



EPIISODE 7

GUEST: JAN J. MARTIN

"We Lived after the Manner of Happiness"



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 do we address difficult topics in the scriptures? Dr. Jan Martin explores the importance of record-keeping and covenant-keeping throughout trials.

Part 2:

Dr. Jan Martin discusses modern research and study on difficult passages regarding "skin of blackness" in the Book of Mormon, while bearing testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon as the word of God.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Jan Martin
- 01:48 Introduction of Dr. Martin
- 02:56 The concept of covenants
- 05:38 Nephi’s purpose
- 08:05 Enduring difficulty through covenantal relationships
- 11:22 Remembering what the Lord has done
- 13:26 Lehi’s conversation with his family
- 17:11 Purpose alleviates suffering
- 20:12 Joseph of Egypt and Joseph Smith
- 24:22 The Book of Mormon is to maintain covenants
- 27:51 God’s perspective and many Josephs
- 35:25 Wilfred Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow
- 37:55 Joseph Smith and testimony
- 39:12 Covenant renewal among the Lehtes
- 42:02 2 Nephi 5:4
- 43:54 Grief and death
- 50:45 An imperfect family
- 52:53 Suzerainty
- 55:07 Six essential parts
- 1:03:15 Ishmael’s daughters fearful of the future
- 1:06:25 Commandment to be cheerful
- 01:11:15 Gratitude and journaling
- 01:12:55 End of Part 1–Dr. Jan Martin

Part 2

- 00:00 Part I–Dr. Jan J. Martin
- 00:07 2 Nephi 5 Covenant and prayer
- 01:25 Taking problems to the Lord
- 04:49 Separation and boundaries
- 08:20 The pain of Nephi’s separation
- 12:03 The group left behind
- 13:11 2 Nephi 5:19-20 – the Lord’s promises to Laman and Lemuel
- 16:04 2 Nephi 5:21 - Breaking a covenant
- 20:38 Different verse breaks and careful teaching
- 23:44 Cursing or covenant breaking
- 28:28 Unpacking difficult topics
- 30:21 Darkness is metaphorical

- 32:42 Historical research regarding skin color and bias
- 36:24 Teaching with caution
- 39:10 Additional resources
- 40:03 Righteous vs unrighteous not Nephite vs Lamanite
- 42:27 2 Nephi 5:22 and making assumptions
- 45:09 Letting go of past assumptions
- 46:31 2 Nephi 5:25 covenant keeping and happiness
- 50:19 Dr. Martin shares her testimony of Jesus and the Book of Mormon
- 54:17 End of Part II– Dr. Jan J. Martin

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Biographical Information:



Born: San Diego, CA

Raised: Albuquerque, NM and Holladay, UT; graduated from Skyline High School

Mission for LDS Church: Richmond, Virginia

Married to: Jared Martin

Bachelor's Degree: Brigham Young University: Physical Education K-12 Teaching with a minor in German Teaching (1994)

Master's Degrees: Brigham Young University: Exercise Physiology (1997); University of York, UK: Early Modern History (2008)

PhD: University of York, UK: Sixteenth-century English Bible Translation; focus on early English reformers (2011)

Previous career: Taught as adjunct faculty at BYU in the Physical Education Department (1997-2001);

Taught for LDS Seminaries & Institutes for 5 years: 1 year at Timpview High School (2002-2003), 3 years at Spanish Fork High School (2003-2006), 1 year at Provo High (2006-2007)

Classes taught for BYU Religious Education: Teachings and Doctrines of the Book of Mormon, First-half of the Book of Mormon, Second-half of the Book of Mormon, The New Testament Gospels

Research interests: Early English translations of the Bible; early English reformers such as William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, and John Frith; King James translation of the Bible; development of the language of English theology

Publications:

“The Prophet Nephi and the Covenantal Nature of *Cut-off, Cursed, Skin of Blackness, and Loathsome*,” in Charles Swift and Nicholas Frederick (eds.), *They Shall Grow Together: The Bible in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2022) 107–141.

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“Letting English Words Stand: Thomas More, William Tyndale and the Common Expression of English Theology,” *Archive for Reformation History*. Jahrgang 106 [December 2015], 92-114.

“Cuthbert Tunstal, Thomas More, John Fisher, and the Burning of William Tyndale’s 1526 New Testament,” *Reformation*, vol. 18, no.1, December 2013, 84-105.

Languages: German

Other interests and hobbies: I enjoy an active lifestyle and participate regularly in many different sports with my husband: racquetball, tennis, pickleball, cycling, volleyball, weight lifting, and kayaking. We also enjoy taking walks and hiking all over the beautiful state of Utah whenever we have a chance. My husband is from England and that means we often return across the pond to visit family and enjoy the beautiful English countryside. I love teaching and researching and really enjoy becoming more knowledgeable so that I might assist the wonderful students that come through BYU.

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Suzerainty Treaty Structure of 2 Nephi 1

Compiled by Dr. Jan J. Martin, Associate Professor, Brigham Young University, 2023.

Structural Element	Purpose	Evidence
Preamble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified the parties making the covenant, time & place covenant was made. Evidence of the superior authority and power of the suzerain 	<p>2 Nephi 1:5 Lehi, Lehi's family, others led to promised land.</p> <p>2 Nephi 1:1 Lehi rehearsed the great things the Lord had done in bringing the family out of Jerusalem.</p>
Historical Prologue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed past relationship between suzerain and vassal. Emphasized benevolence of suzerain & rebelliousness of vassal. 	<p>2 Nephi 1:2-4 Jehovah was merciful in warning family to leave. He saved their lives multiple times.</p> <p>Laman and Lemuel were rebellious on the waters.</p>
Stipulations of the Covenant	Established the reciprocal responsibilities for each party in the covenant.	<p>Suzerain's responsibilities 2 Nephi 1:5-7, 21 Preserving the promised land as a land of liberty for Lehi's family</p> <p>Lehite responsibilities 2 Nephi 1:24-28 Follow Jehovah's commandments, be united in all things, support Jehovah's chosen prophet</p>
Blessing and Cursing Section	<p>Blessings provided incentives to keep the covenant.</p> <p>Cursings outlined consequences for breaking the covenant.</p>	<p>2 Nephi 1:7, 9, 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never be made captive, protected from other nations. Prosper in the land. Possessing their lands, dwelling safely forever. <p>2 Nephi 1:7, 10-12, 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land cursed. Lose lands to other nations, scattered, smitten, bloodshed. Famine, hatred, warfare, captivity to the devil.
List of Witnesses	Demonstrated the trustworthiness of the suzerain and that the covenant was made in the open.	<p>2 Nephi 1-4 Lehi's posterity present</p>
Instructions for Preserving the Covenant	Provided a way for the covenant to be remembered and kept.	<p>1 Nephi 19:3-5. Kept on the small plates, to be used for the instruction and knowledge of his people.</p>

Information taken from: Jan J. Martin, "The Prophet Nephi and the Covenantal Nature of Cut-off, Cursed, Skin of Blackness, and Loathsome," in Charles Swift and Nicholas Frederick (eds.), They Shall Grow Together: The Bible in the Book of Mormon (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2022) 107–141.



Covenant Keepers

GUEST: JAN J. MARTIN



- Hank Smith: 00:00:04 Hello, my friends. Welcome to a new episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my happy co-host, John Bytheway. John, you can't disagree with that one. You are a happy co-host.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:15 I'll take it.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:15 John, the reason I call you happy is because the title of this week's Come, Follow Me lesson is We Lived After the Manner of Happiness. I've heard you reference 2 Nephi 4 multiple times over the last few years. What are you looking forward to today?
- John Bytheway: 00:00:30 This is a time when Nephi has to move and Lehi dies and he laments that. I mean, Nephi calls himself wretched, which makes me think, "Ooh, can I be wretched like Nephi?" There's some great things today. And then of course living after the manner of happiness, like you said.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:46 Right, John. I know this is going to end almost our narrative portion of Nephi's life. This is going to be kind of the end of our story and we're going to get a lot of doctrine and Isaiah chapters after this one. I'm excited to see how his life plays out here. John, we are joined by our good friend, Dr. Jan Martin. She is a joy. Jan, what are we looking forward to in this lesson?
- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:01:09 I really like to take a covenant perspective of these chapters. That's not one that a lot of people take and it is so much fun. So I'm just looking forward to sharing with you a way to see what's going on with Nephi, what's on his mind, and how covenants is a big thing and how it helps him through all of these difficult transitions with losing his dad and becoming the person in charge of everything and then having to move to a new location and set up and how this covenant is really that stability for him and that helps them live after the matter of happiness. So I think it's going to be really good.

Hank Smith:	00:01:49	I love these chapters. Jan is not new to our podcast. She's given us some incredible episodes in the past John, but some people might be just joining us. So tell us about Jan.
John Bytheway:	00:02:00	We're excited to have Dr. Jan J. Martin back. She's an associate professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University. She specializes in the Book of Mormon, the New Testament, a PhD in 16th century religious reformers and Bible translation, which is so cool. So we're really glad to have you back.
Hank Smith:	00:02:20	I look forward to everything that Jan does. She's been on the Y Religion Podcast a couple of times. It's the podcast of the Religious Education Department at BYU. Jan has given a couple of episodes there that for me, personally, had a complete paradigm shift on a couple of topics, especially the King James English in the Book of Mormon, wow. So we'd encourage everyone to go find the Y Religion Podcast and especially go find Jan over there.
	00:02:48	All right, Jan, where should we start? 2 Nephi 3, 4, and 5. We had a great experience last week with Dr. Anderson. Where should we go now?
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:02:57	Okay, well, I would like to do a little exercise with you guys that I do with my students when we hit this spot because it's really just fun. And it's about perspective. It's about zooming out first before we zoom in. That's one thing I like about the scriptures, is you can take the distant view of things if you're willing to look at things kind of as a whole. And then as you learn, you zoom in really close and you start looking at the details.
	00:03:23	I just want to introduce this concept of covenants. Russell M. Nelson has said that one of the most important concepts of revealed religion is the sacred covenant. I'm going to have us just zoom all the way out. We're going to take kind of a more wide approach of looking at Nephi's writings for a minute and I'll just have you guys have some fun with a little exercise. Then we can zoom in on chapters 3, 4, and 5 and then have a much clearer view of what we're seeing because we took the broader perspective for a minute.
Hank Smith:	00:03:54	Jan, John's always telling me I need to get more exercise, so I'm excited for this.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:03:59	What I want you to do for just a minute, we're just going to look at 1 Nephi as a whole for just a second. And what I have my students do is I'll say, "Okay, in 1 Nephi, there are six big

stories." And they all know what they are. You're leaving Jerusalem, you're getting the plates. You're convincing Ishmael's family to come with you. You have that broken bow issue story there. Then you build the ship and then you cross the ocean. So those are our six major stories in 1 Nephi. So what I ask my students to do is talk amongst themselves and say, "If you had to pick one theme that runs through every story, what would it be?" So let me have you and John just do that. Just kind of remember those six stories and then pick something that you could identify as a common theme through every one of them. What would that be?

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|-----------------|----------|---|
| Hank Smith: | 00:04:48 | John, you get to go first, so it'll give me time to think. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:04:53 | I think that God helped them, maybe. They needed help and they got help. |
| Dr. Jan Martin: | 00:04:57 | And that's great because they need to leave Jerusalem and they need to get the plates, they have to convince Ishmael's family, they got to solve the broken bow, they've got to build this ship and they got to across the ocean. So good. John, that's a great theme. Hank, did that give you any little breather moment? It's hard to do that on the spot, but anything coming to you that would be different than that? |
| Hank Smith: | 00:05:17 | Yeah, I think divine direction and kind of a stretch is something I don't want to do or I don't want to deal with. When I think of that broken bow, how we talked about with Dr. Griffin, I don't like problems. I want to stay comfortable, and these are all uncomfortable things. |
| Dr. Jan Martin: | 00:05:38 | Okay. So I'm just going to put those two things together. John, you saw God's side of it. And Hank, you're seeing the human side of it. This is what I want to argue is, 1 Nephi is really about exercising faith that God will help you with uncomfortable situations. In other words, you're in a covenant relationship that I can do hard things because I'm yoked with the divine. 1 Nephi, if you'd back out and look at it, you can see Nephi purposefully giving us these stories to help us see, "Well, how did we get to the new world?" We got here because we listened to God, we did hard things with his help and we kept that relationship. Does that make sense? |
| | 00:06:26 | So you see 1 Nephi as a story of faithful people and what happens when they keep their covenants or not, like Laman and Lemuel often are the foil of people who are struggling to have that faith. But when they do and when they are supportive with getting Ishmael's family or building the ship, amazing things |

happen. We've got 1 Nephi kind of as our backdrop for 2 Nephi. And if we approach it through the covenant lens, we can see Nephi illustrating what happens when you keep your covenants.

00:06:56 Then we hit 2 Nephi, which is our new world story. We're now in the new world. We've arrived here. As most of you know, 2 Nephi is full of Isaiah, and you guys are going to get to that in the next episodes here. But what I want to say is you have Nephi showing what covenants happened and what things happened because I kept my covenants. And then he is going to jump into the larger view, which is Israel's covenant destiny through the Isaiah teachings and where the Nephites fit into that. You have Jacob coming in as a teacher and his job is to teach why the Nephites need to feel like they haven't been abandoned by God. And he uses Isaiah to show that the covenant is still there. God is still keeping his end even though you've been scattered over to this new world and even though you've been kicked out of the initial lands of inheritance, and here we are, but we're going to use covenants to help us recognize that this is all okay and I don't need to feel like God abandoned me.

Hank Smith: 00:07:59 I think it's the, "Can a woman forget her baby?"

00:08:01 "No, she cannot, and I will not forget you."

Dr. Jan Martin: 00:08:05 Exactly. As we jump into 2 Nephi, chapters 3 through 5, that's the backdrop of which I want to approach it, is Nephi is really occupied with covenants and he's really shown we got here because of covenants, we're now here and we're able to deal with our adversity in the new world because of covenants. And I'm going to spend my whole 2 Nephi teaching you about Israel's covenant destiny and that the Nephites fit in that. As we look at the narrative in 2 Nephi 3 through 5, it's a really great lens that will help us deal with a lot of the narrative and the painful moments and then some of the things in 2 Nephi 5 that might be a little confusing or troubling or really helpful when we look at them through the covenant lens. I just want to set us up for that, that 1 and 2 Nephi are heavily saturated with covenants.

Hank Smith: 00:08:57 I like that. And as you're talking, Jan, in the back of my mind, I'm thinking, "Hank, do you take your covenants as seriously as Nephi?"

Dr. Jan Martin: 00:09:03 As Nephi. Mm-hmm.

Hank Smith:	00:09:05	Because you can also do hard things with the Lord's help when you focus on your covenants, when it's not just words to you. These are real promises.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:09:15	Yeah, as I started off with quoting President Nelson, let me carry on with that, he says, "Through the ages, God has made covenants with his children. His covenants occur through the entire plan of salvation and therefore are part of the fullness of the gospel." And then he says, "The greatest compliment that can be earned here in this life is to be known as a covenant keeper."
	00:09:37	If you just take 1 Nephi, you see Nephi is the ultimate covenant keeper. Then we're moving to the new world, and the challenge is to maintain our perspective of that covenant and continue to be covenant keepers, which is why the Nephites are able to live after the manner of happiness. They're doing the covenant things, keeping commandments and following the prophet and looking after each other. So that leads us to this happiness, even if we have to do hard things, like happiness isn't always an absence of hard things.
Hank Smith:	00:10:10	I like that.
John Bytheway:	00:10:11	Sometimes when we initially hear the word covenant, we feel an obligation, this promise that I made. What I hear you saying and what I love about covenants is it's a promise of togetherness. Of you have help. You're not alone. And I hope we can look at it that way, like God wants to help me keep my covenants. What it really means is not an obligation, but I have help. In everything I need to do, I have help.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:10:38	And I'm guaranteed the help. That's the thing, is I can have absolute confidence that God is going to play a role in all of this, and that's that security that sometimes we're missing in life. But when you have that relationship with God, you absolutely have no reason to believe he won't help, because he will. He's promised.
John Bytheway:	00:11:03	So rather than thinking of covenants, this obligation that I have, let's think of it as I have so much help, I have constant help. And we talked before about the word comfort, how it means together strong. When I think about covenants, I think together we can do this. Together strong, I have help.
Hank Smith:	00:11:22	Nice. I'm going to quote from your Ezekiel interview, Jan, you said, "When you need to be revitalized and you need some

hope, look at our promises. Keep focusing on the things the Lord has promised for the future." It seems that this has been on your mind the last couple of years.

- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:11:39 Because it's been so well taught by President Nelson, like he's really had a focus on covenants, on the covenant path, on staying on the covenant path. And I like to follow the lead of our prophets and try and take a similar focus to them as I'm approaching things. It's a really great way to follow the prophet, is what is he saying and how can I learn to take those things into my own perspective? So I've really tried to say, "Okay, if covenants are on the mind of our prophet, then they need to be on my mind." And then as I look in the scriptures, you see them everywhere.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:15 Wonderful.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:16 Wonderful. What you've said here really links well with the opening of the manual. It says, "Reading 1 Nephi, you might get the impression that Nephi was somehow larger than life. Large in stature both physically and spiritually. He seemed unshaken by the trials he faced." Or at least that is what we might assume. "While Nephi's faith was remarkable, his tender words in 2 Nephi 4 reveal that even faithful people sometimes feel wretched and easily beset by temptations." Here we see someone who is trying, who wants to be joyful, and we might add who really wants to trust in the covenants, but whose heart groaneth because of his sins. "We can relate to this and to the hopeful determination that follows. Nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted." There's those covenants again.
- 00:13:05 "While Nephi and his people learn to live after the manner of happiness, they also learn that happiness does not come easily or without periods of sorrow." And you referenced that earlier. "It ultimately comes from trusting the Lord." And we might throw in there and his promises, the rock of our righteousness. All right, Jan, I think we're ready to jump into these individual chapters. Where do we start?
- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:13:27 What I'd like to do really quick is just remember what's in chapter 1 and chapter 2, because when we jump into chapter 3, we're kind of in the middle of the conversation that Lehi's having with his family. Chapter 1, if you look at it through the covenant lens, what you see is Lehi reviewing the covenant that's been made with his people. He's in the middle of renewing and reviewing this covenant, and then part of that renewal ceremony is teaching doctrine. So you get to 2 Nephi 2, which you guys have already done, and you hear all these great

divine laws, the agency, the opposition, the probationary state, the atonement.

00:14:08 Now, as most of you know, Laman and Lemuel have complained about being on this journey the entire way, they never did understand why we had to leave Jerusalem and how come we had to go out here and suffer. And then you got little Joseph who's born into the middle of this and all he's ever known is traveling and adversity and moving and never being able to be settled in one place for very long. What an opportunity for a loving father to say, "Joseph, let me put this in perspective for you."

00:14:38 So then we look at verse 4 and we get the connection to his own ancestry. "I'm a descendant of Joseph of Egypt." And then notice the end of verse four, here we go, "And great were the covenants of the Lord, which he made unto Joseph." Lehi's gonna explain Joseph's life using an ancestor's covenants. "Why are we out here, Joseph? Why did our family have to leave Jerusalem? Why? Well, let me explain it through the covenants that were made to our patriarch Joseph back in the day." Again, how do I handle adversity? How do I explain adversity? I'm going to focus on the covenant part.

Hank Smith: 00:15:21 Well, this reminds me a little bit of my childhood, Jan, my mother saying, "In the days of my greatest sorrow, I did bear thee." Poor Joseph, I can't imagine. I'm kidding.

00:15:33 "Well, thank you father."

00:15:34 "Oh really. No, it was really the worst. Yeah, no, let me just tell you, it was awful. It was bad."

Dr. Jan Martin: 00:15:42 If you're trying to explain why bad things are happening to these people who are trying to be good, and notice where he goes, I'm going to go back to this promise that was made to our ancestors, so have a look at verse 5 everyone. "For Joseph truly saw our day." Little Joseph, our ancestor Joseph, saw us. Like how cool is that to know that, that somebody from the past saw our family? And he obtained a promise. There's the covenant again of the Lord that out of the fruit of his loins, the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel.

00:16:19 Now, not the Messiah, okay? We have all of those scriptures that talk about that, but a branch which was to be broken off, "Nevertheless to be remembered," here we go again, "in the covenants of the Lord that the Messiah should be made

manifest unto them in the latter days." Joseph, the reason we're out here in the wilderness is because our ancestor Joseph received a promise that there would be this branch of his family that would be led somewhere else, Messiah would come and visit, and we are fulfilling that. This is one of the reasons we're out here, is to fulfill prophecy and to fulfill covenant. How cool is that, to have that perspective for your rough life that you've had?

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| Hank Smith: | 00:17:06 | Yeah, there is purpose in this suffering. This isn't just suffering for suffering's sake. |
| Dr. Jan Martin: | 00:17:11 | And you remember Laman and Lemuel always telling their dad that he's kind of this visionary man who's making things up. The only reason we're out here in the wilderness is because you've lost your mind, so why are you doing that? But here is Lehi saying, "I didn't lose my mind. The reason we're out here, the reason we came here is partly obviously to save our lives from the destruction of Jerusalem, but this is part of these ancient covenants and promises and prophecies, and we are fulfilling them." I don't know how you guys are, but when you recognize that what's going on around you is part of the fulfillment of prophecies and covenants, you can really handle things better because you see that there's a larger purpose. I'm not just suffering for the sake of it. God is really working here, and I can trust this. And the reason I'm out here is really great and grand, even though it's hard. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:18:05 | Wonderful. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:18:07 | I've wondered if Lehi could have been saying, "You were a blessing in the middle of that great affliction that I had," maybe. Because I have seen my children come into very clean, tidy, sanitary hospital rooms, and to imagine having children in the wilderness, that's a whole other topic, what that must've been like. But I wanted to say that I love how often people are compared to trees in the scriptures. And we are a righteous branch, not just a branch that's broken off and scattered, but a righteous branch. And I feel like usually, people get scattered when they're wicked. They lose their testimony. Then they lose their real estate. But what he's saying is actually, we were scattered to preserve us. We are a righteous branch, which is, like you said, Jan, a really positive way to look at this. Here's what's happening. The Lord is preserving us. We're a righteous branch that he's moving to a different place. |
| Dr. Jan Martin: | 00:19:01 | And sometimes we see our adversity. We have this typical natural man way of saying, "Well, something bad's happening to |

me, so I must have done something wrong. What did I do? Why is God punishing me?" And I imagine Laman and Lemuel kind of took that approach as well. They weren't happy of being out there, and they may have thrown those kind of comments, but here is Lehi is saying, there isn't anything wrong. We were led out to protect us. And yes, it's been hard, but these are all positive reasons we're here. And we're not being punished, and we're righteous people, and God is leading us to these places where he can bless us more. So I don't need to see my adversity as negative. It's part of the growth that's going to take place as he's moving me somewhere else where he can bless me with more things. But we don't need to take that negative approach. And I don't think Lehi is, I think he's really trying to orient everyone to the blessings of, yes, I know this was hard, but this is really cool to be part of this bigger picture.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:20:03 | Jan, I have, at the top of my page, written, "This is Joseph times four," because we've mentioned two Josephs so far, but there's more to come. |
| Dr. Jan Martin: | 00:20:12 | So if everyone wants to come to verse six, you'll see more of this Josephness. Verse six is where you start with Joseph being able to talk for himself like Lehi's kind of been summarizing some things, but now we're going to look. So for Joseph of Egypt, in verse six, truly testified saying, "A seer shall the Lord, my God raise up who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of thy loins." In verse seven, Joseph truly said, "Thus saith the Lord unto me, a choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him, will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of the loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them," here we go again, "even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants, which I've made with thy fathers." |
| | 00:21:05 | Most of us know, as you read through the rest of chapter three, we're going to name this seer after his father, and his name's going to be after Joseph. So there's your other two Josephs. You have Joseph Smith, the seer, but his father is Joseph. And then we're connecting Joseph Smith to fulfilling part of this covenant that was made to Joseph of Egypt, that he would come and bring forth this record, this record of Lehi's descendants that are going to be of great worth, and remind the people who read it that they can be part of the covenant people. Whether you're a descendant of Abraham or whether you join in through baptism doesn't matter. Everyone can be part of this covenant family. It can't have been easy for Lehi to have done any of this. |

And he's getting adversity from everyone around. They're trying to kill him.

00:21:54 And then from in his own family, you constantly have this pushback. Why are we out here? What are you doing? Are you sure you know what you're doing? You're a crazy guy. So for him to try and reconnect with his own ancestry and find meaning in the scriptures is really important. And then to name his kids after these two pivotal figures. And especially this youngest one after Joseph, when you start looking at what he knows about this covenant with Joseph of Egypt, it's hard to think that that was random, that he's naming these kids and just pulling names out of somewhere. I think that these names really represent teachings. Now that they're in the new world, this is why we're here. And it's not a bad thing and you didn't do anything wrong that you've suffered. This is all part of the covenant.

00:22:46 Then we can come and look at verse 12, which is a really significant part of this prophecy that says here, "Wherefore the fruit of thy loins," that's Joseph of Egypt's loins "shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah," that's the line of the Messiah, obviously, "shall write, and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also," here we go again, "to the knowledge of my covenants." All those records they're keeping, we know Lehi keeps a record, we know Nephi is keeping one, and these records are going to also be part of the fulfillment of Joseph of Egypt's prophecies and promises, and to bring these two records together.

00:23:41 We know Lehi's family has the brass plates with the record of the Israelites, and now we're going to bring these two records together and make those record keeping efforts really important. It's important that they keep them and you see the Nephites being very protective of their records all the way through their Nephites history.

John Bytheway: 00:24:02 You've also got this footnote there as to the Ezekiel 37 idea of the stick of Joseph, stick of Judah being one in the hand. I like the way this says it a little bit even more because it talks about what that will do, confound false doctrines, lay down contentions and establish peace, and bring them to a knowledge of covenants.

Hank Smith:	00:24:22	John, if you remember, Dr. Sears, a couple of weeks ago, showed us, in Nephi's vision, if you remember, the plain and precious truths which are taken away, First Nephi 13, verse 26, which are plain and most precious and many covenants of the Lord have they taken away. So it seems like what Jan just pointed out, and you, John, just pointed out is that one of the major purposes of the Book of Mormon, we're coming back around to what we've been talking about, I think all year so far, is to make sure that the knowledge of the covenant is maintained and is recorded for the latter days. Knowing the book is going to come forth in the latter days, it needs to reestablish the covenant, these plain and precious truths. Does that kind of fit with verse 12?
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:25:10	Yeah, absolutely. When you think about us trying to make sense of our lives and where we fit in the eternal scheme of things, and to know that God has had a plan all along, and that from your Old Testament all the way through your Book of Mormon, you can see that plan, that he's working with individual prophets and keeping those covenants, and that we all fit in to this is, again, like Lehi's trying to do with his sons. This is positive. I don't need to panic. I don't need to abandon God because I feel like things aren't going very well. I'm part of this larger purpose, and that helps me keep things in perspective when maybe it's rough.
Hank Smith:	00:25:51	Yeah, Genesis. All the way back to Genesis 12, we're going to bless all the families of the earth.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:25:57	All the families of the earth.
Hank Smith:	00:25:58	So there's great purpose in what you're going through. It's part of the plan of the Lord, to use the House of Israel to bless the earth.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:26:07	As we keep saying, just because I have adversity does not mean I'm being punished. And when I'm in that covenant relationship, I have absolute confidence that God's going to help me. And I can go back and read these ancient stories and see God doing that, and then have confidence. So if we want to jump down and just look at verses 13 and 14, you'll see Lehi doing that. Verse 13 is continuing to talk about this seer, this Joseph Smith we're talking about and out of weakness, he shall be made strong. And those of you that know anything about Joseph's life, plenty of weaknesses, plenty of things, and he becomes a really powerful instrument in the hands of the Lord over time. "And in that day, when my work shall commence among all my people unto restoring thee O house of Israel, saith the Lord.

	00:26:54	And thus prophesied Joseph of Egypt saying, Behold that seer," that's Joseph Smith, "will the Lord bless. And they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded for this promise," and in that case, the word for means because of this promise, "which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins shall be fulfilled. Behold, I am sure of the fulfilling of this promise." How great is this when we're struggling, having a hard time, where do we look for the confidence? We'll go back and look at the Lord's promises for other people that he's made in the past. And we can have absolute confidence because we can see him keeping his promises in the past, which means he is going to keep them in the future. And Lehi's totally confident, like, I'm okay. I don't always know how things are going to play out, but I know that they will.
John Bytheway:	00:27:52	One of the impressions I've had so far this year in the Book of Mormon, I keep thinking of this phrase that God has a long view. We have such short views that... And maybe covenants help us see a longer view instead of, "Oh no, this happened, oh no, this happened, oh no, this happened." And the Lord's saying, "I got you. I got this. And I have a long view, and I'm going to keep my covenant." So I like that he would say, "I'm sure of this." That's a testimony that's nice.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:28:18	And again, when we looked back at 1 Nephi, how many times has the Lord come through for them in those six critical stories of helping them. And they've been able to grow. At least Lehi and Nephi and Sam at least have been able to grow in their confidence of God is in this and he will continue to help us. Even though we're settling in this new place and we've had all this trouble, it's going to work out. We can do it.
Hank Smith:	00:28:45	I feel badly for Joseph Smith as he's translating these words going... Look, Joseph of Egypt had a very hard life of above and beyond because of the covenant. This Joseph, Lehi's son, has had a very hard life because of the covenant. He might be thinking, "Oh no." Right? "I think I'm going to have a very hard life because of this covenant." There's a pattern here.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:29:11	Yeah. But how cool if you're Joseph and you're reading verse 14, "They that seek to destroy him shall be confounded." Absolutely, in the end, I will come out on top, but I'm going to really maybe have some adventures on the way there. But that's kind of the inheritance of covenant people, is adversity is part of it. Then we hit verse 15, which is... We've talked about this. This is the fun one with the names of the father and the son. And so we have Joseph Sr. there and Joseph Jr. there. And then you hit verse 16, and we're continuing to let Joseph of

Egypt speak for himself. So he says, "I am sure of this thing." There it is again. "I'm sure of this thing, even as I am sure of the promise of Moses." So when Joseph of Egypt's learning all these, Moses hasn't even come on the scene yet, but he's sure of the promise of the seer being raised to the other house of Israel as he is about the one coming to his broken off branch.

00:30:10 We have the Moses, and then we have Joseph Smith who's likened to Moses often in the scriptures, and he's very, very confident that this will be fine. Again, verse 17 continues on with that. "I'll raise up a Moses." So that's our Joseph Smith and start talking to him about this record and how he's going to help the Nephi prophets have a voice in translating their words and things. So that's verse 18. Really fun stuff. But poor little Joseph maybe had a little simple question of, what's up with my life? And you look at this amazing revelation that he's being given to give him some confidence that it will all be okay. I just like to jump us over to verse 22 so we can bring this chapter to a close and have a look at the other two. But now we have Lehi taking back the conversation.

00:30:59 He's been quoting Joseph of Egypt the whole time. And now, he says, "And now behold, my son Joseph, after this manner did my father of old prophesy," verse 23, "wherefore, because of this covenant, thou art blessed. For thy seed shall not be destroyed for they shall hearken unto the words of the book." So again, Joseph, I know you've had a hard life. I know this hasn't been very much fun, and you've been this nomad all of the time you've been on earth. And here we are having to rebuild in a new world, but the covenant is what we're part of, and that is going to bless you in all these ways and bless your posterity. That book that we've been talking about will speak to your descendants at some point and bring them back into the covenant as well. Covenant, covenant, covenant all the way through chapter three.

Hank Smith: 00:31:52 Yeah, Jan, I think in the past as I've taught this and looked at this chapter, I've focused on the word Joseph, where actually you should focus on the word covenant. It comes up actually more than the word Joseph.

Dr. Jan Martin: 00:32:04 Yeah, and to help us place all these events inside that larger viewpoint that Joseph Smith's activities is part of this larger picture. As important as he is, he is not the picture. He's a player in the picture, and he's a significant player. But this plan of God has been going on all along. We can't wreck God's plans, and we need to fit in that. And that's really the message I think Lehi's trying to give to little Joseph, is our family's a player in

this overarching plan. How cool, but there's more to the plan that'll be coming, the other people are going to play a role in, but we need to rejoice that we're seeing the covenant, that we know we're part of the covenant, and all of this is doable because we're yoked to God.

- John Bytheway: 00:32:52 For all the moms out there who are listening, they can share this with their children too. Did you know that we are part of this covenant family, and that even when we have ups and downs and trials, it's okay because we're part of this covenant family, and God's made promises that we can bless all the families of the world. It's so funny because here's Lehi saying, "This has been really rough, but you have been so blessed."
- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:33:18 Yes.
- John Bytheway: 00:33:19 He's like, "Really? Is that what this is?" But you've been blessed because you're part of this covenant, and we know how this is going to turn out.
- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:33:29 Well, and how cool it would be for moms to remind their children of their baptismal covenants, and that's how you join this family. And that because you've been baptized and because we have these other covenants as well, not every family that we're having listen to our podcast has mom and a dad, but everybody can have a baptismal covenant that we can connect this to. Any mom could say, "Right, you're having a hard time. How can your baptismal covenants give you this perspective because you're part of this family."
- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:34:00 Let's look at little Joseph or let's look at Jacob in the previous chapter, both of whom had rough childhoods, and how is this covenant going to help you deal with something difficult at school or difficult at home or difficult at work? Yeah, I think there's a lot of power in connecting your children to the overarching covenant and Lehi does it really well through here.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:23 Jan, I know you taught us well here that the second Nephi three is let's focus on the covenant and not necessarily the players in the covenant. You're absolutely right on here. And also in addition, John, you talked about parents teaching their kids. This is an excellent opportunity, though he is a player in this story, to testify of the Prophet Joseph Smith. When I think about how others talk about Joseph Smith in this day and age, if I were him and I wanted you to know about me besides talking to me and my family, I want you to hear from my closest friends. And I was reading to prepare and I think most of us have heard Brigham Young's quote, "I feel like shouting

hallelujah all the time when I think that I ever knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet." And I think most of us have heard the statement of John Taylor from section 1:35, "Joseph Smith, the prophet and seer of the Lord has done more save Jesus only for the salvation of men in this world than any other man that has lived in it."

00:35:25 I wanted to add two more because there's two more Presidents of the church after Brigham Young and John Taylor who also knew Joseph Smith personally, Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow. And here's what they say, Wilford Woodruff, "I want to say that I have traveled with Joseph Smith a good deal in my day. I associated with him more or less from the spring of 1834 to the day of his death." That would be 10 years later. "I know as do my brethren who were associated with him, that he was a prophet of God, one of the greatest prophets God ever raised up on the earth. As I said yesterday," he was talking, he was in general conference. "He received revelations upon every subject necessary for the organization of the church. He laid the foundation of a great work and this is the greatest dispensation God ever gave to man."

00:36:12 And then another friend of the prophet Lorenzo Snow, "Joseph Smith, the Prophet with whom I was intimately acquainted for years as well as I was with my brother, I know to have been a man of integrity, a man devoted to the interests of humanity and to the requirements of God, all the days in which he was permitted to live. There was never a man that possessed a higher degree of integrity and more devotedness to the interest of mankind than the Prophet Joseph Smith. I say this from a personal acquaintance with him." So this is a great opportunity, don't you both think, for parents to tell their children, look, Joseph Smith is going to have evil spoken of him, but there's quite a few people who have spoken good about him. Let's hear from them.

Dr. Jan Martin: 00:37:02 Yeah. And let's add Lehi's testimony, if we want to just go finish up with chapter three. If you look at verse 24, this is a brilliant testimony. He says, "There shall rise up one mighty among them," Joseph's posterity, "Who shall do much good both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God with exceeding faith to mighty works, wonders and do that thing which is great in the sight of God unto the bringing to pass of much restoration unto the house of Israel and unto the seed of thy brethren." What a testimony. That's Lehi's testimony of Joseph. You've given us all these modern prophets. Let's add an ancient prophet, and Joseph is certainly a significant contributor

to this covenant plan that God has and we have every reason to testify of him, be grateful for what he's done.

- Hank Smith: 00:37:55 John and Jan, I had a student recently just a great girl, she said, "Brother Smith, I love the church. I love the gospel. It really is my world. I just don't know what to think about Joseph Smith", from all that she'd heard. And I thought, it's interesting how maybe some of us have separated the church and the gospel that we enjoy and love from Joseph Smith.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:21 It's like you're at a restaurant. Oh my goodness, I love this prime rib. So good. Oh, those green beans were perfection. Oh, this salad is so delicious, but I just don't know if the chef is a good cook.
- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:38:37 Yeah. Yeah, the gospel came through Joseph. You understand people who are wrestling with these kinds of questions, but honestly by their fruits shall you know them and if the fruits of the gospel you're enjoying came through Joseph, there's every reason to accept him and believe him to be the prophet.
- Hank Smith: 00:38:58 Absolutely. If you rejoice in the Latter-day Church and in the gospel you are receiving, you automatically are rejoicing in Joseph Smith. Jan, are we ready to move into chapter four?
- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:39:12 I think we are. You watch Lehi blessing all of the rest of his children. There he goes through and leaves his promises on Laman and Lemuel's children, on sons of Ishmael, on Sam. I don't want to lose our covenant focus because I introduced you to the idea that Lehi is conducting a covenant renewal ceremony here before he dies. And part of that ceremony is giving blessings to your children. This isn't him going off on another tangent. This is part of a covenant renewal ceremony. And if you look in Deuteronomy, you'll see Moses doing that same thing with the Tribes of Israel. We get over to verse 12 after all the blessings are given, and then you get the news that Lehi has died and now Nephi is going to be in charge and he's going to have this rough time. And we all love second Nephi four.
- 00:40:06 We know it as Nephi's Psalm. Many authors have shown that it's carefully and meticulously crafted, that he's really working through his grief here. But what I want to do is show you the covenant structure of it. Second Nephi one gives you this suzerainty treaty structure of the Lehitic covenant, but second Nephi four gives you a look at Nephi using a covenant to walk himself through some of the worst times of his life.

	00:40:37	Before I show you that, let me read something Elder D. Todd Christofferson said. He said, "Making and keeping covenants with God gives us the power to smile through hardships, to convert tribulation into triumph, to be anxiously engaged in a good cause and to bring to pass much righteousness. Divine covenants make strong Christians." I just want to show you how the covenant structure is here that you maybe have not seen, but it's allowing Nephi to figure out how to smile through his hardships, how to convert this tribulation into a triumph. And he comes out on the other end in second Nephi 5:5 able to do some more hard things. He's shown us the grieving and how covenants will help us with the grieving. So this is a fun thing to do.
Hank Smith:	00:41:25	I'm excited to walk through this. It reminds me of the first experience I had when I heard, maybe both of you have heard this, the hymn that was created by John Tanner from this Psalm. Anybody can look it up. It's on YouTube. It's called I Love the Lord by the BYU Men's Chorus. It is pretty incredible. I would encourage everybody to go take a look. Have you both heard that? It is...
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:41:47	I haven't. So I need to.
Hank Smith:	00:41:49	It's really spectacular.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:41:51	Okay. John, would you start in verse 15 and read from 15 through 18 and then I'll show you how to start analyzing the rest through the covenant perspective.
John Bytheway:	00:42:02	Okay. Second Nephi four beginning in verse 15, "And upon these I write the things of my soul, and many of the scriptures which are engraven upon the plates of brass. For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children. Behold my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great goodness of the Lord in showing me his great and marvelous works my heart exclaimeth, O, wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh, my soul grieveth because of my iniquities. I am encompassed about because of the temptations and the sins, which do so easily beset me."
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:42:51	Thank you. Here's Nephi in a dark place. His dad has died. So you have the grieving that comes from losing a close parent. One of the things I like to have my students do is really think about all the reasons Nephi has to be struggling here. And Lehi's

always been his ally and he's gone. He's having to put up with the adversity of his siblings all alone. And you can just imagine the grief and then the adversity and just that one. And there's other reasons Nephi has to be feeling down. He's taking over as the spiritual leader. He's probably feeling inadequate. He's probably feeling incapable. He's got his weaknesses. Maybe his brothers push his buttons and he's let some of that loose and he's feeling repentant and sad about weaknesses. You can be drawn right in to a very dark time for Nephi, and we don't always get a look at this. Nephi's been pretty stalwart all the way through first Nephi, but here we get the look at the real person and not just the always faithful person, but somebody who's just real and hurting right now.

- Hank Smith: 00:44:00 As Nephi is looking back, this isn't written at the exact time, but he's looking back upon the death of Lehi. And I've wondered, and maybe both of you can comment on this and please point out where I might be flawed in my argument here, but I think there's always a hope that people will change and repent and then perhaps as Lehi is in his dying days, that maybe there's a hope that this family is going to stay together and that they'll come through. And then as Nephi is looking back, I wonder if there's that feeling of inadequacy. What if I would've done things differently? Did I fail my father? Here he is writing about his... Did I fail in keeping our family together? And that would rip you apart. I'm sure there's probably, this is inevitably going to happen, but I hope it doesn't. Right? There's always that hope of things will turn around and I wonder if he, long past he's looking back and thinking, oh, I'm sorry, dad. I'm sorry.
- Dr. Jan Martin: 00:45:03 Yeah. Yeah, I don't think there's anything flawed in that thinking because by the time he's writing about this, the family has split. They're not living together. There's probably been some wars and contentions. There's probably maybe been a few more heated interactions. The population isn't huge at this point. I think that Nephi carries that maybe heavy responsibility and maybe sometimes takes on, this is my fault. Had I been more patient or had I not lost my temper, because he has, he admits he has an issue with anger sometimes. Looking back, he can just be like, my dad would be disappointed maybe.
- Hank Smith: 00:45:41 Yeah. I mean he wrote in verse 13 that not many days after his death, things go back to the way they were. They are angry with me. John, I've heard you talk about your father. It's something that is so dear to your heart. Does that speak to you at all in second Nephi, four? He writes about the death of his father and those emotions all start coming up.

John Bytheway:	00:46:06	Yeah, I think what Jan just said a minute ago, this was a spiritual ally, and he was one of the younger siblings as his brothers continually reminded him, right?
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:46:15	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:46:16	But at least I'm seeing eye to eye with dad and then dad's gone, like you said, and carries through the seemingly the rest of the Book of Mormon, the descendants of the older brothers should be ruling the younger brothers, and that seems to go on for hundreds of years. But anyway, that friendship he had with his dad, and I don't want to discount, we don't know much about Nephi's wife, but I'm saying kind of what Jan did. This was his spiritual ally. He had seen things and Nephi had seen things and they were prophets together perhaps. And now he's gone.
	00:46:49	I think you're absolutely right, and I couldn't keep the family together. But yeah, to answer your question, I just had a dear friend who lost his father. And even when you know it's coming, when it really happens, it hits you and it's sobering. Nephi's got a lot going on right now with his fathers. And then as you said, verse 13, they're angry with me. I've always thought how strange. They're angry with me because of what God said. They're angry with me because of the admonitions of the Lord.
Hank Smith:	00:47:21	My dad died about three years ago, but I find myself almost avoiding the topic sometimes of talking about my dad because I can see if I were to make a journal entry all about his death and what had happened since then, I could see all these emotions, these uncomfortable emotions, not bad emotions, but uncomfortable emotions coming up in writing the history.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:47:48	Yeah, for sure.
Hank Smith:	00:47:50	He's a real guy here. He's a real human being. Yeah.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:47:54	And as many of us know, who've lost loved ones, grieving sometimes takes years, years and years to work your way through the different layers. And as we've said, Nephi's writing, looking back on this and writing about it. But I think you can still see some of that grieving just still. Sometimes you just miss people, like they're gone and nobody can fill their place and they were unique. And even if you've been 10, 20, 30 years out from the loss of a loved one, you still miss them. It's not the same. And I think you can see Nephi being able to be very real here of I've missed him ever since. I didn't just miss him in the

moment that he died, but I've had to do a lot of hard things all by myself since then. And I miss my dad.

Hank Smith: 00:48:42 I miss that pillar. I miss that support.

Dr. Jan Martin: 00:48:46 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:48:46 And how wonderful to know that part of this long view covenant we're talking about is family, that that relationship will continue thankfully. And we all have that to look forward to, that those relationships will continue.

Dr. Jan Martin: 00:49:02 And if you don't mind, I'm going to jump in and be a little personal here too, because I realize that we have a wide variety of people listening to the podcast. And family can be a really painful subject for a lot of people because not everyone has a happy family. Not everybody has a good relationship with their parents, and some of us, I'm one of these, doesn't have a good relationship with my father. And the grief that I have is when my dad passes, there's not a lot to say. I think the grief that I'm going to have is that I could never connect with him. I've tried.

00:49:44 For those people out there who don't have parents they can connect to, and they're having that kind of grief that I have that this has been difficult, it has not worked out in this life, but there's the covenant hope that it can work out in the future, that maybe in the next life I'll be able to connect with my father in the way that I was never able to do here. And that these family problems that are so painful can be healed. As you've said, that's the beauty of having that long view, is that all these messy things about families will ultimately be healed. So we want to speak to anyone who has grief, whether they've lost a loved parent or have never had a great relationship with a parent. There's grief of both types, but the gospel can really keep us focused on healing and hope. And at some point it's not over yet, and at some point it can be made maybe more of what we were hoping it to be.

John Bytheway: 00:50:46 Jan, I'm so glad you bring that up. I'm sure there's a lot of folks out there nodding with you as they're listening. And one of the things I love about the Book of Mormon is it isn't a story of a long line of perfect families. It's the story of a long line of families with problems. Hopefully that gives us some hope that God has this long view, these families went through struggles like we will.

Dr. Jan Martin:	00:51:16	And if you look at Nephi as well, I think he's grieving over his dad, but I think there's some grief over his brothers as well. And we can have really difficult relationships with siblings sometimes. Not everyone has great relationships with siblings. And that's another great thing about the Book of Mormon is you actually see some really problematic sibling relationships all the way through Nephi's story at least. And those continue into the Nephite Lamanite history as a nation.
	00:51:43	But again, how Nephi's grieving, I know he loved his brothers. They were hard to get along with and they had personality issues, but I'm sure there's grieving too over the loss of them. And then feeling responsible and then wondering if you're ever going to be able to heal that breach that's there. And a lot of our listeners may have those concerns about siblings and wonder if those gaps can ever be healed. It's a place to be like, "We need to play the long game." And remember that there's things that can happen on the other side of the veil and that everything doesn't have to be sorted in this life. There'll be more changing.
Hank Smith:	00:52:24	Don't assume you're alone with your family situation.
John Bytheway:	00:52:27	I'm recalling, was it Elder Gary Stevenson that showed a family picture and talked about the backstory behind the picture? And just the idea that we sometimes get is we see everybody's Facebook posts and we assume the hunky-doryness. Is that a word? That's a new word I'd like to invent.
Hank Smith:	00:52:45	That's a good adjective.
John Bytheway:	00:52:46	Of everybody's life. And there's a backstory. All of us are just struggling through this, so hang in there.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:52:53	That's a great segue now to, we've got Nephi in this dark place and anyone who's struggling with family issues, Nephi is there with you, whether it's parents or siblings or extended family. He's got a lot to grieve about. And so how does he then smile through the hardship, as Elder Christofferson said, he's going to utilize covenant. And so let me walk you through the beautiful covenant structure here that if you don't know the suzerainty treaty that I've been talking about that the law of Moses is presented in, let me introduce you to it here. Because he follows the format as he is going through and talking himself through the positive side. And how am I going to deal with all the grief I've got? And so if everybody wants to come to verse 19.

Hank Smith:	00:53:39	Jan, I want to write this treaty at the top of my page. So how do I spell that?
John Bytheway:	00:53:44	So do I. I was just going to say, can you spell that? I need to see that word?
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:53:47	Suzerainty. So S-U-Z-E-R-A-I-N-T-Y.
John Bytheway:	00:53:55	Yeah, that's how I was going to spell it.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:53:59	Well, it's a funny word. It is kind of spelled suzerainty treaty, but nobody says it like that. It's just kind of this suzerainty treaty.
John Bytheway:	00:54:06	And what does it mean and what's the etymology of that? Was there a Susie who ain't coming or something?
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:54:14	Yeah, no, it's the Middle Eastern style of covenants that they were making. And if you go back and look at Old Testament times, you'll find loads of these suzerainty treaties evident in archeological texts. So we have lots of them from different nations all around the Mediterranean. The law of Moses is actually structured in this way, and so I didn't want to go off on that, but you can see the structure in 2 Nephi 1, and you can see it again in 2 Nephi 4. So I'll show it to you carefully in 2 Nephi 4. I do have a document we can put up on your notes for the listeners that will show it in 2 Nephi 1. And that way if they want to study it and mark it in their scriptures, they can go get that document. So I'll make sure you guys get that. I came prepared with that.
Hank Smith:	00:55:01	We can put that on our show notes, followhim.co. Go over there and look for Jan's episode. You can find those show notes.
Dr. Jan Martin:	00:55:07	And I can just introduce you to the six things that these suzerainty treaties always have. And Nephi has them all, and you watch him using this covenant to help him talk himself through the darkness. And he comes out a lot better on the other side. So verse 19 is the beginning of his use of the covenant. He says, "When I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins", but this word nevertheless is really important. "In spite of all the darkness I know in whom I have trusted." So in a suzerainty treaty, this is what we would call the preamble. The preamble always identifies the parties that are involved in the covenant. Nephi is there.
	00:55:52	I know in whom I've trusted, and that would be Jehovah. So we have our preamble and he's starting off reminding himself that

he and Jehovah are partners in a covenant. Then he moves from the preamble to what we would call a historical prologue. The historical prologue reviews the past relationship between the suzerain, which is Jehovah and the vassal, which is Nephi, and it emphasizes the benevolence of the suzerain. So let's watch. Hank, if you want to be the reader. Let's have you read. Start in verse 20, read if you don't mind, all the way to 27 and watch how Nephi goes back through the history of his relationship with Jehovah. It's really cool.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:56:42 | Okay, it seems, Jan, right in the there in verse 19 is where it switches. Right in the middle, |
| Dr. Jan Martin: | 00:56:47 | Right there. He's going to go to the covenant. Yeah. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:56:50 | "Nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted." Now verse 20, "My God hath been my support. He has led me through my afflictions in the wilderness, and he has preserved me upon the waters of the great deep. He has filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh. He has confounded my enemies unto the causing of them to quake before me. Behold, He hath heard my cry by day and He hath given me knowledge by visions in the nighttime. And by day I have waxed bold in mighty prayer before Him. Yea, my voice have I sent up on high and angels came down and ministered unto me." |
| | 00:57:28 | " And upon the wings of his Spirit, hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains and my eyes have beheld great things. Yay, even too great for man. Therefore, I was forbidden that I should not write them. Oh, then if I have seen so great things, if the Lord in His condescension unto the children of men have visited men in so much mercy, why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow and my flesh waste away and my strength slacken because of my afflictions? And why should I yield to sin because of my flesh? Yea, why should I give way to temptations that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? Why am I angry because of mine enemy?" |
| Dr. Jan Martin: | 00:58:19 | So a good historical prologue always reviews the amazing things the suzerain has done, which you got all the way from verse 20 through verse 26. You get these beautiful reviews of the past, the miracles, and you can link every one of those verses to a story or an event that Nephi has experienced in 1 Nephi. It's a brilliant historical prologue. But the other part of historical prologue is reminding yourself that you're the weaker part, that you're the vassal. And if there's a problem here. It's you, not the suzerain. The end of verse 26 and the end of all of verse 27 is |

that it's showing Nephi's weakness. There's a reason he's the vassal and not the suzerain. The suzerain is the more powerful person in the relationship. And you always want to humbly admit that you're the one that's at fault. And he does that.

00:59:15 Why is my heart weeping? Why am I being depressed? Why am I yielding to my flesh? Why am I giving into temptations and why am I angry? So he's humbly finishing that prologue with exactly what you need to have in it, which is I'm the fallen, weaker person in this relationship. It's really neat to see the covenant prologue as he goes through it. And then what follows the historical prologue is the stipulations of the covenant, which establishes this reciprocal relationship for each party. John, if I could have you be a reader again and start in verse 28 and let me have you read 28, 29. Watch him reconnecting to his obedience part.

John Bytheway: 01:00:01 "Awake my soul, no longer droop in sin. Rejoice O my heart and give place no more for the enemy of my soul. Do not anger again because of my enemies. Do not slacken my strength because of my afflictions."

Dr. Jan Martin: 01:00:16 This is the stipulation section where he reminds himself of his part in the covenant. Awake my soul. I shouldn't be drooping in sin. I need to be rejoicing. Get a handle on your anger and do not lay around in your tent feeling sorry for yourself. Let's recommit to the obedience part. I have a part in this. And then we hit verse 30, which I'll read, and it says, "Rejoice O my heart and cry unto the Lord and say, O Lord, I will praise you forever. Yea, my soul will rejoice in thee my God and the rock of my salvation." Verse 31 says, "O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? Wilt thou deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?" He finishes his side of the agreement and then he launches into what he needs from the suzerain.

01:01:08 Jehovah, I need you to do the covenant part and I'm going to remind you of what I need. I need you to redeem me from my weaknesses, and I need you to deliver me out of the hands of my enemies. And I need you to help me be stronger in dealing with my enemies and not cave into some of these maybe button pushing issues that I have with my siblings. So this stipulation section is what you have in a covenant. I'll do this. God does this, and I have every right to call on Him to do his part when I'm committed to doing my part. And you see that there. And then the final part of one of these covenants is what we call a blessing and a cursing section. The blessing section is

there to motivate you to keep your covenants. It gives you all the positive consequences for being a covenant keeper.

01:02:01 And then the cursing section always outlines the negative things that will come to you if you don't keep the covenant. And that's just what a good covenant is about. It lets you know what will happen when you're doing the right thing and educates you on what will happen if you don't keep it. If you will all jump over to verse 34 and 35, you'll see that little blessing and cursing section. Verse 34, "I have trusted in thee, I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of the flesh. Why? Because I know that cursed is he that put his trust in the arm of the flesh." There's the cursing part. Accursed is he that put his trust in man or make flesh his arm. Then here's the blessing part.

01:02:45 "Yea. I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me if I ask not amiss. Therefore, I will lift up my voice unto thee. Yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness." And so forth. You have this whole treaty structure that he walks himself through, which allows him to come out on the other side of this dark place and recognize I'm not alone. I have confidence in calling on Jehovah. He will help me. And he uses the covenant to get through it. And this is a great way to apply when I'm having a dark time how can I review my covenants the way Nephi did and use them to help me smile through the hard times and find joy in the difficulties. So it's brilliant what he's got here.

Hank Smith: 01:03:36 Jan, this has been fantastic. Not only learning about the treaty itself and its place here in the Book of Mormon and how incredible that is, but also how Nephi uses it to get himself out of this really dark place, which again, is not a bad place to be. Sometimes we think that negative emotions are... We want to get rid of those, let's push those off. I should be happy all the time. Why am I not happy? And it's okay to sit in grief for a little while, but you can't stay there. You've got to find a way out.

Dr. Jan Martin: 01:04:10 Yeah. So let me share another comment from our President Nelson. He says, "Committed children of the covenant remain steadfast even in the midst of adversity. When that doctrine, the covenant doctrine, is deeply implanted in our hearts, even the sting of death is soothed and our spiritual stamina is strengthened." Watch Nephi sitting in this dark place, and then he decides to get out of it by reviewing the covenant-

Hank Smith: 01:04:40 I noticed how the daughters of Ishmael reacted to their father's death in 1 Nephi 16 and how they don't seem to come out of it,

they mourn exceedingly because of the death of their father. Then they start thinking of all their past problems. They've been brought out of Jerusalem. They've wandered in the wilderness, they have suffered a lot of things. Then they start predicting the future. "We must perish in the wilderness with hunger." Nephi's way seems much more effective. Wouldn't you say that perhaps another way to put this, which I think you've walked us through, is Nephi is experiencing the Fall and in order to really appreciate the Atonement you have to experience the Fall? The light doesn't mean as much if you're not sitting in the dark. And that's something we've seen throughout the Book of Mormon so far is people experiencing the hardship of the Fall creates in them a need, a longing for restoration for the light.

- Dr. Jan Martin: 01:05:42 Yeah. And when you are talking about the Fall and the things that you need to experience, it's always you need to taste the bitter that you know the sweet. It's not taste the sweet so you know the bitter and that's an important order that you don't realize that things are good until they're not. And then when you're sitting in the darkness like Nephi is doing, you have a desire to get back to the light that maybe you took for granted. So that then is a motivation to have you do something to get out of the dark and then back to the light. But because it was dark, you now appreciate the light more and can really value that. It's an important thing.
- 01:06:24 One thing I was going to say about the daughters of Ishmael in their mourning, if you compare what they are focused on, it's all the negative compared to what Nephi focuses on in that historical prologue. He goes and looks at all the good things God did. That's really important. We need to acknowledge that negative things happen, but you also, even in the dark places, there's good things happening. We need to emphasize that and as we emphasize the light, the light can then have more power to help bring us out of the dark place. The daughters of Ishmael would've maybe had a better experience had they utilized that historical prologue and not just looked at the hard things, but also looked at the good things that God did to help them with that. And that seems to be what's missing in their review of the past is, well, God was actually there helping as well.
- Hank Smith: 01:07:15 Yeah, I've often told friends, when you're really in a hard, difficult, dark place, it's probably not a good time to predict the future. It's probably not a good place to go.
- Dr. Jan Martin: 01:07:26 Yeah, because everything looks bad.
- Hank Smith: 01:07:28 Yeah, everything looks bad.

Dr. Jan Martin:	01:07:30	But when you do it the way Nephi did it and you go back and look at the way God was involved in your past in a positive way, then you have more grounding and then you can see, well, the future's not as dark as I think it is. I have a God I can call on and I can have this confidence and He's going to help me with this.
Hank Smith:	01:07:49	It reminds me of the way the Liberty Jail sections start with Section 121 verse one, God, where are you?
John Bytheway:	01:07:58	How long?
Dr. Jan Martin:	01:07:58	Where art thou?
Hank Smith:	01:07:59	Yeah. And then 123 finishes with, "Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power." And you're going-
Dr. Jan Martin:	01:08:08	Yeah. Even if he maybe isn't as aware of the structure as Nephi is, Nephi is perfectly aware of this and seems to be deliberately using it. I'll do this and when I have my students walk through 2 Nephi 4, even if they don't know the suzerainty structure, they can see that he's grateful. He starts out with the grateful and even though they don't always know it's a historical prologue and that's what you do, they can see the progression from I'm being grateful and then I'm acknowledging my weaknesses and then I'm coming up with a plan to strengthen them, and then I'm going to rely on the Lord. And they can see all of that even if you don't know what to call it, and it's a great way of working through dark times.
Hank Smith:	01:08:48	I really enjoy watching this switch from sadness and heartache to almost excitement about the future.
Dr. Jan Martin:	01:08:57	When you look at verse 35, he's just rejoicing right there by the end like, I know that it's going to be fine. My future's going to be brighter than I was looking a few verses ago.
John Bytheway:	01:09:09	I'm imagining that we could sit down with our kids and say, "You know what God did for Nephi, he can do for us. God will support us through our trials. He'll lead us through our afflictions. He'll preserve us. He'll fill us with love. He'll confound our enemies and hear our prayers and give us knowledge." Just trying to think of a way to apply this that we can share with our families separate from the really amazing structure you've showed us that's true, but we can tell our kids, "Look, these are the kinds of things God can do for us when we strive to keep our covenants."

Dr. Jan Martin:	01:09:41	Yeah. You could even take it deeper than that and say, "Okay, in the past, when has God filled you with his love? When in the past has He confounded your enemies? When has He heard your prayers?" Of course He's going to do that, but sometimes children need to have that active remembrance and go back and remember their past spiritual experiences and that God has really been part and then they can tell you about them and that's a bearing of testimony and I don't know anyone that feels sad after you start bearing a testimony of truth, the Spirit just can really lighten things. If parents are looking for some application, this is a great chapter to get out and then start asking your kids those questions when they're having a hard time and see if they can start testifying of the way that God has been part of their lives already.
Hank Smith:	01:10:32	Yeah, it's much easier to remember those experiences if you've written them down.
John Bytheway:	01:10:36	Amen.
Dr. Jan Martin:	01:10:38	Gratitude journals or spiritual experience journals, I think we all remember Henry B. Eyring talking about that in General Conference, that miracle journal, and that might be a fun way for families to start applying this too, is to sit down on a family home evening and start a miracle journal. Start a family journal or an individual journal and encourage them to write down their spiritual experiences so they can go get them out and read them if they can't remember.
Hank Smith:	01:11:02	I think of prepping a son for a mission or anyone who's serving a mission and you're going to have dark days. It comes with the territory. You can follow the same pattern that Jan has taught us here of sit in that emotion, feel it, and then start remembering all the good things the Lord has done. Even list them, start listing them and watch your feelings change.
John Bytheway:	01:11:30	And it will surprise you what the Lord has done. Right?
Dr. Jan Martin:	01:11:32	Great chapter, chapter 4, love that.
Hank Smith:	01:11:35	Chapter 4 is one of those I've heard many people say, "When I'm feeling down or I'm struggling, I go back to 2 Nephi 4." It's one of those chapters that you say, "If that's the only one Joseph Smith gives us, if this is the only chapter, you'd feel like he gave you enough."



Triumph over Tragedy

GUEST: JAN J. MARTIN



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Dr. Jan Martin, 2 Nephi chapters 3-5.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 Jan, we have been keeping you for a while, but we don't want to miss out on chapter five, another important chapter in this lesson.
- Dr. Jan J. Martin: 00:16 Very important chapter. I would like to just keep our covenant focus here because I believe Nephi who's writing about all of this, later on he comes back and writes about it from hindsight, but he's really purposely trying to keep the focus on the covenant. One of the interesting things about his prayer in chapter four, if you look at verse 31, is he wants to be delivered from the situation with his brothers. But like all good vassals, he takes the problem to the suzerain and says, "I need you to do this for me, but I'm not going to tell you how to do it because that's your job, but I would like to be delivered from this situation." And then when you hit chapter five, it's really important to help readers see that it doesn't get better right away. Now, Nephi is in a better place emotionally because he's worked through that. But when you hit verse one, we have "I Nephi did cry unto the Lord, my God." So he keeps having to pray about it and the anger of his brethren is increasing, when you look in verse two.
- Hank Smith: 01:23 That's not what I asked for, right?
- Dr. Jan J. Martin: 01:25 Yeah. An important principle here about adversity is, take your problems to your God and lay them at his feet, but realize it may take a little bit of time for the solutions to come. And sometimes things get worse before they get better, and you have Nephi doing that. But the important thing I want to point out is, if he is the vassal in this relationship, which he is, he has to wait until the suzerain decides it's time to solve it. So notice that he sits in it, he sits in the anger, he sits in the contention, he stays there, it gets worse and worse. But a good suzerain will give him the word when it's time for him to do something different. And Nephi needs to wait for the direction from the

Lord. Sometimes we have to put up with hard things for a while, until the solution becomes evident.

02:16 And so Nephi obediently sits in it and he waits. And then when it becomes very clear that Laman and Lemuel are not going to accept him as the prophet of the family and they're going to kill him. Then the suzerain will say, okay, I need you to take people that want to follow you and I need you to leave. But I love that Jehovah gives Laman and Lemuel every possible chance to change before he separates the families. And that's really important. But poor Nephi has to depart, so you'll see that in verse five. And again, with a covenant perspective, this is what's fun, verses six through, I'd say until you hit about verse 18, you have Nephi recording the consequences that come to his group because they kept their covenants. "We're led to a new land." Verse seven, "We take our tents, we journey many days, we find a new land." Verse eight, "We call it the land of Nephi."

03:19 They take upon themselves the name, people of Nephi. And then look at verse 10. "We're going to keep our covenants, we're observing to keep the judgments, statutes, and commandments of the Lord in all things. We're following the law of Moses." And then remember in a suzerainty treaty, we have a blessing section. He's talking to you about that. Verse 11, "The Lord is with us. He's prospering us. We're sowing our seeds and they're reaping in abundance, and our flocks are producing in the way that we want. We have the records, we have the compass. We have all this revelation that we can do."

03:51 And then you hit verse 13, "We're prospering. We're going to make these swords." Which you can tell that Nephi's preparing for some negative reactions to the separation he's preparing. And then you look at verses 15, 16, 17. Again, very positive. I'm educating my people. I'm teaching them to work. We actually build a temple. We're really living according to that other verse that's over there, across the column there after the manner of happiness. We're really having that here, but it's because we've kept our covenants. Really important that you see Nephi trying to help anyone who's reading this see that it is a better way forward if you keep covenants, even when you have to do something hard, like separate from the family.

Hank Smith: 04:39 Jan, can I ask you about something application wise? You see this separation happening and it is a major separation. Chapter five, verse five, "We did flee into the wilderness." This changes everything, the rest of the Book of Mormon is shaped by this separation. Sometimes we teach that being Christ-like is you don't give up, you stay, you stay. You just don't give up on

people. And that is a good principle. And yet we have Nephi separating from them. And I think probably knowing that many of his nieces and nephews he's leaving behind, this would be a very difficult decision. What do you see here that can help our listeners?

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 05:22

Well, I would say that you see the setting up of healthy boundaries. Nephi's life is in danger, that's abusive. It's not okay. And all this contention, I'm imagining there's angry words and there's arguments and there's some other kinds of abuse. There may be emotional abuse, there may be verbal abuse. And then there's this physical threat of abuse. Now, I don't know if there's other kinds of altercations where people are beating each other up or anything physically, but certainly you can see there's some problems in the way Nephi and his brothers are interacting, and they're negative and contentious and hurtful. And you could see abuse coming in there in any form.

06:04

I think this chapter is a great one to say, at a point with relationships, you may have to put a separation, a healthy boundary. And that way you're protecting yourself from being treated poorly. And the other person then can carry on believing or doing whatever they want, but you're not being hurt by it. We need to be mature enough and courageous enough to recognize that some relationships you need this kind of boundary. And boundaries are different for every relationship you have. But in this case, there's a distant boundary and we're no longer living with you, and we're going to have two separate societies and we're going to agree to disagree, but you don't get to take my life. You don't get to keep hurting me.

John Bytheway: 06:50

I've heard certain speakers that were marriage counselors and family therapists and things talk about this chapter as there may come a time where you have to go. I'm glad this is in here to say, well, I know they're trying to kill you Nephi, but just stick it out a little bit longer. You've got in verse five, "The Lord did warn me that I, Nephi, should depart." So even the Lord told him, no, you got to go. You don't have to put yourself in danger, like you said, Jen, you don't get to hurt me.

Hank Smith: 07:17

Probably a good moment to quote Elder Holland, The Ministry of Reconciliation, a talk given in October of 2018. "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven, Christ taught in New Testament times. And in our day I, the Lord will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you, it is required to forgive all men." It is however important for some of you living in real anguish to know what he did not say. He did not say, you are not allowed to feel true pain or real sorrow from the shattering experiences you have had at the

hand of another. Nor did he say, in order to fully forgive, you have to re-enter a toxic relationship or return to an abusive, destructive circumstance. But notwithstanding even the most terrible offenses that might come to us, we can rise above our pain, only when we put our feet onto the path of true healing. And it sounds like that's what Nephi was doing. That path is the forgiving one walked by Jesus of Nazareth who calls out to each of us, come, follow me". I think this is a difficult, healthy decision.

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 08:20

I absolutely agree, and I think Nephi has to have some indication that there's going to be a lot of resentment created. We notice the things that he... Not only does he leave beloved nieces and nephews and cousins and people behind who may have really been hurt by the departure, like how could you leave? How could you abandon us? But then if you jump over and look at verse 12, Nephi took the brass plates. He takes the Liahona and he takes the priesthood with him. He takes the knowledge of the temple with him, everything. He takes the education, Nephi is a talented guy and he knows how to do a lot of things. He's built a big ship and he does work with metal. And then he's got the scriptures and he is good at teaching those and he's taking all of it. So imagine how hurtful that would be for the people left behind.

09:18

I don't even have access to the brass plates anymore. And presumably Lehi left a record and Nephi's keeping his own record, and he took all of the records, and boy, sometimes setting up boundaries has some things about it that can be quite hurtful. And when you set the boundary, you have to be willing to face that and realize that there may be some misunderstanding and some people feeling like you don't love me anymore, or you don't want to be involved with me. And that's not true. But I do need to protect myself from being hurt. Therefore, I'm going to engage with you differently than I have in the past. And there's going to be some boundaries. But you've got to have people grow into that and learn and drop their resentments. I think Nephi was well aware that there's going to be a lot of hurt and anger towards him.

John Bytheway: 10:10

It sounds like Nephi in verse six, that it was Zoram and Sam, his elder brother and his family. And Jacob and Joseph, my younger brother and also my sisters, and then he adds this. "And all those who would go with me." He says, "And all those who would go with me were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God." So that would be interesting someday to know if maybe there were some of those cousins that went

with him, those who were believers, that was the separation from the believers and nonbelievers.

- Dr. Jan J. Martin: 10:42 Yeah. And imagine, let's say that maybe one of Laman or Lemuel's sons or daughters was a believer and went with Nephi, talk about parental hurt. Like you took my child away from me. Or what if there were some spousal separations here? We don't know about Nephi's sisters. There's some scholars who've argued that they were married to Ishmael's sons, but that's not something we can prove. So maybe they were unmarried sisters, but maybe they were married and well, does the husband come if he's an unbeliever? Whoa, there's some pretty painful potential separations here that could have escalated the resentment and the hurt depending on who went with who or who stayed. What if some of Nephi's kids stayed with Laman and Lemuel as well? What if they didn't come? There's hurt on both sides. This is not an easy thing.
- Hank Smith: 11:38 And all of this reminds me to go slow when I read and to think, if it's just black and white on the page, I might not think, wow, these are real people going through very difficult things. And what's a verse to me could be a lifetime of pain.
- Dr. Jan J. Martin: 11:53 Yeah. And for us to pause there and really experience the human-ness. This family is very well connected and intertwined, and they have a shared history.
- Hank Smith: 12:03 So Jan, you've already given us a little preview. They separate and they set up a new society, a new system where things sound pretty good. What do you want to look at next?
- Dr. Jan J. Martin: 12:12 What I'd like to do is take a moment to look at the verses that talk about Laman and Lemuel and what Nephi describes as happening to the group that he left behind. Now, because we've been talking about the covenant structure, so I want to remind the audience that the beginning of chapter five, second Nephi five, shows Nephi being blessed because he kept his covenants in spite of all the pain that this brought. Like these choices are hard, but Nephi goes through everything the Lord does for them that's positive and tries to illustrate the treaty, that covenant that they have with Jehovah is being kept. They kept their covenants, they followed the Lord's directions, and he is blessing them. In Jewish thinking, for God to be just, it's not just about the positive side of things that happens. All of the negative consequences that he's promised to the covenant need to be seen as coming to pass as well.

	13:11	So if everyone wants to come to second Nephi five verse 19, I hope this will now help you make sense why Nephi writes it the way he does. He says, "And behold, the words of the Lord had been fulfilled unto my brethren." We've seen how the words of the Lord have been filled unto Nephi, but we now need to see how the words of the Lord in the covenant will be fulfilled unto Laman and Lemuel. And I think verse 19 is a really incredibly helpful clue of Nephi's perspective of what you're going to read. This is covenantal in Nephi's mind. I'm just going to tell you how the cursing section of the treaty is coming to pass in my brother's lives because they didn't keep their covenant. I've shown you how the blessing side of it came to pass in my family's life because we kept our covenants. It's helpful when we hit some verses that may be troubling to people to give them a solid lens at which to look at that likely is Nephi's perspective.
John Bytheway:	14:08	I'm excited to look at this as the separation and what is this kind of the outcome of breaking the covenant in 19 and 20?
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	14:17	Yeah. I'll walk you through it here. First, 19, we see the beginning of the reference to the words of the covenant being fulfilled. Then Nephi gives you the details. Let me read verse 19 again. "Behold the words of the Lord have been fulfilled unto my brethren, which he spake concerning them, that I should be their ruler and their teacher. Wherefore, I had been their ruler and their teacher according to the commandments of the Lord until the time they sought to take away my life."
	14:46	This is now the breach of the family and the ending of the joint family covenant. Like Laman and Lemuel are making a very clear decision to not have Nephi be the prophet, to not accept the covenant that Lehi entered in with Jehovah. We're going to separate. We're going to have two totally different ways of proceeding. We can see the covenant lens here that Nephi has.
	15:10	Then verse 20, "Wherefore, the word of the Lord was fulfilled, which he spake unto me saying that: inasmuch as they will not hearken unto thy words, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And behold, they were cut off from his presence."
	15:29	Lots of scholars have looked at these verses and there's a number of ways to see them, but because we are using the covenant perspective, I'd like to introduce you to the legal language of a suzerainty treaty.
	15:42	When the treaties are written, they use words like we do. If you've ever read your phone contract or your internet contract,

like you never read those things because they go on for days, but because you can't understand them, they use legalese. It just has English in there, but it's used in a way that's incomprehensible to the average person. So we just sign the bottom, but we have no idea what it said.

16:07 And suzerainty treaties have that similar thing. They're a legal contract and there's language in them that means different things than it would normally mean when you're speaking. The word cut off in Hebrew covenant language is the prominent word for ending a covenant. Laman and Lemuel have made a choice in wanting to kill the prophet that they don't want to be part of the covenant anymore. And as you know, covenants, if you keep them, bring you into the presence of God ultimately. That's the point of them. The covenant path brings you right back into God's presence.

16:45 If we read this through the covenant lens, we see the cut off as the ending of the official Lehitic covenant for Laman and Lemuel. They've chosen to come outside of it. And that's important because we don't want anyone to feel like Laman and Lemuel are being picked on, that God doesn't love them, but he does honor their agency and says, "Okay, you don't want to accept my prophet and you don't want to follow what he says. I get it. We'll let you end the covenant and I will let you guys be a separate group."

17:16 Of course, with any covenant we can always re-engage with it if we want to repent. Covenants with the Lord are always open-ended. So if we choose to end it, we can end it, but if we want to re-engage, we can repent. And that's the beautiful thing. If Laman and Lemuel want to come back into the covenant, they certainly can.

17:35 John, could I ask you to read verse 21?

John Bytheway: 17:37 Okay, 2 Nephi 5 verse 21. "And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them."

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 18:04 Okay. So we need to unpack this verse. It's quite complicated. And for those who don't know about the way the Book of Mormon was published and structured, it didn't have verses originally. They didn't versify it until later. But we just need to

remember that this was a long paragraph and a long piece of text and it's been put in verses by us. Sometimes with the versings, it kind of puts things together in a way that is maybe confusing. And so I'd like to take the first half of the verse and the second half of the verse and treat them separately.

18:36 If I'd been versifying this, I probably would've done it that way instead of connecting the two. But we've got the verse that we have, but we just need to realize verses were not original in the text.

18:47 Nephi says that Jehovah had caused the cursing to come upon Laman and Lemuel, even a sore cursing because of their iniquity. So that's really important for readers is to remember that the cursing is coming because of sin. It's not coming because God doesn't like them or because they're not his favorite. There's a real connection to their behavior. And if we understand the suzerainty treaty, we remember there's a cursing section in it and that it outlines all the specific consequences that will come to Lehi's family if they don't keep the covenant.

19:26 So when we use a covenant perspective, we don't just see a cursing as some random theme. We actually see it as, "Oh, remember the cursings in the covenant section? That is what's going to come upon you."

19:40 Let me remind all of you really quickly what's in that cursing section. It's back in 2 Nephi 1. When you go back and look at the treaty, you'll see it. But the land is going to be cursed. They will not be able to hang onto their lands. They'll always be threatened with other nations coming and taking away their lands. They'll be scattered, smitten. There'll be warfare, famine, hatred, and captivity to the devil.

20:06 When we use this covenant perspective, we can be really precise about exactly what the Lamanites are going to experience and it's everything outlined in the suzerainty treaty and nothing unexpected. So remember, God doesn't do things in secret. He doesn't unexpectedly send us things we haven't been told about. When we use the covenant perspective, it really helps us go, "Oh, what cursing are we talking about?" It's those very things in the treaty that now they're not keeping it. Here come the consequences.

John Bytheway: 20:38 If you were doing the verses, where would you put your divider in there? I'm just curious.

Dr. Jan J. Martin:	20:44	Yeah, I would probably divide up this whole thing a little bit differently because the way it reads. But I'd certainly have verse 20 be its own verse, and then I'd have verse 21 up until the word iniquity, I'd probably have a little verse, just so we can see that we have a cut off and we have a cursing. And then we're going to talk about how the families are now going to relate to each other, which is a whole other subject.
	21:10	I don't find the connecting of these two different ideas very helpful because then we equate the skin of blackness with the cursing and suddenly you have all the trouble with you're sounding like we have some racial ideology here. And I don't believe... the sense Nephi seems to have a covenant perspective. I don't think that that's how he would want this to be read. So I'd put a separation there.
	21:33	And also that phraseology for behold tells you I need to stop and pay close attention to something which would make it a nice transition for a new verse.
Hank Smith:	21:42	Jan, I really appreciate how you're introducing this to us. It'd probably be wise to tell anybody teaching this to go slow and be careful in the way you teach it because oftentimes I have found that when it comes to these verses, if you're too analytical about it and don't acknowledge the fact that people can be hurt by the reading of this, that kind of surface level, "Hey, let's just look at this. Obviously it's not what you're reading, so let's move on," where you just acknowledge that oh yes, this can be the difficult thing.
	22:19	The man who's writing this is the same man who wrote 2 Nephi chapter 26 verse 33 where he wrote this, Nephi, "he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness. He denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female, he remembereth the heathen and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile." This is the same prophet saying these things.
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	22:45	Yeah. And that's why I like the covenant perspective so much because if this is really describing how Laman and Lemuel ended the covenant, then we automatically know they can re-engage with the covenant. Like God wants all to come unto him and the condition is on repentance. If I've ended the covenant for a while and went away and learned that maybe I'd be better off in the covenant relationship, I can come back and re-engage with Jehovah or Jesus Christ through repentance and renew my covenants.

	23:14	All is not lost here. I think what we're seeing is Nephi acknowledging Laman and Lemuel's choice to exit the covenant. They're angry, they're upset, they don't want Nephi to be in charge, so they're going to do it on their own, but there's always hope. And you see that through the rest of the Book of Mormon with the continual missionary efforts the Nephites make to reach the Lamanites.
	23:33	We can be sensitive to people's choices and letting them learn, but also reminding us that it's possible for them to re-engage with the covenant, and I think that's what we're going to see as we look through here.
John Bytheway:	23:45	I'm looking at page 33 on the Come, Follow Me manual and it says, "What was the curse that came upon the Lamanites? In Nephi's day the curse of the Lamanites was that they were cut off from the Lord's presence because of their iniquity." Then it gives the reference we just read. " This meant that the Spirit of the Lord was withdrawn from their lives." When Lamanites later embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ, then Alma 23:18 says, "the curse of God did no more follow them."
	24:12	The Book of Mormon also states that a mark of dark skin came upon the Lamanites after the Nephites separated from them. The nature and appearance of this mark are not fully understood. The mark initially distinguished the Lamanites from the Nephites. Later, as the Nephites and Lamanites each went through periods of wickedness and righteousness, the mark became irrelevant.
	24:33	Prophets affirm in our day that dark skin is not a sign of divine disfavor or cursing. President Russell M. Nelson declared, "I assure you that your standing before God is not determined by the color of your skin. Favor or disfavor with God is dependent upon your devotion to God and his commandments." That's from his talk Let God Prevail, October 2020, General Conference.
Hank Smith:	24:57	And John, I know you have a paper copy, so there's probably not a video attached to your book like there is mine because I'm on a digital copy. There's a video with Elder Ahmad Corbitt who we've actually had on the podcast before, and the video is called Till We All Come In the Unity of the Faith.
	25:18	Jan, as I'm reading this and you said, remember that these are people and there's a lot of emotion involved. Can I remember that with Nephi as well, that he's a real person and that there's

emotion involved here for him as well? I can imagine he's still frustrated with his brothers.

- Dr. Jan J. Martin: 25:36 I think that he's trying to help us understand if you're using the covenant perspective, that they were taught this, that they had plenty of information. I think if you even read 1 Nephi carefully, you see they come to gain their own testimony that Nephi is even the next prophet. But they really cannot relinquish this idea that the elder brothers should be in charge. So they really have to assert themselves, cannot submit to this other idea that a younger brother could be in charge.
- 26:09 I think Nephi senses that of just like, Really? How many times did we try and teach you that this was okay? There's even instances in the Old Testament where the younger brother becomes the birthright son and leads and it's in their family history. And that's why I think when we continue looking at verse 21, he tries to use a metaphor to help us understand where Laman and Lemuel's hearts are and how come they're just not interested in the covenant.
- 26:38 If everybody comes back to verse 21, we'll pick up where we ended. Three lines in we have this, because of their iniquity, and then we get this next part. And this is the metaphor Nephi uses, "for behold, they", that's Laman and Lemuel, "had hardened their hearts against him," Jehovah, so the suzerain, "that they had become likened to a flint". So let's stop right there. If we don't read the metaphor, if we don't pause and look at the flint, then I think we missed what Nephi's trying to say.
- 27:09 So a flint, if you don't know, is a very hard dark rock, or it can also be used proverbially to mean anything that's hard. And because of its rigidity, flint does not submit or blend with any other substances. Here's Nephi trying to explain what he has been dealing with. Their hearts are so hard that unity is not possible with them.
- 27:36 One of the things I like to point out to my students, if you go back to 2 Nephi 1 and you look at the actual Lehitic covenant, you see Lehi outlining one of the stipulations was that the brothers work together in unity. "Be unified. Be of one heart and one mind," if you remember those beautiful words. Let me just backtrack and give them to you. 2 Nephi chapter 1:21
- Dr. Jan J. Martin: 28:00 And he says, "Arise from the dust my sons, and be men and be determined in one mind and one heart, united in all things." And they just haven't managed to do it. And here's Nephi trying very hard to convey to us why the unity didn't happen. We have

hard hearts. They don't want to submit to Jehovah. They don't want to be unified with me, and therefore being able to be one family is going to be very difficult. So then once we understand that, then we can look at the rest of the things that follow and say, this is about hard-heartedness and about interacting with the family when they're hard-hearted and what's that mean? And then we can start unpacking the skin of blackness thing as possibilities and how to read that. That metaphor really matters of what Nephi is dealing with. What I'd like to do is go back into verse 21 from where we left off, and we just hit the word flint.

28:58 So we've spent time studying that metaphor and we understand how hard-hearted they are. And then comes this wherefore. What I'd like to suggest is, Nephi now has questions about how he's supposed to interact with his other family members. This is helping him figure that out. So it says, "Wherefore as they were white and exceedingly fair, and delightsome that they might not be enticing unto my people, the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them." Over the many years there's been numbers of ways of interpreting this. The most obvious way is literally in a reference to white and dark skin. And that's how most people interpret this when they read it.

Hank Smith: 29:36 And that can be very hurtful.

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 29:37 It can. It can be really hurtful. But I'd like to suggest today that you don't have to read it that way, that there's lots of other very plausible and well researched, and based in Nephi context and ancient Israelite context ways of reading this.

29:55 So let's start with white. Scholars who've looked at the use of white in the Book of Mormon have found that in every instance it's used metaphorically, and it refers to purity and the amount of revelation or the amount of light and understanding somebody has, and that this actually isn't a reference to skin pigmentation. In like terms, they've often looked at skin of blackness as metaphorical. So this is not a reference to someone's skin tone. It has to do with their lack of revelation, their lack of understanding, their lack of light, knowledge, their lack of closeness to God. That is a really strong way of reading this, and there's plenty of articles. We can give you some in the notes, of how to find scholars who are arguing for the metaphorical interpretation. There are also scholars who argue that the skin of blackness is self-inflicted. That this is something that the Lamanites added to their own bodies.

30:56 So we can also give you the articles for these. There's an argument that this might be a reference to clothing, that the

skin is animal skin, not human skin, and that the Lamanites are dressing in a particular way to suggest that they're not part of the Nephite culture, and that they do things differently than the Nephites, which is an interesting argument. There's also scholars who've been arguing that this is skin paint, that they're painting themselves. Again, to indicate that they're from a different group, and that they're separate from the Nephites. And then one of the things that I argue with the covenant perspective, is that this is possibly tattooing, and that the Lamanites want to identify themselves as separate from Jehovah.

31:46 And they create an identity through a tattoo that the minute you see them, you know that they're not part of the covenant, and that they've done that on purpose to separate themselves from their Nephite brothers and sisters. I'd offer those out there for anyone who's curious of other ways to read this text, that are very well written and I'd invite people to do more study. We can have very good explanations that may not have anything to do with a literal change of skin pigmentation.

Hank Smith: 32:18 Definitely no expert on this, but having done a little reading myself, I've seen that the terms for describing race by color, is not something that happens until the mid 1600s.

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 32:33 And that's very true.

Hank Smith: 32:34 That white, black, red, all of these start coming up much later, much, much later than Nephi's time.

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 32:42 That's one of the really strongest pieces of research context that we have, is that racial prejudice as understood with skin tone, does not exist in the ancient world anywhere. And there's many scholars who've come to the same conclusions over and over. If we approach the Book of Mormon as an ancient text, and we accept it to be what it says it is, a record of the Nephites, then it is not likely that this has anything to do with a skin pigmentation change. Now, one of the things I found as I was doing my research is, it has to do with language. And the Nephites are very good at telling you that it's hard to write on the plates. They keep telling you that if they could write in their spoken language, which is Hebrew, that they wouldn't have this trouble. So anyone who speaks another language knows that writing in the second language is usually more difficult than writing in your native language.

33:36 So if we go from this concept of reformed Egyptian, that we find out in Mormon that the Nephites seem to be using to keep their

plates, you may run into a language problem of expressing what this really is. And when I was doing my research on tattoos, I found out that in Egyptian there is no hieroglyph for tattoo. So you can't explain it with its own image. Those of readers that don't know, Egyptian is hieroglyphic, meaning you're writing with pictures. There is no word for tattoo. One of my arguments is, well try being Nephi and explaining what happened when you don't have a word to use. So what would you do? You would try and describe it. Now, some of you might know that the word tattoo originates from James Cook, the great explorer of the 17th, 18th centuries. And when he went over to Tahiti for the first time and landed there, they have a culture of tattooing.

34:40 And he writes in his journals about the first time he saw these tattoos and he didn't know what to call them. So I find his description of them really powerful. In his journal, he said that he witnessed that these people inlaid the color of black into their skin. And that's the only way he could describe it. So then he has to start learning their language so he knows how to describe it, and he adopts their word, which was tatau meaning to tap. So if you guys know about how you put tattoos back in those days, you used a little sharp bone or something, and you'd make little holes in your skin and then introduce the soot from a fire by rubbing it into the hole. So there's this tapping motion, so that's what they call it, tapping. So that's how we got the word tattoo into modern languages, was adopting it from the Tahiti word.

35:31 So imagine being Nephi with no word to use. What would you describe it as inlaying the color of black into your skin? A skin of blackness. So we may just be dealing with a difficulty in expressing the idea here, and Nephi is doing his best. And when we translate it into English, it comes out as the skin of blackness, and then we interpret it from our racially motivated perspective, as something that maybe he never intended it to mean. We just need to be careful in how we interpret this, and I'd invite all the audience to do more study into some of these other interpretations, and give you a wider variety of possibilities for what this might mean. Then we don't need to be hurtful in our conclusions, or be insensitive to how these passages can be very hurtful for people to read.

Hank Smith: 36:24 Excellent. Jan.

John Bytheway: 36:24 Really good.

Hank Smith: 36:25 Really good stuff. Jan, this has been absolutely wonderful. I think as a teacher, since I'm not an expert in any of this, I would

say, I try to err on the side of caution. Wouldn't you agree that as we teach this, be very cautious, don't go barreling into it? I would offer a number of resources. One, when I approach this with students, I like to say, "No matter how we understand the Book of Mormon and the history of the church, let's acknowledge where we are today." There's a wonderful gospel topic essay called Race and the Priesthood, right at the very end of the essay, there's a section entitled, "The Church Today." The first paragraph says, "Today, the church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or a curse, or that it reflects unrighteous actions in a pre-mortal life, that mixed-race marriages are a sin, or that blacks or people of any race or ethnicity, are inferior in any way to anyone else."

37:29 Church leaders today, unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present in any form." That's where we are today. Of course, John and I would encourage anyone, we did an episode on this same topic with Brother Ahmad Corbitt. Now Elder Ahmad Corbett. It's way back in our first year, episode 50, part one. We had a great time. And also a website that I send my students to, which is just a wonderful resource. It was started by a brilliant scholar by the name of Paul Reeve. It's called Century of Black Mormons, and it's a fantastic resource where you can see the faith of incredible men and women in the past.

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 38:16 I would recommend anyone who's teaching this to approach it sensitively, but also to try and approach it by giving people a number of opportunities to see different ways of interpreting it. We have much better success with students when we provide them with a wide variety of possibilities, rather than a teacher trying to teach one interpretation as the only interpretation. As the manual says, the Come, Follow Me manual. We don't know what the mark is, it's not completely understood. But we have, as I've said, plenty of really well-grounded research possibilities, from metaphorical to self-inflicted. It's worth exploring them and then allowing students to explore them, and exposing them to the many different interpretations, rather than trying to declare one thing. That's been wiser in my experience, you have much better responses.

Hank Smith: 39:10 And Jan, is there a resource that you would send people to? Can I get the Book of Mormon Academy's work on this?

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 39:16 Yeah. What I will do is, I will use all of the articles I give to my students, and I'll just make sure you get them all, and then they can go on your notes. So that anyone in the audience just can come to your note page and say, "Right, I want to read these

other articles. I want to know what other scholars have said so I can be more educated and give my students more options." And then they can study them, and then provide those to their students as well. It's all about educating. And sometimes the good work that we do just doesn't get out. Nobody knows about it. And that's what we'd want to share.

Hank Smith: 39:51

Well, we can definitely help with that. We'll get those articles from you and put them onto our show notes. followHIM.co, go there, find Jan's episode. You should be able to find it easily.

John Bytheway: 40:04

Just in our conversations, we said when Jesus appeared to the Nephites, what I've noticed was, when Jesus came to the new world, he didn't appear ... Well, it's true, but it's not complete. Jesus didn't appear to the Nephites, he appeared to the righteous. There were Nephites and Lamanites who died in the destructions, and there were Nephites and Lamanites there when Jesus appeared. The privilege of seeing Jesus was not based on culture or race, but on righteousness. And that's an important distinguishing thing to make. And that's what I think is happening here in second Nephi five. It was they're going against the covenant that got them separated, nothing else. And God's not arbitrary about this race or culture, or this or that one. Like you said, Hank, and it's in the footnote, second Nephi 26:33. All are alike Nephi himself is going to write that, "All are alike unto God, black and white bond and free male and female." And that helps me to think about when Jesus appeared, it was the righteous that he appeared to.

Hank Smith: 41:04

And Jan, would it be fair to say that it's a mistake to approach the Book of Mormon as if Nephites good, Lamanites bad? I think that kind of dichotomy, there's no one who is all good, and there is no one who is all bad. If we approach the Book of Mormon that way, I think we're going to read it in error.

Dr. Jan J. Martin: 41:25

I'd agree with that. If you just look at the Nephites and how much trouble they have being righteous. How few times do you have when they're actually described as keeping their covenants and doing everything? Most of the Book of Mormon is about them needing to repent. If you honestly look at it, especially the Book of Helaman, the whole thing is about pride cycles and needing to repent, and the terrible wickedness. And then you have all the destructions in third Nephi. So that one little brief moment in fourth Nephi, where you have a Zion society is really great, but notice we don't have a lot of information about that. The Book of Mormon itself is about fallen people who need to repent and who are struggling. That dichotomy, that Nephites good, Lamanites bad I think is not helpful.

	42:16	And then when you come and look at this, if you can just approach it from the covenant perspective and realize we all struggle to keep our covenants and we all have times where we're maybe not doing great with those. We can have a lot more inclusive approach to Nephite, Lamanites here when we understand that everybody's struggling with righteousness and wickedness.
Hank Smith:	42:37	Jan, what else do we need to know about Second Nephi 5 before we leave this topic?
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	42:42	I'd like to focus on verse 22. It has some language in there that can be quite offensive, especially when you connect it to cursed skin of blackness. And now you're going to add this loathsome word. I think the loathsome really can put it on people to be really offended here if they combine everything.
	43:00	I want to talk about how to read verse 22 because we need to be careful in the assumptions that we make. Let me read verse 22. It says, "And thus saith the Lord God, 'I will cause that they shall be loathsome unto thy people. Save they shall repent of their iniquities.'" And people often will say it's because of their appearance that they're loathsome. They'll go cursed, skin of blackness, and now you're loathsome and oh.
	43:25	But if we read verse 22 backwards, we'll be able to get away from that. Let's just put the end phrase first and we'll start with the word save. "Save they shall repent of their iniquities. They will be loathsome unto thy people." Loathsome has nothing to do with appearance and everything to do with behavior.
	43:49	You could understand this, if the Nephites are following the law of Moses, which is quite particular and covers every aspect of their life, even their dietary ways of preparing food and their ritual cleansings and all these things, they're going to be living a particular way. And then if the Lamanites are going to abandon that or have trouble remembering what it is because they no longer have scripture to check. The Nephites are going to see different behavior and they're going to probably find that behavior troubling because the Lamanites are not doing what they should be doing.
	44:24	We need to make sure we understand loathsome as something behavioral and not something related to how people look. That way we don't need to add on to this kind of idea that the Lamanites are somehow less than. They're still great people. They just are going to develop a different culture than the Nephites have.

	44:45	And you can understand why they've lost their prophet, they've lost their scriptures, and they're going to do the best they can. And there may also be other people around in this world as well who are going to be influencing them. We can connect with loathsome on a more behavioral way and not on appearance. And I think the text is very clear that this is about what they're doing, not about how they look.
Hank Smith:	45:07	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	45:08	So good.
Hank Smith:	45:09	Jan, John, one thing I would add is there may be theories from the past that are still with us that no longer need to be with us or should be with us. And that is the phrase, "The dark skin was not the curse, it was just the sign of the curse." That's not something to teach. It's not something to say. It's not something to perpetuate.
John Bytheway:	45:32	That's what's in the new essay that you mentioned. The church disavows that it was a curse or a sign of the curse it says right now. Yeah, that's right.
Hank Smith:	45:41	Yeah, please don't teach that. Let's finish up here.
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	45:45	Let's jump over to verse 25. This is maybe a verse that people just jump over. It helps us conclude our whole focus on covenants. For me, this is all about covenants, being in the covenant or out of the covenant. And right now Laman and Lemuel have chosen to be out of the covenant. That Nephi and his followers are in the covenant, and we're trying to maintain our covenant. Hank, if I can have you read verse 25. Let's finish our discussion of covenant here and then we can look at the last few verses of the chapter really quick.
Hank Smith:	46:16	Awesome. "And the Lord God said unto me, 'They shall be a scourge unto thy seed to stir them up in remembrance of me. And inasmuch as they will not remember me and hearken unto my words, they shall scourge them even unto destruction.'"
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	46:32	Well, as we look at verse 25, one of the positive outcomes of the Lamanite, Nephite interactions is that they can help each other keep the covenant. Lamanites can stir the Nephites up and remind them whenever they have abandoned their covenant that they need to return to it. And the Nephites can continually send missionaries to the Lamanites to stir them up to repentance and remind them to come back to the covenant.

	47:01	The family is still a family and they can still help each other on either side of this relationship to come be in the covenant. To end our discussion of covenant, we all need help keeping our covenants and we all need each other to remind us to keep them. And sometimes the interactions we have with other people can stir us up to remind us.
	47:24	Sometimes we're inspired by other people. Sometimes we're reminded by other people to be patient and be Christ-like and that we need to keep our covenants. Verse 25 is really useful in seeing this positive thing. Let's help keep each other connected to the covenant. The Lord wants everyone in the covenant. Nephites, Lamanites, we all want to be here together in the covenant.
Hank Smith:	47:48	Beautiful.
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	47:49	Verse 27 is this nice ending to the discussion of covenants that we've had as well. That to live after the manner of happiness means to involve God in your life. Now CS Lewis, who we love to quote, he has some great teachings on this, that humans cannot function happily without God in their lives. And he does a much better job expressing that than I do. And I think the way he worded it was to run on God. That's our nurturing, that's our lifeline. Humans were meant to connect and be sustained and supported by God.
	48:31	The Nephites here, they're living after the manner of happiness because right now at least they're keeping their covenants. They're following Nephi, they're doing the things that they need to do. And in spite of the adversity they have, they're still able to detect God there and find that happiness to do hard things.
	48:50	As President Nelson said, Happiness doesn't have anything to do with the circumstances of our lives, but it has to do with our focus. And covenants are there to focus you on Jesus Christ. If you remember your sacrament prayers to always remember him and keep him as your principle focus of your life. That's why we do what we do, is to keep Jesus there. And when he is your focus, you can be happy in any circumstance.
Hank Smith:	49:17	I've gone through chapter five and thought, what is it that could lead to happiness? And he talks about we did keep the commandments. We worked hard. We had a temple. We were industrious. We built, I think you could search chapter five for some of these principles of happiness, things that kept them focused on the Lord. I'm sure both of you remember this, but

there was an article in the February 2016 Ensign called What Can The Book of Mormon Teach us about Happiness?

John Bytheway:	49:48	It was a great scholar, a great scholar. Let's see. It's right at the tip of my tongue. A doctor-
Hank Smith:	49:54	I don't know who it is, but we'll put it in our show notes.
John Bytheway:	49:57	I think his name was Henry.
Hank Smith:	50:00	Yeah. I honestly can't remember. I just remember the words were just exquisite.
John Bytheway:	50:08	And Hank, you've written a book about happiness too. What's the title of that?
Hank Smith:	50:11	It was called Be Happy.
John Bytheway:	50:13	I wrote one called How to Be Miserable. You are a lot more positive than mine.
Hank Smith:	50:18	Yeah. Jan, we'd like to ask you a question before we let you go. And that is, here's someone who has had incredible education all over the world, a scholar of scripture and someone who loves the Book of Mormon. I don't know if we were to sit down and say, "Jan, how do you feel about this book?"
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	50:40	I love this book. I would talk about it as a very best friend. I remember so many times in my life where I've had a hard time, like Nephi. And I've just opened it up, read it. Through the Book of Mormon, he comforts me, he directs me, he teaches me. It's such an amazing tool. It's a friend. It's something I spend a lot of time in, and I know that it's true. And the reason I know that is because of the light and knowledge and comfort and love and connection with God that it brings every time I'm in there. I will always be a fan.
Hank Smith:	51:24	I've attached myself to this book. Where it goes, I go. Jan, as you've taught us here, the covenant comes with blessings and cursings. These people, that's the world in which they lived, blessings and cursings. But I'd say that having you with us is a blessing, it's a wonderful blessing.
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	51:45	Thank you.

Hank Smith:	51:46	I feel like the Lord has put you in a position and the brilliance that you have, you bless so many lives. We're grateful for you and grateful for your time.
Dr. Jan J. Martin:	51:55	Thank you.
Hank Smith:	51:56	We loved having you. With that, we want to thank Dr. Jan Martin for being with us. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And we always remember our founder. Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us. We have more of Second Nephi to come. We are going to start into more Isaiah chapters on FollowHim.
	52:23	Before you skip to the next episode, I have some important information. This episode's transcript and show notes are available on our website, followhim.co . That's followhim.co . On our website, you'll also find our two books, Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament and Finding Jesus Christ in The New Testament. Both books are full of short and powerful quotes and insights from all our episodes from the Old and New Testaments. The digital copies of these books are absolutely free. You can watch the podcast on YouTube. Also, our Facebook and Instagram accounts have videos and extras you won't find anywhere else.
	52:57	If you'd like to know how you can help us, if you could subscribe to, rate, review, and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, and Annabelle Sorensen.
President Russell M. Nelson:	53:17	Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him. Follow him.

WHEN BACKWARD IS FORWARD



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| Hank Smith: | 00:05 | <p>Hello, everyone. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. This year we are telling a single story that goes with each week's lesson. John, we're in 2 Nephi 3, 4 and 5 and I thought of a story I might tell you. You've probably heard me tell this story before. So if I forget anything, let me know.</p> |
| John Bytheway: | 00:22 | <p>Sounds good.</p> |
| Hank Smith: | 00:23 | <p>Most people who listen to our podcast know that both of our fathers have passed away. Your father passed away years ago and mine pretty recently, just a couple of years ago. Well, when my father passed away, a couple of days later, I remember being very frustrated. I kind of told the Lord, "Hey, I would like a little notice when someone's going to die," because we figured we had more time, but didn't end up being that way. I was pretty frustrated with the Lord and I was letting Him know that I was frustrated with how things had played out. But then an image, a memory came to my mind of my dad and I playing golf. My dad was a golf professional and we played a lot of golf growing up. Well, we're playing this one hole that we had played many, many times and there's this green. Those of you who don't golf, you might have to ask someone about what a green is. But it's where you putt the ball. You've probably seen this before. In the middle of this green is this massive hill that goes down.</p> |
| | 01:22 | <p>So you can either be on the upper part of the green or the lower part of the green. But between those two is a big hill and anytime you land on the top, you putt it and it just races right off the front because the hill is so steep, it just blah right off the front and I go up to see where I am on the green and I'm going to try to make a birdie putt and my ball is up on that second level, the higher level and I've been there so many times and I knew what was going to happen. I was going to putt it slow as I possibly could. It was going to hit that hill and just fly off like a rocket and it was going to go straight over the cup, even if I hit it right at the cup. Golf balls defy the law of physics, John.</p> |

John Bytheway:	02:01	They do.
Hank Smith:	02:02	They go straight over the cup. So I lined up to do it and my dad, it was just he and I, he said, "Hold on a second. Hold on. What if we tried it putting it towards me?" Which was exactly the wrong way, John. It was the wrong way to putt.
John Bytheway:	02:21	He said to the golf pro.
Hank Smith:	02:22	Yeah, yeah. I said, "Dad, if I putt it that way, it's away from the hole," and he said, "I know, I know. But why don't we give it a try?" And I said, "Dad, no. You just don't want me to make this birdie putt."
John Bytheway:	02:35	Because then you'll have to buy the donut.
Hank Smith:	02:36	Yeah. He kind of looked at me like, "Seriously?" And we went back and forth for a long time. I think I was 15 and then he said this. I still remember this. He said, "Hey, who do you think knows more about this, me or you?" And I sat there and I was like, "Well, I'm pretty good and you've been playing the game for five or six decades," and I said, "I think we're about even and I finally said, "You. You know more about this than I do," and he said, "That's right. So why don't we do it my way?" And I said, "All right." So I turned and I putt this ball, John, the wrong way. So I putt it towards him and I watched it and it went right towards him along the top of this hill. Then it got right towards his foot and it turned. It turned to go back towards the cup, nice and slow. It's going back towards this cup and I am, "Whoa." Right? It's getting closer. It's getting closer. You could feel the tension.
	03:46	It went slower and slower and slower and then dropped right in to that cup and I went crazy. I threw my hands in the air and I ran around the green. I remember out of the corner of my eye, I saw my dad. He had his hands in the air. He's going around the green. We met in the middle and I was like, "That was the most amazing thing," and he said, "Right? Right?" And I said, "Well, why are you surprised?" And he said, "Well, I didn't think you'd make it." Father, son, we just went over that. We stayed on that green replaying it and how it went down and even later in his life, he would tell me about going golfing with somebody and I said, "Did they ever hit a shot like on the 15th of Southgate?" Right? And he's like, "That's the greatest putt I've ever seen in my life to this day." John, it would've been the number one play on SportsCenter.

John Bytheway:	04:38	SportsCenter.
Hank Smith:	04:39	Had we had a video. Yup.
John Bytheway:	04:40	(Singing) Hank Smith.
Hank Smith:	04:42	So there I am sitting on the edge of my bed, kind of upset with the Lord, really upset actually, that my father had been taken and, John, I'm telling you. That memory came back to my mind and I heard my father say, both of them, I think, "Who do you think knows more about this, me or you?"
John Bytheway:	05:03	That's so good.
Hank Smith:	05:06	And I thought, oh, not again. You, I guess. I guess it's you and the voice came again. "Well, you're just going to have to trust me then. You're going to do this my way," and I've never forgotten that. So when I come to 2 Nephi 4 and I read about Lehi's death and Nephi's response and how when he thinks about that death, how sad he gets, he turns around and says, "Nevertheless ..." I bet you can finish it, John. "I know in whom I have trusted," and then he picks up and he keeps going. It's a story that I love to tell. Who do you think knows more about this, me or you?
John Bytheway:	05:47	It reminds me of one of my fallback verses in 2 Nephi 2, 2 Nephi 2:24. "All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things."
Hank Smith:	05:55	I know in whom I have trusted.
John Bytheway:	05:57	Somebody knows and it's not you.
Hank Smith:	06:00	It's not you. That's humility is knowing there's a God and you're not Him. Well, thank you for joining us on followHIM Favorites. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. We're with Dr. Jan Martin this week and she gives some incredible insights and then after you listen to the podcast, come back here. Join us next week for another followHIM Favorites.