hank Smith: 02:45 Absolutely perfect. I picture Nephi there at the tree just eating. He's making tree of life jam, tree of life pie. That's all he cares about. That's all he cares about. People are mocking him. And he's like, "Do you want some fruit?" "No." "Okay, I'm just going to stay here."

John Bytheway: 02:59 "You're crazy. This is the best thing I've ever tasted. You should come."

Hank Smith: 03:03 "You should get over here. You should get over here." I love that story, John.

03:08 Come join us for our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. Come back next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorite story.