



EPIISODE 9

GUEST: SHON HOPKIN



"His Name Shall Be Called ... The Prince of Peace"

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:

Why does Nephi spend significant time and effort teaching Isaiah? Dr. Shon Hopkin shares insights into the power of God's covenants, the mission of Jesus Christ, and the meaning of the Abrahamic Covenant through the lens of the love of Jesus Christ.

Part 2:

Dr. Shon Hopkin explores how Nephi and Isaiah teach Saints who God is and how it encourages them to come to Christ.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Shon Hopkin
- 00:17 Last Week
- 00:30 What to expect in 2 Nephi/Isaiah
- 05:00 Bio of Dr. Shon Hopkin
- 06:28 First simplicity
- 08:11 Second simplicity and a nursery rhyme
- 11:01 Understanding Isaiah in history
- 13:58 Genesis 12-22 Abrahamic Covenant
- 14:22 Joseph of Egypt
- 17:28 40 years in the desert to a Divided Kingdom
- 20:55 Assyria and Isaiah
- 22:39 Place names
- 24:07 Isaiah and preaching in Israel and Judah
- 25:31 Nephi and Isaiah and important dates
- 29:05 Isaiah 37: Assyria and Hezekiah
- 33:20 Why Nephi loves Isaiah
- 35:44 Land and identity
- 37:32 Isaiah's children
- 38:59 2 Nephi 17
- 39:59 2 Nephi 11-14
- 44:02 2 Nephi 14:5-6 Gather places
- 46:40 2 Nephi 12 River flowing against gravity
- 49:49 Descending off of the mountain
- 52:08 2 Nephi 12:4 Why temples?
- 54:46 *Isaiah for Airheads* by John Bytheway
- 57:45 2 Nephi 13 Babylon is coming
- 1:00:31 2 Nephi 26:20-23
- 1:04:00 2 Nephi 13
- 1:07:35 2 Nephi 13:12-13 Pride and downfall
- 1:10:42 End of Part 1–Dr. Shon Hopkin

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Shon Hopkin
- 00:07 2 Nephi 13:27 or 2 Nephi 14:1
- 01:43 Prophetic authority
- 02:51 2 Nephi 14:1 Eusebius, Jerome, and Aquinas
- 04:11 Scripture and private interpretation
- 06:42 2 Nephi 15:7 A song
- 10:28 The story of a man with a vineyard

- 11:38 Dr. Hopkin shares a story about a bad grape
- 12:55 2 Nephi 15:8 The wealthy in the vineyard
- 15:08 2 Nephi 15:10 Why crops fail
- 17:42 2 Nephi 18-20 The heavy load of vanity
- 20:00 2 Nephi 15:20 and Alma 25 Bad guys
- 23:22 Prophetic likening
- 25:25 2 Nephi 15:25 Justice or mercy
- 28:38 2 Nephi 19:12 Hand stretched out
- 30:28 2 Nephi 16 Isaiah's calling
- 33:02 Theophanies
- 34:48 Isaiah is given a message
- 37:12 2 Nephi 16:4 Smoke and symbolism
- 40:24 2 Nephi 16:7-12 a literary unit
- 42:15 2 Nephi: Ahaz, Pika, and firebrands
- 45:14 2 Nephi 17:7 Judah will survive
- 46:08 2 Nephi 17:14 A virgin as a sign, Jesus and Hezekiah
- 49:01 Isaiah honors his wife
- 52:00 Elder Holland on Isaiah's wife and Mary
- 53:09 Isaiah and baby names
- 54:15 2 Nephi 17: 13 Immanuel—God is with us
- 55:05 2 Nephi 19 God's eyes are on Israel
- 56:54 2 Nephi 19:2 Jesus and a Davidic king
- 59:14 2 Nephi 18:6 A flood
- 1:00:24 Dr. Shon Hopkin shares his testimony of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon
- 1:04:28 End of Part II— Dr. Shon Hopkin

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Biographical Information:



Born in Denton, Texas, as the son of Lorraine Hopkin and Arden Hopkin, Shon Hopkin attended Southwest High School in Fort Worth, Texas and graduated from Orem High School. He received a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree from Brigham Young University in Near Eastern Studies with a focus on Hebrew Bible. He received a PhD from the University of Texas at Austin in Hebrew studies with a focus on medieval Hebrew, Arabic, and Spanish literature. Before coming to Brigham Young University, he taught in Seminaries and Institutes for four years at Timpview High School (1997–2001), four years at Provo High School (2001–5), and six years at the Austin Institute of Religion (2006–11). At BYU he has served as Chair of the Book of Mormon Academy and Chair of the BYU Religious Outreach Council. He is one of the principal organizers of the ongoing Jewish & Latter-day Saint Academic Interfaith Dialogue project. He has authored, co-authored, and edited numerous books and articles on Isaiah, the Hebrew Bible, Latter-day Saint beliefs, and medieval literature, including *Opening Isaiah: A Harmony* (with Ann Madsen); *Abinadi: He Came Among them in Disguise* (edited, Book of Mormon Academy); *Mormonism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (with Robert Millet, as part of Bloomberg Press’ Guide for the Perplexed series); and the forthcoming *Understanding Your Neighbor: Judaism* (with Rabbi

Mark Diamond, as part of the Widtsoe Foundation's series). He and his wife have four children and two grandchildren.

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- Hank Smith: 00:00:03 Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm here with my Isaiah loving co-host, John Bytheway. John, I've heard it around that you love Isaiah. Is that true?
- John Bytheway: 00:00:17 I do love Isaiah, Hank, and maybe it's because I've had to put some time into it. When I had the opportunity to teach, the two most frightening things were the Isaiah chapters and the war chapters, but with some time, yeah, I feel better about it.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:30 Same way with me, John, it took some time. But as I worked through it verse by verse, eventually, the light came on and it became beautiful to me. Speaking of Isaiah expertise, John, we are joined by a Bible scholar. His name is Dr. Shon Hopkin. He's a good friend of ours. Shon, what are we looking forward to today?
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:00:52 As we all know, Nephi quotes a large chunk of Isaiah. Many feel, oh, we are to the Isaiah chapters, I will slog my way through. And I actually think people tend to... I know the one verse that makes sense to me and I can find that verse in the chapter, but let me sort of muddle my way through and they get really excited about that one verse, and then muddle my way through again until the next verse. One of the things I like to say to my students is Isaiah does not reward lazy reading, and it doesn't reward listening to the scriptures at two or three times speed. This is not narrative. This is prophetic poetry. And for those of you who never liked poetry, you're going to have to learn to love digging into symbolism, digging into beautiful language, and it will reward you over and over and over again, if you can take some time. You're not just going to zoom your way through it. There's beauty throughout, enough beauty for an entire lifetime and beyond in Isaiah.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:54 Beautiful. I think it's crucial that we worship God with our heart, mind and strength. So this is a form of worshiping God, trying to understand difficult texts.

John Bytheway:	00:02:06	I love that and I think that... was it Elder Bednar who talked about, we can either skip it, we can skim it, we can read it, or we can search it? Jesus wants us to search Isaiah. This is a chance to go from a casual reader to a serious student, to use the Ezra Taft Benson quotation. I love to tell my students, "Listen, we should never be intimidated by scripture. We are children of God with the gift of the Holy Ghost. This isn't a trial, this is a gift. Let's draw from this and be blessed by it."
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:02:37	Isaiah is the best Hebrew in the Bible by far. It is detailed, it is nuanced. It's very careful, very skilled use of the Hebrew language. So the way that he spoke resonates. And of course, we experience that through the King James version, which has its own beauty, but the Hebrew is spectacularly beautiful. It's poetic, it's alliterative. It repeats certain sounds. And he'll use a word that can point two different directions depending on how you translate it. And then in the first half of a verse, he'll say this, and then second half of a verse, he'll say this, and that one word ties together those two slightly different messages. If you look at the way the Book of Mormon prophets talk about Isaiah and why they are quoting, including Jesus, but also others, Nephi, Mormon, Moroni, they are the same as the main purposes of the title page of the Book of Mormon.
	00:03:34	So why do they quote Isaiah? Because Isaiah is the foundation. He helps them understand the world and they map their world onto the way that he talks about it. You get, remember that God's covenants are there anciently and are still there. You get, remember that Jesus is the Christ. It's testifying that Jesus is the Christ and God speaks to all of his children, both Jew and Gentile. So those are the three main messages of the title page. And that's actually, if you look at every time they say, "Hey, you should read Isaiah," that's why they say we should read Isaiah because he does those things. Fascinating to see Isaiah track through the Book of Mormon and provide the Nephites an interpretive lens for understanding their world. And I think he could do the same, should do the same to a certain degree for us.
Hank Smith:	00:04:23	I think we've done a great job here of saying, let's not avoid this. Let's embrace it. There's a great reward at the end for the work that needs to go into this. I frequently quote the Bible Dictionary. As one understands Isaiah better, he or she more fully comprehends the mission of the Savior and the meaning of the covenant that was placed upon Abraham. Those are two things I really want. I want to more fully comprehend the mission of the Savior and the meaning of the Abrahamic covenant. Apparently, according to the Bible Dictionary, that

comes through reading and understanding Isaiah. Now, before we go any further, John, let's introduce our audience to Dr. Hopkin. He's been here before, so he probably needs no introduction, but let's give a brief one anyway.

- John Bytheway: 00:05:08 Yeah, Dr. Shon Hopkin from Denton, Texas. In fact, he was a star pupil of mine at EFY in 1989. Wonderful memories of those and so many wonderful young people. And look where they are now, they're on podcasts. Shon attended Southwest High School in Fort Worth, Texas, but graduated from Orem High School, so you must have transferred. Entered the transfer portal, went to Orem High, received bachelor's and master's degrees from BYU in Near Eastern studies with a focus on the Hebrew Bible. No surprise, based on what he just said. He received a PhD from the University of Texas at Austin in Hebrew studies with a focus on medieval Hebrew, Arabic and Spanish literature. And he's currently the chair of the Department of Ancient Scripture.
- Hank Smith: 00:05:53 John, for anyone who's interested, go to our YouTube channel, type in FollowHIM, Shon Hopkins. You can hear some of the other episodes we've done. We were in Genesis with Shon. We were in Psalms with Shon. We were also in Matthew 3 with Shon. And all of these episodes have been just fantastic, showing us new things we'd never seen before. Shon, with that, let's jump into the lesson. The title of this week's lesson is, His name shall be called The Prince of Peace. And our chapters, easy to cover. Right John? 2 Nephi 11 through 19. There's not a lot in here, is there?
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:06:28 Yeah. We're going to have an exciting run. Let's get right into the text. As we're just now entering into this lengthy quotation, sometimes people think that Nephi may be stretching us a little bit, and then he's going to say, "Well, I glory in plainness," and you think, "No Nephi, you're lying. Why would you do this to us?" But I really do believe that Isaiah formed the foundation for the way Nephi understood things. And you have heard talked about before maybe, this idea of first simplicity and second simplicity. First simplicity is when something's just very straightforward and simple, Fur Elise, the Piano Song. And I may have even said this on this podcast before, (singing). A beginning piano player could play that piece, and that's first simplicity.
- 00:07:14 If an expert piano player played that piece, the notes would be basically the same. The rhythm would be basically the same. It would sound different. And so there is a simplicity on the other side of complexity, and that is what we are getting in Nephi's

plainness. It's because he has absorbed Isaiah. And then one other little thing I'd like to say, he says, "Those who are living when these things will be fulfilled, they'll understand this better." And I think the tool we have of the teachings of the restored gospel and this idea of President Nelson's talking all the time about covenants, about the Abrahamic Covenant, about the gathering in the last days, it really focuses in on these themes a lot. And once we start recognizing, wait a minute, Isaiah's talking about the same kinds of topics that I am hearing about in General Conference, another place where we get second simplicity. Sometimes people are confused, "Wow, this is just simple."

00:08:11 But no, this is second simplicity. When general authorities teach, they're teaching on the other side of complexity. They boil it down to give us the most powerful information. It's not, well, we're right on the edge of our ability. We're on the other side and giving it to you plain and simple through the wisdom that's gained. There's a fun little tool here that some may want to use at some point, as you're teaching about Isaiah. There are these nursery rhymes that were put into different language, into academic language, and let me just do one of these with you just for fun. See if you can recognize what is being described here. A research team proceeded toward the apex of a natural geologic protuberance. The purpose of their expedition being the procurement of a sample of fluid, hydride of oxygen in a large vessel, the exact size of which was unspecified. Now, some of you have fallen asleep, some of you have figured out what this nursery rhyme is. Any takers, Hank or John?

John Bytheway: 00:09:07 Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water.

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:09:09 Jack and Jill are the research team, and they're going to the apex of a natural geologic protuberance. Or in other words, they're going up a hill to get a pail of water or a sample of fluid, hydride of oxygen, a large vessel, the exact size of which was unspecified. Let me just finish it off really quickly. One member of the team, we know that's Jack, precipitantly descended, sustaining severe fractional damage to the upper cranial portion of his anatomical structure, which is actually what happened. Subsequently, the second member of the team performed a self-rotational translation oriented in the direction taken by the first team member. Wow, that's sort of not exciting until you realize, "Wait, I know this story," and you can map them onto each other. And all of a sudden, the way that those words are being used doesn't confuse, or frustrate, or put you to sleep. Instead, it's exciting because it gives you new ways of thinking

about what's going on. It gives you a new direction to ponder, but it's fun.

00:10:07 We know this story. We are taught the same themes that Isaiah's teaching. Now, while that is true, you hear this over and over again, I'm sure from people that are on this podcast, that the ancient world has so many similarities with us, but it is also very much foreign territory. Understanding what's going on in Isaiah's timeframe can serve as a very important key to help us unlock meaning for us, so that we can apply it in more appropriate ways. Nephi calls this process, likening. So we're going to do some of this. We'll see, okay, what's going on in Isaiah's day, so that the whole chapter can make sense, not just the one verse that we find over and over and over again. And then when we've got that context, we can liken it to ourselves in much more powerful ways.

Hank Smith: 00:10:54 Excellent. I love that Jack and Jill. I'm going to have my children memorize that, so it can... It just rolls off the tongue really.

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:11:01 Before we jump into the text, why don't we just take a few moments to situate ourselves in history? For some, this'll be very straightforward. For others, it won't be straightforward. It just depends on what your previous experience is. And some of the dates that I will give are wild approximates. People would say, "No, he's 200 years off." So just hang in there. In some of this early history, we don't have great dates for all of it. Let's say that Abraham lived around about 2000 BC, and you'll get earlier dates, you'll get later dates. And then let's put his grandson, Jacob or Israel, and his 12 sons. So now, we're two to three generations later around 1900 BC or so. The Abrahamic Covenant will say about 2000 BC, and Abraham then of course, is in the land of Canaan, and then there's going to be a famine there.

00:11:59 And Joseph, about 1850 BC, goes down into Egypt, and then they all end up in Egypt. 400 years later, 1450 or so BC, some would put it later than that, Moses delivers them back up out of Egypt. They come into the promised land. You get the reign of the judges, people like Samson and others, Samuel at the end of this timeframe, leading into the reign of the kings, Saul, David, Solomon, right around 1000 BC. The grandson of David, Rehoboam, is going to preside then as the kingdom divides and splits into a north half called the Kingdom of Israel. Sometimes it confuses us because it's called the Kingdom of Israel. It's got 10-ish tribes and the southern kingdom of Judah, two-ish tribes in the southern kingdom, but called the Kingdom of Judah

because Judah is who the kingship runs through and it's by far, the most powerful tribe there.

00:13:00 So that's about 930 BC. And now, we are about two centuries after those divided kingdoms. And these are going to be like siblings or cousins. They will be often frenemies. There's this close linkage, but they struggle to get along. They split apart earlier. And they've continued to have in some respect, similar needs and desires, but in other respects, they begin to diverge in who they are and what their identity is. By the time you get to Isaiah, there is a crisis going on where the northern kingdom of Israel is threatening the southern kingdom of Judah. And they're using their neighbors, Aram, or as we would think of it, Syria, to threaten Judah. That's really how the storyline is going to play out here. Warring siblings, if you have one of those, then we know what that's like a little bit.

Hank Smith: 00:13:59 John, let's make sure we understand. For anybody who's listening who went, "Okay, I followed that a little bit." Let's just review really quick. And John, I want to hear your Charlton Heston impressions here. Where would I go? Genesis 12, Shon, for Abraham and the Covenant?

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:14:16 12 through 22 or so. Yep. Genesis 18 is an important one as well.

Hank Smith: 00:14:22 This family, he says, "Abraham, your family is going to bless the whole earth. I'm going to give you commandments. And with those commandments, you're going to get blessings. You're going to bless the whole earth." That goes from Abraham and Sarah, to Isaac and Rebecca, to Jacob and Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah. Jacob gets his name changed to Israel. They have the 12 sons, the most famous of which John is...

John Bytheway: 00:14:47 Joseph.

Hank Smith: 00:14:48 Joseph.

John Bytheway: 00:14:53 (Singing), that's excellent.

Hank Smith: 00:14:54 Yes, many people have seen the play. They just haven't read the book. Then we get enslaved in Egypt because Joseph brings the family to Egypt to save them. Shon, why don't they just go home after being saved in the famine? Do we know? That's between Genesis and Exodus.

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:15:09	Part of the answer to that, maybe. I mean, they've moved everybody down there and there is a lengthy famine. Egypt is actually a pretty reliable place. It was the breadbasket of the ancient world. The Nile would do its regular flooding thing, and they rarely had to deal with famines. And often, you see Egypt saving Israel more than once. Even in Jesus's day, you get this theme replaying where Joseph, once again, Jesus's adoptive father, takes Jesus down into Egypt, and then Jesus is going to come up back up out of Egypt, so that these themes play in multiple times.
	00:15:49	And the way I like to think of it, we often think of Egypt as this symbol, this negative symbol. If Egypt didn't exist, then the gospel, the covenant people doesn't survive. I like to think of Egypt as a symbol of the world. God sends us to the world from pre-mortality to mortality. We live here, but we just don't want to get terribly seduced by this place, by the ease and comfort that the world sometimes offers. And maybe they're seduced a little bit by that. Life is a little bit harsher at times back up in Canaan, what's going to be Israel later on. They just stay, and then they get enslaved, and then they can't go because they're enslaved.
Hank Smith:	00:16:26	Let's follow our story here. So those 12 sons of Jacob and his wives, when his name has changed to Israel, they become the 12 tribes of Israel. So I imagine the family's much bigger at this point, but they're enslaved. They want out of bondage. They want to go to the promised land promised to Abraham, that original promise. Here comes Charlton Heston, right John?
John Bytheway:	00:16:50	Yeah. Chuck Heston, as we know him, a friend of the podcast, watching that movie as a kid is where I learned this. So Moses became this deliverer who was going to lead them out of Egyptian bondage. I think the kids nowadays know Prince of Egypt a lot better, wouldn't you say Hank?
Hank Smith:	00:17:06	Yeah. Water, mud, faster.
John Bytheway:	00:17:09	Yes.
Hank Smith:	00:17:09	Yeah.
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:17:11	Second born, second place.
Hank Smith:	00:17:14	Yeah. Let my people go. They leave Egypt, they cross the Red Sea, they go to the promised land, but they end up not being

ready for it, Shon. And so the Lord sends them into the wilderness. Is that how I should read that?

- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:17:28 Yeah. It doesn't take 40 years, it doesn't take two years. It takes a few months maybe, with a large group of people to get across the Sinai Peninsula, that desert. It's not that they're wandering around lost. They stay for about 38 years in one place. They're just not allowed to go in. They're preparing to go in, so to speak.
- Hank Smith: 00:17:46 It's easy to get Israel out of Egypt, but not easy to get Egypt out of Israel. Let's keep going here. They enter the promised land under Joshua, and now we can be the covenant people again. But by the time Samuel, the prophet, son of Hannah, comes around, they've decided they don't want to be covenant people. They want kings. John, am I telling this story right, Shon?
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:18:08 Like the rest of the nations.
- John Bytheway: 00:18:10 We want to be like the nations. And this is what that king will do. He'll take your sons, he'll take your daughters, they'll run before the chariots. He'll make them bakers, and the people still say, "I know, but we want a king like all the nations." And the Lord says, "Well, they haven't rejected you. They've rejected me. Give them a king." It's kind of that, "Go ahead, that's what they wanted." The message is God is supposed to be our king and our lawgiver, but they want to have a king.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:35 Yeah. Our first three kings then are Saul, David and Solomon. And then Shon, you said something happens after Solomon, the kingdom divides.
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:18:44 Yeah. So they split into two kingdoms. And by the way, even though Saul, David and Solomon are the most famous and in some ways, the best examples you might say of kingship, they model the problems already. In those first three, you see all the problems, like David takes someone else's wife for his own, and then kills someone to take someone else's wife for his own. So you certainly see those concerns. And then King Mosiah, of course, in the Book of Mormon, is going to be really concerned about what wicked kings are going to do. And history plays out that way. History supports that original statement that the Lord makes to Samuel. You get Solomon's son, Rehoboam, get some bad counsel and says, "You want things to be lighter? I'm going to make them heavier. I'm going to make things tougher." And that doesn't work out for him as you might expect, and you get a split.

John Bytheway:	00:19:39	You see students give some recognition when you talk about the northern kingdom had the 10 tribes, because they've heard about the lost 10 tribes. So that's what we're talking about when we talk about the northern kingdom, right?
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:19:51	Right.
Hank Smith:	00:19:51	We sing it in the articles of faith.
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:19:53	Right. And that actually happens during Isaiah's lifetime. And so sometimes people will say, "Why is Isaiah so dark at times? Why is he so negative at times?" And this is real. He is a truth teller. It'd be like my son runs into the street and I'm like, "Hey, you're fine buddy. People do great out there." That wouldn't be a very loving thing to do. He sees real issues. And they're going to see the entire kingdom of Israel overrun by Assyria, and then many of them carried away captive, and then they disappear. The 10 tribes become the lost 10 tribes and they never recover in antiquity. And the prophets actually continue to point to, "Hey, by the way, this covenant isn't just with Judah. The northern tribes are going to be restored as well, but they're gone." And this happens during Isaiah's lifetime, major upheaval during his lifetime. Assyria, it's actually Neo-Assyria, historically speaking, as we talk about it, but Assyria is wreaking havoc throughout the world at this point.
John Bytheway:	00:20:55	Let's stop for a second because people are listening and this is what used to confuse me. There is Syria, S-Y-R-I-A, and there's Assyria, A-S-S-Y-R-I-A. And they're both involved in what Isaiah's talking about. I like to say I have a bias for the kingdoms in Isaiah's time. Bias, meaning Babylon, Israel, Assyria, and Syria. And then they could get, okay, here's some of the kingdoms involved because everybody knows Egypt. We all remember Egypt because we have Prince of Egypt. But those other kingdoms come into play, and I like the way Victor Ludlow said it, "Assyria is like the military cruel superpower. Babylon's the cultural commercial center like New York, New York." And that helped me think too of what Isaiah's got to deal with with his people when there's enemies like Assyria and Babylon out there.
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:21:47	Syria is actually this sort of close threatening neighbor. They're the nearby threat, but Assyria is the real threat. And by the way, Syria is what we get in the King James version. Aram is what they would've been known as at that point. Assyria is the real terror.

Hank Smith:	00:22:03	Shon, let me ask a couple of questions just to clarify a little bit more. We have basically a civil war between these two kingdoms and now they both have separate kings. So we've got kings in the north and kings in the south. So if one king wasn't enough, let's have two. 10 tribes in the north, like John said, two tribes in the south. Now, Isaiah comes onto the scene right about then. Does he have access to both of these? And my second question is, when I read Isaiah, he doesn't seem to refer to Israel and Judah at times. He calls them different things, which can be confusing.
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:22:39	He will often refer to Israel by the name, Ephraim, which is the dominant tribe in the north and is biblically considered the birthright tribe. And so he sort of parallels Judah in the south, which is just one of the tribes, but it's the kingship tribe. With Ephraim in the north, he'll sometimes besides Ephraim, call the northern kingdom by its capital city, Samaria. And then Syria, who is further north or Aram, he will often call them by their capital city, Damascus. You'll hear him doing that a lot of times and it gets confusing until you get it sorted out a little bit.
John Bytheway:	00:23:16	Maybe we'll talk about this when we're in 2 Nephi 17, because I had to make a map and write all those things down before I ever understood it. When I explain to my students, if I say the White House, if I say the Oval Office, if I say 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, if I say Washington, DC, they know that I'm referring to the same place, and that's what Isaiah is. So there's Israel, and Samaria and Pekah, the king, and the son of Remaliah who is also Pekah, and Ephraim who is the dominant tribe. And Isaiah doesn't... He refers five different words to the same place. We do that too. We just have to learn these in Isaiah's time, and then it makes it easier. And if you're me, you have to make a chart, and then you get it.
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:24:05	Yeah, I think that's well said.
Hank Smith:	00:24:07	Shon, Isaiah, does he live in the northern kingdom or the southern and does he have access to both?
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:24:14	He is very much in the southern kingdom. In fact, with strong access to the court, he is someone who is closely connected to the kings of Judah at the time, which isn't always the case. So you've got Amos, who is more like a sheep herder or a farmer, a rancher, and then you've got Isaiah who is highly educated. He's erudite and he communicates beautifully and powerfully in kingly courts, but he doesn't pull any punches as we know. He tells them the truth. But when Isaiah decides to meet with a king, lo and behold, that king meets with him.

- 00:24:51 Now, does he have access to the north? Most would say that the things that Isaiah teaches are actually being sent to the courts and the lands where he is prophesying. It's certainly not going to function anywhere close to what we would understand today with our internet access, but that there is a way in which these things are not just these little internal statements he's making, but they're actually oriented to influence these other kingdoms as well. When he prophesies about Moab, they're oriented to influence those countries. And not everybody would agree with that, but that's pretty widely understood that way.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:31 Nephi obviously has the words of Isaiah, and I think most people could tell you, Nephi and Lehi leave Jerusalem around 600 BC. So what is their relationship to Isaiah? They don't live at the same time period?
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:25:46 Isaiah is going to be about 100 to 130 or so years before Nephi. This comparison is sometimes made if you think of Joseph Smith in 1840 or so. We're about 180 years after Joseph Smith, then we're a little further out at this point, but that's something of a similar situation or a comparison to the distance. And Isaiah really, is the man for them. His prophecies are highly influential throughout the history of Israel. Let me give you a few more main events, just to see if it'll help a few people. During Isaiah's lifetime, let me give you three-ish main events, and then three main events after Isaiah's lifetime. And then I think historically, we'll have the bones of it. Isaiah is going to be called maybe around 740 BC, right at the end of Isaiah's reign. And then five years later around 735 BC, you're going to get this thing that we're going to be talking about more today, the Syro-Ephraimite War where Syria and Ephraim or Israel, are threatening Judah. That's a big deal, historically speaking, and Isaiah is going to deal with it.
- 00:27:04 About 10 to 15 years after that, in 722, 721 BC, that's when Assyria is going to come back down and carry the tribes away, destroy the northern kingdom of Israel. That happens right in the middle of Isaiah's time as prophet. He sees that happen. His people see those siblings to the north disappear. By the way, this is probably one of the main times when you get people from the north fleeing down to Judah. And maybe this is when Lehi's ancestors, so about 120 years before Lehi, his ancestors may have shown up. And it's probably going to be most prevalently the educated and the leaders who have the means to flee down, which would then help us understand why Nephi is so good with literature. He may be coming from a scribal kind of a tradition. But there's a reason why Manasseh is sitting in

Jerusalem, that the tribe of Manasseh, which is what Lehi and Nephi are from. The genesis of this is during Isaiah's lifetime.

00:28:03 And then one more date in Isaiah's lifetime in his ministry is 701 BC. This is the event that Isaiah cares about most. He prophesies about it, he focuses on it. This is when Assyria is going to come down and try to take Jerusalem, but fail to take Jerusalem because Hezekiah the King is righteous and points them towards the Lord, and the Lord saves them miraculously.

Hank Smith: 00:28:31 Assyria wanted the whole thing, but only got the northern kingdom, not the southern.

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:28:37 What happens is that Israel keeps trying to throw off the yoke of Assyria, and Assyria comes and punishes them for it. Ahaz, as we're going to see here when we look a little more closely at these chapters, he's going to stay under the yoke of Assyria, but his son, Hezekiah, is going to throw off the yoke of Assyria. And that ticks Assyria off and they're going to come down and try to wipe out Judah, just like they wiped out Israel 20 years earlier. So that's how that plays out.

Hank Smith: 00:29:06 Does Isaiah have anything to do with Judah surviving or is he just watching this happen?

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:29:11 There is this really powerful moment, particularly for Latter-day Saint readers. You can see it in Isaiah 37. When Assyria is at the doors, they have Jerusalem under siege. Rabshakeh, this Assyrian leader, is threatening Jerusalem with destruction and mocking Hezekiah. And Hezekiah gets the message. He rends his clothes, he takes it seriously. He goes to the temple to pray to God at the temple. He sends his messengers to Isaiah to say, "Isaiah, what should we do?" And Isaiah, it's really powerful. So he's praying in the temple and a prophetic message comes in response to that prayer. So think of that triangulation, by the way, for Latter-day Saints. You go to the temple and you listen to the prophets. You go to the temple and pray to the Lord. And one of the ways powerfully that the Lord answers your prayer is through prophetic messages. In fact, I would say Latter-day Saints can apply that story better than any other people in the world.

Hank Smith: 00:30:13 We have a great member of our team, her name is Lisa Spice. And if Lisa were here, she might say her favorite episode of FollowHIM was when we had Josh Sears last year. Shon, you're her second favorite. But when we had Josh Sears come on and do 2 King 17 through 25, where he talked about this very story. So I'd encourage anyone who's interested to go find that. Isaiah

to Nephi then, not only is a prophet, but he's almost like a war hero. He saved the country. Is that a good way to think about it?

- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:30:46 Certainly, Hezekiah, and then guided by Prophet Isaiah. And then that leads to the last couple of important things that we should mention. So if Isaiah is 740 to 700 BC, Nephi is about a hundred years later in 600 BC, right around the time of Nephi and Lehi, were right up at the time when Babylon's going to come just like Assyria did, but Assyria failed to take Jerusalem. Babylon is going to come and do to Judah and Jerusalem what Assyria did to the northern tribes earlier. But because those southern tribes continue to trust in the Lord even in exile, that's when you get people like Daniel and Ezekiel leading them in exile in Babylon. God promises them, Isaiah prophesies of this, "You are going to come back home. Hang in there." And this never happened anciently. If your temple is destroyed and you're carried away by a foreign power, that means their God won, your God lost, you are done and you're going to go get put in slavery and absorbed into that people, but they hold strong to their identity. They're changed by that experience, but they hold strong to their identity.
- 00:31:58 And God sends them home, when as John has been telling us. So you get first, Assyria, the major threat, and then Babylon beats Assyria. And Babylon, that is the one that's going to take Judah, and then Cyrus with the Persians is going to defeat Babylon. And Cyrus is the one who says, "I'm going to send those people home." And Cyrus is talked about in the book of Isaiah as being this savior kind of a figure. And that sort of brings our short and sweet historical run to a close.
- Hank Smith: 00:32:28 Yeah. And Shon, I realize that took a while, but to me, in my teaching of Isaiah, that story that we just told from Abraham to Isaiah is crucial if you want to understand what Isaiah really is talking about, if you really want to understand his context, why he's saying what he's saying, who he's talking to, and why he would be saying certain things to these certain cities and lands. That story, I would encourage everybody like, "Oh, I didn't get that." Okay, go back. Rewind. That's a word from the 1900s. Rewind and go through it again. John, anything you would add? You've taught this before.
- John Bytheway: 00:33:05 Yeah. What I love about this, and we brought this up in Old Testament, is that Jerusalem, not Judah, but Jerusalem had been miraculously saved. And then Lehi comes and says, "Jerusalem's going to be destroyed." And that their recent memory, they have no, it didn't fall the last time.

Hank Smith:	00:33:21	Shon, let me ask one more question, then we get into the text. Why do you think, and I know you can't be Nephi, but why do you think Nephi loves Isaiah so much?
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:33:31	Nephi actually gives a couple of reasons why he loves Isaiah so much and why he wants to quote him. And one of the primary reasons is in the reading for this week in 2 Nephi 11. It is a big deal to Nephi that Isaiah saw the Savior, that Isaiah saw the Redeemer, that Isaiah had this throne, theophany or throne vision, of Yahweh. And Nephi's like, "Well, I've seen God, Jacob has seen God." I'm going to quote from Jacob, "Isaiah saw God." I sometimes say to my students, I have learned more about the nature of God from Joseph Smith and from Isaiah than from any other source. And I suspect Nephi was led to believe that God was willing to reveal himself to him in part, because of the words of Isaiah.
	00:34:27	And this sort of functions to open up the Book of Mormon. Lehi has a vision of God seated on a throne. We would think of this, he's surrounded by angels, so the divine counsel. He's invited into this experience with God and given a message and sent forth. That's exactly the same thing that happens with Isaiah. That's exactly the same thing that happens with Nephi. So that's one answer why Nephi loves Isaiah. But then all of the themes that are going to be important to him as he's leading his people, he sees those because Isaiah has cared about, no, there's going to be people carried away, and then that righteous remnant will be preserved in the last days. And they give him hope, they give him joy. They remind him that they are not cast off forever, that the covenants are going to work in the last days and they testify of the Redeemer. All of those things are what are going to give his life meaning.
	00:35:21	So I don't know which comes first in the cycle. If he learned it first in Isaiah, and then he saw the world there, or if he sees this, and then he's reading the scriptures and the scriptures answer this problem. I think in our lives, it probably is a little bit of both. We read the scriptures and they help us understand our world, but then we've got needs that drive us back to the scriptures and there are the answers. This is how it seems to function for Nephi.
John Bytheway:	00:35:44	Once these folks lost their real estate, they lost part of their identity. For Nephi, to share Isaiah with them, helps them know, "This is us. We are still part of the covenant. We still have the blessing and the burden of being Covenant Israel." And isn't it wonderful that President Nelson talking to the young single adults said, "I want you to remember these three identities.

You're a child of God, you're a child of the covenant, and you're a disciple of Christ." Nephi is reminding him we're in a different area code, but we have a covenant obligation and covenant promises that are still valid and intact.

Hank Smith: 00:36:20 If you go back into the 1900s even, President Nelson is talking about this story that we're covering. If anybody wants to read his history of this, he actually gave it in General Conference, October of 2006, the gathering of scattered Israel. And he walks through that same history that we just did. Now Shon, for simplicity's sake, let's call the loss of the northern kingdom, the 10 tribes, and the loss of the southern kingdom 130 years later, the two tribes as the scattering of Israel. Nephi is living it then. He's living the scattering of Israel. What is it about Isaiah that helps Nephi understand their situation as being not tossed away, but led away from their home?

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:37:09 Yeah, their situation is going to be trickier and different than what he's used to because they are led away. He's going to start helping Laman and Lemuel try to understand this by quoting from Isaiah. We're on the isles of the sea. We've been separated out. And they're like, "Jerusalem was righteous." And he quotes from them a chapter that says, "Jerusalem is not righteous." He's quoting to them from Isaiah.

00:37:32 The other thing that I would say, I think that is helpful to Nephi, this is such a big deal to Isaiah, he actually names one of his children, a remnant will return, Shear-Jashub. So if he has two children, one of those children gets a name that connects with scattering Maher-shalal-hash-baz and/or probably known as the Baz to his friends. And then Shear-Jashub, his first child is a promise. And actually, Isaiah, right in these chapters that we're looking at this week, he's going to say, "I and my children are for signs to Israel." For Isaiah, what stirs his heart? "Oh, let me name my child directed by the Lord, Shear-Jashub, a remnant will return." There's going to be a scattering, but God's covenants permeate and can last throughout history, permeate history, and a remnant will be gathered. And this is going to make all the difference to Nephi who's seen a vision of his people be destroyed, that name of Isaiah's son, but a remnant will return.

Hank Smith: 00:38:36 I wanted to name my firstborn son, the Jazz will win the championship. That's what I was hoping to... My wife vetoed it, but...

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:38:43 It's a good thing you didn't so far anyway.

John Bytheway:	00:38:47	But we're hanging on to hope.
Hank Smith:	00:38:48	Yep. Ryan Smith, if you're listening, we believe. We believe. Shon, with that, don't you think we're going to be able to go through the text now with an understanding?
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:38:59	This makes a huge difference actually, and we're going to see it. We'll dig into some other chapters before we get to 2 Nephi 17, which is Isaiah 7. But once we get to Isaiah 7, it's going to be huge to understand what's going on. And that famous verse, "A virgin will give birth and his name shall be called Emmanuel," and we go to that one verse and we love that verse, but the whole rest of the chapter is gibberish if you don't understand that context. And understanding the context doesn't rob that verse of its power, it actually enhances its power, as we're going to see as we study these chapters. I think it changes everything as you study Isaiah.
	00:39:37	The first half of the Isaiah class that I teach, I'm like, just hang in there with this history. It's like reading the Book of Mormon and having no clue who Nephi, Laman or Lemuel are. You got to get familiar with what's going on, and then all of a sudden, the story is really going to resonate with you. It's like reading a big fantasy novel and you lose track of the characters, and then you get bored because you don't know who's what or what's going on.
	00:39:59	I mentioned that one of the reasons Nephi loves Isaiah is found right in 2 Nephi 11. It is that Isaiah is going to be someone who has seen the Redeemer. Well, we're going to see that in these very powerful chapters. Let's move out of 2 Nephi 11, and let's go ahead and dig in to the beginning of this lengthy quotation of Isaiah that Nephi is going to give us in 2 Nephi 12. I want to show you something. If you think of 2 Nephi 12 through 14 as a literary unit, and if you think of a chiastic balance where things are mirrored at the beginning at the end, and then in the middle, you'll have a focal point, but notice what Isaiah does at the beginning and end of these chapters.
	00:40:47	2 Nephi 12, Isaiah 2 starts with this idea of people flowing to a temple of God. And this is going to matter to Isaiah's people because they are going to end up seeing the temple destroyed. Look at chapter 12 verse 2 of 2 Nephi. "It shall come to pass in the last days when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow unto it. Many people shall go and say, 'Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us of his

ways. We'll walk in his paths. Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

00:41:24 Well, we'll come back to that in a moment, but that's a powerful prophecy that there will be a temple in the last days. Actually, before I go to the other book end in 2 Nephi 14, let me just mention that as Latter-day Saints, we are often going to think as we read these verses very beautifully so, well, Isaiah is talking about the Salt Lake temple. It's built in the top of the mountains as the Native American Utes, the Native Americans who live in the top of the mountain. This is what that name means and we're thrilled to think of all nations flowing to the Salt Lake temple. You go to General Conference and you've got a worldwide church representative there having flowed to that temple. To a desert area, you might say against the force of gravity, that word for will flow, shall be established on the top of the mountains. All nations shall flow unto it. That's the word for river Nahar, but it's made of verb, Naharu, and it's flowing upward against gravity.

00:42:22 So think of all these people coming to where, to Salt Lake City, and this is the way it works. And we are a people, you might say the only people who's actually living this story. Now, our heart's thrilled to that and I think appropriately so, but I think with confidence, I could say Isaiah's ancient audience would not have understood this as, "Okay, there's going to be some other place on the other side of the world in the last days." They're going to be thinking of the Jerusalem temple will be rebuilt in the last days. And they're right. They're not wrong.

00:42:57 So what I don't know, as we talk about Isaiah's ancient context, and then a likening or a fulfillment, or maybe multiple fulfillments over time is what Isaiah saw in his brain. I can't get into Isaiah's brain. Is he seeing the Jerusalem temple? Is he seeing the Salt Lake temple? Is he seeing both? Does he know how his words will be applied or does God inspire him to speak in a certain way or inspire Latter-day prophets to talk about this? But this is the idea of likening. I'm confident his ancient audience didn't understand that there would be a Salt Lake City temple someday, but God did. And what Isaiah would've seen, I'm just not exactly sure. I have my students vote on this, and I tell them, "Okay, we'll send this to the first presidency, so that they know how we voted." And most often, Latter-day Saint students will want to say, "I think he saw both." But I do think that's helpful when we talk about ancient context, and then some of our Latter-day fulfillments.

Hank Smith:	00:43:53	We've got the first bookend here of this chiasm, chapter 12 verse 2, about this temple being rebuilt and people are flowing to it to learn about God.
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	00:44:02	That is exactly right. So that's bookend on one side, and then in the middle, you have this apostate situation, this really challenging description of them rejecting the Lord. But then, look at how Isaiah is going to end this in Isaiah 4, or 2 Nephi 14, with a similar promise, a balancing promise that our hearts can rejoice to as well. Look at the tail end of 2 Nephi 14:5-6, "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion." There you have homes. And upon her assemblies, there you might say anciently, they're gathering to the temple, but you talk about gathering places later on they're going to have synagogues that they gather to. "A cloud and smoke by day and a shining of a flaming fire by night," that's symbolism connected to the Exodus when God's going to lead them through.
	00:44:57	The Provo Temple is right in the midst. It's about to start its remodel. I'm sure it'll be beautiful and spectacular, and we will lose some of the symbolism of the Provo Temple with that sort of circular cloud at the bottom, and then the pillar of fire there on top of it. "God isn't the temple. The temple isn't God. God, you can seek after the Lord in the temple. He will guide you through the wilderness as we seek after him in the temple." He's using that imagery here on the other bookend on every dwelling place or home upon her gatherings, and we would apply that in our days to our church meetings. It would be a good application, and then he's going to guide them by this cloud during the day, shining a flaming fire by night. Upon all the glory of Zion shall be a defense and there shall be a tabernacle and there is our temple.
	00:45:48	Think of the three holy spaces of Latter-day Saints, the holiest places in the world, home, church, temple, and there is Isaiah pointing to the importance of homes, gathering places and tabernacles or temples, this sort of tent imagery that the tabernacle is going to use. And it's going to function how for a shadow in the daytime from the heat for a place of refuge, a covert from storm and from rain. Beginning of 2 Nephi 12, end of 2 Nephi 14, those are the bookends and they're so beautiful. And every Latter-day Saint heart should say, "Oh my goodness, this is my story." So think of that nursery rhyme in weird words and you're like, "What is going on here?" Then you're like, "Oh, no, I know this story. We are living this story."
	00:46:40	If we go back to 2 Nephi 12 and this idea of a river flowing against gravity up a mountain, I may have shared this with you

before in a previous podcast, but our kids, we try to get them up early when we had kids at home. We are now newly empty nesters for the first time, oddly enough. Yeah, that's why I look so old this year and sad, but it's life. Anyway, when we had kids at home, we would try to do these early morning baptism for the dead temple trips to the Provo Temple. And we would bribe them a little bit with McDonald's breakfast. I don't know if that sounds like good bribery or not, but we'd get up at 4:30. I can't remember exactly when the temple opened, but maybe 5 AM, something like that.

00:47:23 And nobody's rewarding anybody for that, besides maybe a little bit of McDonald's. Nobody's cheering you on your way. Your bishop isn't counting the numbers there to give you a star. You love the Lord and you're getting up against the gravity. These are teenagers. And as I've said at times before, when I tell my friends of other faiths that we have early morning seminary and that we get our kids to go do baptisms for the dead at five in the morning, they're like, "What?" And then I tell them, "Yeah, and we don't drink coffee." And they're like, "No, that's impossible."

00:47:57 We're working against the gravity of life, stay in bed. You go to bed late, you get up late, we'd get closer to the temple and all of these car lights would start to converge on the temple. They're like flowing against gravity at 5:00 AM. And then we go into the baptistry in the Provo Temple, and it is full of young people who have gotten up at 5 AM, to come do work for people that they can't even see because they love them and they love the Lord. This is our story. Isaiah is telling our story. And Nephi, they're going to separate from the Lamanites. They're at risk. What's one of the first things they do, like the Latter-day Saints when they got to Utah? They build a temple. They build a temple and they go to the temple. When Hezekiah is threatened, where does he go? He goes to the temple. This is a story that I think, resonates right from the start with every Latter-day Saint heart.

John Bytheway: 00:48:59 I love the emphasis on the temple here. Emmanuel emphasizes it too, and I'm thinking of moms and dads with young children out there trying to teach them. And I thought, well, maybe it would be fun to talk about how a mountain is like a temple and how it takes effort to get there going uphill, like you just said. But once you're there, you have great perspective and you can see afar off.

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:49:21 I think we love hiking to the tops of mountains. We don't love the hike, but there is something about the grandeur of seeing

God's creation spread below you and you just feel, "Oh, God is real and God loves me." God has created all of this because he loves his children. That's what being out in nature does for me. And at the tops of mountains, you come up out of the pollution, out of the chaos, out of the nitty-gritty of daily living.

00:49:49 And I used to wish I could take a little white sleeping bag with me and just stay in the celestial room because the celestial room is like that. You feel God's love. "Oh, God loves me. God sees me." There is a purpose, there's an order to all of these things, but God doesn't let us bring our white sleeping bag. We got to go back. We got to descend off the mountain, and then take the joy and the affirmation of that experience and let that help carry us through some of the challenging days that sometimes come in months, and sometimes years in mortality. But we've got a temple as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to guide us through. I think that's really, really great, John.

John Bytheway: 00:50:32 Hank, you mentioned that the Israelites were out of Egypt, but they had to get the Egypt out of them. I remember hearing, was it Sister Elaine Dalton talking about, when we go to the temple as often as we can, the temple is in us. We can go to the temple, and then we leave the temple, but part of the temple is in us. Like you said, we long to be there again. It's tough when the alarm goes off at 4:30, but when you're there, you have that Peter feeling, it is good for me to be here. I think all of us have experienced that when we're in the temple. It is good for me to be here.

Hank Smith: 00:51:04 And speaking of a hike, Shon, we're going against the flow of gravity when you're trying to get to the top of that mountain.

John Bytheway: 00:51:11 The whole rest of the world.

Hank Smith: 00:51:13 When you're climbing a mountain, it can sure burn trying to burn those muscles, trying to go against the law of gravity, pushing your way up.

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:51:21 It is fascinating how well that fits with our Latter-day temple worship. The world does not reward these kinds of behaviors. You're going to take three hours out of a day, and just to put it not in very nice terms, you're going to go serve dead people. These aren't people that are going to be able to help you out, but Latter-day Saints over and over again, use our time to show we believe that the next world is real, that there is a God, and that life continues after this life and that there is a community of saints that stretches beyond mortality. And we honor the lives of those who have gone, but the forgotten ones, a

remnant shall return, and one of the places they're going to return is as we do work in a temple of God.

- Hank Smith: 00:52:08 Sometimes I'll get a question from a student that will say something like, "Why do we spend so much money, so much resources on temples when that could be given to feed the poor?" And I frequently come to 2 Nephi 12:4. Isaiah says, "They're in the temple. They beat their swords into plows and their spears into pruning hooks." And often, that's lost on my students. What is that about? Well, weapons of destruction are changed into tools of production. The temple can become a place where I become a people feeder. Does that make sense? Where I change from a sword to a plow, where I personally changed... John, you said that, that the temple becomes part of me, where I personally changed from a spear, a weapon, to a pruning hook. Perhaps the temple could be a place that we create people feeders. People walking out of the temple are now ready to feed the world both physically and spiritually.
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:53:19 I think that's really well said. The behaviors we engage in the temple are peaceful building kinds of behaviors. It's not competitive in nature. "Oh, I've got to earn more money or be more successful at my job than the next person in this race of life. I am going to take a step away to remember and build Israel in peaceful ways." I love that harvestry and connecting that with the temple. I haven't done that before, Hank, to sort of connect. I love the peaceful imagery of Isaiah and I like pointing to that, but to connect it with what we do in the temple is really profound.
- Hank Smith: 00:53:57 I thought you could feed people with those millions of dollars, but what if you could create a machine that creates people feeders for hundreds of years, then your investment into this building, this million dollar whatever investment into this building, becomes much, much more lasting than a one-time feeding.
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:54:21 If you build people who will then change the world to be a better place and will then take what they learn in the temple and go out to feed both spiritually, emotionally, but also physically literally, like the humanitarian work of the church, that is money well spent, if there's a space that changes the kind of human beings that we are.
- John Bytheway: 00:54:45 Change our nature.
- Hank Smith: 00:54:46 Speaking of these verses about swords and plowshares and pruning hooks, I have my copy of Isaiah for Airheads. I don't

mean to embarrass you, John, but this book was written by none other than John Bytheway, Isaiah for Airheads.

- John Bytheway: 00:55:01 The chief airhead, that's me.
- Hank Smith: 00:55:02 Yeah, the chief airhead. And this is what you wrote, John. I don't know if you remember writing this. You talked about 2 Nephi 12:4, swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. In the millennial day, weapons for killing will be turned into tools for living. Can you imagine how many farm implements and how many pruning hooks could be made out of an aircraft carrier? In 2005, the United States Department of Defense budget totaled \$400 billion. And I looked it up, John, since you wrote this book. This year, it's doubled that and a little bit more. It's over \$800 billion in just a year for the Department of Defense. And then this great question, "Imagine what can be done for the poor in all the world when millennial peace reigns and the inhabitants of the earth shall not learn war any more." That's a quote from Isaiah 12:4. Now, we're not against the Department of Defense by any means, but you're right, John. How many plows and pruning hooks could be made out of just one aircraft carrier?
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:56:07 May peace come.
- John Bytheway: 00:56:09 And what you just said, Hank, about the temple, people coming out of the temple, imagine the changed hearts of everybody on the planet, and what good will come when our hearts are turned to each other instead of to war like that?
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:56:25 John, let me express appreciation for your book. I read it all and the way that it can help Latter-day Saints understand the words of Isaiah. I think that's beautiful.
- Hank Smith: 00:56:34 So Shon, where do we want to go next with this? Do you want to stay here or should we keep going into what you've called this apostasy dark time between 12 and 14?
- Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 00:56:45 So let's go into the middle, but as we leave, because this is Book of Mormon, it's Nephi quoting Isaiah, let me just point out, you can see right here some things that matter to Nephi and Isaiah. All nations, remember the title page of the Book of Mormon, both Jew and Gentile, all people, it's right there. Covenants and that a temple will be built in the last days. You can see Nephi talking or Isaiah talking and Nephi quoting about the ways of the Lord. And then think of when he is going to talk about the doctrine of Christ and talk about that as the way early Christians

were often referred to, we believe as the way. This is sort of an interesting word, and Nephi is going to apply this word later on.

00:57:28 You can see some themes that are going to matter a lot. Nephi of course, is going to build a temple when they're in their new promised land. Lots of things that right off the bat, we're seeing that Nephi would've cared about here in Isaiah. Now, this middle part is really fascinating and it's really important to understand the ancient context. He is going to talk about challenges with idolatry in the rest of chapter 12, and then I want us to move forward into chapter 13, which is Isaiah 3, where he's going to talk about what happens anciently when Assyria or Babylon comes and attacks and carries away your leaders, and your land returns to this nomadic pastoral land of estate.

00:58:18 And in one sense, that's idyllic, but it's the result of all of those powerful, and mighty and wealthy being pulled away by this conquering army. That's really what's going on historically. And Isaiah is prophesying about this matter. This is going to happen in his lifetime to Israel, and it's going to happen to Judah, and then again, it's going to happen in more power, more complete ways to Judah under the Babylonians as we've talked about, about 130 years later.

00:58:43 If we look at chapter 13 verses, let's go with just 1 through 4. And with the historical context understood, I think there's some fascinating application or likening, Latter-day likening that I want to suggest and that sometimes I think we miss. "For behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the stay and the staff." Those are both things that provide support. Those are synonyms. "The whole staff of bread, the whole stay of water, the mighty man, the man of war, the judge, the prophet, the prudent and the ancient captain of 50, the honorable man, the counselor, the cunning artificer, the eloquent orator, and I will give children unto them to be their princes and babes shall rule over them." Historically speaking, he's prophesying of exactly what's going to happen when they're conquered by Assyria, and then by Babylon.

00:59:38 By the way, if you want to reference historically, 2 Kings 24:14, this is what's going to happen. Historically, he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even 10,000 captives and all the craftsmen and smiths, none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. Well, so this poor that's left behind becomes a righteous remnant. And Isaiah loves to talk about the remnant. Sometimes even like

a tithe, 10% is left, but they are the poor. You might call them the innocent. They are those who have not oppressed their neighbors, but have probably been oppressed by the mighty. And I want you to think about two ways in which these are going to matter first to Nephi, and then maybe to us as Latter-day Saints.

01:00:31 So first of all, Nephi, when he gets to 2 Nephi 26:20 later on, he's going to talk about the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes. They grind upon the faces of the poor. So he's going to care about that message and see that happening in the last days. But then, look at this potential connection. Look at how the Lord opens Doctrine and Covenants and the way he talks about the last days. This is Doctrine and Covenants section 1 verse 17, "Wherefore I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant, Joseph Smith Jr." That's 17, now 18. "And also gave commandments to others that they should proclaim these things unto the world and all this, that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets. The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones." Now, I want you to think of Isaiah 3 and the mighty and strong carried away. And who is the righteous remnant? It's the poor. Babes shall lead them.

01:01:37 Skipping to verse 23, "That the fullness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world and before kings and rulers." Notice, it's going to say, if you continue on through 2 Nephi 13 or Isaiah 3, he's going to say, it's going to be so bad that if this one guy who just has clothing, they're like, "Well, clearly, you should be in charge. You've got clothing. You're doing well enough that you got a pair of clothes." Guess what? You're in charge now. Well, look how fascinating it is, particularly if you're going to make some connections with this idea of priesthood authority or priesthood power being symbolized by clothing. And Isaiah does a lot with that and Joseph Smith does a lot with that. Joseph Smith, the child prophet, so to speak, called in the last days, the weakest and the simplest, the most common of names, the farmer. And who's being called forth? The weak and the simple are.

01:02:36 Once again, we are living this story. Missionaries sent out at age 18. Are you kidding me? And age 19. I mean, sometimes they're pretty confident in themselves, but usually, they're pretty terrified. Like really? I remember when I left the MTC, the MTC was a pretty safe space for me. And then I got on an airplane, I was sitting next to somebody, I'm like, "Oh no, I'm supposed to

share the gospel with this guy." And I tried and he sort of rolled his eyes at me and I was like... And I felt weak and simple.

01:03:06 This is how God is going to proclaim his message in the last days, a child prophet. And what will that child who is called to lead them do? He will be given priesthood clothing by the Lord and he will clothe the other weak and simple, and then send them forth to the world to bless the world. We're going to hopefully, bless spiritually with priesthood authority being spread throughout the world, but also physically feeding the world as we've talked about already. Some who are listening may feel like that's a little bit of a stretch. Personally, I think the Lord is building on that imagery of this righteous remnant, the weak and the simple, and this idea and a child is going to be in charge of them. Well, what do we find in the last days? Joseph Smith, the farmer prophet, the child prophet being called to lead and gather the weak and simple in the last days.

Hank Smith: 01:04:00 Awesome. Shon, how would Isaiah's audience, his immediate audience, have taken chapter 13? You said earlier that his audience probably didn't envision the Salt Lake Temple, even though it's a wonderful way to use that verse. What about chapter 13? We're seeing Joseph Smith here. What would've Isaiah's audience have seen?

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin: 01:04:22 And I think that's a really important question. Before we jump to the likening, the Latter-day likening, it's really important to establish that ancient context, and I do think that ancient context, I gave that 2 Kings 14, where Babylon actually does come and carry away all of the most powerful. Those that could be a threat to them, they're going to carry them away. Who's left behind? It's the poor and the simple, and they are so poor that they don't even have clothing.

01:04:47 Man, A child is going to have to lead us because we don't have anybody else to lead us. If you look at verse 4 of 2 Nephi 13, "I will give children unto them to be their princes. Babes shall rule over them." But this is the idea that all of the leadership has been carried away. And then if you look at verse 7, that's what I was referring to with clothing, in that day shall he swear saying, "I will not be a healer. For in my house, there's neither bread nor clothing. Make me not a ruler of the people." And they're saying, "Oh, you've got clothing, you are in charge." But anciently, literally, they're so poor, they don't have clothing. That's what's going on anciently.

Hank Smith: 01:05:20 And then this long list of the daughters of Zion. What am I supposed to take from this? Is that where we're going next?

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	01:05:27	<p>Yeah. We absolutely can go there. It's important to recognize that first of all, Isaiah probably is critiquing certain behaviors. Right? One of the things I like about Isaiah is Isaiah will use a prostitute as an example, of someone who breaks covenants because sacred things are being used for monetary purposes. He's not critiquing the prostitute, he's critiquing the society that produces the prostitute. What's often lost, of course, in these discussions is prostitutes exist because there are really terrible men who use prostitutes. And Isaiah actually, he's critiquing a society that encourages these kinds of behaviors. So there's both women as a symbol though of the entire society and the sort of elevation of wealth, and pomp, and grandeur, and appearances over substance, both with the women and with the men. But then he also begins to shift into, if you look at the end, verse 24, "It shall come to pass instead of sweet smell, there shall be stink instead of a girdle or rent, instead of well-set hair, baldness."</p>
	01:06:40	<p>So now you have imagery of a conquering army. And the Assyrians were known to shave people bald, often to brand people, to lead them away naked, burning instead of beauty. "Thy men shall fall by the sword, thy mighty in the war, her gates, Jerusalem," this sort of feminine imagery. And by the way, those verses are super tough. Generations of gospel doctrine and seminary teachers are like, "Okay, let me help you understand what's going on here." If you were to get a different translation like the NRSV or the NIV, it will help you a lot. The Hebrew is really tough there. There's a record number of what are known as hapax legomenon, which is these Hebrew words that only show up once in the Bible. They're very hard to translate. There's this significant number of them right in that passage. But over time, since the King James version, as we get more and more ancient texts to do comparative work, what those words mean, we've gotten better and better at translating those words. The NRSV or the NIV, something like that would help.</p>
Hank Smith:	01:07:35	<p>It seems that the end of 12 and the middle to the end of 13 are all about, pride is going to come down. Pride will be your downfall. The cedars of Lebanon will fall. The oaks of Bashan, these huge trees, are going to fall. And if you put your trust in lust and in stuff, maybe this list instead of cauls and round tires like the moon and mufflers, would be iPhones. Put your trust in cars, in AirPods, which I'm using right now. If you put your trust in those things, that is going to turn into a slavery eventually. So would that be an okay way to liken, Shon, that pride will eventually be your downfall?</p>

Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	01:08:21	He does a lot and I like that you brought that out, Hank. He does a lot with the reversal of fortune here, and lots of height imagery being reversed. And later on, he is going to use that again, saying a forest being cut down. Yeah, I think sometimes historically, this has been used to produce modesty, "Hey, dress modestly," kinds of lessons. And I prefer to see this as more he's talking about pride and external appearance and show-off-ishness. I just made a new word. Rather than this covenantal substance that is needed, being kind to others, not grinding upon the faces of the poor, taking care of your covenantal community, not using all of your substance to show off for others, so to speak. That applies equally as we know, to men and women. And women often are an example of... It's a female word obviously, for women, but Jerusalem, the word city in Hebrew is feminine, in the way the language works. So they act as a symbol for all of the covenant people or for God's covenantal bride, his church.
Hank Smith:	01:09:32	This isn't about women in Israel, this is about all of Israel.
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	01:09:36	Yes. Although he's using images that they're probably familiar with to teach this lesson, but this is not a lesson for women. This is a lesson for God's covenant people.
John Bytheway:	01:09:44	Yeah. I call it successive excessive accessories. It's not about women, it's about trying to attract other lovers. It's about our loyalty to Christ and our loyalty to covenants.
Hank Smith:	01:09:59	Coming up in part two of this episode.
Dr. Shon D. Hopkin:	01:10:02	I made you. What do you mean you can't do this? What do you mean you're too shy, you're too weak, you're too busy, you're too this or that? I made you. I know what you can do. And in my power, you can do this.



- John Bytheway: 00:00:01 Welcome to part two with Dr. Shon Hopkin. 2 Nephi chapters 11 through 19.
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:00:07 That actually leads us to a really fascinating verse in 2 Nephi 14:1. We're sort of coming to the end of that middle stage, and remember, we've already talked about the bookend, this sort of, "Hey, temples are going to be restored in the last days," but there's actually a really fascinating verse that in the Septuagint and in the JST, the way it looks at chapter divisions, are actually it's connected with the end of the apostasy and the covenant breaking of chapter three rather than as part of the restoration in chapter four or chapter 13, chapter 14. Even in the Isaiah commentaries, the Non-Latter-day Saint Isaiah commentaries that I work with, they include verse one with those apostate behaviors. And if you think of what happens in a society where many of the men are taken away by war, this is actually sometimes the consequences of war, that seven women are going to lay hold upon one man.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:06 So Shon, let me make sure I understand. So chapter 14 verse one actually belongs as chapter 13 verse 27?
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:01:15 You could say that. Yes, exactly. It seems to go at the tail end of the previous... Those chapter divisions, of course, are often going to mess us up.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:24 I have, I don't know where I got this, that 14 is the last verse of Isaiah 3 in the Hebrew Bible, the German Bible, and in the JST.
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:01:34 Yeah, that follows the Septuagint's chapter divisions. That's exactly right.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:38 Because the mood change from one to two in 14 is drastic.
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:01:43 Yeah. At times when the church was authorized by God prophetically-led practice of plural marriage, this verse was referenced in support of that, and I think prophets, when

prophets are leading and they're asking the Latter-day Saints to follow what the Lord is asking them to do, they can liken the scriptures in ways that I don't have authority to liken them, but then I've heard some people say, "Ah, here's a clear indication that there'll be some sort of a return to plural marriage someday," and I just think that is a non-authorized likening that's inappropriate and wrong. We follow what the Lord asks to do when He asks us to do it. So there's a likening that actually I prefer rather than that likening, although prophets have authority that I do not have to liken things, and that likening is actually modeled by early church fathers, Eusebius, Jerome and Aquinas. Actually, their likening was, "Let's see those seven women as sort of the seven churches from the Book of Revelation are representing God's covenant people and the one man is the Lord."

00:02:51 So let me read to you from a commentary that sort of digs into how Isaiah has been interpreted through the centuries. The one man in verse one and the branch of the Lord in verse two are one and the same, Christ. Eusebius, Jerome and Aquinas all saw it that way. According to another ancient Christian interpretation, the seven women are the seven churches nourished by the bread of the Holy Spirit enclosed in the garments of immortality. To me, that has a much more immediate and broad application that as God begins to restore us, we begin to turn to the Lord and say, "Give us your name to take away our shame." Again, we want to look first at the historical context, but then if we look for likenings in our day, I love that Christ-centered likening available to us.

00:03:39 And with these likenings, let me give a quick word about this likening process because Isaiah often is seen as a code that you have to crack to understand, "Oh, he's actually telling us very specific things about the last days and if this ancient empire equals this current country..." That does not sound right to me, that does not sound correct. That kind of likening, I'm not saying it can't be done, but that is in the purview of prophets of God. Scripture is not for private interpretation in that way. The kind of likening that I train and we work on with my students is likening that teaches the principles of covenantal gospel living that are found throughout the gospel, and it's powerful, it supports the doctrines of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, but it does not try to find the hidden key to unlock the code. That's in the purview of prophets. I do not have authority to do that, nor do I think other members of the church have the authority to do that.

- 00:04:48 Now, God could inspire us with some particular application in our own lives, but that would just be for the individual, not even for a gospel doctrine class. I'm preaching a little bit here. I actually think this is really important. Prophets are called to lead the church. Our likenings need to be in the zone where they are strengthening and supporting the doctrines that have been taught from the beginning to the end of God's covenant plan.
- Hank Smith: 00:05:15 Shon, I'm glad you bring this up because it seems that Nephi and Jacob both are likening Isaiah to them, but they are also in authority. Nephi is the prophet. Jacob has been ordained as a priest.
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:05:31 Absolutely. There's two levels of revelation. One level of revelation is for me to make appropriate application in my gospel living in my life. Another level of revelation is to prophetic leaders who then can lead the entire community and Nephi and Jacob fit in that category as does President Nelson today. My likening, like the connection I shared between weak and simple ones in Doctrine and Covenants 1 and Isaiah 3 that is showing the support for and thematic connections that exist in the restoration of the gospel. But the Lord is the one who gave us Doctrine and Covenants 1, not me. So to see the connections, I think, is powerful, the potential connections. And then we also need to reaffirm understanding the historical context and not getting confused about that, I think, is very helpful as you're trying to liken. Appropriately start with historical context and then you liken in the last days. Sometimes it can go the opposite direction. You see something taught in the last days and you see it mirrored in Isaiah or supported in Isaiah, that's fine too, but we are not the ones who have authority to do that.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:42 Awesome. Moving forward, Shon, I've heard that Isaiah 5 or 2 Nephi 15 starts out with a pretty fun song. I think we talked about this, John, in our Isaiah episodes two years ago. So is that the case that I should be playing some music when I get to 2 Nephi 15?
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:07:03 This is really beautifully poetic language, [Hebrew 00:07:13]. All of these are sort of repetitive sounds that he's using and if you think of Song of Solomon or Song of Songs, To My Beloved, and he's using that kind of language here. This is you might say a love song, but it's a love song that goes awry. And then in verse seven, you have a really incredible play on words. So if we're in 2 Nephi 15 verse seven, look at the second half of that. He looked for judgment and behold oppression for righteousness, but behold a cry. So judgment is mishpat. He wanted a goodness or judgment, that's a good thing. Righteous judgment,

basically. He wanted mishpat, but instead he got oppression, which is mispach. By the way, that's a stronger sound. mishpat is a softer sound, mispach is a stronger sound. He wanted righteousness, tsedaqah, but instead he got a cry of distress, tseaqah. With a guttural in there, so to speak. Tsedaqah, but he got tseaqah. So this is Isaiah the master of Hebrew language really at some of his best right here.

John Bytheway: 00:08:25 I'm glad you're saying this because we have Jesus saying, "Great are the words of Isaiah," and I think we missed something in the translation and there's maybe dozens of other ways that it's great, but that's just one of those things I'm glad you're bringing up. It's so fun to hear that in Hebrew, mishpat. Do those two again.

Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:08:47 Mishpat and mispach. Tsedaqah, righteousness, and tseaqah is going to be a cry of distress. I wanted righteousness, but instead you caused my people to utter a cry of distress. So think if he's talking to an abusive parent and I wanted you to love your children, but instead you did the opposite, you sort of tore them down. He's disappointed, deeply disappointed by this. Those verses, the Song of the Vineyard... And by the way, for Latter-day Saints, you're going to really be thinking, "Wow. This shows some similarities with Zenos' allegory in Jacob 5." Which one came first and which one came second, I'm not sure when Zenos lives that's being quoted from in Jacob 5, but the themes show similarities.

00:09:36 It's about God setting up this beautiful vineyard and working really hard to provide everything they need and the people don't want what He's giving them. They want what's on the outside of the vineyard and they reject what He's giving them, they don't take care of the vineyard. "I looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes." That sounds a lot like Jacob 5, doesn't it? If they don't want the hedge that protects the vineyard, he's trying to protect the vineyard, but you don't want that barrier against what's on the outside. Well, I'll tear it down. Really, you're sort of tearing it down. And look at verse six, "It shall not be pruned or digged." You don't want my pruning, you don't want my digging so I won't prune and dig, and then what do you get? Briars and thorns, which by the way is what Adam and Eve get when they leave the Garden of Eden. He's working with some really powerful biblical imagery here.

Hank Smith: 00:10:28 So the story is of this man owns a piece of land, he constructs a beautiful vineyard with a home and walls and it's supposed to do these wonderful things, but then everything goes terrible because... Is it the vineyard itself?

Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:10:43	Yeah, the vineyard is really His people who He's trying to prune and dig. The vineyard is the covenant people and they're going to bring forth wild grapes.
Hank Smith:	00:10:54	And what's the wild grapes?
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:10:56	In horticulture or viticulture, I guess, is what we've got here, if that's not done appropriately... They have to be cultivated correctly. So if you think about pruning so that you don't get a bunch of small fruit that doesn't really produce anything but rather some rich grapes or some rich fruit here, that's what we're talking about.
Hank Smith:	00:11:18	So I wanted you to bring forth righteousness basically, and you brought me worthless?
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:11:24	Wild grapes, yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:11:27	Terry Ball says, "Oh, Shon. They're worthless stinking things. It's not wild grapes, it's worse. It's worthless stinking things or something like that."
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:11:38	Well, now early in my marriage, just in the first month or so we had put some grapes up on the top of the fridge to eat later, and then they went bad up there and they got sort of wrinkly and dusty and my wife thought it'd be really funny to say, "Hey, Shon. Close your eyes. I've got something for you," and she stuck one of those now raisins in my mouth. And that story has shown up year after year after year that the trust is broken, we've had to work hard to restore the trust. But if you go to a vine, a grapevine, some of the grapes might be nice, but there's going to be years where they're not good or where there's portions of them that aren't good and they look sort of shriveled and they rot away.
Hank Smith:	00:12:21	So the message is, I gave you incredible opportunity and you didn't take it. You did the exact opposite.
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:12:29	If we're going to make New Testament connections, I'm the vine and you're the branches, there's some connections that can be made there. There's other likening or applications that can be made with, well, what is that tower? What's the watchtower that's being set up there? There's a wine press that's there to get the fruit or the juice, that really valuable juice, out of the grapes, but none of that is functioning in this case.

Hank Smith:	00:12:55	We just stopped at verse seven, Shon. Verse eight, "Wo unto them that join house to house." Any thoughts on that?
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:13:04	He's talking about really wealthy people who buy all the land so they can put their dwelling space right in the middle and have all this open space and in the meantime, everybody is suffering without a place to dwell around them. If you were going to connect apartment, there's probably ways in which apartment buildings could connect in a very sort of tangential way to that, but he's talking about not caring so much about, "Gathering, gathering, gathering. I want more and more and more stuff for me. I want dominion, I want mastery, I want everything. I want all the things, and I'm going to let everyone starve by the wayside as I'm gathering the things for me."
	00:13:41	This is not how you build a Zion community, it is how human beings tend to act. We have a scarcity mentality that makes us want to get more and more and more so we can be as safe, and then we have a competitive mentality and Isaiah is trying to push against those natural human... Well, the Lord is, and say, "That's not covenantal behavior." We would use the language in our day, I want consecrated behavior from my covenant people.
	00:14:08	You get this really fun verse in verse 10, "10 acres of vineyard shall yield one bath and the seed of a homer shall yield an ephah." 10 acres of a vineyard. If we're talking modern vineyards in California, 10 acres would produce about 3,500 gallons of wine or of grape juice. These 10 acres are producing 10.5 bushels or eight gallons, and so you have this very small portion, and then 360 pounds of seed is producing 36 pounds of produce, and notice you've got almost like this righteous remnant tithe kind of imagery. Instead of seed should produce all of this produce, you're getting a very limited portion instead of this abundance. As you try to get more and more, you're getting less and less out of it.
Hank Smith:	00:15:08	So verse 10 is your crops will fail. When you try to hoard and take away from everybody else, your crops eventually fail.
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:15:16	Yeah, it's like Jesus's parable of the guy who gathers all this wealth and he's like, "Now I can finally rest," and then he dies that day and he says, "What was that all about?" Basically.
Hank Smith:	00:15:25	I remember an old seminary video called Treasures in Heaven. I don't know if it was actual footage or if it's a recreation, but Brigham Young asks Lyman Johnson, "Whose kingdom are you trying to build? The Lord's or Lyman Johnson's?" That comes

back to my mind at this point, whose kingdom are you trying to build? Yours or the Lord's?

- John Bytheway: 00:15:49 I just think it's ironic that they're reaping less than they sow in those ones that you read.
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:15:58 You don't reap what you sow, you reap less. And it's as you try to grasp things slip out of your fingers. Think of the Book of Mormon analogy of your weapons becoming slippery and your treasures becoming slippery, they're lost. In this chapter, you get five woes and three therefore. So this is the woes, and you could divide those out as a covetous people in verses eight through 10, verses 11 through 17, a debauching people, or you might call them party-mongers, verses eight through 10, land-mongers. They're sort of longing after and running after those things. Verses 18 through 19, an unbelieving people. 20, a truth-perverting people. 21, a people wise in its own eyes, maybe pride-mongers, and then 22 through 23, a justice-perverting people or bribe-mongers, if you will.
- 00:16:55 Isaiah's got a sense of humor here. If you look at verse 22, this is great imagery, "Wo unto the mighty to drink wine and men of strength to mingle strong drinks." So these are valiant men, these are mighty men and what are they mighty to do? Well, what are they lifting up? A big old flagon, and this is like a bunch of guys sitting around a table with beer bellies talking about the glory days. These are mighty men. What are they good for? They're good to get drunk, they're good to drink together and it's really fun imagery. Wo to those people.
- John Bytheway: 00:17:30 I like the NIV of this. It says, "Those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks."
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:17:42 It's really fun imagery. Of course, for Latter-day Saints with the Word of Wisdom, it is even more meaningful in our understanding of the world. There are important verses that are going to be important to Nephi in verse 20. Let me mention verse 18 first and then we'll read 20, "Wo unto them that draw iniquity with chords of vanity and sin as it were with a cart rope." So notice this idea of you are carrying around a heavy load and you're connected to it by your vanity.
- 00:18:14 That's a King James version translation that I'm working with there, but I think the imagery is really interesting that, oh, it's so heavy and I'm worn down, but I cannot... If I'm going to let go of this, all I got to do is just open my hands, but first I have to acknowledge that I am causing myself. So I've got to acknowledge my sinfulness and then you just let go of the load.

And then the second half, sin, you're carrying around sin with a cart rope. This is great imagery. This feels very Book of Mormon-esque, that you're sort of wrapping yourselves up in chains because you refuse to acknowledge God who's trying to free you from those things.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:18:55 | Jacob Marley. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:18:57 | Hank, I mentioned that same connection in my book about Marley who is fettered by his past and vanity and Marley comes to warn him, which I also wonder Charles Dickens got the idea from maybe Lazarus who's asking or the rich man asking Lazarus to, "Go warn my brother so they don't come to a place like this." Well, Marley gets to do that to Scrooge and he says, "Your chain was this long seven Christmas Eves ago and you've labored on it since. Oh, it's a ponderous chain, Ebenezer." That always reminds me of Marley. I wonder if Dickens got inspired by that idea. He was attached to it. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:19:33 | Weighed down and you're attached to it. |
| Dr. Shon Hopkin: | 00:19:36 | Fascinating. Now, I have to confess, every time John does a voice, I love it, but I always want it to end up being Barney. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:19:44 | All right, John, do you think you could do it? Do you think you could do Jacob Marley as Barney Fife? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:19:49 | Jacob Marley as Barney Fife? Well, your chain was this long seven years ago, you've belabored on it since. It's probably enough. |
| Dr. Shon Hopkin: | 00:19:58 | Good, good. That felt better. And then of course a very important verse for Latter-day Saints, for Nephi, he's going to talk about this, "Wo unto them..." This is verse 20, "Wo unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, sweet for bitter." So it's that turning upside down or confusing of things. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:20:21 | I've heard Hank say before to groups, don't confuse your friends with your enemies. As I thought about that, I thought, "Boy, that happens a lot in the Book of Mormon, the people that follow Korihor, thinking he's a friend. The people that literally defend King Noah and persecute Abinadi when it should be the opposite," and how easy that is to do to get our friends and our enemies mixed up. |

Hank Smith:	00:20:46	There's a chapter in 3 Nephi 3 where Giddianhi tries to convince Lachoneus he's the bad guy, "I'm the good guy, you're the bad guy. You have taken away my rights. You have retained from my people their rights of government. I will avenge their wrongs. You have wronged them." You'll see that often with the apostates in the Book of Mormon. They'll flip it around, you're the bad guy.
John Bytheway:	00:21:15	It's a real Latter-day thing, verse 20.
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:21:18	It is, and it's always fascinating when you hear somebody making those claims and then someone who's insightful will push back and say, "Now, wait a minute. You just reversed the reality here." You can see why Christ says, "Great are the words of Isaiah." You need to study these things because they are applicable. I don't know, has Isaiah ever been more applicable if you look at these kinds of verse. This is sort of how covenantal living and the challenges with covenantal living work, and this is Nephi's point. Wow, I am learning how to understand my life and how to have moral strength and certitude from Isaiah. Okay, there's a couple more things we should mention here in chapter five or 2 Nephi 15 before we move on. There is at the end, this 26 through 30, "He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth, and behold, they shall come with speed swiftly, none shall be weary or stumble among them. None shall slumber nor sleep."
	00:22:13	Now Elder LeGrand Richards is going to give a Latter-day likening that is ensign of missionaries going and using airplanes and that kind of thing, and look, it's describing trains. That's I think a Latter-day likening of gathering. And actually the Book of Mormon, that word hiss, it is to call attention. That could either be for something good or bad. That Latter-day gathering likening I think is totally fine there. Anciently, this particular ensign is going to be to call Assyria or Babylon and they're going to come so swiftly, and this is a scattering kind of an image that's going on here in Isaiah's context, in Isaiah's Day. And as Latter-day Saints, we like that ensign word to always be positive. It's powerful. That's what an ensign is. It calls people, it calls things, it gathers, and in this case, it scatters. It's calling an army that's going to come and scatter, but that is part of the Lord's purposes and the way that he is organizing history for his covenantal people, there will be a scattering and then there will be a righteous remnant in the last days.
Hank Smith:	00:23:22	Shon, let me ask you a question. We've talked about this a little bit before. I have Isaiah's original context and then I have a likening. How should I see scripture then? Because it seems

more flexible than a one-to-one meaning, I mean, Nephi does this, Jacob does it, even Matthew does it. He takes Old Testament scripture and likens to the life of Jesus.

- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:23:48 There is such a long history of prophetic likening in exactly this kind of way and what it does, is it means that Isaiah is not a dusty tome that no longer applies to us, but under the tutelage of the Spirit and of prophetic leadership, it comes alive for God's covenant people, for Nephi, Lehi Nephi's people, for us in the Latter-days, and classrooms full of students studying Isaiah in the Latter-days because it's alive for us, it's real for us, it speaks to us still today. I tell students, "Listen, we're going to study the historical context, but as the Spirit is trying to help you apply things and change and become more Christ-like in your life, as the Spirit's working with you, I don't want my historical context to ever get in the way of what the Spirit is trying to communicate with you."
- 00:24:40 Actually, President Eyring said something that I found very powerful, he said, and he's talking about Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, which is exactly what we are doing here, "Many are more skilled than I am at putting scriptures in their historic context. There are wonderful techniques of understanding metaphor, simile and allegory to the scriptures. I hope you will learn as much about that as you can." In other words, that's good, learn the historical context, "But I hope you will learn one more thing. As you read Isaiah," and he's actually talking about Book of Mormon Isaiah there, "Try to believe that I, without worrying about the imagery, could take it directly to my heart as if the Lord were speaking to me. I will make you this promise about reading Isaiah in the Book of Mormon. You will be drawn to it as you understand that the Lord has embedded in it His message to you."
- 00:25:30 Historical context is important and some of my friends might say, "No, that is the most important," and if we were to discuss a little further, they'd also agree, "Yeah, but application, what we're supposed to do with that today, that's more important. That matters more. That's more powerful." Now, let me just dig in here on this with a verse that has been dear to many Latter-day Saints. Look at... It shows up for the first time, it's repeated a lot of times. Look at 75:15 verse 25, the last sentence. "For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still." Now so many of my students have had the Lord witness to them as they read that phrase, "His hand is stretched out still," God's hand of loving merciful invitation is stretched out towards you still. Now, if you dig into the context, what Isaiah seems to be saying is he is talking about until they repent, God's hand of

justice still hangs over them and so my students, if I'm not careful, the light will go out a little bit and, "Oh, that's God's punishing hand?"

00:26:41 No. Let's just stick with this for a moment. I did a little bit of a scripture search and look at the way the stretched out hand or the stretched out arm is used. Most frequently it shows up in context of God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. Exodus 6:6, "I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments." So He's going to save the righteous by bringing judgments upon their oppressors. Here's another one where it's a hand of invitation from Proverbs 1, "Because I have called and ye refused, I've stretched out my hand and no man regarded." That's a hand of invitation. You've refused it, but it's a hand of invitation. Doctrine and Covenants 136 is fascinating, verse 22, "I am He who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt," using that Exodus imagery again, "My arm is stretched out in the last days to save my people, Israel." That stretched out hand is God in justice protecting the righteous covenant people. It's redeeming, it's saving.

00:27:44 And for those who are repentant turning to the Lord, I would never want to rob them of the sense that God's loving, merciful, forgiving hand is calling them to Him because it is. His hand isn't stretched out in punishment for all who are repentant, and that is Isaiah's consistent message throughout the book. If you repent and return to the Lord, that is a hand stretched out calling you to Him. If you don't repent... You can't ever find a time though where Isaiah is saying, "Hey, I'm going to be merciful to those who don't repent or God's going to be merciful to the unrepentant." That's not how this works, but He is always merciful to the repentant. So I don't want to rob that imagery of its power that the Spirit is using in a student's life by saying, "Oh, but that's an angry hand, not a kind hand." I think that's not true, fundamentally untrue, even though historical context that might be what's going on in that particular verse.

Hank Smith: 00:28:38 Yeah, I think you're right on there, Shon. Chapter 19 verse 12, "For all this, His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still in anger." Why? For the people turned not unto Him. It's okay to see it that way, that this is God saying, "No, I'm not stopping with the consequences. They're going to keep coming until you repent," but for a teacher to say when a student says, "I love this verse because God is reaching out to us in mercy," and for them to say, "No, that's not." I like how you say it, you would rob them of that light that they have found in that verse. This is what we've said about historical context and likening.

Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:29:16	And sometimes we really, really are self-vaunting, prideful and we do significant damage to others. I serve as a bishop. There's times that we do real damage and God is not saying, "Eh, it's all good. You act however you want and then you get the rewards because you want them. No, I'm looking for holiness of behavior and people treating each other with love, dignity and respect, and my hand is stretched out to you in your imperfection as you imperfectly strive to do that."
Hank Smith:	00:29:50	He doesn't stop the consequences, they'll keep coming. He's like, "Those consequences are still on their way."
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:29:57	I don't want to believe in a God who doesn't care about righteousness, who is like, "Yeah, it's all good. Good, bad, it's all pretty much fine with me." That does not work for me. That view of reality, I don't know what's heaven, what's hell, what's any of this about if God is not actually saying, "There's value to doing what's right and there's an opposite value to not choosing to do what's right, to rejecting truth."
Hank Smith:	00:30:23	You think like Lehi, eventually you'll get to the point where God doesn't exist.
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:30:27	Yeah, what's the point? Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:30:30	So Shon, we still have a couple more chapters and I don't want to short them. Let's keep going. We get to chapter 16, which is a very famous chapter of Isaiah getting his calling as a prophet.
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:30:40	He's given us a couple of different introductory approaches to Isaiah and now this very powerful moment where honestly Isaiah is going to become, you might say, like Nephi, a tragic figure where God says, "You are going to prophesy to this people and they are going to reject you. How long until their cities are laid waste? You're going to just keep prophesying." Nephi has this vision and he knows how this is going to turn out, and then he gathers hope in the last days. Isaiah very similar. People are going to harden their hearts. There's this verse that often causes some discussion. This message, verse 10 of chapter 16, "Make the heart of this people fat, make their ears heavy, shut their eyes." When this shows up in Christ's quotations, also in the Septuagint, the direct causation is not there as strongly.
	00:31:38	One of the ways you could understand this... Certainly God has power to do what He chooses to do with His children. Joseph Smith always wanted to be really careful in the JST that we recognize that God also honors agency, that our choices actually

are very important. If we're going to pull those two things together, one way to understand that is the act of preaching will cause a response and that response will then reveal the hardened heart or may even harden the heart, as someone says, "I choose to reject." You're extending an invitation that causes people to either accept it or reject it. They can't just go on the same as they were before and that message you might say could have the impact amongst the rebellious of hardening their hearts. Certainly Isaiah's learning here, your message is not going to be well-received.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:32:36 | That makes sense. The story is an interesting one. He's invited into the presence of the Lord, he doesn't feel worthy, he says his lips are unclean, and then an angel takes a hot coal off an altar, puts it on his lips, which I can't imagine would be very comfortable, and then he seems ready to serve, "Here am I. Send me." What are we supposed to make of this? |
| Dr. Shon Hopkin: | 00:33:02 | I know the two of you, as is often the case, you teach these things over and over again and then we talk about them and you let me talk about them. I'm sure you've got a lot of insights here. There is a prophetic call narrative or a throne theophany narrative that often shows up and you can think of Lehi's experience, John's experience, John the Revelator, Moses, Enoch and others. There's an introduction as we see here like, "Let's create the setting," and in this case the setting is an ancient temple setting. And he's probably not in the actual temple, he's probably in a heavenly temple where he sees God seated on a throne. Anciently, that throne was an important image. They've got the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies that is God's throne, so to speak, His mercy seat. |
| | 00:33:51 | But today when God shows up, we don't normally see God seated on a throne. God shows up in a standing position. That was already the case, by the way, in the Book of Revelation, but Lehi sees Him seated on a throne, Alma the Younger is going to say, "I thought I saw even as my father Lehi saw, God seated on a throne surrounded by concourses of angels." There's an introduction and then there's this throne theophany and a theophany is where you see the face of God. Theophany, it's a vision of God seated on a throne. Often called also the divine confrontation. God is trying to get you to do something. You see Moses at the burning bush, a similar experience here. |
| | 00:34:28 | And then the Kedushah or heavenly song. You have this angelic host surrounding the throne of God, praising God, and as other biblical scholars have dug into this, they say this is when the prophet is invited into the divine counsel and made a part of |

God's divine counsel. He's given a message. The prophet's like, "Wow, I am not good enough for this," and then God says, "You are good enough because I'm calling you and making you good enough." Think of Moses, "How can I do this?" And I sort of love the Prince of Egypt portrayal, "I'm a man of stammering lips," and then the way Spielberg does it in that movie, "Who made your lips? Did not I? Now go," and then he sort of, "Now, Moses," and then he goes soft on him again. I sort of like that, "Hey, I made you. What do you mean you can't do this? What do you mean you're too shy, you're too weak, you're too busy, you're too this or that? I made you. I know what you can do and in my power you can do this."

00:35:30 Isaiah has this resisting moment and then God makes him worthy to stand in His presence and He gives him a message and then sends him forth. Well, notice this is what happens with Lehi. He's given a book, I think it's Zechariah who gets the fly. He sees this flying scroll or flying roll in heaven that's sometimes joked about, and then John says, "I ate it and it's sweet in my mouth, but bitter in my belly." I've mentioned before, I think this is a prophecy of Taco Bell maybe, sweet in the mouth, bitter in the belly.

00:36:03 Anyway. Prophetic commission, then you're sent forth. Now, there's more to say about this, but I want to just highlight to Latter-day Saints listening that this is what God is doing with you in our Latter-day temples. He is inviting you into the divine counsel to make you a prophetic, lowercase P, a prophetic figure, one who understands one who knows one who is endowed with power and then he sends you forth into the world to build a family, to do missionary work and call others. But first, think of that prophetic vision of everything from the beginning to the end. God is giving us the prophetic experience and calling us as prophetess and prophets to go forth and give His message to the world. That message is the plan of salvation, it's the Book of Mormon, it is so many different things that He gives to us and then places a burden on us as prophetic figures who are going to lead in the world. So I think there's some really powerful imagery there, but we should probably go back and talk about some of these symbols just a little bit more.

John Bytheway: 00:37:12 Well, I like the fact that the house was filled with smoke and the posts of the door moved in verse four, and what could those symbols mean?

Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:37:22 You have the posts that hold that veil up, or the posts of the temple, and then God's might is shaking the space, but Isaiah seeks to enter into the presence of God and angelic guides

actually encourage him. They want him to come in, "Pass beyond the veil and enter into the presence of God because you are prepared to do so." I've heard some liken this to the Latter-day Saint experience of the sacrament that cleanses us through God's ordinances as we come humbly with broken heart and contrite spirit. You have God's train filling the temple, so you've got sacred clothing. That train often symbolizes posterity. If it's a bridal train, then you're talking about posterity, disciples, descendants, a covenantal community. God's glory is filling the temple.

00:38:17 But that smoke, sorry, to go back to your original prompt, John, is probably smoke from the altar of incense. I would also add that the altar of incense symbolizes prayer. So as the smoke ascends, it symbolizes prayer and that prayer at the veil, that's a place of prayer at the veil that then prepares the high priest on the day of atonement, but in this case, Isaiah, to enter into the presence of God.

00:38:47 If you think of the way this works in the New Testament, Zechariah is one of the priests who's been asked to give the daily prayer and he's sprinkled some of the blood there on the altar of incense. He's standing right in that spot where Isaiah is right before the veil as he prays and the priests are outside the temple praying at the same time for God's blessings to be on Israel, that's the moment when the angel comes and stands right there in front of the veil. You've got angel stitched on the veil. God sends his message to that space right at the veil, that place of prayer before the veil. How are you going to enter into the presence of God? Well, in this case, God will descend among you.

Hank Smith: 00:39:30 I really like that, Shon, how you said, "It's not anything Isaiah is doing." He says, "I'm unworthy. I have unclean lips," and the Lord is saying, "I can fix that."

Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:39:39 I've got a thing,

Hank Smith: 00:39:40 I've got some sins. And the Lord says, "Oh, really? I can help, and it might be a little painful." The live coal could be a little painful, but it'll work.

Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:39:49 I've read and talked about these verses so many times, I've never actually thought about the physical pain of putting coal on your lips, right?

Hank Smith: 00:39:57 It might hurt a little bit to be cleansed.

John Bytheway:	00:39:59	A little ChapStick is not going to help at that point.
Hank Smith:	00:40:03	So Shon, we're coming to the last three chapters today. We've kept you for a while and I honestly don't feel bad about it because that is the way to study Isaiah. It takes a while. It's a price you have to pay. So kudos to those who are still with us going through these chapters. What should we see in these last three chapters? Do they fit together or should we separate them?
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:40:24	No, I think they do fit together. In fact, you might say that seven through 12 could be viewed as a literary unit. Some wouldn't see it in precisely this way, but the way that I think many see the way that seven through 12 holds together is chapter seven and eight are introducing this threat of the Syro-Ephraimite War. So here's where all of that historical context we gave you at the beginning is going to become really important. So here's where Israel, often called Ephraim by Isaiah, and Syria are joined together against Judah and they want Judah to help them rebel against Assyria, and Ahaz is afraid of them and they're like, "We're going to wipe you out and put our own king on your throne," and Isaiah is going to come be commanded by the Lord to bring his son, Shear-Jashub, a remnant will return, and meet Ahaz to try to strengthen his spine a little bit, to try to encourage him and say, "No, if you'll trust in the Lord, He will be with you."
	00:41:28	So that's chapter seven and eight. Nine and 10 prophesy of the destruction. Hey, this threat of Syria and Israel is not going to last. You think it's a threat? It's not. Chapter 10, even Assyria, the big, bad mighty empire of Assyria is not going to last. And then from 10 it springs in 11 and 12 into this symbol of the gathering, "Hey, your covenants. My covenant promises mean you are going to make it through these threats and survive," and then it springs into this gathering sort of imagery in the last days and you get what we would think of as a millennial song in Isaiah 12. Seven through 12 could be seen as a unit. Let's just do a little bit with seven, eight, and nine. Does that sound good?
Hank Smith:	00:42:15	Yeah, that sounds fantastic. With our understanding, I think I can follow the storyline now. Chapter 17 came to pass in the days of Ahaz, it's the king of Judah. His father's name is Jotham, his father's name was Uzziah. He's the king of Judah, this Ahaz. Rezin, who's the king of Syria. Pekah, the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel. So I've got three kings basically mentioned in verse one. Two of them, Rezin and Pekah, want to go against Ahaz to war against him. So I'm guessing Judah, the whole kingdom of Judah.

Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:42:51	<p>Yeah, Ahaz is terrified by this. So the Lord is going to say to Isaiah, "Hey, go meet Ahaz with Shear-Jashub in this location." It's near the Fuller's Field. It's a washerman's field. It's where they would wash and clean the wool. It's a commonly known location in Isaiah's day. I have my opinions of where it is. It's commonly known location in Isaiah's day. "... and say this to Ahaz: 'Take heed. Be quiet. Fear not. Neither be faint-hearted,' and this is one of the two places I want to pause in this chapter for the two tales of these smoking firebrands. I love that imagery, the smoking firebrand. So if you think of a firebrand, it's designed to give light, maybe heat. A smoking firebrand is about to go out, it's going to look very threatening and it's going to produce a lot of smoke that is problematic and makes it look really big, but there's no more fire, there's no more heat. It's going to catch your attention, but don't pay attention to it.</p>
	00:43:56	<p>And I love pausing here with students and saying, what are the smoking firebrands in your life? What is it that's really you think, "I'm never going to make it through this. I am going down. I will never survive this." Maybe a romantic relationship has come to a close. Something didn't turn out the way you thought it was going to. Maybe you've struggled with something in school. This is university we're talking about. Maybe there's been a mistake you've made in your life or something dumb you've done and then someone has made a big deal out of it or you're having to sort of pay some of the costs of that, you're in a bad place because of that.</p>
	00:44:33	<p>Those moments can feel like there's no way to recover, but what he's saying here is, "Hang in there. It looks really bad, but you're at the part where if you hang in there, you will come through this and it's not going to take you down unless you let it take you down." And I think all three of us certainly and everybody listening has had smoking firebrand moments and we're terrified of them. They're terrifying, they're scary, they're hard. They can leave some marks and some wounds and God's saying, "Hang in there. I will save you. I will bring a righteous remnant in you through this fire," so to speak.</p>
Hank Smith:	00:45:14	<p>And then the Lord saying in verse seven, "It's not going to happen. You are going to survive this."</p>
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:45:19	<p>Absolutely. Well, then there's this really fun sequence where Isaiah says, "Hey, ask for a sign," and Ahaz says, "No, not me. I don't ask for signs." Well, I think we're sort of trained both as Latter-day Saints, but also as readers of the New Testament that it's bad to ask for signs. I would just push back on that slightly in Moroni 10, we are told to ask for a sign, "Pray and the Spirit will</p>

tell you if the..." Well, that's a sign, right? But it's the kind of sign that requires spiritual trust and maturity and that kind of thing. Usually, we don't want to ask God for proof, but if God asks you to ask for proof, you do that, and when Ahaz says, "No, not me, I don't ask," and to me this is producing Isaiah an eye roll, he is like, "Yeah. Okay, you're not going to listen to what I tell you anyway and you're great. Okay. God Himself will give you a sign."

00:46:11 And this is the sign that He gives, the very famous verse 14, "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign. A virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil to choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both their kings." Now obviously for us as Christians, this becomes a powerful, and the gospel author saw it as a very powerful reference to the birth of Jesus Christ who was born of the Virgin Mother Mary, the original Hebrew. So the word virgin is in the Greek translation of the Septuagint, that then the New Testament authors rely on the Hebrew word there that Isaiah is using is *alma*, which means a young woman, a young maiden, sometimes not married yet, but could be a young married woman.

00:47:07 So it does not necessarily have the implications, certainly not the set implications of a virgin. The reason I'm emphasizing this is because the most powerful application here absolutely is Christ, but there has to be an application I think in Ahaz' day... First of all, otherwise it doesn't make sense, and you might say, "Well, that's the kind of sign he gets, a sign isn't going to be fulfilled for 700 years," and it is technically true. By the time Jesus is born, those two kings are gone. That's not very helpful to Ahaz. And the question is, "Who is this *alma*? Who's this young woman and who is the child that's born?" Hezekiah is a suggestion. One of the challenges with that is Hezekiah apparently would already be born at this point, but the reason some suggest that is because of Isaiah 9:6, this very powerful, "A king and he'll be a prince of peace." That must be Hezekiah. It's Davidic, certainly this messianic sort of prophecy.

00:48:06 I personally read this as Isaiah's wife. And by the way, if you go on to the next chapter, he talks about, "And I went in unto the prophetess and she conceived and bore a child," that's Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. And I love this moment where Isaiah is talking to a king who is too afraid to have a strong response, and he's saying, "Okay, Ahaz, you're too afraid, but my wife is not too afraid. She is the sign and symbol of faith in the Lord that all will

be okay. She is willing to have children in the midst of this threat of destruction because she believes in the promises of the Lord," and at this moment when he confronts a king, I like this interpretation, that who does Isaiah point to? His wife, who he also calls the prophetess, by the way. I believe Isaiah loved and honored his wife. And then that idea of Emmanuel and that the birth of that child is a symbol, "God is in this. It's going to be okay, God is with us."

00:49:15 So to me, understanding that historical context, whether it's Hezekiah, whether it's Isaiah's child, whether it's some other woman, and then when that child is born, the symbol of God is with us. Now think of Christ and the Virgin Mary under the threat of Rome, and an angel comes, says, "You're going to be the mother of the Son of God," and this young woman says, "Okay, I will do this." She doesn't balk at this, and then part of the power here then is then we can carry that into our day when many are afraid to have families and children under the difficulties of our day and those who trust in the Lord say, "I will move forward in faith and we will have families, we will support families. If I'm an aunt or an uncle, I'm going to support my brothers and sister's family. I'm going to be a primary teacher and support families."

00:50:11 We will not be afraid, but we will move forward. And I would submit every time a child is born and the spirit that comes with that childbirth is a witness of Emmanuel. God is with us. He's still sending His children to this earth. It's another sign the story's not over. Don't be afraid. And each one of you, children I'm sending, has a divine destiny and is a symbol and a sign god is with us because of the central fulfillment of that prophecy when Christ was born, who truly was God amongst us. To me, that becomes more powerful with the historical context rather than detracting from the prophecy of Christ, to me. I don't know if you can enhance a prophecy of Christ, but that's sort of the idea. I think it helps.

Hank Smith: 00:51:02 It's one of those likening things where there was an original context and then Matthew uses it in a very appropriate way to liken it to the birth of Christ.

Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:51:11 Yeah. So then the question is, what did Isaiah understand? What's in Isaiah's brain? Well, I'm not in Isaiah's brain to know if he's purposely giving a dual fulfillment prophecy, or if God's giving it to him in a way that it will be understood that way, or if later as Christ is born, now we understand the more complete fulfillment of this, but there had to be an original fulfillment and then a likening fulfillment that comes in Christ's day.

John Bytheway:	00:51:39	I've really liked Donald Parry's... This is a big picture way to look at it. 2 Nephi 17, the Emmanuel Prophecy, 2 Nephi 18, the first fulfillment, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, and 2 Nephi 19, the later fulfillment, Jesus Christ, where we get for unto us, a Child is born unto us a Son is given.
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:51:59	Oh, that's nice.
John Bytheway:	00:52:00	Yeah, Elder Holland says the same thing you said. He said, "The most immediate meaning was probably focused on Isaiah's wife, a pure and good woman who brought forth the son about this time, the child becoming a type and shadow of the greater later fulfillment of the prophecy that would be realized in the birth of Jesus Christ." I love that. There was an immediate fulfillment and there was a later fulfillment, and that's just another way to read Isaiah. There can be dual meanings, dual fulfillments.
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:52:28	And by the way, I do really believe that Isaiah loved and honored his wife. I love the way he calls her prophetess. If this is the correct interpretation, which I think it is, but that it's his wife we're referring to, that he uses her as the great sign and then he uses a lot of birth imagery and motherhood imagery throughout his writings and prophecies, and every time I read that, I think he had to have learned that from his wife. He's listening to his wife, he's paying attention. Maybe she's saying, "Hey, here's a good way you could say that." I don't know. Anyway. It feels that way as I read the Book of Isaiah.
Hank Smith:	00:53:09	So this other son that's born, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, his name is according to the footnotes here, destruction is imminent.
John Bytheway:	00:53:17	Yes, here comes trouble.
Hank Smith:	00:53:19	Can you hear that baby blessing. The name we have chosen for him is destruction is imminent. So what's the destruction, Shon?
Dr. Shon Hopkin:	00:53:28	Well, so you've got the destruction both of Assyria and then later on of Babylon, but what you could say if you're going to broaden this out thematically is you have a gathering and a scattering. Two children, you've got a gathering name and a scattering name, and I don't know which you want to be if you're on the football field, you want to be the Shear-Jashub, gar? Do you want to be the Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz? But both of them actually are in the Lord's divine plan. And so it's not like a good guy versus a bad guy. No, this is the plan scattering as we

Latter-day Saints understand it and know it is crucial to get the preparation for then this gathering in the last days.

Hank Smith: 00:54:10

Isaiah has two sons. One is named after the gathering, one is named after the scattering.

Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:54:16

That's a way to understand this, unless he has a third son named Emmanuel, but I don't think so. I think Emmanuel is, if this interpretation is correct, it's that symbol, God is with us. I don't think his son was actually named Emmanuel. Well, in order to begin to bring this to a close, we've referred to some things in Isaiah 8, chapter 18, "Israel and Syria, you're afraid of them, but they are going to be not a threat. Those two kings are going to disappear as a threat," and they do pretty quickly. By the way, I've got to point for just a moment. Look at 2 Nephi 18 verse 10, "Take counsel together, it shall come to not. Speak the word, it shall not stand," and look at that phrase, "For God is with us," or in other words, Emmanuel. This sign follows through Isaiah's prophecies. So you can see why I talked about these as a literary unit.

00:55:08

And then if we go into chapter nine or 19, this now talking about Israel, and I love that the prophets continue to focus on the northern kingdom of Israel even though they're going to be scattered and they're going to disappear from history for centuries, but God still cares about them to the degree that He is saying, "Hey, there's going to come a time, your vexation," if you look at chapter 19 verse one, "Your vexation up in the north," in what we think of as the Galilee, the land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali, these are tribal inheritances in the northern kingdom. It's a tough place because it's a crossroads of the nations, the King's Way and Via Maris sort of go right through that area, and so you get a lot of foreign powers traveling through there. Megiddo. The city of Megiddo in this valley now, that the Book of Revelation... Har Megiddo becomes a symbol of Armageddon because there's so much violence there.

00:56:07

And wow, you have really suffered, but in the place that has had darkness, verse two, the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation and increased the joy, they joy before thee according to the joy in the harvest. How is this going to happen? And then it bursts joyously into this messianic prophecy. And even if this is... Some would say, "Ah, it's not about Christ or a Messiah. This is about a Davidic king." Well, okay, if that's Hezekiah, I don't

know. And some would say, "No, Hezekiah is a symbol that God is with them," but look at the way this is described.

- 00:56:52 "Unto us a child is born," and we're all hearing Handel's Messiah, of course. "Unto us, a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called," and by the way, these two words should be paired, a wonderful counselor or a counselor of wonders who works wonders, a miracle-working counselor. The mighty God. Another way to translate that Gibbor El is a warrior or God is a mighty one. The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and for Christians we say, there it is. How else should we understand that verse? And there are other ways of understanding it, but for me as a Christian, understanding Christ in exactly these ways and the Book of Mormon pointing to Christ in exactly these ways, this just resonates with us. And I liked what you said, John Bytheway, about Don Parry saying, "Hey. Look, you've got the early fulfillment in chapter eight or 18, and then the Christ fulfillment in chapter nine or 19 here."
- John Bytheway: 00:58:02 Yeah, I do hear the music and I see the capitalized proper names there. How do you understand that in another way? As a Davidic King, really?
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:58:12 Yeah, the way that's understood... Because that's so clear, this son will be the mighty God, and the way I was just working on this in something else I'm working on with Isaiah, and for those who don't believe that's a prophecy of a Messianic king who will be God, they would say, "No, that Messianic king, that Davidic king is a symbol pointing to..." Almost like Emmanuel. God with us isn't the actual name, but it symbolizes that God is with us, that we have an Everlasting Father, a Mighty God, a Prince of Peace. And that's fine. That's the way that's understood by some, or maybe even by those who are not Christian who are reading this verse and saying, "What in the world could this mean?" And for me as a Christian, I just think, "No, a son is going to be born and that son will be the counselor of wonders, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father," and beautifully so. Not a man of war, but a Prince of Peace.
- Hank Smith: 00:59:14 That's wonderful. Shon, it reminds me of back in chapter 18, we skipped these verses, but it's very similar, and this is verse six. You're refusing the waters of Shiloah. You're refusing this wonderful counselor, so what's going to happen instead? Here comes Assyria as a flood. There's two options.
- John Bytheway: 00:59:33 You're going to get in a flood of the Assyrian army. And you know what, Hank? Shiloah, say that in Greek is Siloam. It's the

temple of Siloam, the pool of Siloam, which is pretty cool because Jesus sends the man who was born blind down to that pool, those waters that go softly, and he washes in it. That pool had some staying power, didn't it?

- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 00:59:54 You are rejecting your local water source that I've given you and saying it's not sufficient for us. Well, what are you going to get? You're going to get the Euphrates, the mighty waters of Assyria are going to come like a flood. Don't reject the blessings. Trust in those. It's going to be okay if you trust in them.
- John Bytheway: 01:00:14 And while I'm saying this, I want Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz to stand next to me so that you can get the message, right?
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 01:00:21 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 01:00:24 Shon, this has been so fun. I don't know about both of you, but this is my idea of fun, going through and explaining and talking about and understanding scripture. John, this is a great job.
- John Bytheway: 01:00:38 Yeah, and we could keep going, but we got to go to church Sunday. No, we get to go to church Sunday.
- Hank Smith: 01:00:45 For those of you who are still with us, come on to YouTube, leave us a comment that says, "I went the distance. I followed the three of you full way." Tell us where you're living and that you made it all the way through. So Shon, as we come to a close here, tell our listeners what you think about this book. It's obvious that you've studied a little bit of it. What do you think about the Book of Mormon?
- Dr. Shon Hopkin: 01:01:07 The Book of Mormon is pure, simple, and powerful to change lives. It has a depth to it that we have still not plumbed. There is more there that we can and will and must find in our quest for the Lord and to understand the gift that we've truly been given. The Book of Mormon has had a purifying and life-changing impact for me and has encouraged me to come to Christ. And then I want to echo something I said earlier about Isaiah. Isaiah teaches me who God is, and it is so deeply rewarding and powerful to dig into Isaiah. Great are the words of Isaiah. "Search them," is what Christ says. I have been rewarded by that process and I need more. I'm learning more about Isaiah almost every day, actually. So I'm deeply grateful for both of those great gifts in my life.
- Hank Smith: 01:02:07 Absolutely wonderful. It has been a treat to have Dr. Shon Hopkin with us today. We want to thank him for being here. We

want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our wonderful founder, Steve Sorensen. Join us next week. You're no longer scared, you're excited about more Isaiah chapters on followHIM.

01:02:33 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. 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 Sorenson.

President Russell M. Nelson: 01:03:27 Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him. Follow him.

A MIRACLE ENCOUNTER AT THE TEMPLE



Hank Smith:	00:03	Hello, my friends. Welcome to this week's followHIM Favorites. This year, we are telling a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, this week we're in this huge chunk of 2 Nephi in the Isaiah chapters, and I have a story I think you'll like. Are you ready?
John Bytheway:	00:17	Yes, absolutely.
Hank Smith:	00:19	All right. You know in chapter 12 where Isaiah talks about many people flowing to the house of the Lord.
John Bytheway:	00:27	The mountain of the Lord.
Hank Smith:	00:28	The mountain of the Lord. Let's go to the temple. I want to tell you a story about a miracle. At least I believe it's a miracle that happened in the Accra Ghana Temple about 10 years ago. There's a man named John Ekow-Mensah. He's in his 80s. He joined the church, I think, 10 years previous to this. So 20 years ago, lived alone in a town called Nkawkaw. I think that's how you say it. He'd been a member of the church, I think for 10 or 15 years, and now he's making trips to the temple. He's in a waiting area at the temple.
	01:00	Another man sits down next to him, and they strike up a conversation starting with, "Oh, where are you from?" The man says, "Oh, I'm from Sekondi." And he said, "Oh, I'm from Sekondi. What part of Sekondi are you from?" The man said, "Oh, I'm from right where the schools are." There's this growing sense of recognition to where the man says, "What is your name?" This is the younger man. He says to John Ekow-Mensah, "What is your name?" And John Ekow-Mensah, our convert, he said, "Oh, I'm John Ekow-Mensah." The younger man says to brother Ekow-Mensah, "That is my name too."
John Bytheway:	01:34	What?

Hank Smith:	01:35	So what had happened is that years and years and years ago, decades previous to this, John Ekow-Mensah Sr. had had a falling out with his mother-in-law, who was also like a matriarch of his tribe, his town, and she had exiled him, and he had to leave behind his wife and infant son. Over the decades, he had moved far away and been working when he ends up joining our church.
John Bytheway:	02:06	Wow.
Hank Smith:	02:07	On the other side of this is his son, John Ekow-Mensah Jr., who grew up never knowing his father. They never talked about him. He ends up getting married to his wife, Deborah. He was at the University of Accra in Ghana, and he picked up a Liahona magazine. So get this, John. When he gets home from school, talking to his wife, Deborah, now John, this is the same day that he picks up this magazine. She says, "I want to tell you about a church I learned from a friend." She told him the name of the church was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. John said, Hey, that's the same church I read about in this magazine,-
John Bytheway:	02:48	In this magazine.
Hank Smith:	02:48	... the Liahona. So they were both baptized. Then, John, the same day in 2012, John Ekow-Mensah Sr., who had joined the church, John Ekow-Mensah Jr., who had joined the church, found themselves sitting next to each other in the waiting area of the Accra Ghana Temple. Tears came as father and son were reunited. Their joy was compounded by their understanding that they had separately joined the church and both found their way into the temple that beautiful morning.
John Bytheway:	03:23	It's almost like the temple is to unite families.
Hank Smith:	03:27	It's almost as if, John.
John Bytheway:	03:29	That was all orchestrated.
Hank Smith:	03:30	Isn't that wonderful?
John Bytheway:	03:30	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	03:32	Isn't that just a wonderful story?
John Bytheway:	03:33	Amazing.

Hank Smith:

03:34

Oh, I love it. Come join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're with Dr. Shon Hopkins this week, walking through these Isaiah chapters, and we think you'll love what he does. Come back next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.