

# EASTER

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"I Am He Who Liveth,  
I Am He Who Was Slain"

**followHIM**

**Episode 14: Dr. John Hilton III**

**Easter**

*"I Am He Who Liveth, I Am He Who Was Slain"*

## Show Notes

### 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 Sunday.

### Podcast Episode 112 Description:

#### Part 1:

Do you tend to jump right past the cross when studying Holy Week? Dr. John Hilton III shares why looking at the entirety of Jesus's last week, including his suffering on the cross, will deepen our understanding and appreciation. This episode will exceed your expectations. Join us!

## Part 2:

We continue to discuss Holy Week and unpack all four Gospels and their accounts. Dr. Hilton shares why Holy Saturday has applications to uplift and enrich our lives, especially in times of trial. Discover why the story of the Road to Emmaus teaches us about expectations, doubt, and faith.

## Extras:

1. John has published several articles about the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ—you can read them for free at <http://johnhiltoniii.com/crucifixion>
2. Sign up to receive a free chapter of John's new book *Considering the Cross* at <https://forms.gle/rwyyFh1u838uy4f2A> or buy a copy at Deseret Book or on Amazon (<https://www.amazon.com/Considering-Cross-Calvary-Connects-Christ/dp/1629728713>)
3. To download side-by-side accounts of the Savior's final hours in mortality, as well as his resurrection, visit <http://johnhiltoniii.com/synopsis>
4. During Holy Week of 2021, see new daily videos from John on Instagram. Follow @johnhiltoniii on Instagram to join the conversation (<http://instagram.com/johnhiltoniii>).

## Timecode:

### Part 1

- *00:00* Welcome
- *01:28* Dr. John Hilton III Introduction
- *04:48* Dr. Hilton Shares Why Christ on Calvary Began to Impress Upon Him
- *07:29* Where Would You Say Christ Mostly Atoned for Our Sins?
- *09:14* Why We Glance Over the Crucifixion When Teaching the Atonement.
- *10:12* Restoration Scripture's Teachings About the Atonement Bring Doctrinal Understanding.
- *11:19* Elder McConkie States the Horrors of Gethsemane Returned at the Cross
- *14:01* Should or Can We Use the Cross as Saints?
- *14:46* History of Cross usage in American Christianity.
- *15:49* The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Usage of Cross Symbology
- *24:00* Teaching the Crucifixion to Children
- *28:21* The Sacrament Table, an Altar, and a Supper Table
- *31:13* Historical and Physical Realities of Crucifixion
- *34:25* The Suffering Christ Can Succor Us in our Darkest Hours
- *37:49* Barrabas or The son of the father and Jesus the Son of the Father
- *39:17* Jesus Had Someone Carry the Cross for a Time
- *40:51* The Savior's Statements from The Cross
- *42:51* Jesus is "Sorrowful Unto Death." Have We Seen Him Like This Previously?
- *46:61* Jewish Expectations of the Messiah
- *49:30* Possible Meanings of "Graven"
- *52:31* Possible Nephite Motivation for Touching Jesus's Side
- *55:34* Indications the Atonement is Working in Your Life
- *59:42* End of Part I

### Part 2

- *00:00* Welcome
- *00:21* The Importance and Application of Holy Saturday
- *02:07* Resurrection Sunday and Resource Provided by Dr. Hilton: A Side-by-Side Comparison of the Gospel Accounts of the Garden and Beyond
- *03:28* The Gospel of Mark Never Shows Resurrected Lord
- *04:04* Jesus Defies Convention by Having Women as Witnesses
- *04:58* Original Ending of The Gospel of Mark is a Cliffhanger
- *09:18* Matthew Reports Jesus Telling the Apostles to Meet Him in the Galilee
- *10:12* Ideas that Came from Members and Supported by the Church Leadership
- *11:53* Matthew Ends and Begins with the Same Idea
- *15:07* The Gospel of Luke Account

- 16:45 John and Hank Have Lost Parents Recently and Share Their Thoughts
- 18:05 The Road to Emmaus and Evaluating our Expectations
- 28:41 Jesus Always Speaks Peace
- 29:32 The Gospel of John is 93% Unique
- 31:40 Mary Magdalene and What “Touch Me Not” May Mean
- 35:09 Doubting Thomas Should Be Called Die With Him Thomas
- 40:01 The Apostles Returned to Fishing After the Resurrection
- 43:14 Peter is Still on the Lord’s Team
- 45:17 Dr. Hilton Shares How the Death and Resurrection of the Savior Has Changed His Life
- 1:00:22 Closing Credits

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## Biographical Information:



John Hilton III is an assistant professor of ancient scripture. Before coming to BYU, John worked with the Seminaries and Institutes program for eleven years in a variety of capacities. John has a master's degree from Harvard and a PhD from BYU, both in education. John loves to teach and his research focuses on issues relating to both religious pedagogy and Open Educational Resources (OER). John and his wife Lani have six children. John is passionate about doing humanitarian service and is an amateur magician. For more information, see <http://johnhiltoniii.com> (religious education website) and <http://johnhiltoniii.org> (educational technology website).

[www.doctrineandcovenantscentral.org](http://www.doctrineandcovenantscentral.org)

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# EPISODE 14 • PART I

Dr. John Hilton III



*EASTER*

Hank Smith:	<u>00:01</u>	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:09</u>	And I'm John Bytheway.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:10</u>	We love to learn.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:11</u>	We love to laugh. We want to learn and laugh with you, as together, We Follow Him.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:18</u>	My friends, welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with my incredible co-host, John Bytheway. Welcome, John.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:29</u>	You're talking about me? Oh, that's-
Hank Smith:	<u>00:30</u>	Yes.
John Bytheway:	<u>00:31</u>	That's very kind. Thank you.
Hank Smith:	<u>00:32</u>	John, can you introduce our friend?
John Bytheway:	<u>00:35</u>	Yes, we have John Hilton III with us. And Hank, we've known John for years. I think you may have known him longer than I have.
Dr. John Hilton...:	<u>00:45</u>	I'm going to just pop in. So I think I actually have technically known you longer because when I was a BYU student, I came knocking on your office door at BYU saying, "Do you have any tips for how I could write a book or [crosstalk 00:00:57]?" I'm sure you had hundreds of people like me, but you treated me so kindly. You were so nice and polite. Yeah.

Dr. John Hilton...:	<u>01:05</u>	Anyway, so just throwing that out there. John, I've been grateful for you for decades.
John Bytheway:	<u>01:10</u>	Oh, you're so nice. I'm glad that you remember me being a nice guy.
Hank Smith:	<u>01:15</u>	Yeah, I was going to say, when I did that in college, John said, "Get out of here! Why do you kids keep bothering me?"
John Bytheway:	<u>01:27</u>	That's great.
John Bytheway:	<u>01:28</u>	John Hilton III was born in San Francisco and grew up in Seattle. He served a mission in Denver and received a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University, where he met his wife, Lani, and they have six children.
John Bytheway:	<u>01:41</u>	Now this is the fun part. They have lived in Boise, Boston, Mexico, Miami, China, and Jerusalem. John has a master's degree from Harvard and a PhD from BYU, both in education. He is currently a religion professor at BYU. John has written several books, including The Founder of Our Peace and Considering the Cross. And I think those two are the most recent. Considering the Cross just came out.
John Bytheway:	<u>02:09</u>	John's biggest claim to fame was in high school, he won a pizza eating contest by eating 22 pieces of pizza.
Dr. John Hilton...:	<u>02:16</u>	I mean, if you didn't feel like there's credibility here, I hope that sealed it. In full disclosure, they were small-ish pieces of pizza. But still, it's something to be proud of.
John Bytheway:	<u>02:27</u>	That's good. And John, you mentioned Jerusalem. That is an experience to sit there and to sing, "There is a green hill far away," and to look out the window and say, "Oh, it's not that far away."
Dr. John Hilton...:	<u>02:36</u>	"It's right there."
John Bytheway:	<u>02:37</u>	Yeah. It's just amazing. It's hard to get through the words when you're right there looking over old Jerusalem. And you got to experience that for a year.
Dr. John Hilton...:	<u>02:48</u>	Yeah, it was beautiful. Wonderful.
Hank Smith:	<u>02:50</u>	That's fantastic.

Hank Smith: 02:50 Now, before we go any further, I have to tell a couple of stories. And these are just important stories.

John Bytheway: 02:58 That's so unlike you, Hank.

Hank Smith: 02:59 There is no one as brilliant as John Hilton. He's so great they made three of him. His actual name is John Hilton III.

Hank Smith: 03:09 I've known John for ... Oh, it's probably been 15 years. We went to a Subway to get lunch and no one on the other side of the counter spoke English and I'm trying to order. And all of a sudden, my friend, John Hilton, starts speaking Spanish to these workers. And I said, "Well, how come you speak Spanish? You didn't serve a Spanish speaking mission." And he was like, because it was a revelation to him, he was like, "I know." And I said, "Well, how come you know Spanish?" And he said, "I wanted to learn Spanish, so I learned it." It was probably within that year sometime, I overhear him speaking Chinese with somebody, and I said, "Wait, what? You speak Chinese?" And he said, "Yeah, I wanted to speak Chinese, so I learned Chinese." And sometimes someone might say, "Well, intelligent people don't believe in God, intelligent people don't ... " Whatever. Fill in the blank. They don't do the whole faith/religion thing. Find me someone as intelligent as John Hilton III, and we can have that discussion, because he is not only intelligent, he is kind, he is everything. And his wife, Lani, is even better.

Hank Smith: 04:24 So John, do you feel like I did that justice? Did I overkill that?

Dr. John Hilton...: 04:30 You know, one thing that you left off, Hank, is that as we walked out of that Subway, there was someone who was asking for money and you gave them some money and treated them kindly. And that's something I always remember. That's something about your character. Some people work on learning languages and other people just develop Christ-like attributes. So a little something for everyone.

Hank Smith: 04:48 Yeah. I was just looking for ways to look good. I actually planted that guy outside. I'm like, "You stay here."

Hank Smith: 04:57 John, let's talk. This week's lesson is a little bit different for Come Follow Me. We're going to step away from the Doctrine and Covenants for a little bit and talk about Easter. Talk about the atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Hank Smith: 05:13 John, you just wrote a book on this. In fact, this is why I invited you on the podcast today. You just wrote a book on this called

Considering the Cross: How Calvary Connects Us with Christ. Maybe let's just start there, John, and see where we go. I know that this book was a couple of years for you, just thinking about it and then doing the research. Tell me what spurred you on to this and what you learned.

- Dr. John Hilton...: 05:39 So when I was in the Jerusalem Center, I was one day talking with one of my colleagues. And this is kind of like BYU religion professor fun talk, where we're like, "So what do you do when you teach the atonement of Jesus Christ? How do you teach that?" And as we were discussing this, one of my colleagues said, "Why do you think in the church we always focus almost exclusively on Gethsemane as the place where Christ atoned for our sins?" And I just thought, "I don't know, because that's what the scriptures say probably?"
- Dr. John Hilton...: 06:10 And I realized, in that moment that, whenever I taught a lesson ... So this week we're probably all studying maybe different episodes in the life of Christ, in this last week, we're probably focusing on the last supper, Gethsemane. And I realized that when I did these kinds of things, I tended to jump straight past the crucifixion and go to the resurrection. And I came across a quote from President James E. Faust. He said, "Any increase in our understanding of the Savior's atoning sacrifice draws us closer to him." And that really stood out to me. Any increase in any aspect of Christ's atonement is going to pull us closer to him.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 06:49 And I realized that, so to speak, there was some low hanging fruit with respect to Calvary and the crucifixion. This was just an area of Christ's atonement that I had kind of glided by. And as I started to investigate, I found that there are scriptures that talk about Jesus Christ suffering for our sins in Gethsemane; there's one in the Book of Mormon and one in the Doctrine and Covenants. So two total. There's, at the same time, more than 50 passages of scripture that talk about Jesus Christ dying for our sins. And we've seen them over and over again. Just this year, in the Doctrine and Covenants, it's in section 18, it's in section 21, we'll see it in a week or so in section 35. It's just over and over again, Jesus Christ emphasizes, "I was crucified for the sins of the world." And so when I realized that, I thought, "Wow, there's kind of a mismatch between what I've been focused on and what the scriptures are teaching."
- Dr. John Hilton...: 07:42 And so Anthony Sweat, who you know and has been on the podcast, he and I did a survey of some students at BYU, and we asked about 800 students, "Although Christ's atonement was a process, where would you say Jesus mostly atoned for our

sins?" In the first round we gave students two choices, either at Gethsemane or Calvary, and 88% of students selected Gethsemane. So someone said, "Hey, that's kind of unfair. You should have given them a third choice of 'equally in Gethsemane and Calvary.'" So we surveyed a separate group of about 800 students, and same question, "Although Christ's atonement was a process, where would you say he mostly atoned for our sins? Gethsemane, Calvary or equally in Gethsemane and Calvary?" And even with the choice of "Equally in Gethsemane and Calvary," 58% of people said Gethsemane only.

- Dr. John Hilton...: 08:35 So this was a signal to me that I'm not the only person who's tended to focus almost exclusively, or maybe primarily, on Gethsemane. But as I dived into ... You know, we're so focused on Joseph Smith this year with our Come Follow Me. Joseph Smith, actually, in his writings and sermons, he never talks about Jesus Christ suffering for our sins in Gethsemane. He only mentions Gethsemane one time, and that's in the context of Christ doing the will of his father. But there's more than 30 times when he talks about Christ being crucified, and several of those are specifically about him dying for our sins.
- Hank Smith: 09:14 I think in my experience as a teacher, and maybe you'd say the same thing, John Bytheway, maybe you'd say this as well, is that during the course of a class on the Savior's life, I am building and building and building to this moment, right? I'm building to this atonement moment. And for me personally, I've just kind of realized this as you've been talking, I will hit that moment in Gethsemane, and I will talk about Calvary, but it's on the downhill side. It's on the, "We've hit our moment and now we're hitting maybe post-climactic moment." And I think I do teach the Calvary, but it's on that ... I don't know, that other side of, "Okay, we've already hit our big moment."
- Hank Smith: 09:59 Would you say that other teachers do that? Or is it just me? This podcast has ended up being All The Things Hank Does Wrong Podcast. But do you feel like you used to do that as well maybe?
- John Bytheway: 10:13 I think what John said is right. When we learn the meaning of Gethsemane, that's olive press, and as John said, okay, we've got it in Luke that he bled at every pore, and that's it. Right? And then in restoration scripture, we have it in King Benjamin, in Mosiah 3, and Doctrine and Covenant, Section 19. And so maybe because of that, we feel some, "Oh, look what we have in restoration scripture that's only mentioned once in the Book of Luke, is that he bled from every pore."

John Bytheway: 10:46 And I love what you're doing, John, with suffering for our sins, dying for our sins. And yet we don't separate those too much because it was all part of the same process. Is that fair?

Dr. John Hilton...: 10:59 Yeah. And you just mentioned separating it out. I think that's maybe a common misunderstanding. People will say, "Well, Jesus suffered for our sins in Gethsemane, so he overcame spiritual death in Gethsemane and then overcame physical death on the cross." And Elder Gerald Lund calls that a doctrinal error, that to try to separate it out like that just isn't accurate.

John Bytheway: 11:19 Yeah, it was all the atonement. Can we say that? The atonement didn't happen here or there, but it was all. I mean, I'm, in my mind, remembering, and you've done so much research on this, I think it was Elder Bruce R. McConkie saying, "The horrors of Gethsemane returned on the cross." Is that accurate?

Dr. John Hilton...: 11:38 Yeah. So Elder McConkie did say that. And even more recently, President Nelson, he describes all of the things Christ experienced in Gethsemane, and then he said that, "All this suffering was intensified as Christ was cruelly crucified on Calvary's cross."

Hank Smith: 11:55 That's an important quote there, John. I had not heard that. So to go back to what you were saying, I do this. And this is what I recognize. This was kind of the turning point for me. It was to say, "I am. I'm building up and Gethsemane is the climax." Without doubt, that's...

Dr. John Hilton...: 12:12 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 12:13 I go back and look at my PowerPoints from like five years ago when I was teaching, and that was for sure the case. And I'm sure that you and I, and John, we're not alone.

John Bytheway: 12:22 And I don't want to say to any teacher listening, you did it wrong. Let's just say, "Hey, let's improve."

Dr. John Hilton...: 12:28 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 12:29 Let's improve. That was a great method at the time, but let's improve. Let's adjust.

Hank Smith: 12:33 And to be clear, it's not saying that Gethsemane isn't important. Gethsemane is supremely important. It's just there's maybe

another aspect of the Savior's atonement that we haven't fully appreciated or studied.

John Bytheway: [12:45](#)

So John, you've talked a lot, just with me personally, about the cross itself, that somehow, maybe there's a tie in, maybe there's not, you can correct me, that we don't focus on Calvary as a doctrine because we don't focus on the cross as a symbol. Maybe we shy away from the doctrine of what happens on the cross because of the fact that we, as Latter-day Saints, have shied away from the cross as a symbol. Tell me about what you've found there.

Dr. John Hilton...: [13:17](#)

I mean, to me, it makes me think of a parable from Elder Packer, where he talks about how a merchant found a precious pearl, and it was so amazing he wanted everyone to see it. So he made this great box to showcase the pearl. And when everyone came to watch it, he was so sad because they focused on the box instead of the pearl. And in a way, I think you can say that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the pearl and the cross as a symbol is a box. And maybe some people adore and worship the cross as a symbol, and that's not good, and maybe some of us have completely shied away from the image of the cross and said, "Oh, that's bad. I don't want any part of that." And as a result, we don't look at the pearl, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. So, I mean, just a quick backstory to that; to be honest with you, what I didn't know a couple of years ago is that, in the 1820s, as the restoration is taking shape, Catholicism is not a prevalent religion in the United States. In fact, in the Palmyra area, there's no Catholic churches. The Joseph Smith story, he says, "The Methodists, the Presbyterians." He never says, "What about the Catholics?" It's just not on his radar. It's not part of the cultural context. What I didn't know is that, in the 1820s, the cross was primarily a Catholic symbol. Protestant churches like Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, they didn't use the cross as a symbol. And that was going back to the Protestant/Catholic split off a couple of hundred years earlier.

Hank Smith: [14:43](#)

So they don't want to be seen as Catholic so they're not using the cross.

Dr. John Hilton...: [14:46](#)

Correct. So as Joseph Smith is kind of making decisions about building church buildings and, "Would you put a cross on it?" That would be a Catholic thing. It wasn't a Christian thing. And so that was an interesting data point for me, was to see that there's a culture that our church is growing out of, American Protestantism, is the cultural milieu that Joseph Smith is surrounded with and that doesn't have the image of a cross. But there's massive Catholic immigration to America in the 1840s

through '60s and that leads to Christians broadly in America adopting the cross as a symbol of their faith.

- Dr. John Hilton...: 15:24 So by the 1870s, you have well-documented statements saying something like the cross is no longer denominational, it's a Christian symbol. And even amongst Latter-day Saints during the late 1800's and early 1900's, there are times that the cross appears. It appears in some church buildings, not frequently, but occasionally there's-
- John Bytheway: 15:45 In our, in Latter-day Saints churches?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 15:47 Correct. In Latter-day Saint church buildings.
- John Bytheway: 15:50 I wanted to make sure. I saw this illustration in your book, on the spine of a European printed Doctrine and Covenants and what was there on the spine.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 15:59 Yeah. On the 1852 Doctrine and Covenants there's crosses on the spine. And there's other examples, B. H. Roberts of the Seventy as a cross on his tombstone. Several Latter-day Saints, both men and women, posed for formal photographs wearing crosses or cross earrings. And just to be clear, I'm not suggesting that we need to all go out and buy cross necklaces or anything. It's just interesting to see, historically, there wasn't a stigma with it.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 16:27 In the 1950s through the '70s, there was a couple of statements from church leaders that suggest that it would be in poor taste for members to wear a cross. No one ever forbids it, it's never forbidden, there's no commandment saying don't do it. But I think that's where we really get this cultural aversion to the cross.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 16:46 And of course in 1975, President Hinckley tells a story where he's taking a Protestant minister through the Mesa Arizona Temple and the minister says, "Well, if you're a Christian Church, how come I don't see a cross in this Temple?" And President Hinckley says, "Well, for us, the cross is a symbol of the dying Lord and we worship the living Christ."
- Dr. John Hilton...: 17:08 So, I think that those kinds of things would be what maybe some listeners are thinking about right now is, "Well, yeah, of course we don't use the cross and maybe the crucifixion isn't as important because we worship the living Christ."

- John Bytheway: 17:19 I think where you're going, this is an important discussion because it affects the doctrine, which is what's most important. What are we understanding about the Savior and the Atonement, and let's not have this symbol and cultural changes with the symbol change our doctrine and to shy away from the Crucifixion. Am I reading you right?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 17:43 Exactly. So you can wear a cross. You can not wear a cross. You can love it, not like it. Great. But let's not let that distract us. In fact, in the same talk from President Hinckley that we were just referring to, he says, "We must never forget the price Christ paid Calvary." And so, that's so important.
- John Bytheway: 18:03 I, just earlier this week, was teaching my class and I was in 3 Nephi 27 and I thought, "Oh, John will love this," I'm sure you know which one I'm talking about. But you know, this is that chapter where the disciples are meeting and, "What should we call the church?" And Jesus appears and, "How be it my church save it be called in my name?" But listen to verse 13 and 14, "Behold, I have given unto you my gospel. And this is my gospel which I have given unto you, that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me. And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross. And that after I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me. That as I have been lifted up by men, even so should men be lifted up by the Father to stand before me to be judged of their works, whether they be good, or whether they be evil."
- John Bytheway: 18:57 And I could go on, but I thought, "Look at that. John, I'm sure loves this verse," and kind of, "Look, here's the Savior Himself saying, this is important.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 19:09 And just with that, as I initially was finding this out and I would share it in small groups and test out the ideas I was working on, someone said, "Well, maybe the reason why people focus on the cross is that it was when," they say people like Christians generally, "focus on the cross because it was a public experience, that Gethsemane was more of a private experience so fewer people know about it."
- Dr. John Hilton...: 19:33 But then I thought, "Oh, okay." But then I thought, well, actually Jesus Christ describes His experience in Gethsemane one time in Doctrine and Covenants 19. But on more than 20 occasions in scripture, He talks about His death. Just like the verse that you just read. And so if anyone knows a lot about both Gethsemane and Calvary, it's the savior. And He, Himself is personally

emphasizing over and over again that He was crucified for our sins. That being lifted up on the cross, draws us to Him.

- Hank Smith: 20:06 There are so many... And all of a sudden, all these references are coming to mind like, I think in Nephi's vision he said, "I saw Him lifted up on the cross." It says nothing about Gethsemane, not that it's not important, again. But he talks about the cross when the savior talks to Nicodemus, He says the serpent, Moses' serpent in the wilderness story and says He'll be lifted up.
- Hank Smith: 20:28 I wonder if, as we sometimes want to differentiate ourselves from mainstream Christianity, that we said, "Well, they have the cross, that's theirs. We'll take Gethsemane, that's going to be ours." Right? "That's how we're going to be different."
- Dr. John Hilton...: 20:45 And maybe that was important in the 1960s or '70s. That might've been needed at some time. But that's not what I hear our church leader saying today. I don't hear an Us versus Them mentality. It's, let's have all good unite. And maybe on that, if we just could take a missionary moment and I'd love to hear your guys' experiences. When I was a full-time missionary in Colorado, if I saw someone wearing a cross, it was kind of like, "Oh, that's like other, they're different."
- Dr. John Hilton...: 21:12 Whereas, now if I was a missionary and I saw someone wearing a cross, I'd be so excited. I go up to them, "Hey, I see that you believe in Jesus! This is incredible. I've got this book here. And Jesus Himself says, 'My father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross.' Let's talk about our mutual feelings of excitement about the Savior's sacrifice on Calvary."
- Hank Smith: 21:31 Right? Someone is publicly declaring themselves to be a Christian and we're like, "Oh, no. How weird." Where now we'd be more, you're right John, I'd be excited. I love to see the cross. And from our discussion, and people are just getting your book, but I've had these discussions with you for a long time now. And I get more and more excited to see people with the symbol of the cross, announcing who they believe in.
- John Bytheway: 22:00 We will be having Dr. Robert Millet on the podcast at one point, I know he wrote a book called What Happened to the Cross and other doctrines, but I think they chose that as a title. And I was so intrigued because I thought, I had never seen anybody saying don't use a cross. But I remember in kind of... what would you say? Common knowledge or conventional thinking? "Well, we are all about the living Christ," and so forth. And I remembered something that Robert Millet had taught me, because he had

done a lot of writing and thinking about the doctrine of grace. And he said at one time he asked his dad, "Well, don't we believe in grace?" And his father said, "No, because the Baptist do."

John Bytheway: 22:45 And since that time we've seen a lot of helpful discussion about, "What did Nephi mean in 2 Nephi 25:23?" And Brother Brad Wilcox's talk, His Grace is Sufficient... All sorts of things to say, "Wait a minute. This has always been what's in the Book of Mormon."

John Bytheway: 23:05 I like to tell my students, "Hey, we've only had this book for less than 200 years. We're still learning what's in our own revelation," kind of. And do you think that, we just mentioned, that it's differentiating ourselves? But I'm right with you, I see somebody with a cross and I go, "Wow. They believe in Jesus. Isn't that great."

Dr. John Hilton...: 23:23 And I think, John, you shared with me earlier as well, some experiences you've had listening to Christian talk radio. I don't know if you want to share anything about that?

John Bytheway: 23:31 Yeah, I have. And, and condemning those who are offended by the cross and put us in that group.

Dr. John Hilton...: 23:38 Yeah, this is an area where we don't need to have... There doesn't need to be any friction. We totally believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins. In fact, that verse that you quoted earlier, Hank, from 1 Nephi 11, "I Nephi saw that Christ was lifted up on the cross and slain for the sins of the world." So there's no doubt that this is actually a bridge-building point for us and other Christians.

Hank Smith: 24:00 John, maybe one reason... And I can see this in myself, is that part of the come follow me manual this week talks about Jesus Christ Accomplished a Perfect Atonement. I have little ones and maybe it's my aversion to violence that I can focus on Gethsemane and maybe not on the cross. How do you as a father, how do you go about teaching the cross to your children without... I don't know? Do you find it might be emotionally scarring? Like, "All right. Let's all sit down and watch the passion of the Christ together?" Right? How do you teach it in a way that it's true to it, but yet not too graphic, what's age appropriate.

Dr. John Hilton...: 24:46 And this is just one experience, when I was a young father, we had the gospel art kit and we'd flip through the pages and I

would always flip past the crucifixion and just jump from Gethsemane to the resurrection. And I remember my son saying like, "What's that like, go back to that." And he was really curious and interested in the crucifixion image.

- Dr. John Hilton...: 25:05 And I'm sad that I didn't take advantage of that opportunity to teach my son because it was a teachable moment that I was more worried about than he was. I'm not saying that all crucifixion imagery is important or even appropriate for children of all ages. I do wonder if maybe there's some times that we maybe miss an opportunity to teach.
- Hank Smith: 25:28 A little too cautious.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 25:29 Yeah. Maybe so?
- Hank Smith: 25:30 Is that your son that's on a mission now?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 25:32 Yeah, exactly.
- John Bytheway: 25:33 Well, you did okay John. You did okay.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 25:35 Hopefully it didn't scar him too much. One other thing just to think about, I remember President Eyring one time saying something to the effect of, we need to take advantage of opportunities to teach small children. That they're at their most teachable phase prior to eight years of age. And so in some ways, what better time to help route in their hearts the power of Christ's atoning sacrifice in Gethsemane and on Calvary.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 26:05 Just recently a friend showed me something that her son who's five years old had made, and it was a picture of the crucifixion. And her son had made Jesus smiling on the cross. And she said, "Oh, why is Jesus smiling?" And her son said, "Because He's so happy to sacrifice for you and me."
- Dr. John Hilton...: 26:21 So I do think that at least some little children, and every parent's going to know their own child best, some little children it may be helpful. Definitely, maybe not watching the Passion of the Christ, but to see some of these other images and to talk about it and to read some scriptures together, I think could be a very spiritually powerful opportunity.
- John Bytheway: 26:40 Also I think something, John, that parents could do... And I forgot about this, is that you talk about the crucifixion symbolism in the gospel around us, right? In the gospel our children are already experiencing. Tell us about the connections

you've made there, with just the gospel that our children are already experiencing?

- Dr. John Hilton...: [26:59](#) Well, I mean, one for example is the ordinance of baptism. So in Romans chapter 6, Paul makes it very clear that baptism is a symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So, that's an opportunity to talk about the total commitment that Jesus Christ manifested to each of us. He was so all-in, He gave His life for us.
- Dr. John Hilton...: [27:20](#) Or the sacrament is another opportunity where Jesus said, "Eat this bread in remembrance of the body, which I laid down for you." We see that in our recent Come Follow Me and Doctrine and Covenants Section 27, "And my blood, which was shed for you." And in the scriptures, the phrase "shedding of blood" always refers to death, it's the death of an animal or in this case the death of the Savior.
- Dr. John Hilton...: [27:46](#) One little nugget in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul is talking about the crucifixion and the sacrament. And he says that, as often as you take the sacrament you show... And it's spelled S-H-E-W, it's a weird word. You read it and you're like, "What does that word mean?" Well, if you look up, it means to proclaim or testify of. So he says, "As often as you take the sacrament, you are publicly testifying of the death of Christ." And I think that's another really, not every day, but every week opportunity to think about and commemorate the Savior's sacrifice.
- John Bytheway: [28:21](#) I was telling my kids that I think of the sacrament table not only as a reminder of the last supper, so it's like a table of communion. But also as an altar, because we're remembering the body and the blood of Christ there. And I don't know if that'd stand up to Correlation, but I think of both of those ideas. Here's the priests breaking bread in front of us and the fact that the way we do that is in the front of the room, every week for everyone to see while we sing a sacrament hymn. That he was bruised and broken and torn for us on Calvary's Hill. I mean, is that Hymn 181? And why then? Why while we're singing? I think that all means something to help us remember His death and He died for us. But I love that it's kind of both, it's the last supper and it's an altar. And like I said, I don't know if that would pass Correlation, but it went well in our own little home evening lesson.
- Dr. John Hilton...: [29:33](#) John, with that thought that you just said about it's both, going back to the idea of, "Well wait, don't we really just worship the living Christ?" And I think that we... I don't think, I know we

100% do worship the living Christ. At the same time we also worship the loving Christ. And Jesus Christ Himself personally defined His greatest act of love. As His crucifixion He said, "Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." That same idea is found in the Book of Mormon-

- Dr. John Hilton...: 30:03 ... and lay down his life for his friends. That same idea is found in the book of Mormon as well. So to me it's not an either or. It's not, well, we either have the living Christ or the loving Christ. It's both. You can't have one without the other.
- Hank Smith: 30:15 This is wonderful. John, first weirdos out there who really like just information, I want to learn, did you learn anything in your writing about the act of crucifixion itself that you didn't know before?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 30:30 I actually remember one day I was just eating lunch with some colleagues and it just dawned on me that everything I knew about crucifixion came from movies, primarily The Lamb of God and The Testaments, because those are some of the only movies that I had seen that had crucifixion imagery in it. And I thought, "I'm pretty sure that there's a whole science around this." And there have. I mean, thousands of pages have been written about what we know from archeology. One or two little interesting details is I've always seen this image and probably a lot of you have seen it as well, where Jesus is nailed to the cross and the thieves on either side are tied to the cross. And I've had people ask, "Well, why were the thieves tied but Jesus was nailed?" And of course that picture is just based on the artist's imagination.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 31:13 In reality, both nails and ropes were used in crucifixions. So it could have been either or. We know that in the Savior's case, he was nailed to the cross because of the Prince and his hands and his feet. Another interesting detail is that the best evidence suggests that crosses were much smaller than we sometimes think of. Occasionally in a movie you'll see like a pulley system and they're like hoisting up the cross really high. But oftentimes it appears that the cross was maybe only a foot, maybe two feet taller than the person who's being crucified. Which has a different effect if you think about your eye level with the crucifixion. And so when you're there at the cross and Jesus says these powerful seven final statements, it's not that He's distant and far away. If you're near the cross, you're almost at eye level with Him.
- Hank Smith: 32:04 Wow. Did this happen often, John? Did the Romans invent crucifixion? Is this something that I should even ask?

Dr. John Hilton...: 32:14 No, it's a great question. So the historical origins of crucifixion are a little bit murky. Clearly the Romans perfect the practice. The Greeks and maybe the Persians before them have some type of crucifixion. And any of the kingdoms before that are impaling people. So something that's similar to a crucifixion has been happening for centuries before. But clearly the Romans the way that we think of crucifixion perfect the practice, if we could use that terrible term. But yeah. And a lot of times I think people don't want. I'm kind of shying away from this topic because I think probably a lot of listeners are about, "Like, let's turn this off right now kids. Let's move on."

Hank Smith: 32:55 It's a little murky.

Dr. John Hilton...: 32:57 But you know, we hope that Jesus Christ understands our pain. Don't we? We talk about, "Well, the savior understands our pain." We're never going to understand the pain He experienced an atoning for our sins, but we can understand a little bit about the physical realities of crucifixion. So maybe since we want Him to understand our pain, it might not be too much for us to understand His pain.

Hank Smith: 33:19 Oh, John, I've never thought of that and I love you for that. You ever had moments, John, by the way, where you think, "I'm never going to forget that?"

Dr. John Hilton...: 33:29 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 33:29 I want Him to understand my pain, why don't I try to understand His as best I can, right? As best I can?

John Bytheway: 33:36 Like you said before, Hank, there's an aversion to violence. It's hard to tell your little tender hearts and minds in your children, "This is what they did to people." Because why would you do that to someone? And so I can understand that. And on the other hand, I like the way you put that, John, that we need to understand what He went through as an expression of love and patience with us.

Dr. John Hilton...: 34:07 And we're talking from maybe our perspective and I don't know all the intimate details of your lives in your children's eyes, but my guess is all of us are relatively sheltered. However, some people have experienced terrible tragedies in their life. Victims of horrific abuse.

Hank Smith: 34:23 Dark, terrible things. Yeah.

- Dr. John Hilton...: 34:25 And I remember reading the account of one woman who had, she had experienced horrible betrayal. And she felt alone, abandoned. Therapy didn't help. And she said that in one moment of her darkest hours she saw Christ on the cross in her mind, but it wasn't the Sunday school image, it wasn't Jesus with a bit of blood, it was the real deal that she saw. Like the truly anguished suffering Christ. And that's when she realized, "This Jesus understands me." So maybe for some of us the scarred up Jesus, it is a terrible image and we can't look at it. But there might be some people for whom it's an image of comfort and solidarity and says, "Okay, this person really understands me."
- Dr. John Hilton...: 35:07 You both, I know you both have a read Corrie ten Boom's book, The Hiding Place. One of the sad things that she describes while she's in the Nazi prison camp is how the prisoners are forced to strip down every week and the guards inspect them and it's humiliating. And then all of a sudden she has a realization that Jesus was probably naked when He was on the cross. We don't depict that in artwork, but that seems to be most likely the custom of what happened at the time. And then all of a sudden she didn't feel ashamed anymore. And again, that's an image that we don't really want to talk about and dwell on, but for someone who's in a very difficult dark place, that moment was powerful for her. And so I think that, yes, we want to be cautious and careful, but there may be some for whom the full understanding of what Christ experienced could actually healing.
- John Bytheway: 35:58 Well, and I think of the phrase that I think is in your book as well is that he descended below all things. And this helps us to know that no matter what we've been through, He is descended below all things and it's hard to talk about, but as you said, yeah, somebody can say, "He will know how I feel."
- Hank Smith: 36:24 You know, all of this has made me think of this quote from Joseph Smith that I've always loved. Listen to this. He says, "The things of God are of deep import. And time and experience and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, oh man, if that will lead a soul on to salvation," that's what we all want to do here. We want to lead souls unto salvation. "Must stretch as high as the utmost heavens," and then this part, John, from what you've talked about. This is difficult to discuss it's difficult to go and look at this.
- Hank Smith: 36:58 But he says, " and you must search into and contemplate the darkest abyss. You must search into and contemplate the darkest abyss and the broad expanse of eternity. Thou must

commune with God," he says. And to me, as you were talking about, this is a difficult thing to go into but there are people who experienced these dark abyss type things in life and the savior's there. He's there with them. So I think you've given me insight after insight after insight here. Is there anything else on the crucifixion, John, before we, we want to talk about the resurrection of Christ, of course, because that's our Easter message. But is there anything else that you feel like our listeners could benefit from talking about the crucifixion?

- Dr. John Hilton...: [37:49](#) For me one of that lesser known character is this Barabbas who it's kind of the choice is between Jesus and Barabbas. And I'm here thinking like, "Well, duh, it's obvious choose Jesus." Right? Like this is a no brainer. But if we maybe go back and think about historical context, many of the Jewish people don't like the Roman authorities. They want an insurrection, they want a rebellion. And that's actually why Barabbas has been arrested. He's a revolutionary, right? He's a rebel against Rome. And so maybe some of the people in the crowd are thinking to themselves, "Jesus seems like a nice guy, but what's He really doing to overthrow Rome?" Barabbas like this guy is on the front lines. Like, "Maybe we should get him out of there and he'll help us."
- Dr. John Hilton...: [38:33](#) And I think that for me in my life, I can liken this to, am I seeking for spiritual salvation or a temporal salvation? Maybe in some ways in my life I have a choice between Jesus and Barabbas. A choice between a spiritual approach with Jesus and a worldly approach with Pilate. And sometimes my tendency is to just go with, "Okay, well, great. This is what the world is saying." Versus, "No, no, no, there's something that's more important here. Even though I've got this kind of special goal, my goal might not be focused in the right area, how can I align that to Jesus?" That's a little lesson that for me has always stuck out with Barabbas.
- John Bytheway: [39:14](#) What are some of your, Hank, John, what are some of your favorite lessons to-
- Hank Smith: [39:17](#) That's excellent. I had an experience just this last month. Some people who follow me on social media might know that I've just had to deal with plenty of deaths lately. And I'm a pretty happy guy just in general, but it's been, yeah, it's been a load to carry and someone, a friend who was texting me, maybe it was you, John, was it you that said, even Jesus, someone-
- Dr. John Hilton...: [39:47](#) Yeah, it was me.

- Hank Smith: 39:47 It was you. Even Jesus had someone carry His cross for a while. And that really struck me. It really did. I'm still not going to let you help, but it struck me that there could be a lesson there of allowing someone to help you with your burden. Even Jesus the greatest of all allowed someone to help Him.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 40:11 Yeah. And it's especially a powerful thing. Like Jesus created Simon, right? Like Jesus is the creator of the world and for the creator to let his creation help Him. Wow. That's powerful.
- Hank Smith: 40:21 Yeah. And to me it's very humbling because I know we focus on being a self-reliant people. Right? We are self-reliant, self-reliant. But maybe Jesus wants us to see this moment of, there are times when it's okay. It's okay to hand this burden off. And I've had awesome friends, awesome Simons in my life who have come to just take a burden away from me and it's been really beautiful. It makes me want to do that for others when I can.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 40:51 Well, I think that the statements on the cross, the thing that is always to me, I guess it would be the pinnacle, would it be is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" As if I didn't see this one coming. And of all the people that I thought, and elder Holland has talked about this, that the father was probably never closer, but somehow, so that his victory would be complete for that moment left. And so that he would even know what it was like to feel forsaken in such a dark abyss type of moment. That's one thing. And then the other thing that I just love to show my students, because it was a, for me, was when Jesus said, "It is finished." And then in, I think it's Matthew 27, the JST down below because I always thought I was focused on the suffering and I always thought it is finished. The, it was about my suffering.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 42:02 And He says, "It is finished," in the JST adds four words, "thy will is done." And I thought, even then the savior was focused on doing the father's will. And not even His own suffering but on doing the father's will. And that part just makes me go, "Wow." Because I think I'd be focused on my suffering. And He was still focusing on doing the father's will. And when you think about what He said primordially, "Thy will be done." And now He's saying, "Thy will is done." Wow. What a moment for that little JST forward addition just makes me go, "Wow. Even then." And then when He came to the righteous in the new world, first thing out of his mouth, "I've done the will of the father from the beginning." I think, "Wow."
- Hank Smith: 42:52 One thing that I've taught, as the savior enters the garden of Gethsemane, I asked my students when we see Him, He says to

His friends, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death." And I'll ask my students, "When have we ever seen Him like this? When have you ever seen Him like this? In our entire semester studying His life, has He ever been someone to turn to their friend and say, 'I'm so depressed. I feel like I'm going to die. Something is happening.'" And then He goes forward into the garden and He falls on His face. And now I'm going to learn to connect this all the way to Calvary that He's crying out, "God, where are you?"

- John Bytheway: [43:34](#) Dr. Hilton, you said perfectly that we'll never understand it. Like it's outside of our scope of understanding. But something is happening that is even mind blowing to Jesus. Something is happening that He has never experienced before. And I think it was Heather Maxwell who said, "Even He with His unique intellect, it was outside of almost His scope of understanding." And when it hits Him, it is-
- Hank Smith: [44:09](#) He was so much amazed.
- John Bytheway: [44:11](#) [crosstalk 00:44:11] worse. Yeah. He was amazed. What would it take to amaze Jesus? Here's a being who has seen a lot, done a lot and yet He's going, "Wow, I'm kind of shocked by the weight of this." So as much as we, if someone says to me, "Well, what happened in there? What happened? I want to know what happened. I want to know how in this amount of time this happened." I don't know. I don't know. But I can tell you that it was enough to scare the most powerful being that we know of. It was enough to shock and amaze Him.
- Dr. John Hilton...: [44:47](#) I think that's a really tender point. We talked really about people who are going through really intense struggles. We've got the seven statements of Christ on the cross and then the eighth from the Joseph Smith translation. But in Matthew and Mark, there's only one statement and it's the one that you mentioned, "My God-
- John Bytheway: [45:03](#) But in Matthew and Mark, there's only one statement and it's the one that you mentioned, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And that's where it ends, that's the end of Christ on the cross. There is no, "It is finished," in Matthew or Mark. And so I think it's okay for us to linger a little bit on that despair, the anguish, falling on his face in Gethsemane to know that when we are in a dark moment, he understands. He's been there, he knows what it's like to be utterly, completely alone.
- John Bytheway: [45:29](#) I think that maybe our listeners might want to find Elder Holland's comments. I think the talk is called And None Were

With Him, if that rings a bell. And something else, I just want maybe our listeners to ... Because it seems like in the gospel accounts that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John it's like they were written after the fact. But Jesus talked routinely about, "This is what I'm going to do," and it seems only the women understood. She's doing it for my burial. Right? Isn't that true when they ...

- John Bytheway: 46:01 And, and it's like, after the ... "Wait a minute, he did say that." And I think there's a couple of verses, I just go, "Wow." Where Jesus says, "Okay," this is a rough translation, "Let's go back to Jerusalem. The son of man will be betrayed by hands of sinners and will be crucified," and he set his face towards Jerusalem. Like, "Okay, let's go." And I'm thinking, "I am Jonah," in that moment. "I am heading to Joppa," right? "They're going to do what to me?" And Jesus is like, "Let's go." And I think, "Wow, look at the courage." He knew it was going to be crucified, and he set his face towards Jerusalem. And I think maybe it's important for listeners to know that maybe even as late as Peter drawing his sword, they were expecting more of a political deliverer.
- John Bytheway: 46:51 It's definitely clear that there were different types of expectations for a Messiah. And at least among many Jewish people, they were expecting a temporal deliverer. So Jesus, the suffering savior, that's not the person they were expecting.
- John Bytheway: 47:06 Isn't it Paul, that talks about, to the Greeks, "This is foolishness. You don't have a God who dies. That's not a God who suffers and dies. What kind of a God is that?"
- John Bytheway: 47:17 Right. We have like a immortal God. He is amazing, he's incredible. A criminal dying on a cross. It's terrible.
- John Bytheway: 47:23 That's so shameful. That couldn't be a God. Yeah. Well a couple of verses from the Book of Mormon that I'd like to add. I remember one that I can still remember, Elder Neal A. Maxwell some time when I was younger listening in general conference and having him quote this verse, 1 Nephi 19:9, and the world because of their iniquities shall judge him to be a thing of not wherefore they scourge him and he suffereth it. Yay and they smite him and he suffereth it. Yay, they spit upon him and he suffereth it." And then because, and I love this because I've often thought, "What helped him through it? What was deep in his heart that was letting these people do this to him?" And it kind of answers it here, "Because of his loving kindness and his long suffering towards the children of man."

- John Bytheway: [48:19](#) And look, he loved us. He's patient with us. And then section 19, "I have suffered these things for all that they might not suffer." That is an incredibly loving message. I would prefer to take this myself than to have you suffer. Isaiah 49 or 1 Nephi 21, "Zion hath said the Lord has forsaken me and my Lord hath forgotten me, but he will show that he heath not, for can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yay, they may forget, yet will I not forget the O house of Israel? Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. Thy walls are continually before me."
- Hank Smith: [49:02](#) So one of the chapters in my book is called The Loving Christ. And if it's okay, Hank and John, I'd love to just make a free PDF copy of that chapter and put it into the show notes, because I think that, that concept of a loving Christ and how that helps build us a bridge with other Christians is really important. Would that be okay? Can we put that in the show notes?
- John Bytheway: [49:23](#) Absolutely. If there's one thing that John Bytheway and Hank Smith love, it's free stuff. So we will take it.
- John Bytheway: [49:30](#) And I know I've read that there's different meanings of that graven, but I love to show my students the sign language for Jesus when I read that, which points to the center of the palms one after another, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." And this is something, John, I'd love your thoughts on, why did Jesus choose to retain the one ... I thought resurrected beings were all perfect again.
- John Bytheway: [49:57](#) Yeah. One note on that verse, I have graven thee on the Palm of my hands. The, thee is singular. It's you, it's not you all. And I think that is a powerful moment. He says, "I know you, your name, everything about you graven on the palms of my hands." And I don't know all the reasons why the savior has chosen to retain his resurrection scars, but I think that maybe one reason are because it's a sacred symbol, both to him personally and to us of the love that he has.
- John Bytheway: [50:28](#) There's the Zechariah 12 reference where at the end of Armageddon, is that right? What are those wounds in your hands? And he'll say, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." So I'm thinking, "Okay, he's got to fulfill prophecy. So keep the wounds for that reason." And then incredibly in the new world invites everyone to come one at a time to feel the wounds. And I think, if I shake your hand, there's a level of intimacy there, but imagine being invited to feel someone's wounds and having that one by one experience

and what that did to society for the Nephites and the Lamanites is the righteous of the Lamanites and the Nephites.

John Bytheway: [51:16](#) To have 2,500 witnesses of the crucifixion and resurrection like that, changed society so much we call it fourth Nephi, where they went for so many years with no contention, and Mormon keeps bringing it up, "And there was no contention, and there was no contention, there was no contention." So I think of that. Another reason to retain that, as you said, John, this is evidence they could touch of his love.

Hank Smith: [51:49](#) One thing that you made me think of John, just as a side note is the first things he says to the Nephites in 35:11 is, "Thrust your hands into my side." And others have, have taught me this. I don't know who, but the idea is that, as John is telling us, the Romans had perfected crucifixion, the Nephites likely wouldn't have had many points of reference on crucifixion, but they know a mortal wound when they see one. So that mortal wound in his side, he kind of focuses on that because that's something they would tie to death rather than wounds in hands and feet. So you've got to ... There's just an interesting play there where the Savior's saying, "You probably don't understand crucifixion. You will one day. So let me just show you this wound in my side." And Nephites would know, that's a fatal wound, right? Versus those in your hands and your feet.

John Bytheway: [52:44](#) I have a question for both of you, and this is a little off the cuff, so that's okay. And let's use this to wrap up episode one. We often talk about the Atonement and the crucifixion, and they are amazing and wonderful. There's this question in the Come, Follow Me manual that I think brings it back to an individual and it's this, how can I tell if his Atonement is having an effect in my life? Right?

John Bytheway: [53:14](#) So we've got this beautiful, massive thing that is just an incomprehensible to us, but I want it to work into my life. So if someone were to come to either of you and ask that question, I love what you've taught me about the Atonement. I love how amazing it is, now, help me get it into my daily walk in life. What would you say?

Hank Smith: [53:37](#) In John chapter 12, Jesus says, "When I am lifted up, I will draw all people unto me." And so I think that is one indication. Am I feeling closer to Jesus Christ? For me personally, studying Christ's death has changed my life. And I can't quantify all the ways that that's happened, but I'm just a little kinder. I think about Jesus a little bit more. And as you know, when you're thinking about Jesus, it's hard to be angry.

Hank Smith: 54:04 We should study more of every aspect of the Savior's life. I think studying his Atonement in particular helps us to think of him more. And as we are, the spirit is with us more. And we just feel a closer connection to the savior. And to me, that would be one indication. I'm feeling the Holy Ghost, that is an indication that the Atonement is working in your life.

John Bytheway: 54:25 So yeah, what I hear you saying, John is, "Hey, I don't know how it's going to work, but I do know that if you study this, it will work. It will work. You might not feel the exact moment where you became different, but over a long period of time, you will see this, over a period of time."

Hank Smith: 54:44 President Nelson's invitation to study all the references to Jesus Christ in the topical guide, and he does this and says, "I am a new man. I'm a changed person." I mean, now that's incredible. And I think we're going to see similar changes in our own lives and we'll feel it. And that's the Atonement helping us to change and to draw closer to Christ as we study him more.

John Bytheway: 55:05 Excellent. I think that that is so wise. I would say this, put yourself in experiences where the Holy ghost can be present, because the Holy ghost to me in scripture is almost the vehicle by which this beautiful Atonement can get into your heart, mind, and soul and weave itself into your being. All right? So if you are feeling the Holy Ghost, like you said, John, I think that's an indication that the Atonement is working in your life. And so to me, when I use that as kind of a gauge, I don't want to lose the spirit. Because if I lose the spirit, I lose the effects of the Atonement in my life. It's not just, "Well, I've lost the Holy Ghost for a little while." No, I do not want to lose the effects of the Atonement in my life.

John Bytheway: 55:54 I want it to be working on me, maybe even faster than it does, please. Right? Like, let's get this going. But I want to put myself in places where the Holy Ghost will have an opportunity to come into my heart and mind even more powerfully than maybe I already have it, because that means that the Atonement is working in my life even more so. Again, I don't know how. I wish I could explain that the ins and outs of it all. I wish I could say, "This is how the Atonement changes you and makes you and perfects you." And then it's a beautiful idea. I don't know how it works, but I know that it works. John, by the way, what would you say? How can I tell if the Atonement is having effect in my life?

Hank Smith: 56:38 I'm just right in line with you. I there's a David O. McKay quote, "What you sincerely think in your heart of Christ will determine

what you are, will largely determined what your thoughts will be." And I think he said, "No one can study divine personality without becoming conscious of an uplifting and refining influence within himself," and that's what I was thinking. As you were saying that John, is that you're different when you're thinking about him and, and his love for us and what he did, and of all the things we could talk about, I just love when the Wentworth letter went out, well, I know there's all these different things we can talk about, but what are the first principles? And the first thing is faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. And thank you for writing it that way. That's the first thing. And we become conscious of that influence, as we think about it and think about it every day.

- John Bytheway: 57:39 Yeah. I would say, as I have found the Atonement working in my life, one question for me personally is, do I feel like I want to repent? That's an indication to me. Do I feel like I ... I just, I want to repent some more, please give me a chance to repent some more, because that seems to follow faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, right, John?
- John Bytheway: 57:57 Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Hank Smith: 57:58 Second repentance. So if you are feeling like, "I need to repent." Now, I don't know about either of you, but it's hard to find things to repent of, because I just-
- John Bytheway: 58:08 For you, Hank. For sure. It's hard to [crosstalk 00:58:10]-
- Hank Smith: 58:10 It is. It is difficult.
- John Bytheway: 58:11 I understand. I understand in your case.
- Hank Smith: 58:12 Yes, but if I search, I can usually find something.
- John Bytheway: 58:17 I'm thinking, that story in the new Testament, I mean, it all came out of a focus on the law of Moses, but that story, "What lack I yet." I'm like, "Oh, sure. That is not my ... I'm pretty stumped here, Lord. I am thought about it and thought. What in the world? I can't think of one thing." I'm just like, "Oh, sure. Get me a yellow pad and leave me alone."
- Hank Smith: 58:41 Can you imagine? If I asked that of Jesus, he'd say, "Do you want it alphabetically, chronologically? How do you want this list? We can have a delivered." Volume one, volume two?

John Bytheway: 58:52 I know. I'm imagining, did you really just say what lack I yet? I just, and so Hank, when you said that, you feel like you want to repent, you know what came to mind? King Benjamin's speech. What was the impact? We have no more disposition to do evil. We just want to do good continually. And I always ask my students, do you think that was permanent? And my personal opinion is, no. You've had that feeling. You felt that at general conference-

Hank Smith: 59:19 I'm never going to sin again.

John Bytheway: 59:20 You're like this, "That was a great talk. Thank you, Elder Holland." And you're so fired up, but then you got to go back to school. You got to go back to work. And so you keep coming back where that spirit is. You keep coming back where the Savior's influence is to keep coming back to that, that good feeling of, "I just want to do better. I want to repent." Please join us for part two of this podcast.

## EPISODE 14 • PART II

Dr. John Hilton III



*EASTER*

- John Bytheway: 00:00:02 Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
- Hank Smith: Let's move forward now, Dr. Hilton. I've heard you say this before that we often jump from Friday, crucifixion, to Sunday, resurrection, and we skip Saturday. But you like to talk about Saturday. Why?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:00:21 I love Saturday because it's in the middle. So you've got yesterday's tragedy and tomorrow's triumph, but now we're in the middle. And I feel like so much of our lives, metaphorically speaking, is Saturday. Something bad has happened. Maybe it's going to be resolved. We hope it's going to be resolved, but it hasn't been resolved yet. So I love lingering for a moment with the women at the tomb.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:47 This is huge. This is not a little thing because so often when people are going through tragedy, we talk about the future. It's going to be okay because such and such. And I know we mean well. But for me personally, who has seen a lot of difficulty over the last six months, I'm not overly concerned about the future. I believe, too. I'm with you. I believe that the future is going to be great. My concern and my pain, and along with I know many others, is not that we don't believe. It's in the right now. The right now is hard. And if we don't stop and say, "The right now is hard," I think we can be too quick to just tell people it's going to be okay. It's going to be okay. Is that what I'm hearing?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:01:36 Yeah, exactly. So, I mean, think about moments that we almost gloss over entirely, like taking Christ's body down from the cross. What did that look like? What did that feel like? Mary Magdalene's there. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is there. What's

in their hearts? They go to the tomb. He's buried. What's running through their minds? And I think a key is that they don't leave town. They stay near the tomb and they come back Sunday morning.

- Hank Smith: 00:02:03 So is it okay if we move to Sunday now, John?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:02:07 I was hoping we just have five minutes of silence on the podcast and just let us all kind of let it just marinate. No. So as we go to Sunday, I don't know exactly how everyone wants to approach this, but I do want to kind of throw out a resource that's changed the way I view the resurrection. And it's doing a side-by-side study of what Matthew, Mark, Luke and John teach about what happens at the garden and beyond, the garden tomb and beyond. And I know that you both have studied this quite a bit. And it's interesting that although the core message is the same in all the accounts, the tomb is empty. Women are the first witnesses. Jesus is alive. There are subtle differences that maybe when you start to notice them, bring out these great insights and spiritual nuggets that at least I had never noticed before.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:02:57 So again, in the show notes, I'll give you a side- by-side handout that you can use it. I think this would be a great family home evening or a good Sunday afternoon study time to just kind of carefully read what are the little subtle differences and similarities in these accounts and what do I learn from them? Because there's so much I know we'll spend some time unpacking it right now. But even if we had three hours devoted to the segment, we couldn't really unpack all there is to offer in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John's teachings of the resurrection.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:28 In fact, let's start unpacking because one of my favorite things to show my students is that in the gospel of Mark, in the original gospel of Mark, you never see a resurrected Lord. If you go to the end of the gospel of Mark and you see the women that are there at the tomb. Now I've heard something, John, and you can tell me if this is incorrect or not. But in Jesus' day, women could not be legal witnesses.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:03:57 Yeah. So there are restrictions on women in terms of their ability to testify in public court settings.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:04 And here the savior, I think, does it on purpose maybe to show, "Listen, here are going to be my first witnesses." I think Elder Talmage said that Jesus Christ is the greatest defender of women to ever live. And this is one indication that he doesn't care about the legality of a woman's witness. Those are going to

be his first witness is a group of women. But when you get all the way down to 16:8, it says this, "And they went out quickly and fled from the sepulcher for they trembled and were amazed. Neither said anything to any man for they were afraid." You can look right there. That is the original ending of the gospel of Mark. It just ends right there. Talk about a bad ending. And it might be a good ending for some. I've heard a lot of New Testament scholars say, "No, this is good because of dah, dah, dah, dah, dah."

- Hank Smith: 00:04:58 But for me personally, I like a nice tie the bow ending, and this is a leave you hanging ending where you're going, "What happens? What happens?" And almost as if Mark, if you had read Mark or heard Mark read to you, you might say, "I got to know what happens." It was almost left as a cliffhanger. I've always thought what if we did this as missionaries. We did a kind of a gospel of Mark approach and said, "Joseph prayed. And in the light he saw... " To find out more, please go to Jesus Christ [crosstalk 00:05:31]
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:05:31 We'll come back next week and [crosstalk 00:05:32]
- Hank Smith: 00:05:34 Because what did he see? What did he see? So it's almost as if Mark is kind of leaving them hanging there. Anything on the gospel of Mark, John, that you want to talk about?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:05:41 So one thing that I think really is interesting, and I don't know if this is intentional or not, but throughout the gospel of Mark, there's several times where Jesus does a miracle. And then he'll say, "Don't tell anybody about it." And now here at the end, the young man at the tomb tells the women, "Go tell about Jesus." And they don't tell. It's a reversal. And I wonder if it's meant to be sort of a literary irony. And now it comes to you and I, the reader, we are left in the tomb. That's where we end in Mark. We're there. And it's kind of like, okay, well, if the women don't go tell, who's going to tell? Who's going to share the message? Who's been along for the ride the whole time? Me. So am I going to now keep the secret or am I going to go spread the good news of Jesus? So I love that short ending.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:30 Yeah, it does seem to not be a... I would say, John, I don't think this is a Mark condemning these women. He's using a literary device here. Because I'm sure these women eventually told a lot of people.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:06:45 Matthew's going to highlight that for us. Yeah. So you're right, every gospel is going to give a slightly different portrait. But I think, especially in Mark, and I like how you said that it was

probably heard. Mark was most likely a performance. People are hearing Mark, not reading it. And so now that dramatic note, I think, actually is a powerful witnessing moment for me as a disciple to say, "Okay, what am I going to do?"

- Hank Smith: 00:07:09 It is. If I watch a movie with a bad ending, it leaves me uncomfortable. Maybe that's the whole point, to leave you a bit uncomfortable and say, "You better go find out more. You better... Yeah. There's more to this than you realize." Instead of tying it all up nicely. Mark was most likely written first, right John? So let's go to the Matthew account, which has its basis most likely in the gospel of Mark.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:07:34 One little subtle difference, so we were just talking about the women at the tomb. If you look in verse eight, Matthew 28:8, it says, "They departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy and did run to bring his disciples word." I love that phrase, they did run. Hank, you're a runner. John, I don't know if you're a runner. I only run if I'm being chased, which is rarely. So...
- Hank Smith: 00:07:57 You're a swimmer.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:07:59 But think about, I mean, if I had this kind of news to share, how fast, how far could I run? And I can almost feel the adrenaline in these women as they're running to share the good news of Jesus Christ. And maybe that's just something for me. Metaphorically speaking, am I running to tell people about Jesus Christ? Am I hiding my light in a bushel? And I'm like, "Oh yeah, well, this weekend, I did this on Friday, did this on Saturday." And I don't talk about church because I'm not running metaphorically speaking to tell people the good news.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:33 Yeah. Do you feel like you have good news? Because this is good news.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:08:36 This is good news.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:38 This is change your life news. And I have got to tell you. And then it seems like the author of the gospel of Matthew is saying, "Let me give you a little bit more than Mark gave you." Would you agree that he's saying, okay, those of you who are reading my account of things, I'm going to give you a little bit more, which to be a first century reader, would be really fun to get a second account. It says that Jesus meets these women and tells them that he is going to meet his brethren which I assume to be

the apostles, in Galilee, which is a three-day journey away from the tomb.

- Hank Smith: 00:09:18 And that's how Matthew is a little bit different in my point of view, in that you have him appearing... We're going to go ahead and look at Luke and John here in a second, but he's in Jerusalem. He's around that area appearing. Here. it's go to Galilee, go back home and I'll see you there. So I don't know. They're going to go back home anyway, but to go back home, having the anticipation of he's going appear is a beautiful idea. Let's go home then. Let's take the journey.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:09:49 As we think about the fact that they came and Jesus tells the women directly, "Go tell my brethren," it's interesting that the message to the apostles is coming from these women that Christ is commissioning. And oftentimes we think that revelation always comes from the top down. And it is true that we are led by a prophet and we need to follow the prophet's counsel and teaching 100%. at the same time in the history of the church, sometimes great ideas have come from other sources. [Orelia 00:10:18] Rogers has the inspiration to start the primary program. And she takes her ideas and shares it with the president of the church. And then it becomes the primary program that eventually we know and love today.
- Hank Smith: 00:10:29 The welfare program also started as steak program. And then it came up and came to the whole church. So this has happened.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:10:39 So, and I just think it's okay for us to pause and reflect for a moment that Christ's original message as a resurrected savior is to women and that's important. And he's calling them to be witnesses to his apostles.
- Hank Smith: 00:10:53 I think that's a beautiful idea. And I oftentimes, I think we like to take latter day principles and ideas and kind of force them onto the past when we can be comfortable that things weren't exactly the way we have them today. The end of the gospel of Matthew, it doesn't seem to be focusing on, wow, he's resurrected. It seems to be focusing on the apostles, go. Go teach. Almost as if this fact that this person came back from the dead, it's just a side note to the commission to these apostles. In fact, I think in the MTC, as it was redone a few years ago, there is now a beautiful big sign in the MTC with the Great Commission of Matthew 28, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Do you think the author of the gospel of Matthew has this in mind because the first century Christians needed to get out there and spread that message and so he's kind of telling them that?

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:11:53 Yeah, that's a clear emphasis. We've got to spread the good news. And right after that, so as you call it the Great Commission there in verses 18 and 19. And then in verse 20, at the very end, he says, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." And I think that's a powerful message to go along with the idea that when, as we're sent out to preach the gospel, Jesus is with us always. And he's saying that even as he's bidding them farewell. All right, get out of here, go teach the gospel, but I'm always with you. And actually, if you remember the very beginning of Matthew, in Matthew chapter one, when it talks about Christ being born, Matthew refers to a prophecy from Isaiah saying that his name shall be Emmanuel, meaning God with us. So here now at the beginning and end of Matthew, there is this message Jesus is with you. And I love that to think about us on the Great Commission, sharing the gospel. We're not alone. The master of the vineyard is laboring with us.

Hank Smith: 00:12:58 Oh yeah. That's that great Jacob 5 reference. And you guys both know my personality and how odd I am, but I often tell my students, well, when I was on my mission, people would ask, why can't you just leave us alone? Great. Believe what you believe. I'll believe what I believe. Why do you got to come knocking on my door? And I think as a 19 year old, I was, "Oh, I'm so sorry. Didn't mean to disturb you. We'll go our separate..." But I think now, as an old man, I would say something like, "Listen, I don't want to be here either, but you take it up with him because he asked me to." Matthew 28, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." So if you have a problem with this... I honestly wouldn't say this. But in my mind, I would be thinking, if you have a problem with this, take it up with him because it's his commission to his followers. Go and teach, go and spread the gospel.

Hank Smith: 00:13:50 So I think as a missionary, if a missionary is maybe hearing this, they might have confidence in what they're doing, that you are following the master's commission to go and teach. And yes, some people might be bothered, but he didn't say that. He didn't say, "Go and teach all nations. But don't disturb anyone."

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:14:10 And apologize when you bother [crosstalk 00:14:12]. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:14:14 This is a straightforward message.

John Bytheway: 00:14:16 I love where this is going. Now I'm excited to see, when I saw And They Did Run, I don't know. It just reminded me of in the Book of Mormon when Jesus was with them. And then he said I'm coming back tomorrow. It says there were people who were up all that night to gather others to be in the place where Jesus

said he would appear on the morrow. And I think if you knew he's going to be here tomorrow and you didn't have a phone or telegraph. All you had was your cureloms and cumoms or your horse, how hard would you work?

Hank Smith: 00:14:51 Get on the cumoms, kid. Let's go. We got to go tell everybody.

John Bytheway: 00:14:54 I love just the idea of how hard would you work to make sure your family was there? So I like that.

Hank Smith: 00:15:00 Yeah, that John, that is such a good idea. It reminds me of Luke 2. And the shepherds made haste.

John Bytheway: 00:15:06 Yeah. Right.

Hank Smith: 00:15:07 Let's go. Let's go tell everybody. Okay, let's turn our sights on the third account. Let's go to the gospel of Luke, where Luke adds a story. He says something very similar to both Matthew and Mark. If you read in Luke 24, he talks about the angels, the tomb, the women. He adds a little piece of information that we don't get in Matthew and Mark. And that's in verse 12 about Peter himself going to the sepulcher. But then we get a whole new story that we haven't heard before.

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:15:37 Before we go to the new story, if I can just highlight one little question in verse five that's also unique to Luke. It's the phrase, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" is the question that the angels ask the women. And I know that you both have been to Jerusalem several times and we all enjoy going there. When I was living in Jerusalem, I would love to go to the traditional place of Christ...

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:16:04]

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:16:03 I would love to go to the traditional place of Christ's death and resurrection. I remember the last day I was so sad and I was like, "How am I going to keep coming closer to Christ when I'm back in America, and it's not the same as living in Jerusalem?" And this was the line that came to my mind. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" Jesus has risen. I hope that we all get to go to Jerusalem. It's a fantastic experience, but we don't have to walk where he walked to walk closer to him now. And just that idea that he's risen and we don't need to seek him in Jerusalem per se. Great if you get the chance, but we can seek him now in our lives. I think that's a little powerful question that the angels bring out here in Luke.

John Bytheway: 00:16:45 Oh, John you've really touched my heart there. My father passed away this last month, and one regret I have is I never got to take him to Jerusalem. We'd always talked about it. And he was a caretaker for my mother. So you just healed my heart a little bit there that we don't need to see Jerusalem. It is a beautiful experience, but we don't need to see Jerusalem.

John Bytheway: 00:17:13 It reminds me also of a woman who said that she was sitting at her young daughter's grave side, and she felt the Holy Ghost speak in the voice of her daughter to her, "I am not here. Don't seek me here. If you want to be closer to me, go to the temple. Go to the temple, that is where I am." So I like that. I like that. This idea that Christ is very much alive and very active in our lives and in the church.

Hank Smith: 00:17:51 So Luke tells us this story that we don't get anywhere else. It's one of my absolute favorites in scripture. I say that a lot about scripture, but it really is. It really is one of my absolute favorites, and that's the road to Emmaus. What do you want to talk to us about? Both of you?

John Bytheway: 00:18:05 This is an important one to me personally because we have this... One of the biggest pieces of art in our house was Jesus on the road to Emmaus. My dad loved to show us what the artist did and then tell us the story, how he drew near to these two men walking and, "Their eyes were holden," it says. They didn't know who he was. And they were, "You a stranger around here? Have you not heard what's been going on?" And then Jesus opens up the scriptures and tells them everything. And when he leaves, he is like, "Well, come and eat with us." I can't remember exactly what they said, but they say abide with us. And I've always thought, does the hymn Abide With Me come from that verse? Abide with us to eventide. And so we sing that, but Jesus leaves.

John Bytheway: 00:18:55 And then they say, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he walked and talked with us by the way?" And we love that in our family for that reason alone. But I love when that recognition comes, "Hey, wait a minute. Who was that? And our hearts burned. We felt something while he talked with us." And I don't know if we even know who those two disciples were. Is there another gospel that speaks of these two and gives them names?

Hank Smith: 00:19:22 No, there's only one named here. His name is Cleopas and then the other one, some new Testament scholars have said it's got to be Luke. I don't see any evidence for that. But I have heard that the other one might be Luke. What say ye, John Hilton?

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:19:37 Yeah. Same as what you said. We don't know who the second person is. Some people have maybe speculated that it's a female disciple as well. We just don't know for sure.

Hank Smith: 00:19:46 I love this story. As John said, they are walking and it's a long walk, right? We're talking... If you have your footnotes with you, it used to be in kilometers, but then someone said, "Why don't they just speak American?" And I think it says, what now? Seven miles. Is that what it says?

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:20:04 Something like that. Six or seven miles. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:20:06 Seven and a half miles? That's a long walk. I don't know about you guys, but that's... In steps, I guess we're now talking in steps. We're talking... This is going to be 20,000 steps. So it's going to take a couple of hours. And Jesus is there with them. They don't know that it's Jesus. I love that. I hope it's a standard feature in all resurrected bodies, the ability to have other people's eyes holden.

Hank Smith: 00:20:34 I've joked with my students. I hope this just isn't a Jesus upgrade because that would... I would spend the first half of the millennium just scaring my friends, right? You two. I'd be, "So what did you think of your friend, Hank?" Right? And then they say, "Well, he wasn't my favorite." "See. It was me the whole time. I told you." But my favorite is that, he says, "Why are you both so sad?" And they say, "Do you live under a rock?" right? Jesus of Nazareth...

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:21:05 That's the Greek, right? The Greek is that.

Hank Smith: 00:21:07 Yeah.

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:21:08 It's a loose translation from the Greek.

Hank Smith: 00:21:09 I've read the papyri. And yeah, it is.

John Bytheway: 00:21:11 Do you live under a petros?

Hank Smith: 00:21:13 Yeah. John... There are some jokes that only we will get, but they said... And this tells me that everybody's talking about Jesus, right? They're saying, there's not a person-

John Bytheway: 00:21:30 "Are you the only stranger that doesn't know about this?"

Hank Smith: 00:21:34 Yeah. "You don't know about this? This is a big deal." And then they make this statement and maybe you guys... Stop me if I

skip something you want to look at, but they lost their faith. In verse 21, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Right? And to me, this just speaks volumes. And I'll ask my students, "What's wrong? Why did they lose their faith in Jesus?" And usually the students will say something like, "He didn't do what they assumed he would do."

John Bytheway: 00:22:13

The political deliverer thing.

Hank Smith: 00:22:15

Right. They had made some assumptions or had some expectations of him that he did not meet. And when he did not meet them, instead of challenging their expectations, they doubted him. And I see this happen so often with friends, students and others who lose their faith because they set up an expectation for God or for even Joseph Smith. They have an expectation and who knows where they got it? These men probably got this from tradition. They were probably taught this at some point. Maybe even they had read the scriptures and had made this assumption from reading scripture. I don't know, but it was a bad assumption. And my favorite part about this is that the savior takes... He says, "The beginning at Moses." I assume they mean Genesis. He takes what we would call the old Testament and opens it up to them. And he corrects their assumptions using scripture.

Hank Smith: 00:23:18

And I have asked my students, "If you ever feel so inclined..." And I have done this. I'll say something in my own prayers, "Lord, if I have an assumption or an expectation that is just false. Will you help me correct it as I study the scriptures?" And I'll tell you both that it's happened. There have been times where my own personal expectations for things... I remember one student said, "I just don't know if I believe in God anymore, because I'm not married." And I said, "Where did you get that ex..." He said, "Don't you think if God loved me, I'd be married by now?" And I said, "No." Where does that say in the scriptures, "When thou reaches the age of 20 and six, if thou art beloved, thou shalt be wed." Right? It does not say that anywhere. And I said, "Where did you get that expectation?" And he was really great about it. He said, "I don't know. I guess I just made it up."

John Bytheway: 00:24:18

Well, I think John has already talked to us about it. There is the law of retribution in the old Testament, the law of the harvest in the new and we talk about those all the time, but there's a Saturday in between. And concerning the marriage thing, just talk to me about it. I was way into menace to society territory before I got married. And I'm thinking about the beatitudes were so interesting because it was, "Blessed are the," present

reality, "for they shall be," and there was a future possibility. And he sent them all home in the middle of their Saturdays because... And so I liked that idea. And I think that we all have that idea of law of the harvest, but there's some patience required in the middle and that expectation... I know that our friend Sherry [Do 00:25:14] said once that if all that were required for getting a husband were fasting and praying and going to the temple, "I would have [knee fies 00:25:21] lined up at my door," she said. So there again is an expectation. So I like that idea of we're in the Saturday. I'm going to remember that for a long time.

- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:25:34 And I think just a helpful quick expectation reset is to go through our scriptural heroes, right? So [Abededi 00:25:41], super faithful, burned at the stake. Mormon works his whole life to protect his people, he's murdered. Merona lives the vast majority of his life completely alone. So there should be no expectation that if I'm righteous, everything's going to work out.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:55 Jesus himself?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:25:57 Right.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:57 Jesus himself. Look at his life. There should be no expectation of, "I lived the gospel and I get everything I want."
- John Bytheway: 00:26:04 Right?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:26:05 So speaking of Jesus though, this is one of the things I think is so cool about that verse you pointed out in verse 21, "We had hoped he was the one, but I guess he wasn't." And they're losing hope in the very moment Jesus is with them. And how often maybe is that true for us? Right? I'm giving up. I don't feel like connected to God.
- John Bytheway: 00:26:26 He's like, "I'm right here. I'm right here, right now."
- Hank Smith: 00:26:28 Yeah.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:26:28 So if any of our listeners are feeling that we had hoped, maybe not, I testify Jesus is walking with you now. He's there. And maybe we can't feel him. Maybe heaven feels distant sometimes, but that does not mean he's not there.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:44 So many times. And I don't want to say this is an all the time thing, but whenever I have talked to a friend, a student, who is struggling, has doubts, often... I'll say often, not all, but often it

is based on some sort of expectation they have. They'll say something like, "I just found out that the book of Mormon has had changes in it." And I said, "Yeah, I knew that too. That's awesome. Right?" And they had an expectation that somehow if the book of Mormon had changes, it wasn't true. A woman said to me once, and it really was a soccer mom. We were at a soccer game and she was a mom and she came up to me and she said, "Brother Smith, don't you think if the church were true, it would be bigger." And I said, "What do you mean?" And she kind of thought it through and explained to me and she said, "Don't you think it'd be bigger?" And I said, "Well, that's not what I see in the scriptures." And I talked about Nephi saying, "I saw many are called, few are chosen. I saw the saints of God and they were few."

- Hank Smith:                    00:27:42                    Just so often, we're basing our faith on bad expectations. And I think when president Uchtdorf said, "Doubt your doubts..." I don't want to put words in his mouth, but to me, I hear, "Analyze your expectations." Right? Analyze those first, before you doubt your faith. And it's been something that's worked for me. And I think I am so typical of these guys. When it all gets worked out, they say, "We knew it the whole time." Right? "Did our hearts not burn within us? Of course. I never doubted for a second. I had it with me the whole time." By the way, Jesus vanishes. Again, I hope that is standard resurrection body ability, don't you guys? If I can change my appearance and vanish, I will have a wonderful after life. I will spend the first few millennia just doing those things.
- Dr. John Hilton...:           00:28:41                    I want to highlight it in chapter 24, verse 36. So as the disciples are now eating, as you mentioned earlier, Hank, in Jerusalem, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you." And you can look at these next few verses as far as a proof of Jesus having a physical body in the resurrection and that's a powerful point. I also just love that, at least in English, we see the first word Jesus says is, "Peace." And when the angels announce Christ's birth to the shepherds, they say, "peace on earth." So from the beginning, his birth, here in the resurrection, everywhere in between, Jesus wants us to be at peace. And I love that message.
- Hank Smith:                    00:29:24                    Why is John so different than the other three gospels? Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and then you have this, well, here's all brand new stuff.
- Dr. John Hilton...:           00:29:32                    Yeah. So I think 93% of the gospel of John is unique to John. And so you're right. There is a difference and early Christian fathers were talking about this and suggesting that John was aware of

the earlier details being recorded. And so John wanted to write a spiritual gospel, kind of having a different focus. In the gospel of John, we see Jesus portrayed a little bit differently. He's more divine. He always knows what's going on. For example, in the garden of Gethsemane, if we are watching a video, that we almost always see Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss. And that happens in Matthew and Mark, but in John, Jesus takes control of the situation. And as the guards approach, he says, "Who are you looking for?" And we see a Jesus who's in complete command. And I think John wants to maybe highlight some of the divinity of Jesus Christ that maybe isn't as fully fleshed out in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

- Hank Smith: 00:30:30 Yeah. I've also noticed that you get a lot of up close and personal accounts of Jesus in the gospel of John. Where you get a lot of sermons in both Matthew and Luke, you get Jesus in one-on-one conversations with Nicodemus, the woman at the well, with his own mother, with pilot, here in the resurrection. A lot of one-on-one conversations. Let's jump into the resurrection then as told by John. And since we have two Johns here, now we're on a third John. This is overwhelming for me, but what do you both see in the resurrection account as given in the gospel of John?
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:31:06 In Luke chapter eight, we see that Mary Magdalen has seven devils inside of her and Jesus cast them out. And I don't know exactly what it means to have seven devils inside you, but it's clearly not good. Right? And I'm definitely not saying it's Mary's fault. Right? And it could be something spiritual, emotional, it could be a physical ailment. Who knows? But the point is, it's not good.
- Hank Smith: 00:31:27 I like this. Having seven devils in you is not good.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:31:32 Not good.
- Hank Smith: 00:31:32 A message from the church of Jesus. Right? I think we're safe.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:31:38 We're safe on that one.
- Hank Smith: 00:31:38 I think they are on the safe side on that one.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:31:40 So then jumping ahead to John chapter 20, as Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene, and it's John chapter 20 verse 16, she's remained at the tomb after Peter and the other disciple have left and Jesus sayeth unto to her, "Mary," and she realizes it's

Jesus. And so to me, that is a great message of hope. So if here's Mary...

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:32:04]

- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:32:03 To me, that is a great message of hope. Here's Mary with seven devils in a low, difficult state, now she's the first human witness of Jesus Christ. It's hard to think of a higher spiritual state, or calling, or opportunity than to be the first human witness of the resurrected Jesus. That's amazing. I love that story to see Mary Magdalene go from a dark place to a beautiful place, and that's a message of hope for those of us who are feeling like we're in a dark place right now.
- Hank Smith: 00:32:35 Oh, that is really nice. John, teach us about Verse 17. Jesus says, "Mary." She turns. She knows who he is. Her whole life changes in one word, and it's her name. I've always had, I shouldn't say I've always had, when I was in primary, I just really hated the fact that Mary could not touch Jesus.
- John Bytheway: 00:32:58 Don't touch me. Don't touch me.
- Hank Smith: 00:33:00 In fact, I remember pressing my primary teachers on this. Why? Why can't she touch him? We don't know Hank. Just don't ask any more. I'm like, "No. This is a problem. What is he like a cake, that if you touch him, he might collapse? What's the problem? Why can't she touch him?" We don't know Hank. We just know that she can't. John, teach us, become my primary teacher from long ago, and tell me about Verse 17.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:33:24 Well, we can first look at footnote 17a, the Joseph Smith translation changes it from touch me not to hold me not, which has a really different connotation. It would be interesting to be a filmmaker. I love The Chosen series. I can't wait until we get to this part in The Chosen. I wonder how they'll choose to film it. For all we know they've embraced for some time. Now Jesus is saying like, "Okay, don't hold on to me. I've got to go." Actually I think we can tie this back to what you said of expectations. Mary has maybe some type of expectation in her mind, "Jesus, you're back. You're going to stay with me now." Jesus says, "Well, don't hold on to me." In fact, if you think about it, in John, this is the first post-resurrection teaching that Jesus gives. "Don't hold on to me." Maybe we can see in that I've got a different vision. Don't put me in your box. Right? I've got a bigger plan. I've got some ideas, and it's going to be amazing.

Hank Smith: 00:34:22 Yeah. Have you ever, I asked my students this, have you ever been in a hug where you're hugging someone and they say, "Hey, I got to go now," and you say, "Okay," and then you just keep hugging them. Right? You're going off on a mission, or going away to college, or something, and your mom is just hugging you, and you're saying, "Okay, I got to go." Okay, right, and they don't let go.

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:34:45 We don't know for sure what the image is, but we don't know for sure what the image is, but what you just said, Hank, that resonates with me. I feel like that's more what we're seeing rather than a can't touch this.

Hank Smith: 00:34:55 Yeah. "Hey Mary, you got to let me go. I know you don't want to, but you got to." Okay. Let's keep going. John gives us a lot on the resurrection. Tell me more what you see in this last chapter and a half.

John Bytheway: 00:35:09 One of the things about John 20, I feel like we've had so much fun in this podcast talking about, "Hey, can we be a little bit easier on Martin Harris? Can we be a little bit easier on Sidney Rigdon? Can we be a little bit easier on Thomas?" It's almost like this is too good to, I really want this to be true, but until I see him ... I mean, that's how I'm feeling. Maybe the poor guy, oh, it's doubting Thomas for the rest of eternity. I mean, for rude. That's not the JST. We call him doubting Thomas now. I mean ...

Hank Smith: 00:35:47 We don't talk about denying Peter. It's just somehow poor Thomas.

John Bytheway: 00:35:52 In John 11, Thomas says he's going to go to Jerusalem. He's going to die. Let's go die with him. How come we don't call him, die with him Thomas?

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:36:02 Brave Thomas. Courageous Thomas.

John Bytheway: 00:36:04 Courageous Thomas. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:36:06 Maybe we identify with the doubting side instead of the I will go and do side. I don't know. I wonder with people, if we remember them for their highest moments or their lowest?

John Bytheway: 00:36:20 What would we like to be remembered for? If we're going to do onto others, let's remember onto others as we would like them to remember unto us, to massacre an old phrase.

- Hank Smith: 00:36:32 This goes, I think, for me personally, it goes with people in the past, that we love, oftentimes we love to judge the people in the past for their lowest moments. They're not even here to defend themselves, right? They can't even make a case for themselves. We can choose to say, "You know what? I'm going to remember you for your high moments." I'm going to at least try to be charitable in that way.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:36:56 One other quick thing. If we were to go back to Luke, Chapter 24:11, when the women come back and say, "Hey, Jesus has risen." All the disciples are saying, "Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believe them not." Thomas isn't really unique, right, in saying like, "Oh, I'm not going to believe." I mean, everyone else was also. It's like what you said with the people that have asked like, "Oh yeah, our hearts burn within us." We knew the whole time, right? Here we're seeing in John, this highlight that Thomas doesn't know, so he's singled out in a way.
- Hank Smith: 00:37:25 Yeah. When Jesus says, "Thomas, blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed," Jesus probably isn't talking about the rest of the apostles there, right, because they're like, "Oh, that was me. That was me the whole time." He's going. "No, none of you," right, "you all thought it was idle tales." Thanks for bringing that up, John.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:37:45 Yeah. One little thought before we go on to 21 is, so Jesus says, "Thomas, blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed." Then the narrator says, "The things that I've written, these things are written that you might believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life through his name." I think a lot of us have heard Elder McConkie's last testimony where he says, "I won't know any better than in a coming day when I kiss the Lord's feet, than I know now of who Jesus is." Maybe we thought like, "Wow, that's Elder McConkie. That's that's an incredible level. I could never get there."
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:38:25 Recently, President M. Russell Ballard said that every member of the church can have an apostolic-like witness of Jesus Christ. In Doctrine and Covenants, Section 46, we'll be there in a couple of weeks, the very first spiritual gift listed is to know through the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world. I hope that as we read John 20 and hear these experiences that we don't just think, "Oh yeah, that's for them, or, "That's for the super high level people." President Ballard said, "We can all strive for an apostolic-like testimony of Jesus Christ." I mean, the author of

John is telling us that, right? These things are written so that you'll see and believe.

- John Bytheway: [00:39:09](#) Hmm. That is just absolutely beautiful, John. I love John's admission. I think it is back in Chapter 20 where he admits we did not know. Look at Chapter 20, Verse 9. "For as yet, they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead." What seems so obvious to us was not so obvious to them. Probably even in writing it after the fact, they make it even more obvious in their writing than it probably was. I find in my New Testament class, I have a frequent guest speaker by the name of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland. He joins us via video of general conference. He tells this wonderful story of adding some backstory to this maybe, and of Peter saying, "It's been great, but I go a fishing." They say, "Okay, we'll go with you." If you haven't seen that, go find Elder Holland talking about that.
- John Bytheway: [00:40:11](#) He says there, I think he said at the beginning, "There's not a group I identify more with than these apostles, or that I feel more sympathy for trying to figure out, "What are we supposed to do now? I don't know. That was amazing. I go a fishing. Okay, we'll go with you." Then he says, "and they caught nothing." He says something no fishermen ever wants to admit, "They caught nothing." Then he calls them children in Verse 5 and repeats an event that had happened when he first met Peter. I love that. Find the talk so we can share the reference because ...
- Hank Smith: [00:40:49](#) The first great commandment, I want to say, October 2012.
- Dr. John Hilton...: [00:40:55](#) One little paraphrase that he does in there is he basically says, "Peter, why are we having this conversation again?" Right? "I've already called you one time." The message is if you've had an encounter with the risen Lord, your life is never going to be the same. I think that's true for us on other levels, right? If I'm doing church right, or if I have a powerful spiritual experience, I can't just go back to how things were. My life has to be different. Jesus is calling us to do something new.
- Hank Smith: [00:41:25](#) I can't tell how you often I've shared this with my students who've returned from missions and sometimes just go back to old habits, and old ways, and old music ...
- John Bytheway: [00:41:35](#) Back to their nets and back to the boats and yeah.
- Hank Smith: [00:41:37](#) I think the Lord would stand at the edge of the sea going, "What are we doing? What are we doing?" I think it's Elder Holland in the same talk who says, "Listen, you're going to leave these nets

a second time and go change history. Don't act as if that didn't happen or if it's over now. These," what does he say, " these 11 fishermen go on to change the world in which we now live," and they do. They are the messengers from here on out. What do you think about this conversation between Jesus and Peter? He asks him three times about, "Do you love me?" What do you think, John?

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:42:21 Well, one of the things that we often will focus on is the three times Peter denies Jesus. Now, these three times, he's affirming his faith in Jesus. I mean, I love that idea. It's also amazing for us to just step back and say, "This is so cool that they're even having this conversation." Back in Mark, Chapter 16, where we began, one of the things that the young man specifically says to the women is, "Go tell Peter." We're just thinking like, of course, Peter is going to be the chief apostle. Of course, you got to tell Peter. Imagine that you're hearing this story for the first time. The last time we heard about Peter before the resurrection is when he denies Jesus three times, and then he's out of the storyline. You and me, as the original readers, if we've never heard the whole story, we were probably thinking like, "Wow, too late for Peter. He's kicked off the Lord's team." Right? You deny him, like you're gone.

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:43:14 How amazing that Jesus is saying to Peter, I think in essence with these three questions, "You're still on my team." I love that for me because I'm Peter. Right? I'm a disciple who's trying, and I'm nowhere near as good as Peter is, but I'm still failing all the time. Jesus is still saying, "Hey, don't worry. You're on my team. I need you. Come feed my sheep. Come work with me."

Hank Smith: 00:43:37 I love this. I love this because there are people who feel like a major, major mistake disqualifies them forever. Peter's mistake, sometimes people say, "Oh, it's a commandment. Oh, it's a mistake." We don't to go there. We can do that at some other time, but if it is a mistake, it is a big one. You might think that's it. Right? I remember President Hinckley talking about this. He said, "Those of you who have fallen by the wayside, or made a bad decision, or done something you never thought you would do, I hope you'll take comfort from Peter who rose above this and became a mighty witness of the risen Lord." I think another message from this is you cannot be disqualified from the Lord's work. If you want to come back in, how forgiving and wonderful is he to welcome you back in and let you move forward.

John Bytheway: 00:44:35 The very last Verse in the book of John, many other things which Jesus did which if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books

that should be written." In that, can you make room for another testament of Jesus Christ? That's what I want to say. Could it be possible to make room for another one? I also know that we have what's critical and essential, and we have enough to exercise our faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. I like that, and I wish we had more at the same time.

Hank Smith: 00:45:17

I have a question for both of you just about Easter. We've been just diving into the scriptures here for the last few hours, and I have loved it, but I'd love to just sit back for a minute and talk to me about what, in the Come Follow Me manual, the very first principle they list is just three words long, Jesus Christ lives. It talks about the witnesses, the many, many witnesses of his resurrection that we've had, including Joseph Smith's in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 76. What in your lives has the knowledge, the witness of the risen Jesus done for you? I like to tell my students, this is a big deal. A belief in the resurrection is a game-changing belief. It's not a, well, I believe pineapple belongs on pizza. That's not a game-changing belief, but a belief in a resurrection of Jesus Christ, this Jesus of Nazareth, this man from a history, that is a life-changing belief, and it's a big one. This isn't a little belief.

John Bytheway: 00:46:27

I heard you teach a class on the resurrection one time, and you pointed everyone to the Bible dictionary entry under miracles, where it basically says, "If you believe in the resurrection, then every other miracle ceases to be improbable." If someone who believes in Jesus said to me, "You really think God flooded the earth," or "You really think Jonah spent three days in a whale?" I'm not sure whether those are symbolic or not, but the idea that they would say, "Well, that's outside the realm of scientific explanation." I'm going, "Wait, wait, wait. Do you believe in Jesus?" Yeah. "Do you believe Jesus was resurrected?" Yeah. Okay. Once you believe in the resurrection of Jesus, a 14-year-old boy, having a vision, receiving gold plates, that's nothing. Right? That's actually right in line with that belief. Right?

John Bytheway: 00:47:19

The guy walks on water. I think it was Dr. Mike McKay, who gave me this great statement. He said, "If you look at all the scriptures, you should never look for Jesus in the likely. You should look for him in the unlikely, because everything he does is unlikely." The story of Joseph Smith and the other things we've talked about this year are all in the realm of unlikely, but not for him.

Hank Smith: 00:47:48

Tell me what the belief in the resurrection has done for you both.

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:47:52 For me, the first thing that comes to my mind is my grandfather, John Hilton, the first, who passed away about a month before I was married. I was close to him. He lived in Provo. I was going to school.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

Dr. John Hilton...: 00:48:03 Where I was married, and I was close to him. He lived in Provo. I was going to school at BYU. He met my then girlfriend, now wife, Lonnie, before my parents did. We were just close. And tears were shed and there is sadness at the passing of a loved one. At the same time, I realized that I did know that the resurrection is a true principle. I did know that I was going to hug my grandfather, John, again. And for me, a knowledge, a deep seed of knowledge of the resurrection is one of the best things in our lives to bring peace, that we know at the out-front, Jesus wins. We don't have to worry about everything that's going to happen between here and the end of the game, because ultimately, Jesus wins and it is going to work out. And for me, that just brings so much peace.

Hank Smith: 00:48:48 John, I know your mother passed away recently, just in January, right?

John Bytheway: 00:48:53 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Hank Smith: 00:48:55 Talk about the resurrection and Easter for a minute, if you would.

John Bytheway: 00:49:00 Yeah, sure. I was saying mm-hmm (affirmative) to, she passed away. It was in December. So, it was just another aspect of 2020 that in my personal history, that I'll think of, along with earthquakes and everything else. But yeah, it was one of those times when, do I have a testimony or don't I? And coming from deep inside me was, I do, because I'll have my mom again. And she was one of the most saintly people ever. And it'll have my dad again. And so, we would not be here, we wouldn't be talking about any of this if it weren't for that event. If Jesus had remained in the tomb, would we be here having a podcast? What would we even... It would just be another person in history that maybe said some interesting things like other philosophers, but look what happened.

John Bytheway: 00:50:09 He actually appeared again for the first time ever and take all the philosophers and great thinkers of the world. But did any of them ever come back and have many people see them? And then you see, you start reading the Book of Acts. What

happened to these apostles? Because they are... I don't know, to me, it's like, they are different people. They are fired up. They are fearless after this and you see, what happened? Well, what happened was, the savior was resurrected. And I thought if we could reset the holidays, I think Easter would be bigger than Christmas. And that's not up to me, but Easter should be a lot bigger. Christmas is, oh boy, it's coming. But Easter is, look, he did it. He did everything he said he was going to do. And so, yeah, I do have a testimony that, that tomb was empty. And because of that, I'll have my mom again, I'll have my dad again. We will all have our loved ones again, because Jesus rose from the dead.

Hank Smith: [00:51:17](#) John, I don't think you can overemphasize what you said about the apostles. I remember listening to a New Testament scholar. He was a believing New Testament scholar. And as you all know, not all New Testament scholars are believers.

John Bytheway: [00:51:32](#) Are believers.

Hank Smith: [00:51:33](#) But they're very brilliant people who we love to learn from. But this believing New Testament scholar said, "Give me another explanation for the lives of these apostles." Right? If Jesus hadn't been resurrected, why in the world did they go back to Jerusalem? The very place where everyone would know he wasn't, to teach. Go to Galilee, go to India, go somewhere else, if you want to go and profess this fake event, don't go to the very place where he died, where people could actually produce a body, where they could they could produce witnesses. So, I just think this is... The lives of the apostles, to me, as someone who loves to just think logically at times is, the lives of the apostles is to me, a massive evidence of the resurrection that there is no other explanation for, right? You might say, well, they did it for fame. They all died. They all were martyred. They all left their families to teach. Right? There's no fame in this.

John Bytheway: [00:52:42](#) As John said before, would you want to stay in Jerusalem, where the chief priest have people killed that believe like you do? Right, and the government, did you want to go back there? And they were fearless. And as we see there in John, Peter got a hint of the kind of death that he would have.

Hank Smith: [00:53:01](#) Yeah.

John Bytheway: [00:53:02](#) And yet, he's a fireball after this and he is the rock. Jesus called him, the rock, along before all of this happened. But boy, he lived up to that, didn't he?

Hank Smith: 00:53:15 To me, this tie so well, and you guys can help me with this. This ties so well to the story of the Book of Mormon. My friend, Corey Andrews and I, we were on a church history tour once and we started just talking about the comparison between the savior coming out of the tomb and the Book of Mormon coming out of the stone box. And there are so many comparisons that you can make, but just like the savior coming out of the tomb and the Book of Mormon coming out of the stone box, both have 11 witnesses. We have the 8th and the three and we have the alisted 11 apostles. We have a woman named Mary who sees Jesus. We have Mary Whitmer who tells her story. Right? There's just so many... Just fun parallels that you can make with that story. But both are a game changing belief. A belief in the resurrection changes your life. The next one is a belief in the Book of Mormon and the restoration changes everything. They're both really game changers. And I think we can tie this together beautifully that they are both... Yeah, unlikely, but they're both true. And to me, it's absolutely... Not just wow, but it's also, it touches my heart as someone who's been, like you said, John, just losing someone. Before losing someone I love to the other side, Easter to me was candy and it was springtime, which I love, the weather gets warm and... But now, Easter to me has taken on a new, just an all new meaning.

Hank Smith: 00:55:09 It's not a holiday, it's now a Holy day because of what it represents that will happen for all of us. The Christian doesn't just say, 'Christ lives.' He says, 'I shall live.' Right? And just to me, what did... I think of a Stephen Harper or Tony Sweat who told us with just a couple of swipes, Joseph Smith cut-through theological Gordian knots, right? And to me, this is one of those. One of the questions through all the ages of time is, Job's question.

John Bytheway: 00:55:50 Yeah, if a man die, will he live again?

Hank Smith: 00:55:53 Does he live again?

John Bytheway: 00:55:54 And then Job awesomely says, what did he say? " Worms destroy this body in the flesh."

Hank Smith: 00:56:03 I will see God, though.

John Bytheway: 00:56:05 He had a testimony of the resurrection before it had happened.

Hank Smith: 00:56:09 We've had a long discussion today and it has been just so uplifting. I am grateful that those who had not heard of the name, John Hilton III before now know it because I've known it

and had that friendship and just that strength of character and testimony in my life for a long time and now a lot of people do. John, as a scholar, you don't only write to Latter-day Saints, but you write to what is called the Academy, and you're prolific at both. Everyone at BYU knows that John Hilton can produce scholarship and devotional work unlike anybody else, really, unlike anybody else. Someone is as brilliant as you and you believe, I just want to know more about that.

- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:57:04 For me, I think it really goes back and is deeply rooted to the Book of Mormon. My grandfather, that we've talked about a little bit, John Hilton I, he did word print studies after he retired. He became a statistician at Brigham Young University. Some of you may have heard of word prints, it's basically statistical analyses that show that the Book of Mormon was not authored by Joseph Smith. I definitely would not base my testimony of the church on word prints, right? But I grew up hearing about word prints and chiasmus from my grandfather, and it was all really interesting. And I actually found that there's a lot of intellectual basis for a testimony, right? The Lord will speak to us in our minds and in our hearts. But much more than word prints and chiasmus and other little kind of intellectual proofs of the Book of Mormon.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:57:51 I remember when I was 18 years old, my what were then called home teachers came to my house and they shared a quote from President Benson, where he said, "If you seriously study the Book of Mormon, a power will flow into your life." And so, I decided to take that invitation up and to seriously study the Book of Mormon and my life did change. I felt the power from God flow into my life. And so, the intellectual proofs are nice, but ultimately it's a testimony of the Book of Mormon as the word of God that has fueled it.
- Dr. John Hilton...: 00:58:23 And it's kind of a cliché, but it's really been the key stone of my testimony, because if the Book of Mormon is true, then you know Joseph Smith is a prophet because why would you have a false prophet translate a true book? That just doesn't make sense. And if Joseph Smith is a prophet, then the church he started is true, because why would a true prophet start a false church? And if the church he started is true, then it's led by a living prophet today. And so for me, everything then is centered on the Book of Mormon. And because it's the word of God, I can have confidence in everything else that cascades from that.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:56 John, by the way, another episode of Come Follow Me is in the books. Tell me how... I just like to know how you feel at the end. You always make me feel good.

John Bytheway: 00:59:06 I feel great. I was thinking, we had some pretty tender feelings, close to the surface, all of us, surrounding recent deaths and things. And when I was in the Holy land of just a really fine, I believe Protestant gentlemen said something so interesting outside the Garden Tomb. He said, "You can go in there. You won't find Jesus in there." He said, "But if you come out, bring him out with you and introduce him to some of your friends." He said, "A lot of people want to leave him in the tomb."

John Bytheway: 00:59:40 And I just remember thinking, that is what a lot of the world has done, that, oh, the whole resurrection thing. That was a myth. He was a great moral teacher, but he's probably still in some tomb somewhere. And I liked way that he said... I mean, it reminds me of something similar. A lot of people want to leave the baby Jesus in the manger and leave him the baby Jesus, instead of the one who grew up and started to teach and then someone will leave him in the tomb. And I don't know, I just... It's been a fun couple of hours to talk about. As you said, this game changer that he's not still in the tomb and he's risen as he said. I just love it.

Hank Smith: 01:00:22 My friends. Thank you for joining us on this episode. Thank you to Dr. John Hilton III and thank you to our producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen. Thank you to our production team, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson. Thank you all so much for your help. We hope you come back next week and join us on another episode of followHIM.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:01:02]