



“Be Not Afraid”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

Just how many Herods threatened the life of Jesus? Dr. Jason Combs explores the many Herods, their effect on Jesus and especially on the life, and death of John the Baptist and the call to sacrifice for the Savior.

Part 2:

Dr. Combs continues to examine the miracle of Jesus and Peter walking on the water and Jesus’s call to “Be not afraid.” How do we cast aside our doubts and fears?

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Jason Combs
- 00:56 Introduction of Dr. Jason Combs
- 04:19 How the Gospels relate to one another as testimonies
- 07:18 Mark 6 and Jesus is the carpenter’s son
- 09:46 John the Baptist was killed
- 15:34 Josephus’s account of John the Baptist’s death
- 17:44 Mark and intercalation–Markan sandwich
- 21:47 President Faust story about Rafael Monroy and Vincente Morales
- 24:12 Jesus departed by ship after hearing of John’s death
- 26:47 Feeding of the 5000, Moses and Jesus’s name in Hebrew
- 32:43 Additional details remind us of Exodus and Jesus as a New Moses
- 36:58 Messianic Banquet and the Essenes
- 42:00 Gentile vs. servant leadership
- 43:16 Jesus walks on the water
- 47:41 Commandment to be of “good cheer”
- 49:57 Matthew emphasizes they know who Jesus is
- 52:50 Mark shows Jesus’s divinity in subtle epiphanies
- 55:17 Beliefs about ghosts in the First Century
- 58:20 Matthew teaches us how Jesus is tutoring Peter
- 1:00:26 Jesus and Peter walk on the water
- 1:08:15 End of Part 1–Dr. Jason Combs

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Jason Combs
- 00:14 John 5 and 6 and the nature of the Gospel of John
- 02:31 Three miracles (or signs) in John 5 and 6
- 04:10 Who added the angel stirring the water?
- 09:20 President Packer “Who Stirred the Water?”
- 12:23 First miracle in Jerusalem and on the Sabbath
- 16:36 Jesus reminds that sin isn’t the cause of this infirmity
- 22:20 Jesus calls witnesses
- 28:21 One final witness to Jesus
- 33:34 Often skipped over signs, including manna and Bread from Heaven
- 42:18 Sirach or Wisdom of Ben Sira
- 46:52 Sacrament lessons in John
- 49:23 Hard sayings and the Sacrament
- 55:00 President Ardeh Kapp story about a boy shaking the Prophet’s hand
- 58:12 “Will ye also go away?” and Dr. Combs shares a personal missionary story
- 1:06:47 End of Part II–Dr. Jason Combs

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Biographical Information:



Jason Robert Combs is an assistant professor of Ancient Scripture and affiliate faculty of Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Brigham Young University. He joined the BYU faculty in 2016 after working as a lecturer at High Point University, Guilford College, and UNC-Greensboro in North Carolina. Combs earned his bachelor's degree in Near Eastern Studies from BYU. He holds master's degrees in biblical studies from Yale Divinity School and in classics from Columbia University. He earned his PhD in religious studies with an emphasis on the history of early Christianity from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:15	As together we follow Him.
Hank Smith:	00:00:20	Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith and I'm your host and I'm here with my co-host, who I believe, and he won't agree with me on this, but I believe pretty much walks on water. He is the greatest guy. That's how you describe someone when they are that amazing, you're like, "He practically walks on water." So John Bytheway, you practically walk on water to me.
John Bytheway:	00:00:43	I think you misjudge me. I'm not nearly as buoyant as you think I am.
Hank Smith:	00:00:50	John, we are going to study some famous stories as our listeners can probably tell and we needed someone to help us. Who is joining us today?
John Bytheway:	00:00:58	Yes, we have Jason Combs here, and he's been with us before. Do you remember when that was, Hank?
Hank Smith:	00:01:04	Absolutely. That was our first episode of Isaiah, which I was nervous about, but Jason made it perfect.
John Bytheway:	00:01:10	Yes, it was awesome. Just to refresh everyone's memory, Jason Combs was born and raised in Lakeside, California, which is about half an hour inland from San Diego. He started attending church when he was 16 years old, was baptized at 18. He served

in the Columbia Bogota North Mission. After returning home, met his wife Rose at the Institute of Religion at Grossmont Community College. The institute director had extra tickets to see Shakespeare's The Tempest.

Hank Smith: 00:01:40 Oh, wow.

John Bytheway: 00:01:41 This is perfect for today's Matthew 14.

Hank Smith: 00:01:44 Yeah, [inaudible 00:01:45].

John Bytheway: 00:01:44 And encouraged him to take her. Hank, did you take anyone to Shakespeare on a date ever? I never did.

Hank Smith: 00:01:51 I don't remember doing that, but that-

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:01:53 It works. I can tell you.

John Bytheway: 00:01:53 Yeah, it worked. After they were married, they moved to Provo so that they could complete his bachelor's degree in psychology. Then he switched his major to a degree in Ancient Near Eastern studies, which started them on a very different trajectory. Jason went on to earn master's degrees in Biblical Studies from Yale Divinity School and in Classical Greek from Columbia, as well as a PhD in New Testament and Early Christianity from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

00:02:22 He's worked at BYU in the Department of Ancient Scripture since 2016. Of all of his current research projects, he is most excited about a book that just came out this past November titled Ancient Christians: An Introduction for Latter-day Saints. It's a beautiful book full of images, written in an engaging way, covers topics ranging from receiving Christ, atonement, grace, and eternal salvation, to church organization, priesthood offices, women's leadership roles, from sacred spaces and places of worship to becoming like God, incarnation, moral formation, and eternal progression.

00:02:58 Jason has two chapters in that book, the introduction called Understanding Ancient Christians, Apostasy, and Restoration, and another called Divine Nature: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that discusses the Trinity and the development of ancient Christians' councils and creeds. Sounds great.

00:03:15 So Jason, we're really glad to have you back. Thanks for being with us, and from all those places, Yale and North Carolina and Columbia.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:03:24 It was quite an adventure.

John Bytheway: 00:03:25 And Shakespeare on a first date. Yep, that's not me.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:03:29 That's right.

Hank Smith: 00:03:30 When I think of North Carolina, I think two great people came out of North Carolina: Michael Jordan and Jason Combs. Those are the two people that came out of North Carolina to me.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:03:38 I'm in good company.

Hank Smith: 00:03:39 You are. He was great at basketball and you are incredible at scholarship.

John Bytheway: 00:03:44 Yes. When you first said that, I thought Andy Taylor and Barney Fife, but that was actually filmed in Hollywood I think.

Hank Smith: 00:03:52 Okay, so it was supposed to be in North Carolina, but they actually were in California.

John Bytheway: 00:03:57 Yeah, Mayberry is a mythical place.

00:04:00 So Jason, we're glad to have you.

Hank Smith: 00:04:02 Yeah, Jason, thanks for coming.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:04 Yeah, happy to be back.

Hank Smith: 00:04:05 We're going to have some fun today. From what I've read, we're going to be in Matthew, Mark, and John. Where do you want to start today? Matthew 14, Mark 6, or John 5 and 6.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:14 We are all over the place. That's right. I'd like to start with none of those.

Hank Smith: 00:04:18 Okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:19 I'd like to start with the Bible Dictionary.

Hank Smith: 00:04:21 Oh, wonderful. Let's do it.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:23 Because I think it's helpful to remind ourselves how Matthew, Mark, and John all relate to each other.

Hank Smith: 00:04:29 Yes.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:29 Since we are spending time in three different Gospels today.

Hank Smith: 00:04:32 Absolutely.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:33 In our Bible Dictionary in the back of the Bible, or you can find it online, there's a great entry under Gospels.

Hank Smith: 00:04:41 Under Gospels.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:43 Yeah, it describes how these Gospels relate to each other, and I just want to read two different paragraphs from this entry.

Hank Smith: 00:04:49 Okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:50 The first one starts, "The four Gospels are not so much biographies," if you're following along.

Hank Smith: 00:04:55 I see that. Second paragraph, yeah.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:04:57 "So the four Gospels are not so much biographies as they are testimonies," and in fact I should add there that the Joseph Smith translation, Joseph Smith changed the titles of these Gospels to The Testimony According to Matthew, The Testimony According to Mark. So I think that's important to remember.

00:05:14 "So Gospels are not so much biographies as they are testimonies. They do not reveal a day by day story of the life of Jesus, rather they tell who Jesus was and what He said, what He did and why it was important. The records of Matthew, Mark, and Luke present a somewhat similar collection of materials and have considerable phraseology in common as well as similar main events and thus are sometimes labeled the Synoptic Gospels, meaning see alike or that they can be seen together."

Hank Smith: 00:05:45 You can see that in the word. Syn like synonym, optic like I see the same.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:05:51 Yeah.

00:05:51 "Even so, each is unique and has much detail that is not shared by the others. John's record is quite different from the other three in vocabulary, phraseology, and presentation of events."

00:06:03 Now skipping down to this is the last or second to last paragraph.

- 00:06:06 "In summation, Mark has the least amount of unique material, being only about 7% exclusive, John has the greatest amount, being about 92% exclusive. With the knowledge now available, it's not possible to create a perfect harmony of the four Gospels because the Gospel authors themselves do not always agree on chronological matters."
- 00:06:29 So I start with that because some of the passages we're going to be reading today have exact parallels in Matthew and Mark, and in fact share similar stories to what we find in John, but don't agree on the order in which these events happened.
- 00:06:46 Now I don't mean that they don't agree historically. I don't mean that Matthew thinks that Mark told the history wrong, and so he is correcting it that way. Remember these are testimonies, and so Matthew is choosing an order that best reflects his testimony of who Jesus is, and sometimes he's choosing to include details or even add details or sometimes omit details that don't fit with his testimony. We can see that right away when we look at these different accounts.
- 00:07:18 So for instance, today the manual has us looking at Mark 6 and Matthew 14. So if we begin in Mark 6, Mark 6 picks up right after the end of Mark 5, the story of Jesus miraculously healing Jairus' daughter, miraculously raising her from the dead might be a more accurate description. In Matthew, however, Matthew picks up with Jesus has just finished sharing a whole discourse about parables in Matthew 13. Mark 6:1 parallels Matthew 13:54. In both of those, Jesus has now come into his own country and he begins teaching in the synagogue. The reaction to both of those, to Jesus teaching in the synagogue, you can compare Matthew 13:55 with Mark 6:3, where the reaction is people saying, "Wait a minute, isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't this the son of Mary and aren't his brothers with us?" People are shocked by what Jesus is teaching and are trying to make sense of it.
- 00:08:27 Now we're going to see a similar reaction to that when we get to John in John 6, but it's a slightly different context. Now, of course, it's entirely possible that people were frequently responding to Jesus by saying, "Wait a minute, isn't this a carpenter's son? Isn't this the carpenter?" but it's interesting to see these things appearing in slightly different context.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:47 Yeah, different orders.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:08:48 Yeah. So we'll see why that matters in just a minute when we start to get into the meat of the story here.

00:08:55 In Mark, Jesus calls His apostles to send them forth two by two. This is Mark 6:7 now. He's going to send them forth two by two, He gives them power over unclean spirits, He commands them in Mark 6:8 that they are going to go on this journey and only take a staff and no script, no bread, no money, and they're going to go forth and preach. Well, you probably already talked about that a week or two ago.

Hank Smith: 00:09:21 Yeah, Matthew 10.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:09:23 So they have these events in slightly different orders. Now we're going to see in just a minute why this order is important to Mark's testimony, but let's get into the first main story we get in Mark here and in Matthew 14, this is how Matthew 14 begins, and we're going to pick up with Mark 6:14. This is the death of John the Baptist.

Hank Smith: 00:09:45 Oh, okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:09:46 So Matthew begins with this very tragic story in Matthew 14. In Mark 6:14 is where we get this account. So it begins by introducing us to the death of John the Baptist by telling us that the fame of Jesus has started to spread and Herod is a little bit worried. He's thinking, "Wait a minute, uh-oh, is John the Baptist risen from the dead? Is he coming back to get me?"

Hank Smith: 00:10:13 Yeah.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:10:14 That's our segue into the story. That introduces us to the fact that John the Baptist has passed away, has been murdered, in fact, and we now get the story of how he died.

00:10:25 Before we go on, real quick, there are a lot of Herods in the New Testament.

Hank Smith: 00:10:30 Yes.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:10:32 Let's be clear which Herod we're talking about here. This is not Herod the Great. Herod the Great died long before this around the time of the birth of Jesus.

Hank Smith: 00:10:40 Right.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:10:40 So this is one of the sons of Herod. This is Herod Antipas, and Herod Antipas has a brother, also a son of Herod the Great, named Herod Philip.

Hank Smith: 00:10:51 Both Herods, but different middle names. Different-

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:10:53 Yes. To make matters more confusing, we're about to find out the reason that John the Baptist gets himself into trouble with this Herod Antipas is because Herod Antipas has married his brother's wife, Herod Philip's wife, Herodias.

Hank Smith: 00:11:09 Herodias.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:11:11 Yes. Let's read the account in Mark. If you wanted to follow along in Matthew, this is Matthew 14:3, but in Mark we're going to pick up with Mark 6:17. This explains that Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake. His brother, Philip's wife, for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him and would've killed him, but she could not, and it then explains the reason she could not is because Herod feared John and he knew that John had a following.

00:11:53 Herod has now married his brother's wife, and some of you may remember back in the Old Testament in Leviticus 18:16 it says, "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife. It is thy brother's nakedness." Or Leviticus 20:21, "And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing. He hath uncovered his brother's nakedness. They shall be childless." John is pointing to these passages in Leviticus and critiquing Herod Antipas for breaking the Jewish law, saying, "You have gone against the law of Moses."

Hank Smith: 00:12:33 Like a political scandal here.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:12:34 Yeah, absolutely, and Herodias and Herod are not fans of John because of this.

Hank Smith: 00:12:42 Because John has a big following. It sounds like Herodias is offended quite a bit. She's upset about this.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:12:49 Yeah. So then we find out in the rest of Mark, Mark provides a lot more details in this account than we get in Matthew, Mark tells us that what happens is Herodias gets her daughter involved.

Hank Smith: 00:13:03 This is the fun and dysfunctional here. This is gets a little odd.

John Bytheway: 00:13:06 Dysfunctional family, absolutely.

Hank Smith: 00:13:08 Okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:10 That's right. In this account, what happens is Herod has a birthday celebration, a lot of his friends have gathered, including lord's, this is Mark 6:21, lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee, and Herodias' daughter comes in and dances for him.

Hank Smith: 00:13:29 Which, and Herod, this is his niece, correct?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:32 Right.

Hank Smith: 00:13:32 But also his stepdaughter.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:35 That's right.

Hank Smith: 00:13:36 Yeah. Okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:36 Yes.

Hank Smith: 00:13:37 Okay, I'm figuring this out.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:39 This is Salome. If you want to make things even more confusing, Salome ends up marrying one of the other brothers of Herod Antipas and Herod Philip, but we don't need to get into that right now.

Hank Smith: 00:13:50 Okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:51 His niece, daughter, and sister-in-law, eventually.

Hank Smith: 00:13:56 Yeah.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:56 Right.

Hank Smith: 00:13:56 Oh my word.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:57 Okay. So she comes and dances, they're all very impressed. Herod offers to give her whatever she wants. In verse 24, Mark 6:24, she goes and consults with her mother, with Herodias, and says, "What should I ask?" The mother responds, "The head of John the Baptist."

Hank Smith: 00:14:18 Wow. He had offered half of his kingdom. "I will give unto thee half my kingdom." "Should I take half the kingdom?" "No, I want this." Goodness.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:14:28 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:14:28 Pretty good dancing, I guess? Half my kingdom?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:14:31 Must have been.

John Bytheway: 00:14:32 You said her name was Salome?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:14:35 Yes. Yes.

John Bytheway: 00:14:36 Forgive my ignorance, where do we learn that?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:14:38 Josephus? Because Josephus actually records some of these events. Josephus, who is not Christian, he's a Jewish historian writing around 90 A.D., and he is aware of John the Baptist and he talks about Herod killing John the Baptist. He tells us a little more about Herodias as well. So we'll read a little bit of Josephus in just a minute here.

00:15:02 So Herod does, in fact, it says in March 6:26, for his oath's sake, this oath he made to her, he carries through with what she asks, has John the Baptist beheaded and brings the head to his stepdaughter who then takes it to Herodias. Yeah, horrible, tragic death.

Hank Smith: 00:15:23 Can I just say Herodias sounds out of her mind. Yeah, she sounds like if you could have anything you would ask for and that's your one wish? I don't know, we'll just say she has some issues.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:15:34 Yeah. Let me read to you a little bit of what Josephus has to say here. Josephus has a slightly different explanation for John the Baptist's death. In Josephus, he suggests that the reason is that Herod was worried about John the Baptist's popularity.

Hank Smith: 00:15:50 Oh, okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:15:51 That he's worried about a possible revolt. So he kills John the Baptist for that reason. But a little bit after that, Josephus gives another description of another event regarding Herodias, and this is quite interesting. It turns out that a little bit later, one of the Roman procurator, named Gaius, appoints Herodias' brother, Agrippa, to the tetrarchy of her previous husband, Philip. So her brother gets promoted.

00:16:21 Josephus goes on to say this. Extremely jealous over the success of her brother, Herodias prodded her husband, Herod, this is

Herod Antipas now, to embark for Rome and petition for the kingship also. He resisted as best he could, but finally gave in and they sailed to Italy. Then it goes on to explain that this actually doesn't work out in their favor and they both end up getting banished.

00:16:50 It's interesting to see this one more detail about Herodias and her ambition, and in this case her jealousy over her brother that ends up leading to her and Herod Antipas' downfall. They get banished to Gaul, to a place in modern day France, so as far away from Judea as they could send them.

Hank Smith: 00:17:09 That's incredible. She's got a history. I didn't know of that record in Josephus. That's really cool.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:17:13 Yeah. I have one more thing that I'd like to point out about this story of John the Baptist. It's incredibly tragic, and Mark does something really interesting with this story that we end up losing in Matthew. Matthew does not do the same thing because of the way he rearranges the stories. One thing that Mark loves to do is called intercalation, which is a fancy technical term, it could also be called sandwiching.

Hank Smith: 00:17:43 Oh, okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:17:44 Mark loves to start a story and then interrupt that story with another story and then come back to that first story. Mark does this in order to compel us to read those stories together, and he does that here. If we go back to just before Mark begins the story of the death of John the Baptist, if we go all the way back to Mark 6:12, we get Jesus sending his apostles out to preach. Jesus had just finished explaining to them what their mission would be, endowing them with power to complete that mission, and sending them out. So Mark 6:12 says, "And they went out and preached that men should repent and they cast out many devils and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them."

00:18:35 Then that story is interrupted by this story of John the Baptist's death. As soon as we complete the story of John the Baptist's death, in Mark 6:29, the disciples of John the Baptist heard that he has been killed, they come, they take his corpse and lay it in a tomb, in Mark 6:29. Notice what Mark 6:30 says: "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus and told them all things, both what they had done and what they had taught." So the apostles have now returned from their mission and they share with Jesus everything that happened. So Mark

takes the story of the disciples' mission and puts right in the middle of it the story of John the Baptist's death.

00:19:22 I think that part of the reason Mark does this is to help us realize what is at stake, that discipleship to Jesus sometimes literally means giving your life. Reading this account in Mark brings to mind that passage at the beginning of Moroni, where Moroni starts his final book of the Book of Mormon being chased around by Lamanites, and he says, "I make myself not known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me. For behold, their wars are exceedingly fierce among themselves and because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ, and I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ."

00:20:05 I think Mark is trying to convey a similar message here. He's trying to show us what is really at stake, that the stakes of discipleship are sometimes incredibly high. Sometimes it's not just giving your life, meaning committing your life to Christ, sometimes it can even be literally giving your life.

Hank Smith: 00:20:25 Wow, that's really cool to see Mark use that structure. He does that a few times in his Gospel.

John Bytheway: 00:20:31 What did you call it? You said sandwiching, but something with the word collation.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:20:36 Yeah, intercalation is the technical term. There was another example of that just before Mark 6, back in Mark 5 he did it also. He starts telling about Jesus on his way, Jairus comes to him and says, "My daughter's dying, come help." Jesus is on his way to do that, but then we get this other story of this woman who has suffered from this flow of blood that she has not been able to stop for years and no physician could help her, and she touches Jesus' garment and is miraculously healed. Mark makes us read that story in the context of Jesus going to heal this little girl, which reading those together I think heightens the question, if you're reading Jesus on his way to perform what may end up being raising somebody from the dead, the greatest of all miracles, and on his way a woman touches him and power flows out of him, I think you're left to ask, "Oh my goodness, does he have any power left to heal this poor little girl?" In fact, he does.

Hank Smith: 00:21:35 That Markan sandwich there and how you highlighted what's at stake, what can possibly be at stake, is giving your own life reminds me of a story from James Faust. Do you guys remember President Faust?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:21:46 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:21:47 My students don't remember President Faust, but I remember loving listening to his stories. He talked about in the early days of the church in Mexico, two faithful leaders who were disciples of Christ became martyrs because of their belief. They were Rafael Monroy and Vicente Morales, and it says during the Mexican Revolution, Rafael Monroy was the president of the small San Marcos Mexico branch, Vicente Morales was his first counselor. On July 17th, 1915, they were apprehended by a group of people, they were told they would be spared if they would give up their weapons and renounce their strange religion. Brother Monroy told his captors that he did not have any weapons and simply drew from his pocket his Bible and Book of Mormon. He said, "Gentlemen, these are the only arms I ever carry. They are the arms of truth against error."

00:22:36 When no arms were found, the brethren were cruelly tortured, making them divulge where arms were hidden, but there were no arms. They were then taken under guard to the outskirts of a little town where their captors stood them up by a large tree in front of a firing squad. The officer in charge offered them freedom if they would forsake their religion, but Brother Monroy replied, "My religion is dearer to me than my life. I cannot forsake it."

00:23:01 They were then told that they were to be shot and asked if they had any requests. Brother Raphael requested that he'd be permitted to pray before he was executed. There in the presence of his executioners he kneeled down in a voice that all could hear prayed that God would bless and protect his loved ones and care for the little struggling branch that would be left without a leader.

00:23:19 As he finished his prayer, he used the words of the Savior when he hung on the cross and prayed for the executioners, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." They were both then executed.

00:23:30 President Faust goes on to say, "Some years ago I went to Mexico to reorganize the stake presidency. As I conducted the interviews, I was privileged to become acquainted with one of the descendants of Rafael Monroy. I was very impressed with the depths of this man's testimony and his commitment to the Gospel. When I asked him what had happened to the rest of Brother Monroy's descendants, he said that many of them had been on missions and continue faithful in the church."

- 00:23:52 I remember listening to that talk and I was just struck by it. Like really, it can happen in our day as well? It's the Saturday morning session of October 2006.
- 00:24:04 You're right, Jason, this is a tragic, tragic story, and I'm sure it was hurtful for all of John's followers. I'm sure it was hard for all of them.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:24:12 So Mark emphasizes the tragic nature of it by surrounding it with these disciples' mission. Matthew does it slightly differently. In Matthew, the very next passage, Matthew 14:13 says, "When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart." So in the context of Matthew, Jesus' departure seems to be a reaction to hearing about the death of John the Baptist and needing some time to be alone to deal with that.
- 00:24:42 Mark 6:32 also has them departing into a place privately, but that's after telling about the return of the apostles, so you don't really get the sense that that's about John the Baptist there. But Matthew makes it clear that this is Jesus responding to the news.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:00 Fascinating to just point out that Jesus could have protected John, healed John, whatever he needed to do, and he doesn't. Sometimes we read so many stories of in the Gospels Jesus heals this person, this person, this person, and we don't see that there's times where he doesn't. Most New Testament scholars, Jason, would assume that Joseph, his father, dies sometime before his ministry.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:25:22 Presumably, because we don't hear much about Joseph in any of the Gospels, and by the end of the Gospel of John, Jesus is committing his mother to His beloved disciple, which sort of implies the father is no longer around.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:36 Yeah. So I don't know if it can be helpful or just it can be insightful to point out times where Jesus doesn't intervene because that can be a listener's experience as well.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:25:45 In both Matthew and Luke you sort of sense that John the Baptist was a little bit worried about Jesus not intervening. He sends his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one or do we wait for another?" That could imply that John the Baptist is expecting that Jesus would intervene, that Jesus would free captives such as John the Baptist.

Hank Smith: 00:26:08 It's a tragic end to John, but wonderfully we know his ministry continues. That's not the last we're going to hear from John.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:26:15 That's right.

John Bytheway: 00:26:16 This study this year has just, the fact that Jesus would say, "There's not a greater prophet than John the Baptist," we get the sense the 12 were learning and growing gradually. John seemed to have hit the ground running. He had the Holy Spirit from the womb and everything. Didn't one of our guests call him John the Prophet Baptist or something like that, Hank, because he was a great prophet as well? Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:26:42 Yeah. Awesome. So Jason, where do we want to go next?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:26:47 Let's move right on to the next story we get in both Mark and Matthew. This is the miraculous feeding of 5,000, the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes. Once again, I'd like to focus on the account in Mark because Matthew leaves out some details. We'll talk a little more about what Matthew's up to in a minute, but first, let's see how Mark describes what happens here.

00:27:09 Starting in Mark 6:32, Jesus and his disciples have departed into a desert place by ship privately. People see them departing and they all gather to him. Then in Mark 6:34, Jesus comes out, sees the people, is moved with compassion towards them, and it explains He's moved with compassion towards them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things. Then after He teaches them for a while, they realize that the people are probably starting to get a little hungry, He's been teaching for a while now, and they realize that this is a problem because they're out in a desert place. There's not a lot of villages or cities around where they can buy bread. Even if they could, they don't have the money to buy bread for that many people.

00:28:00 Continuing down, Mark 6:38, Jesus says, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see," and they went and they find five loaves and two fishes. Continuing with Mark 6:39, He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass and they all sat down in ranks by hundreds and by fifties. When they had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up into heaven, blessed and break the loaves and gave them to His disciples, set them before them, and the two fish divided among them and all ate and were filled, this miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes.

- 00:28:38 I just focused on two passages that include some details that are not found in Matthew. Back in Mark 6:34, Mark includes that Jesus is moved with compassion towards these people, Mark says, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and then down when Jesus gathers them into companies, Mark includes the detail that they sat down in ranks by hundreds and fifties. Now it's interesting that Mark includes these particular details because both of these details hint back at passages we read last year in the Old Testament.
- 00:29:15 If you turn to Numbers 27, beginning in verse 15, we get this, "Moses spake unto the Lord saying, 'Let the Lord the God of the spirits of all flesh set a man over the congregation which may go out before them and which may go in before them and which may lead them out and which may bring them in that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd.'"
- 00:29:46 Uses that exact same phrase, "As sheep which have no shepherd."
- 00:29:50 "The Lord said unto Moses, 'Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thy hand upon him.'" So Joshua is then appointed to be Moses' secondhand man. Of course, Joshua ends up becoming in a way the new Moses. Moses is not allowed to lead Israel into the Promised Land, it's Joshua who leads them into the Promised Land.
- 00:30:16 This is actually really interesting, because in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses is promised, God promises that God will raise up a prophet like Moses, and that is fulfilled in different ways over time, but one of the ways that's fulfilled is through Joshua. The reason we know that Joshua is a prophet like Moses is because Joshua does some of the sorts of things that Moses does. For instance, just as Moses parted the Red Sea to lead Israel out of Egypt, Joshua parts the river Jordan to lead Israel into the Promised Land at the beginning of the book of Joshua. So Joshua becomes this new Moses.
- 00:30:54 Anyway, here's where it gets really interesting. Guess how you'd pronounce Joshua's name if it were written in Greek and then you were turning it into English? It's Jesus. Jesus' Hebrew name is Joshua, or Yehoshua, Yeshua, for short. I have the experience in my graduate education to start reading the Old Testament and New Testament in Greek, so it's fascinating to read the accounts in Greek of Joshua and see it calling him Jesus. I'm used to only seeing Jesus in the New Testament when I read in

English, and then you start reading the Old Testament and Jesus is parting the river Jordan and leading his...

- John Bytheway: 00:31:33 Am I in the wrong Testament here?
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:31:37 Yeah, exactly. Exactly. I think that's significant for early Christians as well. If Joshua is the first prophet like Moses, then Jesus becomes this new prophet like Moses, and both have the same name.
- 00:31:51 Already, Mark, in Mark 6:34, includes that detail that Jesus is moved with compassion towards them, Mark says, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, which suggests that Jesus needs to be this new Joshua, this new Moses, who is shepherding Israel. It also makes us think about the Old Testament. It makes us think in particular about the story of Israel in the wilderness, a time when God miraculously fed Israel by providing the manna, bread from heaven, in the wilderness. So these are details, miraculous feeding happening in the Old Testament and now again in the New. Once in the time of Moses and Joshua, now in the time of Jesus.
- John Bytheway: 00:32:37 And Jesus connects those directly in John 6, doesn't he?
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:32:41 Yeah, we'll talk about that today.
- 00:32:43 Also, Mark 6:40, Mark includes the detail that they were arranged into companies, they sat down by ranks in groups of hundreds and fifties. That may also cause anybody familiar with the Old Testament to remember a time where Moses in Exodus 18:25, "And Moses chose able men out of all of Israel and made them heads over the people, rulers over thousands, rulers over hundreds, rulers over fifties, rulers of tens." There's this other allusion here to Israel wandering in the wilderness.
- John Bytheway: 00:33:17 Good point. I remember in Aaronic Priesthood, see I do have a memory sometimes, Hank, but they gave us this chart of Jethro talking to Moses and saying, "You're trying to do all of this by yourself," and it had this organizational chart where Moses was in charge of everything, in agriculture, in army, in farming, in distribution, in hiring and everything. Then Jethro set it up like this and you get those ideas of over thousands and hundreds and fifties, and under this system it took Moses this much time to move the children of Israel. I still remember that kind of funny graphic.

00:33:52 So you're saying Mark is saying this going, "Hey look, this is a newer Moses doing some of the same things." Oh, I love that.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:33:59 Matthew definitely emphasizes that Jesus is a new Moses. He does that from the very beginning of his Gospel, and I'm sure you've already talked about that on here. The truth is, even without those details about having a sheep without a shepherd and sitting down in ranks, those details that Matthew doesn't include, even without those, since Matthew has already set us up to see Jesus as a new Moses, you would read a story about a miraculous feeding of 5,000 in the wilderness and think about the miraculous feeding of thousands in the wilderness.

Hank Smith: 00:34:32 I've heard this story before.

John Bytheway: 00:34:32 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:34:32 That's right.

John Bytheway: 00:34:33 This sounds familiar.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:34:35 In fact, you might even think about other miraculous feedings that happened in the wilderness stories. For instance, in Exodus 24, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, who go up into the mountain with 70 elders of Israel and they're before the God of Israel, and it says in Exodus 24:11 they did eat and drink there. They saw God and did eat and drink, having this large group meal in the presence of God. That also might help us to see new things in this passage in Matthew and Mark, that this is sort of a divine meal, a Messianic meal with Jesus present.

00:35:15 In fact, ancient Israel expected a Messianic banquet. Ancient Israel expected that in the end of times, either after this life or when God wrapped things up, that there would be a large celebration that they described as a large banquet. We often describe things in a similar way today. We sort of describe the afterlife or the end of time being a big family reunion. They did that similarly in the Old Testament and in the New, but they emphasized the food part of the family reunion. There'd be lots of food, lots of wine, a big banquet.

00:35:51 A great example of that is in Isaiah, in Isaiah 25. Isaiah 25:4 praises God for being the strength of the poor, the strength of the needy and distressed, a refuge from the storm and all of that, and then goes on in 25:6, Isaiah says, "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the leaves well refined." So

this amazing large banquet at the end of time, this Messianic banquet.

Hank Smith: 00:36:24 You would miss all that if you weren't familiar with your Old Testament.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:36:27 Yeah, and most of these Gospel authors fully expect that their readers will be familiar with the Old Testament so they often will drop hints in there to help their readers see that everything Jesus is doing is a continuation if not a fulfillment of all that was said and promised in the Old Testament.

Hank Smith: 00:36:47 This is Mark's version of the visions and blessings of old are returning.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:36:53 Absolutely.

Hank Smith: 00:36:54 That's what we're seeing and he's probably trying to say that now.

John Bytheway: 00:36:58 Yeah.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:36:58 There's one more thing that I'd like to point out about reading these accounts as a Messianic banquet, and that is in the Dead Sea Scrolls we actually have an account of what the community who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Essenes, what they imagined the Messianic banquet would be like. It's really interesting to compare how Mark and Matthew describe this miraculous feeding of the 5,000 Messianic banquet before the Messianic age, the Messianic banquet in the presence of Jesus, how they describe that in contrast to the way the Dead Sea Scrolls community imagines that their Messianic banquet will be.

00:37:37 Let me share a little bit of this with you. This comes from a document called The Rule of the Congregation. The technical label that scholars have put to this is 1Q Essay 2.11-22.

Hank Smith: 00:37:50 Okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:37:53 That's for all the nerds listening who want to go look it up in their copy of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Hank Smith: 00:37:58 Okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:37:58 But that just means it was found in the first cave in Qumran and-

Hank Smith: 00:38:02 Yeah, we'll do a shout out to Josh Matson.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:38:04 There we go. There we go. So in this rule of the congregation, here's how they imagine a messianic banquet will take place. This is what it says. "At the session of the men of renowned, those summoned to the gathering of the community council, when God begets the Messiah with them, the chief priests of all the congregation of Israel shall enter and all of his brothers, the sons of Aaron, the priests summoned to the assembly, the men of renowned, they shall sit before him, each one according to his dignity."

00:38:35 There's the first thing I want you to note, they're imagining this assembly that includes men of renown, it includes priests, it includes brothers, sons of Aaron, so what I want you to notice here is that they're imagining this community being gathered together that has all of these dignitaries. It has the brothers and sons of Aaron, it has the priests of the assembly, it has men of renown. Then it points out that they shall sit before Him, that is before the Messiah, each one according to his dignity. That idea, that concept that they need to be ranked according to their dignity, comes up again and again.

00:39:14 Now, this is different than what we just saw in Mark. When Mark mentioned rank, he just meant organization, it's not like those who were in groups of a hundred were somehow better than those who were in groups of the fifties or tens or whatever. But here they're literally having them sit according to their rank. So those who have greater honor are sitting closer to the Messiah, those with less honor are sitting farther away.

00:39:42 It goes on to describe this, it says, "After, the Messiah of Israel shall enter and before him shall sit the heads of the thousands of Israel, each one according to his dignity," it emphasizes that again, "according to his position in their camps and according to their marches. And all the heads of the clan shall sit before him, each one according to his dignity." Notice how it emphasizes that again and again and again.

00:40:09 Then it gets down and describes the Messiah taking bread and says afterwards, "The Messiah of Israel shall stretch out His hands towards the bread and afterwards they shall bless all the congregation of the community." So this part's the same. Jesus is the one that blesses the bread in Matthew and Luke. This community is imagining when the Messiah comes, he would perform the blessing on the bread to start the meal. So that part's the same. What's different is once again it then emphasizes, "And in accordance with this precept shall all act at

the meal when at least 10 men are gathered," and so on, "but each according to his dignity."

Hank Smith: 00:40:47

Again.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:40:48

Again and again, it's according to his dignity. To go back to the account in Mark and Luke, notice that the arrangement is not according to dignity, everybody participates equally, and notice that those who are serving the food are Jesus and his disciples. It is Jesus and his disciples, the leaders, who are acting as the servants, as the waiters who are going around serving the bread and the fish to the multitude, who are all equally distributed even if they're grouped in different numbers for ease of distribution.

Hank Smith: 00:41:23

That's fantastic. Is that going to come up again do you think when the disciples say, "Who is the greatest among us?" Is that just something that was part of their culture?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:41:32

This is absolutely something that's part of their culture, it comes up again and again. Jesus has some teachings and some parables that emphasizes that you shouldn't seek the place of honor at the table. In fact, if anything, you should take the place farthest away from the place of honor and wait to be invited to the place of honor. Jesus is constantly turning the cultural expectations on their head and saying that it's the least of those among us who are the most valuable.

John Bytheway: 00:42:00

I'm looking at a couple of verses in Mark 10: 42 and 43, "But Jesus called them to him and sayeth unto them, 'You know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them and their great ones exercise authority upon them, but so shall it not be among you. But whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister.'" So I put in my margin, Gentile leadership versus servant leadership. We've used that phrase in the church sometimes, servant leadership.

00:42:32

I remember a story of down in Central America somewhere where President Hinckley grabbed a mop and started cleaning up the chapel when he was visiting. Do you remember that story? I thought, "Wow, that's so President Hinckley. 'Where's a mop? Let's get to work here.'"

Hank Smith: 00:42:46

Yeah. That's funny. I've got to see that picture.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:42:51

So from there we move into a story of those who, like John Bytheway, walk on water. We will say a little bit more about the

miraculous feeding of the multitude when we get to the Gospel of John. We'll also say a little bit more about Jesus calming a storm and walking on water when we get to John. But for now we're still focusing just on Mark and Matthew since they say things so similar to each other.

00:43:16 Turning to the passage about walking on water, we'll start again with Mark, and then Matthew adds something really important here that's not found in Mark, but let's start off with the account found in Mark. So in Mark, after this feeding of the multitude, they get in a ship and they're going to head across the sea of Galilee. Jesus has stayed behind, he's going to depart into a mountain to pray.

00:43:39 In Mark 6:47, when night has come, the ship was in the midst of the sea and Jesus is alone on the land. In Mark 6:48, "And he saw them toiling and rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, and about the fourth watch of the night, he cometh unto them walking upon the sea and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit and cried out, for they all saw him and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them and said to them, 'Be of good cheer, it is I. Be not afraid.'"

Hank Smith: 00:44:22 You think you'd be scared out there?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:44:25 You can imagine what that would be like.

John Bytheway: 00:44:27 Let's remember that we see paintings of this all the time, but they're painted as if it's in daylight sometimes, but it's the fourth watch, so that makes it even more frightening, you see this dark silhouette coming at you on the water. Maybe that's frightening in the daytime too, but at night it just seems like even more so when is the fourth watch?

Hank Smith: 00:44:47 With every flash of lightning he's getting closer and closer.

John Bytheway: 00:44:50 Getting close, oh man. The fourth watch is what, between 3:00 and 6:00 AM or something?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:44:56 So the fourth watch is the end of the night, so there's probably a little bit of light in the sky, but just enough to start to make out figures in the distance, such as a person walking on the water. But then it's also stormy and that would make it difficult to see.

00:45:12 Just to put this in perspective, the disciples had been at this all night. Mark 6:47, it says, "When evening was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea." So when night came, the ship is in the middle of the sea, and now by 6:48 it's the fourth watch of the night, the night's almost over. So they've been doing this all night long.

Hank Smith: 00:45:31 Rowing and rowing. Yeah, when's the last time you got on the rowing machine for a good nine hours?

John Bytheway: 00:45:36 Do you know what I love about this? The detail in Mark. I'm glad we started here because this is not in Matthew as I recall, but I have underlined verse 48, "He saw them toiling in rowing." Somehow because of where He was on that mountain, He could see them, and just knowing we can apply this, our trials, our problems, He sees us toiling in rowing in a contrary wind. Sometimes we wish He'd come faster, but He sees us. That's a nice way to think about that. He sees everything you're going through. He knows what you're going through.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:46:12 And comes to us in the midst of the toil.

John Bytheway: 00:46:14 He saw them.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:46:16 That's a really good detail to catch. That's important.

John Bytheway: 00:46:19 You guys might remember Sister Susan W. Tanner, her husband, John Tanner that served at BYU and everything. But she was in the young women's general presidency and she said this: "I know that the Lord's tender mercies and His miracles, large and small, are real. They come in His way and on His timetable. Sometimes it is not until we have reached our extremity. Jesus' disciples on the Sea of Galilee had to toil in rowing against a contrary wind all through the night before Jesus finally came to their aid. He did not come until the fourth watch, meaning near dawn, yet He did come. My testimony is that miracles do come, though sometimes not until the fourth watch."

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:47:03 That's really good.

Hank Smith: 00:47:04 And Elder Holland says we should mark that verse 50, "Be of good cheer." He said, "Indeed, it seems to me we may be more guilty of breaking that commandment than almost any other. We need to speak hopefully, speak encouragingly, including about yourself. Try not to complain and moan incessantly." Then he jokes around, "As someone once said, even in the

golden age of civilization someone undoubtedly grumbled that everything looked too yellow."

- John Bytheway: 00:47:31 The golden age.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:47:33 Just to add to that, Hank, I think it's really important to notice that Jesus commands them to be of good cheer before the storm has stopped.
- Hank Smith: 00:47:40 In the middle of the storm.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:47:41 They're still in the midst of the storm, in the midst of toil. It's not until the next verse that when He gets into the ship the winds cease. In the midst of toil He commands them be of good cheer. That's not a commandment that's always easy to fulfill. When I am in the midst of toil, being of good cheer is not the first thing that comes to my mind.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:01 You're strapping your life preserver on.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:48:04 That's right, and yet I think the message here is not that we are commanded to be of good cheer on our own, we're not commanded to summon that on our own, we're commanded to be of good cheer because Christ has come, because He has come to us in our toil.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:18 I love that, Jason.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:48:19 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:19 Our friend and a guest of the show, Brother S. Michael Wilcox has a whole talk, I think it's called The Fourth Watch, and it's just beautiful about this idea of God's timing. What does Elder Maxwell say, "We who wear wristwatches want to counsel God on His cosmic calendar," or something like that? Somebody said once, "He doesn't come when you want, but He's never late."
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:48:43 Yeah. So there are a couple of other details here in the Gospel of Mark that aren't found in Matthew that I think are worth pointing out. One is the end of the story. It points out in Mark 6:52 that the disciples just didn't understand what was going on. At the end of Mark 6:52, it explains their heart was hardened.
- 00:49:04 That's a theme throughout the Gospel of Mark. Mark really points out that they just don't get it. They just weren't expecting Jesus to do, say or be who He was, and they keep surprising

them. Really, it's not until the end of Mark that a human being finally identifies who Jesus is. It's the centurion at the end of Mark who finally says, "Truly this is the Son of God." Of all people, right? Not even one of Jesus' closest disciples. It's a Roman centurion hearing Jesus cry from the cross and pass away that identifies him as the Son of God.

- Hank Smith: 00:49:36 He's always one step ahead of these disciples. To their credit, whoever told Mark this, because John says the same thing, they're humble enough to say, "We didn't understand. We were in the middle of it, we didn't see what He was talking about."
- John Bytheway: 00:49:49 Yeah, they're writing these Gospels after the fact, and sometimes they're like, then they remember. "Yeah, He did say that He was going to..." Yeah.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:49:57 That's right. Yeah, Matthew's a little more generous. Matthew changes it. At the end of Matthew in Matthew 14:33, Matthew says, "Then they that were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, 'Of truth, thou art the Son of God.'"
- Hank Smith: 00:50:12 He didn't like Mark's ending there.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:50:14 Yes, Matthew wants to emphasize that actually the disciples do understand who Jesus is. Of course the truth is the disciples do, they learn step by step, line upon line, and if you're writing a two-part saga like Luke, then you can spend the entire Gospel of Luke showing how the disciples don't quite understand and then spend the rest of the book of Acts showing how the disciples now do understand. Matthew of course did not write a second volume and so Matthew wants to show how the apostles do start to understand. He includes some of those details a little bit earlier, whereas Mark's fine saying, nope, they didn't get it. Not until the very end. Not until Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:59 I often think what are these four Gospel authors discussing in the spirit world? I can see Matthew, "I was there, I'm right about this. I was there."
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:51:09 Yeah. Mark also includes a couple of hints to passages in the Old Testament that help us to see what the disciples should have seen. So Mark ends saying the disciples hearts were hardened, they didn't understand, but Mark includes a couple of details that suggests that they actually should have understood, and these details are back in 6:48.

00:51:32 So let me read Mark 6:48 one more time. "And He saw them toiling in rowing," we've talked about that passage, then it continues, "for the wind was contrary unto them. And about the fourth watch of the night, He cometh unto them walking upon the sea and would have passed them by." It's that final phrase that is in Mark, not found in Matthew, and that should sound a little bit strange.

John Bytheway: 00:51:56 Yeah, He was just out for a walk?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:51:58 Right, especially given everything we were just talking about, Jesus coming to them in their time of trouble. That's definitely what Matthew is trying to emphasize. So Matthew cuts that part because Matthew's trying to emphasize Jesus coming to them in a time of trouble. But that phrase, "and would have passed them by," is not suggesting Jesus was just out casually for a stroll.

00:52:20 Something that Mark does that is rather ingenious, there's an old German scholar, last name Dibelius, that pointed out that Mark is a book of secret epiphanies, suggesting that Mark shows that Jesus is divine in very subtle ways, and this is one of those ways. There are a number of passages in the Old Testament that uses this exact same Greek phrase, describes somebody passing somebody by, and it's always in the context of epiphanies.

00:52:54 Let's take a look at Exodus 34:5 and 6. This is an account of Moses. So the Lord descends in a cloud, he stands with Moses there and proclaims the name of the Lord, and then it says in Exodus 34:6, "and the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth." That's Exodus 34:5 and 6.

00:53:25 But that's not the only example. We could go to Elijah, the famous account of Elijah on the mountain, and the Lord was not in the storm and the Lord was not in the quake and all of that. 1 Kings 19:11, "And he said, 'Go forth and stand upon the Mount before the Lord,' and behold the Lord passed by and great and strong wind," and so on and so forth. Rent the mountains. So this idea of the Lord passing by is one of the ways in the Old Testament that the Lord commonly manifests himself to his prophets.

00:53:58 Now, there's one more instance of the Lord going by that I think is incredibly relevant to what we just saw here, and that is in Job. In Job 9:11, "Lo the Lord, he goeth by me and I see him not.

He passeth on also and I perceive him not now." Here is why I think that passage is so relevant to understanding this. Just a couple of verses earlier in Job 9:8 it describes God as the one who stretches out the heavens and walks on the sea.

Hank Smith: 00:54:35

Wow.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:54:36

In fact, Job 9:8 in the Greek translation makes it even more clear how miraculous this is. Here's the Greek translation, translated into English, of course. "Who alone has stretched out the heavens and walks on the sea as on firm ground?" That's a description of the Lord in Job, and here in Mark we see Jesus walking upon the sea and would have passed them by just like the Lord does time and again in the Old Testament. So they should have seen what was happening and said, "Oh my goodness, Jesus is the Lord." But instead they cry out, "It's a ghost!"

00:55:17

Now, here's where it gets even more interesting. I did some research on this a number of years ago, this is the first academic article I ever published was actually on this verse right here, Mark 6:48, and it was on the fact that the disciples respond to this by saying, "It is a ghost!" Here's why it's interesting. In ancient times, ghosts often appear at night. That's common in our time today. We sort of have this assumption that that's when ghosts show up, at night. In our time, we sort of imagined that the haunting hour would be midnight, that ghosts show up at midnight or something like that. In antiquity, ghosts often show up at twilight or just before dawn, because the assumption was ghosts were material and so you needed a little bit of light to perceive them. Today, we sort of assume that ghosts glow or something like that. In antiquity, they assumed that ghosts needed a little bit of light out to be seen.

Hank Smith: 00:56:12

Or you wouldn't be able to see them. Okay.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:56:14

Yeah. The story starts to sound like the perfect time for a ghostly encounter. It's at night, it's the fourth watch, so there's a little bit of light, but then Mark adds one detail that shows up in absolutely no ancient ghost stories. The one thing that ghosts absolutely cannot do in antiquity is walk on water. Water actually forms a boundary for ghosts. Ghosts cannot pass over water. In fact, this comes from tales, Greek mythology of the dead needing a boat to ferry them across to get to the land of the dead.

00:56:52

So the one thing that ghosts cannot do is walk on water, but here the disciples are in this situation where they would rather

believe the ridiculous, according to their cultural standards, the absurd, that a ghost could walk on water, rather than believing the reality that Jesus Christ comes to them as the Lord walking on water.

- Hank Smith: 00:57:15 Wow. Right out of the Book of Job. I mean, that is quite a connection. That's really fun. That's something, again, if we didn't have a scholar here, John, someone who knows the Greek, we would've passed by that verse.
- John Bytheway: 00:57:27 Yeah, that's good, Hank. Great to connect that to Job and this idea of they should have recognized him. That's what we're saying. If they had this in their minds, they would've gone, "Hey, wait a minute, he just passed by. Hey!" Right?
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:57:42 Yep.
- John Bytheway: 00:57:43 I'm doing the math here.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:57:45 The only being that can walk on water is God. Ghosts can't do that. From their own scriptures and from their own culture they don't think ghosts can do that, and yet they'd rather that their assumption is, "Oh, it's a ghost," instead of realizing the reality from their scriptures.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:01 It's a rule-breaking ghost.
- John Bytheway: 00:58:02 Yeah.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:58:03 Yes.
- John Bytheway: 00:58:04 Well, this is of the things that I love about the scriptures is there are things that are hidden in plain sight. This is just another one for that list. It's right there, always been there in the book of Mark, hidden in plain sight, and it's really fun to discover those. So thank you for that.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:58:20 Yeah. Now Matthew includes some things not found in Mark. In fact, Matthew includes a whole account not found in Mark. We get the account of Peter walking on water. In fact, Matthew includes a lot more about Peter than Mark does. Not only this account, but later on in Matthew 15, Matthew includes that Peter's the one that asked Jesus to explain what he meant when he taught them that it's not what goes into the mouth, but what comes out that defiles. Matthew 16, Jesus teaches Peter that upon this rock he will build his church and the gates of hell, or Hades, the spirit world, will not prevail against it. That's in

Matthew, not in Mark. Matthew 17, we get the people saying, "Why aren't you paying tribute?" And Jesus has Peter go and catch a fish and in that fish's mouth is a coin to pay the tribute. That's in Matthew, but not in Mark.

00:59:13 So Matthew has a lot more details about Peter, and that's probably in part has to do with what we looked at a minute ago with Matthew adding the detail that the disciples worshiped Jesus. Matthew's including more details about how Jesus is preparing His disciples and apostles to continue on after His death and resurrection.

Hank Smith: 00:59:33 Yeah. There does seem to be in Matthew a tutoring of Peter and he goes up and down, sometimes he's doing the right thing and sometimes he's called Satan and then sometimes he's on the Mount of Transfiguration and the other time he's done something that frustrates the Lord for some reason.

John Bytheway: 00:59:47 It's hard to imagine Mark writing this that Peter walking on water didn't make the cut. Eh, it's...

Hank Smith: 00:59:54 Yeah.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:59:54 At the same time, it wouldn't fit with one of Mark's emphases that the disciples don't understand who Jesus is until the end. I think part of the reason Mark does that is he wants to help his readers realize that they need to be the ones to carry this on. It's a message for us. The disciples didn't understand during Jesus's life, now we all understand, we need to share this message, we need to carry the message forward.

01:00:26 So Matthew includes this whole account not found in Mark of Peter calling out to the Lord as he is coming to him, walking on water, saying, "If it's you, bid me to come and walk on the water." This is Matthew 14:28-31, and Peter does. Again, the storm is still going on. This is still in the midst of the toil that we were talking about before that that takes a lot of faith.

01:00:50 I think oftentimes we skip to the end where Peter sinks and Jesus says, "Oh ye of little faith," and don't realize how much faith it must have taken to take that first step to even get out of the boat in the midst of this storm and this toil. So this is absolutely an example of Peter's faithfulness, even if he in the end still needed to rely on the Savior. But I think that's a message for all of us, to whatever faith we have, ultimately we are dependent on our Savior, and that's where our faith needs to lie.

John Bytheway: 01:01:23 Do you know what I've always wondered about this? Is when Jesus stretched forth his hand in verse 31 of Matthew 14 and caught him, it just doesn't say what, did they both walk back to the ship together? Did they get into the ship? Did they walk back to the shore? I just really want to see the video of what happened next because it doesn't say. Do you imagine they got back on the ship together?

Dr. Jason Combs: 01:01:47 Well, it does. In verse 32, they come into the ship, so they do get into the ship, but it doesn't give us a whole lot of detail, you're right. How do they get back over to the ship? Does Jesus pick up Peter and put him on his back and carry him over? How exactly does that work?

John Bytheway: 01:02:04 Yeah, that's what, do they both walk over together?? I mean, wow, what a spectacle that would be. I've always just wondered, it wouldn't do me any good because I don't speak Aramaic or whatever they were speaking, but just the tone of voice of Peter saying, "Can I do that?" I mean, "If it be thou, bid me." I want to try that. I don't know if it's faith. "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." I think it gives us a window into Peter that is interesting.

Dr. Jason Combs: 01:02:33 If we look at verse 30, it's interesting that it describes him as beginning to sink. You'd think if you're standing on water and you start to sink that you would just immediately sink. The fact that it describes him as beginning to sink to me sounds like this is a gradual process that it sounds like slowly maybe he didn't entirely lose his faith, he started to doubt a little bit and that caused him to sink a little bit.

01:03:03 Reading this carefully, we'd also have to ask, how close is he to Jesus? How far did he get walking on water? Certainly he's close enough that when he begins to sink and cries out, "Lord, save me," all Jesus has to do is stretch out his hand. It doesn't describe Jesus running to him on the water to stretch out his hand, it just says he stretched out his hand.

01:03:25 I think reading this carefully makes us think about what exactly did this look like? How close was Jesus to the boat? How many steps did Peter take on the water? What does Matthew want us to imagine here?

Hank Smith: 01:03:38 Yeah. I had a friend once point out to me that so often we attached the sinking to what the Savior says later, "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" I just had a friend point out, he said, "Couldn't he be talking about, 'Oh thou of little faith, wherefore did you doubt that I would save you?'"

Save me? He's like, "Of course I'm going to save you. What do you think, I'm going to leave you out here to drown?"

01:04:01 "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt that I would save you?" It was a new idea to me that maybe it's not connected to Peter sinking, his little faith. Maybe it's this, maybe it's, "Look what you did with just a little faith. You walked on water."

John Bytheway: 01:04:19 In verse 30 it says, "When he saw the wind boisterous," and I've often tried to apply this in a way about kind of a keep your eyes on the Savior type of a thing. One of my favorite verses, the section 19:23, "Learn of me, listen to my words, walk in the meekness of my spirit." You'll have peace in me, not anything else, Martin Harris. Not all the things he was going through.

01:04:44 But anyway, Elder Holland commented on this and he said this: "While Peter's eyes were fixed upon the Lord, the wind could toss his hair and the spray could drench his robes, but all was well, he was coming to Christ. It was only when his faith wavered and fear took control, only when he removed his glance from the master to look at the furious waves and the ominous black gulf beneath, only then did he begin to sink into the sea."

01:05:12 So I like the idea of he looked over at the wind and went, "Uh-oh." Maybe that's when he started beginning to sink instead of keeping his eyes on the Savior's. That was an April 1998 Ensign.

Dr. Jason Combs: 01:05:25 I think that's an important reminder to us that life is full of distractions. It can be difficult in the busyness of life to keep our focus on the Savior, on spiritual things. Especially in this age where there's so much to distract us. We carry around devices in our pockets that constantly distract us.

Hank Smith: 01:05:46 And the distractions are quite scary sometimes.

Dr. Jason Combs: 01:05:49 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 01:05:49 I like to ask my class when I'm looking at this story because I have a painting and there are a number of them of Jesus walking on the water, and if we apply it that way, look at the winds and the waves, what are those? And we make a list. They're social issues, political issues, all these different things can distract us from keeping our eyes on the Savior where our power is.

	01:06:13	Elder Richard G. Scott said, I love short quotations that I can memorize, he said, "Satan has a powerful tool to use against good people, it is distraction."
	01:06:23	I think of the war chapters in the Book of Mormon, "Let's decoy our enemy out of their stronghold." Let's distract them. Let's make them think this is something it isn't. The keeping our eyes on Christ becomes a super important. Just a fun way to apply this story.
Dr. Jason Combs:	01:06:41	Yeah, absolutely, and once again, brings us back to the primary answers, right? It's faith, it's scripture study, it's saying our daily prayers. It's attending the temple, attending sacrament meeting. Those sorts of things help us maintain that focus.
Hank Smith:	01:06:56	Yeah. If you're going to watch the news, keep your scriptures right next to you.
Dr. Jason Combs:	01:06:59	There you go. So you can hold them up to block the news, right?
Hank Smith:	01:07:05	You won't be afraid.
John Bytheway:	01:07:06	Those are your weapons, right, Hank? Like this guy said.
Dr. Jason Combs:	01:07:09	There you go.
John Bytheway:	01:07:12	Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:00:03 Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:00:08 Let's move on to the Gospel of John, to John 5 and 6.
- John Bytheway: 00:00:14 One of the non-Synoptic Gospels. So what do we call it? Just John, that's what we call it.
- Hank Smith: 00:00:21 There's the Synoptics and then there's John.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:00:23 And then there's John. Yeah. So Eusebius, who's a fourth century Christian historian, quotes Clement of Alexandria who was writing in the second century, and he says that the reason we have the Gospel of John is because of John's disciples. He says that John's disciples encouraged John to write this gospel and that John was familiar with the other gospels, so he decided to write a different kind of gospel. According to Clement of Alexandria quoted in Eusebius, he decided to write a more symbolic gospel or a more spiritual gospel.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:00 The backstage pass.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:01:02 That's right. Yeah. You can see that throughout John in the way that he selects his stories. For instance, John's the one that makes it clear to us that there could have been a lot more books than what we have. He says that at the end of the gospel, that if we had written down everything Jesus said and did, the world couldn't fit all the books that could be written. So John is being incredibly selective in the stories he chooses, and it just so happens that some of the stories we're looking at today are stories that are found in the Synoptic Gospels. John includes the account of Jesus walking on water, he includes the account of Jesus miraculously feeding a multitude of 5,000 people.
- 00:01:42 But the way that John writes those stories is totally different than the Synoptic Gospels. You can put the Synoptic Gospels side by side and sometimes read straight across and they use the exact same words. John tells the same stories using his own words. He's being a little more creative here. Now, one of the things John does in being very selective and symbolic in terms of

the stories he chooses is John chooses seven miracles of Jesus to emphasize throughout his gospel. He likes the number seven. It's complete, whole, perfect, and you've already discussed on the podcast this year the miracle of turning water into wine, the miracle of healing the nobleman's son at the end of John 4.

00:02:31 Now in chapter 5 and 6, we get three miracles, three more miracles back to back. We get the healing of a man who is lame at the pool of Bethesda, and then we get the feeding of 5,000, and then we get the miracle of walking on water. That will leave you with two more miracles to cover with your future guests, the healing of the man born blind in John 9 and then the raising of Lazarus from the dead in John 11. So notice how John punctuates these miracles with a raising somebody from the dead miracle to lead into then Jesus' own raising of the dead as his resurrection.

John Bytheway: 00:03:11 I seem to recall too that John doesn't have any parables by one definition of it. There's a place where it says He spake a parable. "I am the good shepherd," which isn't really the kind of parable, but there's no parables.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:03:23 Yes, and another thing that's interesting, I've been describing all these seven miracles as miracles, but John doesn't call them that. John doesn't use the word miracles. He calls them signs. So for John, each one of these is a sign that Jesus is performing that is a miracle, it is miraculous, but it's a sign that points us to Jesus, that helps us understand more about who Jesus is. So let's start off with sign number three in John 5. So John 5 begins by telling us that there's a feast of the Jews that's coming up, and so Jesus goes to Jerusalem. This doesn't specify which feast right here, and we'll talk more about what feasts are happening in just a minute in the next chapter.

00:04:10 That's a detail that's not as important to this story. What's important about this story is the detail it will reveal in John 5:9, that this story takes place on the Sabbath. Here we have Jesus at Jerusalem by the sheep market. There's this pool that's called, in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda we're told having five porches. Then it goes on in verse three, "And in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water." So there's a bunch of people who are powerless, who are disabled waiting for the moving of the water. Now John 4 continues to describe why they're waiting for the moving of the water.

00:04:57 John 5:4 says, "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water, and whosoever then first after

the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." If you take a look in the New Testament Institute manual, it quotes Elder McConkie. Here it's quoting his doctrinal New Testament commentary. Here's a quote from Elder McConkie. "Any notion that an angel came down and troubled the waters, so that the first person thereafter entering them would be healed, was pure superstition. Healing miracles are not wrought in any such manner." I think that Elder McConkie would be pleased to know that that whole verse does not show up in most of the earliest New Testament manuscripts. It's missing. It was added later.

- John Bytheway: 00:05:51 It's a tradition.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:05:52 It is.
- John Bytheway: 00:05:53 They see bubbles and think, "I bet that's an angel probably."
- Hank Smith 00:05:56 Well, I can see why someone would put in the explanation because if you didn't have it, you wouldn't know what the guy was saying when he says, I have no man to put me in the water. You'd be like, "Why did he say that? What are you waiting for?" So somebody, probably well-meaning, put it in.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:06:09 But it's nice to know their Bible did not originally say that an angel was coming down and making the water into a fountain of youth or something like that.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:20 You don't see that in the gospel very often, right, Jason? You don't see first come, first serve. I got one piece of sacrament bread up here.
- John Bytheway: 00:06:27 This is the real way to be healed. It's get in line quickly.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:06:32 We just read about Jesus multiplying loaves and fishes to feed a multitude. He didn't just throw one loaf in the air and said whoever grabs it gets it. Yeah. So there's the man who's waiting there, and we're told in verse five he has been struggling with his infirmity for quite a long time. He's been dealing with this for 38 years. Jesus sees him and approaches him recognizing how long a time he has waited to be healed, and Jesus walks up to him and in verse six asks, "Wilt thou be made whole," and the man reacts by saying, "Well, yeah, that's why I'm here. I'd love to be made whole. I can't make it into the pool fast enough. I need somebody to help get me into the pool." So he's expecting Jesus to respond by saying, "Well, I'll help you out."

00:07:19 I'll get you into the pool as soon as it's stirred. I'll get you in there fast enough so that you can be healed," but instead in verse eight, Jesus says, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk," and in verse eight, we're told immediately, the man was made whole, took up his bed and walked, and then we're told that this is a Sabbath day and that sets up what we're about to read next. Next, we find out that that causes some trouble because now this man is walking around the city carrying his bed on the Sabbath. Some people spot him. This might be a good point to point out that John often summarizes Jesus' opponents by just saying "The Jews." In Matthew and Mark, it's the Pharisees or the scribes or the chief priests or the Herodians.

00:08:09 In John, time and again, John will just say the Jews did this, and I think it's important to remember that this is John writing at a later time when Christians and Jews are having disagreements with each other. They're separated. At the time that Jesus lived, Jesus is very much Jewish. Jesus is attending synagogue. Jesus was circumcised according to the covenant. He is fully Jewish and his disciples are all Jewish. So it would be a little bit surprising for somebody who's Jewish in the time of Jesus to read John and say, "Wait a minute, what do you mean the Jews?"

00:08:47 Jesus is a Jew, but by the time that John is writing this, even Christians who were Jews are often being kicked out of the synagogue, not allowed to participate if they wanted to. Christians have formed their own groups by this time. So from John's perspective, it is Jesus versus the Jews even though in Jesus' lifetime, things are a little more complicated. The Jews are Pharisees and Sadducees and Herodians and chief priests and scribes and Jesus and his disciples. There are lots of Jews that are following Jesus.

John Bytheway: 00:09:20 President Boyd Kay Packer gave the most beautiful talk called The Moving of the Water, and this was in April 1991 and I know that the three of us here have been to the pool of Bethesda before. It's kind of like way low, isn't it, because the place where you're standing is higher than the level where this would've taken place, but President Packer said, he quoted this story from John 5 and then he said, "There has always been, in all of humanity, a sprinkling of those who are described in the scriptures as the blind, the halt, the lame, the deaf, the wither, the dumb, the impotent folk. We refer to them as having learning or communication disorders, as the hearing or visually impaired, those with motor or orthopedic limitations.

00:10:11 We speak of intellectual or emotional impairment, mental illness. Some suffer from a combination of these. All of them cannot function without help. I speak to the families of those who, at birth or as the result of accident or disease, must live with an impaired body or mind. I desire to bring comfort to those to whom the words handicapped or disability have a very personal meaning," and then he goes on to teach doctrine of the resurrection, of never ridiculing or teasing. There's just a couple of paragraphs that I thought were so beautiful. "You parents and you families whose lives must be reordered because of a handicapped one whose resources and time must be devoted to them." Give me a sec here. I have extended family I'm thinking about. "Our special heroes, you are manifesting the works of God with every thought, every gesture of..." Hang on, guys. Hank, tell me a joke. Let's see.

Hank Smith: 00:11:18 You're doing great.

John Bytheway: 00:11:19 Okay, hang on. Let me take a deep breath. "You are manifesting the works of God with every thought, with every gesture of tenderness and care you extend to the loved one. Nevermind the tears, nor the hours of regret and discouragement. Nevermind the times you feel you cannot stand another day of what is required. You are living the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ in exceptional purity and you perfect yourselves in the process. The day of healing will come. Bodies which are deformed and minds which are warped will be made perfect. In the meantime, we must look after those who wait by the pool of Bethesda." Isn't that beautiful?

Hank Smith: 00:12:05 Yeah, it is beautiful.

John Bytheway: 00:12:07 Because we know people who devote a lot of their lives to taking care of a loved one and who are waiting by the pool at Bethesda. I just thought that was a beautiful talk and I think we all know some who do that.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:12:21 Thanks for sharing that.

John Bytheway: 00:12:22 Yeah. Absolutely.

Hank Smith: 00:12:23 Jason, is this Jesus' first miracle in Jerusalem? Do we know? Because so often in our minds, we think all of this is happening in the same place where a lot of his miracles are taking place up in Galilee, which is in the northern part of the country and this is in the southern part of the country?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:12:41 Yeah. This is one of those details that's unique to the Gospel of John. In the other gospels, they focus entirely on Jesus' mission in Galilee and they leave the stories about what Jesus did in Jerusalem for the very end of their gospels. Remember, the Bible Dictionary entry we read at the beginning suggests that we don't really know the chronological order and that each of the gospels, because they're testimonies are sharing their testimonies, they're not trying to get the chronology perfect, although some may want to.

00:13:14 Luke, at the beginning of his gospel, in the first four verses, he says that he is trying to give an order to count of the things and he talks about he knows eyewitnesses. He's talking to eyewitnesses. So Luke may be presenting his gospel as the definitive chronology, but based on comparing all the gospels, it's really difficult to say. So in the Gospel of John, Jesus comes to Jerusalem a couple of times, but in the other gospels, we only get Jesus in Jerusalem at the end of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Hank Smith: 00:13:43 Yeah. Coming for his final time.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:13:45 Coming for his final time, and I think they do that intentionally to present that as Jesus' final time so that when you see Jesus has prophesied in all three of the gospels, he prophesied multiple times that he will go to Jerusalem and he'll have to suffer many things of the chief priest and others there, and that he will then die and be resurrected in Jerusalem. By the other gospels saving Jerusalem for the end, it sets us up as readers of the gospels to feel a little bit of anxiety as Jesus is approaching Jerusalem because we know what's coming. Jesus has prophesied it multiple times.

Hank Smith: 00:14:19 But John, he goes to Jerusalem?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:14:21 John, he goes to Jerusalem other times. Yeah. I should mention there is one account in Luke where Jesus goes to Jerusalem as a child. At the end of Luke 2, Jesus goes as a 12-year-old to a festival with his parents there and then goes back, but in terms of his ministry.

Hank Smith: 00:14:37 It wasn't until I went to the Holy Land that I understood, wow, this is a long ways away from Galilee where he's spending a lot of time, where his disciples are from, and then that trip down to Jerusalem, that was quite a trip.

00:14:49 So Jason, it's the Sabbath. It's kind of the dun, dun, dun moment.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:14:55 It is the Sabbath.

Hank Smith: 00:14:56 He just mentions it right at the very end of the story. Oh, by the way.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:15:00 Right at the very end of the story in 5:9, we get that and then to make sure we don't forget that, it's repeated in the very next verse. In 5:10, "The Jews therefore said unto him, that was cured, it is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed," and just in case you forget, by verse 16, we're reminded, "And because he had done these things on the Sabbath," so we're reminded multiple times that all of these events are happening on the Sabbath.

John Bytheway: 00:15:31 Is anybody there just going, this is so wonderful. That man for 38 years had been like this. Does that just go, whew. How come nobody's going, this is the best day ever? Did you see what we just saw? That man has been...

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:15:47 It's not entirely clear from the story that the Jews who are questioning him were aware that he was just cured. They just see him walking around with this bed and then he's the one that tells them, "Hey, it's the one that just made me whole that told me to take up my bed and walk in verse 11." So then they ask him, "Wait a minute, who said this to thee? Who said to thee take up thy bed and walk," and he says, "I don't know," because Jesus had just cured him and then stepped away, and apparently, the man obeyed him so quickly, he just jumped up, grabbed his bed and walked away.

Hank Smith: 00:16:21 I didn't get a name.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:16:23 Didn't get a name. Forgot to ask.

John Bytheway: 00:16:25 The movie the church made about this, I love the actor they chose to be this man. His eyes looking up at the Savior, just go find them of church Bible videos on this story. It's really good.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:16:36 I'll have to take a look at that. So then Jesus finds him again. He finds him in the temple in verse 14 and says to him, "Thou art made whole: sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee." I think it's important to pause right there and remind ourselves that Jesus isn't connecting sin to disability or sin to sickness there. I think you could misread that as thinking, oh, wait a minute. Jesus is saying sin no more lest you're going to become crippled again. I don't think that's what's going on, and I think Jesus makes that very clear later in chapter nine when people

are asking a question about a man who had been blind since birth and they're asking whose fault is it, and Jesus answers and says, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents."

00:17:24 Jesus is not suggesting that disability or sickness is in any way attached to sin. I think that's really important to point out so that we don't misread this verse, but Jesus has now identified himself to the man. So the man departs and tells the Jews that were asking before that it's Jesus. So in verse 16, we learned that the Jews start to persecute Jesus and even seek to slay him, it says, because he had done these things on the Sabbath, and Jesus answers them and doesn't deny it, but in fact, in some ways, as Jesus often does in the Gospel of John, doubles down on the very thing that is upsetting them. So Jesus says, "The Father worketh hitherto and I work."

00:18:10 And then the Jews responded and it says they sought the more to kill him because he had not only broken the Sabbath, but he had said that God was his father, making himself equal to God. Now, I think it's important to note there that the Jews are not upset that he said his father works on the Sabbath. That doesn't seem to upset them. They're only upset that he makes himself equivalent to God and that he is working on the Sabbath, and I think the reason they're not so upset that he suggests God works on the Sabbath is because that was a common assumption held by lots of Jews in that time period.

00:18:45 Even though the beginning of Genesis 2 makes it clear that God rested on the Sabbath, a lot of Jews pointed out that that must have been a one-time thing for God and that God must, in our day, work on the Sabbath, and their logic for that is just look around. Plants continue to grow on the Sabbath, babies are born on the Sabbath, the world keeps on spinning on the Sabbath, which means God, who controls everything in the universe, must still be working on the Sabbath.

Hank Smith: 00:19:18 Still working.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:19:19 So they're not upset that Jesus is saying the Father works on the Sabbath. That's common knowledge for them. What they're upset with is that they see Jesus working on the Sabbath and Jesus making himself equal to God, they say. Once again, Jesus, rather than diffusing the situation, doubles down again, and in verse 19, says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for the things soever he doeth, these the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth all things to him that he himself doeth," and so on.

00:19:57 And then goes on to give other examples where the Father "raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." Again, doubling down on the equivalence between himself and the Father. Now, it's interesting that Jesus went with this particular example, quickeneth, just fancy old King James English meaning giving life, and that was one of the arguments they made for God working on the Sabbath. They said God works on the Sabbath because you can see plants are still growing, babies are still born. In other words, God is still giving life to the world on the Sabbath, but here Jesus is saying, "I'm doing it too. God has given me, the Son, the power to quickeneth whom he will."

John Bytheway: 00:20:40 Yeah. In fact, I have a note from Elder Talmage about this. The Saviors reply to their charges is not confined to the question of Sabbath observance. It stands as the most comprehensive sermon in scripture on the vital subject of the relationship between the Eternal Father and His son Jesus Christ. So that's exactly what you're saying. That's in Jesus the Christ in page 208, but yeah, it's about instead of, like you said, instead of diffusing the situation, he explained, "Yeah, this is how I'm like the father."

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:21:11 Yeah. And he continues to give other examples of that. John 5:26, "Where the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," and so on. It seems like by around verse 30, verse 31, it seems like Jesus is anticipating that those listening to him are going to say Jesus is sure talking a lot about himself. So in verse 31, Jesus shifts gears a little bit and says, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true," and then he starts talking about those who do bear witness to him, and it's interesting that all of this is happening in the context of, let me point to just a couple of verses and see if you can pick up on the stage that Jesus is setting for us. Look at John 5:22.

00:22:03 "The father judges no man but have committed all judgment to his Son." Verse 27, "And have given him authority to execute judgment." Verse 30, "I judge and my judgment is just." Now moving into verse 31 and following, "If I bear witness of myself," and then he's going to start identifying in verse 36, "I have a greater witness." Back in verse 33, "He bear witnessed." We moved from Jesus mentioning judgment, judgment, judgment. Now we're talking about witnesses and then by the time we get down to verse 45, "There is one that accuseth you." He has transformed this whole discourse, this dialogue with the Jews into a trial scene where it's no longer Jesus who is being put on trial. They came to him and accused him of breaking the Sabbath. He has now turned the tables and it's now them who

are on trial. He is bringing witnesses in for himself and in the end, it's Moses that accuses them.

- Hank Smith: 00:23:13 He knows how to control a conversation.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:23:15 Yeah, no kidding.
- John Bytheway: 00:23:16 I love it when, what is it, the end of Matthew, "No man asked him any more questions." [inaudible 00:23:22], you'll lose. You can't tangle with this guy.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:23:27 Let's take a look at some of these witnesses he calls for himself. He, first of all, acknowledges that if he bears witness of himself, his witness isn't true. So he's saying don't just trust what I am saying. Don't trust my own witness of myself. There are other witnesses. Then he goes and mentions that they had sent to John and that John bears witness of the truth, but then he says, "But I received not testimony from a man." So he says, you don't even have to trust John's testimony. In verse 36, he says that the Father has given him certain works and that the works he does, those bear witness of him.
- 00:24:09 So Jesus' works that he is performing, presumably these signs as well as the teachings, these bear witness of him and of the Father. Then in verse 37, "The Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me." So the Father bears witness of him. Now, Jesus acknowledges in that verse that they haven't heard the voice of the Father. They need to be paying a little better attention, but that the Father does bear witness of him. Now in verse 39, he suggests that the scriptures bear witness of him.
- Hank Smith: 00:24:47 They testify of me.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:24:49 Yes. Now this verse, we should talk a little about the way this is translated in the King James version. It's translated a little bit different in other versions. It's not that the King James translators are wrong grammatically. To get kind of technical here, the Greek that lies behind this, the phrase we're talking about is the very beginning of 5:39, "search the scriptures." That's a command the way they've translated it in the King James version, search the scriptures, and sometimes we've used it that way. We've used it as to encourage our youth. Look, the scriptures tell you you need to search the scriptures. Now the institute manual helpfully corrects this, but it doesn't really explain why because there's really not a whole lot of room in

the institute manual to give technical Greek explanations, but here's the technical explanation.

00:25:42 In the Greek, the second person plural, present active indicative form of the verb looks exactly the same as the second person plural, present active imperative. In other words, if you don't have any other context to go on, if you were to see this Greek verb, it could be translated either as the command, search the scriptures, or as a present verb saying you all are searching the scriptures, and actually, based on the context, I think that second translation fits the context a little better. It seems to me what Jesus is telling them is that they are searching the scriptures because they think that in those scriptures, they have eternal life. Jesus then goes on to point out that the scriptures testify of Jesus. It's in Jesus that they have eternal life, not in the book. The book just points to Jesus. So don't think that you are getting eternal life out of the book. The point of the book is to point to Jesus.

Hank Smith: 00:26:56 Yeah, it looks like almost every other translation.

John Bytheway: 00:26:59 It starts out you search the scriptures because you think you have eternal life in there, but they testify of me and you're not willing to come to me, which is a different meaning.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:27:09 That's right.

Hank Smith: 00:27:09 This one is you pour over the scriptures because you preserve that by them, you possess eternal life.

John Bytheway: 00:27:16 Can I quote Dr. Andrew Skinner that we've had on the program before? He said, "Jesus is actually being a bit reproving here. He's saying in essence, you study the scriptures because you think that activity brings eternal life, but the scriptures testify of me and I give eternal life. The Jewish sages of Jesus' day believe that the act of studying the Torah brought eternal life, but Jesus pointedly taught that the scriptures do not bring salvation. Sacred writ was given to testify of him and he, God, was the vehicle of salvation." That's in his books, Prophets, Priests and Kings, page two.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:27:53 That's great.

John Bytheway: 00:27:54 But I have really enjoyed that because I have thought that we have misquoted that for years. Search the scriptures for in them, you think... No, because it's you think you have eternal life in the scriptures. You don't. You have eternal life in me and

the scriptures testify of me, so that part's true. They are they which testify of me, but you're not willing to come to me and I love what you've done here, Jason, is listing the witnesses, so I've got in my margin. Okay. John was a witness, my works, my signs and teachings are a witness, the Father is a witness and the scriptures testify of me.

- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:28:31 Yeah. We have one more witness.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:33 And one more coming.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:28:34 In John 5:46, Jesus said, "For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me for he wrote of me." So in the verse right before that, that's where Jesus said, "There's one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust."
- John Bytheway: 00:28:51 Wow. And Moses was such a big deal to them. I've always thought about the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus said, "Yeah, you've heard it said of old time this, but I say this," and they're like, "Who do you think you are?" "Well, I was the one who talked to Moses. That was me in the bush there," and you've heard it said of old time this, Moses, but I say that was that audacious statement of who he was. Okay, here's my question, Jason. For he wrote of me, implicit or more symbolically because I know the Book of Mormon says that didn't Moses raise a brazen serpent and then testify that that's the son of God, and I'm like, well, that's not in Numbers, but it's in the Book of Mormon that it was that explicit. This is the son of God, but you don't see it in the Old Testament. So when he says he wrote of me, more implied?
- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:29:44 I would take it as implied and what I'm thinking of is in the Gospel of Luke, after Jesus has been resurrected and he meets those two disciples on the road to Emmaus, that's another one of those examples of the disciples still not understanding who Jesus is. Even after his death, when Jesus meets with them and they don't recognize that it's Jesus resurrected, walking with them, they start to tell him of what has happened and of how Jesus died, and it's interesting that they say we thought he was the Messiah. The implication seems to be, "Yeah, we thought he was the Messiah, but then he died," and it's interesting that the very next thing Jesus does is it says he opens the scriptures unto them. So it takes Jesus after his resurrection, helping his disciples to learn to read the scriptures that then they begin to see Jesus in the scriptures.
- John Bytheway: 00:30:36 Isn't it ought not Christ to have died, doesn't he say it that way? Wait.

Hank Smith: 00:30:40 Yeah. To have suffered these things.

John Bytheway: 00:30:42 How did you miss this?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:30:43 Yeah. Talking about Moses in 5:46 there sets us up nicely for the context of chapter six.

John Bytheway: 00:30:50 Yeah. Here comes the manna thing. Yeah.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:30:53 That's right. John tells us in 6:4 that it's near time for the Passover. So the events of the Passover provide us the context for understanding the events that happened in John 6. Now of course, Passover commemorates the events of the Exodus. So it's all about how Israel was redeemed from slavery in Egypt and redeemed by the Lord through Moses leading them out of Egypt, and then of course, as part of that, they cross the Red Sea on dry ground and then they wander in the wilderness for 40 years, that time surviving off of just the Lord providing manna or quail in one instance, bread miraculously provided from heaven. So Passover commemorated all of this.

00:31:39 And if you look at a summary of what you find in John 6, we see events that parallel all of those things I just described at Passover, the miraculous feeding of the multitude, the miraculous feeding of 5,000 parallels Israel being miraculously fed by manna in the wilderness, and then of course, by John 6:22 and following, Jesus goes into a discourse on bread from heaven and that discourse involves discussion about one of the responses they give to him in 6:31 is our fathers did eat manna in the desert as it is written. He gave them bread from heaven to eat and then Jesus quotes that back to them in verse 49, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness." So the context is thinking about Passover, is thinking about wandering in the wilderness.

00:32:30 I skipped right over the event before the bread from heaven discourse. In between the miraculous feeding of the multitude and the bread from heaven discourse, we get Jesus walking on water. You think Moses parting the Red Sea is miraculous, Jesus doesn't even need to part the sea. He just walks right over the top of it. We get all of these events, all of these signs. Remember these, we are coming back to some of our signs here now. We get the sign of Jesus miraculously feeding the multitude and the sign of Jesus walking on water pointing to Jesus as a new Moses and as more than Moses because he's doing something more than Moses had done. Moses announced that food would be provided for Israel, but it was God from

heaven that provided that food. It was God that provided, it was manna from heaven, bread from heaven.

John Bytheway: 00:33:20 I love how Jesus says that there because they're like our fathers did eat manna in the desert. He gave them bread from heaven to eat, talking about Moses in Jesus in verse 32. Moses gave you not the bread. That was my father who gave you the bread.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:33:34 That's right. So because we've already spent so much time on the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and on walking on water, I think we can skip over those two stories in John and get into Jesus' teachings here, but I do want to point out one detail that John adds that is very different from what is in Matthew and Mark. This is right at the end of the miracle of multiplying the loaves and fishes. In verse 16 and 15 of John chapter 6, the people having experienced this miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes recognize that Jesus is a prophet, and then verse 15 tells us that Jesus perceives that they are going to come and take him by force to make him king. So it's at that point that Jesus departs into a mountain by himself alone.

00:34:25 Now I think that detail is really important in the context of the Gospel of John because it sets us up for a heartbreak. At this point, there's a multitude of 5,000 people who are ready to make Jesus king, and by the end of John 6, by the time we get to John 6:66, we learned that from that time, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. What we are going to witness as we continue in this chapter is the tragic loss of all of these disciples, these people who are ready to make Jesus king, but it seems like they're ready to make Jesus king when they think that he is something different than what he is and he's about to teach them who he actually is. He's not going to be a Moses-like king.

00:35:22 Some Jewish traditions in the time did describe Moses as being like a king. He's not going to be a David-like king. He is going to be a different kind of king, a king not of this world as he will explain later in the Gospel of John. Let's take a look at what Jesus teaches them that causes many of them to turn away. So moving into the bread from heaven discourse that begins in John 6:22. In John 6:26, Jesus answers them and says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat the loaves and were filled." So according to Jesus here, they're not seeking him because of what he did was miraculous, but because they got a free meal out of it.

00:36:09 So Jesus has identified that and says that's a problem and he is going to teach them a little more about that now. Now before we leave this first, I think it's worth pointing out that in this King James version translation, it says because ye saw the miracles. It's actually not the best translation. The Greek word behind that is Samaya, which means signs. We talked about this a little bit earlier and John, John doesn't talk about Jesus performing miracles even though what Jesus does is quite miraculous. John always calls them signs. His point is that these miraculous actions Jesus is performing point us to Jesus, point us to who Jesus is, and that's exactly what Jesus' critique is here, that they saw the sign and instead of recognizing that it was about Jesus and that they need to understand who he is, they were excited about the free meal and they want more.

Hank Smith: 00:37:03 I quote Philippians 3:19 to my boys all the time, "Your God is your belly," Paul says.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:37:10 I think that is true of all teenagers.

Hank Smith: 00:37:12 Yes.

John Bytheway: 00:37:14 The way to a man's heart through his stomach.

Hank Smith: 00:37:16 We keep Costco in business. Yes.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:37:20 So then Jesus goes on to teach them that they need to not labor for the kind of food, the kind of meat that perishes, but for meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the son of man shall give you. So now Jesus is going to start to teach them what this food is that gives everlasting life and help them to understand ultimately, that it is Him. Skipping ahead to John 6:30. Notice here, the King James version does translate as sign. Here, it's them asking Jesus, "What signs showest thou then that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert as it is written." He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Notice how they're putting it in the form of a question, but they're trying to get Jesus to perform the miracle. They're just asking him to perform again. They're still after the free meal.

Hank Smith: 00:38:14 Trying to use the scriptures to trick him.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:38:16 Exactly. Jesus had just shown them a version of this miracle, a version of the fathers eating manna in the desert. It's not that they didn't see that. They saw it and they're trying to get Jesus to do it again. So Jesus then responds to them and says, "Yeah,

you're right. Moses is not the one that gave you that bread from heaven though. It was actually my father who giveth you the true bread from heaven," and then he goes on to explain in verse 35, "I am the bread from heaven. He that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

00:38:53 They quoted that passage about he gaveth them bread from heaven to eat. Notice that Jesus goes on to explain how he is the bread of life in verse 38, "For I came down from heaven." So Jesus is putting himself in direct parallel to that passage they quoted at him about bread from heaven that he then quoted back, bread from heaven. Now he's saying, "Yes, you're right. I am the bread of life. I came down from heaven," and goes on to explain not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.

John Bytheway: 00:39:27 And we recall here that he was born in Bethlehem, which means house of bread. We brought this up at the Christmas thing, but I think it's him calling himself the bread of life and coming from that place is a nice connection.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:39:41 Yeah. So this idea of Jesus being the bread from heaven, that would not be unfamiliar, that concept of bread from heaven being something more than manna is not a concept that's unfamiliar to Jews in that time period. Think about the passage in Matthew and Luke that Jesus quotes during his temptations, during his temptations where Satan tries to tempt Jesus to turn a stone into bread. Jesus responds by quoting a passage from Deuteronomy 8. Now the temptations are not in John, but this is a passage, Deuteronomy 8 is a passage that was familiar to lots of people in that time and here's what it says. This is Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 2 and 3. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these 40 years in the wilderness."

00:40:30 So once again, reminding us we're talking about wilderness, we're talking about manna and the wilderness, "To humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no, and he humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not. Neither did thy fathers know that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceed out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Okay. So keep that in the background here. This is a teaching that was familiar to them. They knew that the manna was not just manna, but that manna could also point them to bread from heaven and that man must not live by

bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of Lord.

00:41:22 Of course, for John, the word of God is Jesus. We got that from John 1. Jesus is called the word of God that comes down from heaven. Now in the Old Testament, there are other figures who are described as being bread from heaven, most commonly, wisdom that is often personified. For instance, in Proverbs 9, it describes wisdom and then says in 9:5, wisdom is speaking and says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled," symbolically saying, you need to ingest wisdom. You need to take wisdom into you. There's another example of that in an apocryphal text that lots of Jews in this time period were familiar with. It's called Sirach, or the wisdom of Ben Sira.

00:42:18 If you happen to have a Bible that has the apocrypha in it, the deuterocanonical books, it will have a book called Sirach or Wisdom of Ben Sira, and that book also talks a lot about wisdom, and in one instance, it describes wisdom, once again personifying wisdom. It says, "Whosoever fears the Lord will do this and whosoever holds to law will obtain wisdom." Then it goes on to describe what it is wisdom does, and in Wisdom of Ben Sira or Sirach 15:3, it says, "Wisdom will feed him with the bread of learning and give him the water of wisdom to drink."

Hank Smith: 00:42:55 This shouldn't be lost on them.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:42:57 No, no. At this point, their reaction to this is not negative. Their reaction is not how can somebody possibly compare themselves to bread? They're still on the same page. They murmur in John 6:41 because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." It seems like it's once again, they're having this problem with him equating himself with God, with being the one who came down from heaven, and it's here in John, this is the context in verse 42 where the people say, "Now, wait a minute. Isn't this the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know?"

Hank Smith: 00:43:39 What does he mean?

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:43:40 How is he saying he's come down from heaven? We know his mom and dad. What's he talking about, he's come down from heaven? Well, Jesus has been trying to explain to him who his father is and they still haven't quite got that point, that his father is Heavenly Father. So Jesus then continues in verse 43, says, "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me except the Father." He's trying to clarify for them, my father's not Joseph, "Except the Father which hath sent me draw him

and I will raise him up at the last day." Now, Joseph Smith provides a little bit more here where he adds to the words of the Gospel of John some words that are quite similar to things that Jesus says elsewhere in the Gospel of John.

00:44:26 So here, the Joseph Smith translation of verse 44 is, "No man can come unto me except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me," and that's something that John makes quite clear elsewhere. Joseph Smith goes on and says, "And this is the will of Him who hath sent me that ye receive the Son for the Father beareth record of him." It's going back to that idea that we saw in the previous chapter of the witnesses or in the previous verses of the witnesses of Jesus. The Father beareth record of him and he who receiveth the testimony and doeth the will of Him who sent me, I will raise up at the resurrection of the just. So that is a nice summary of a lot of Jesus's teachings here from this sermon and some of the other sermons as well. So now things get more complicated and we're going to see one more instance where Jesus, rather than diffusing the situation that's causing the murmuring, once again will double down on it.

Hank Smith: 00:45:18 Makes it a little harder.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:45:19 Yeah, makes things a little bit harder. So in verse 48, Jesus once again reiterates I am the bread of life, and now he explains what he means by that. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. That wasn't the bread of life. That was a kind of miraculously provided bread. It was a kind of bread from heaven, but if anything, it was a sign that pointed to Jesus, who is the bread of life. So it continues here in verse 50, "This bread which cometh down from heaven, a man must may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Hank Smith: 00:46:10 He just made it a little harder.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:46:12 Yeah. Things are starting to sound a little bit weird here. So bread of life is fine. They could understand that. They could say, "Okay, Jesus is speaking metaphorically here. He's saying he's providing wisdom for them," but now it just took a weird turn because now he's saying this bread is literally his flesh? Is that what he's saying? Now remember, in its chronological context here, Jesus has not introduced the sacrament. I think we often come to this with that lens already and say, "Yeah, okay. So now Jesus is switching gears. He's helping us to understand the

sacrament," which other Christians call the Eucharist or communion.

00:46:53 And I think we can have a really important discussion here about what this teaches us about the sacrament. So I do want to have that discussion in a minute, but before we get to that discussion, I think it's worth staying in the literary context here and remembering Jesus has not provided them any teachings about the sacrament yet. So when he's saying, "I am the bread of life, you have to eat my flesh," that is sounding very strange. So it really shouldn't surprise us that in the very next verse, the Jews respond, this is verse 52 now, it says, "The Jews therefore strove among themselves saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat?" They're going, "All right, what is going on here? What is he saying?"

Hank Smith: 00:47:37 That just took a weird turn.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:47:38 Once again, Jesus is not going to diffuse the situation. He's going to double down and in the next verse, Jesus says to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Okay. Now things just got complicated. Jesus just doubled down on everything they were struggling with. Now, Genesis 9:4, after the flood, the flood has ended, the arc has landed. They get off the arc, God makes a covenant with Noah and God promises Noah he's never going to flood the earth again, but part of this covenant, covenants are always two-way promises here.

00:48:26 God's promise is he's never going to flood the earth again and he's going to put a rainbow in the sky so you can remember it, but human beings, all the descendants of Noah need to promise some other things, and one of those promises is in 9:4 where it says, "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, ye shall not eat." This is a command that Jews understood to be universal. This was not just for Jews. They didn't think anybody should be eating blood because blood is symbolic of life, and now here Jesus is saying, "If you want life, if you want everlasting life, you need to not only eat the flesh of the son of man, but drink his blood." This just got really complicated for them.

Hank Smith: 00:49:18 Yeah. If he wanted to make it easier to understand, he definitely didn't.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:49:23 Yeah. So skipping ahead to verse 60, it's totally understandable why with this teaching, they respond, "It's a hard saying; who can understand it," and then by verse 66, we get that verse that

says, "From that time, many of the disciples went back and walked no more with him." Well now, we have the advantage of hearing it in a slightly different way. For us today and for all Christian readers of the Gospel of John, whether it's in ancient times or today, we read this through the lens of the sacrament. We read this as Jesus helping people to understand what the Eucharist, what the communion, what we call the sacrament, what that really means.

00:50:04 And I think putting on that lens can really help us to get some insights about the meaning of the sacrament and really appreciate why we do this every single week. So let's continue reading what Jesus teaches about here. John 6:54, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood," he reiterates it again, "Hath eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day." Okay, Jesus. How? How does this work? Why are we doing this? Verse 55, "For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed and he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him as the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

00:51:01 He is describing the sacrament as us symbolically taking Jesus' body and blood, symbolically taking Jesus' whole person into ourselves. Early Christians understood this in lots of different ways that I think adds some extra meaning. A Christian named Tertullian writing at the end of second century, early third century, somebody who I talk about quite a bit in that book, Ancient Christians, that we spoke of at the beginning, Tertullian describes it like this. Our flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ that our soul may likewise be filled with God.

00:51:40 Some other ancient Christians understood the sacrament to function like an antidote, like a serum or antidote to the death caused by eating the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So a tree of knowledge of good and evil that causes death from eating it, you're taking death into yourself even though it also brought knowledge of good and evil. So now we need the tree of life and the fruit of the tree of life, which in this case is Jesus, the bread of life. We ingest that. We take life into ourselves, which cures us of the death that we partook of by entering into this world.

Hank Smith: 00:52:15 See it as an antidote. That's interesting.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:52:17 Yeah. Gregory of Nyssa, some of our fellow Christians who also firmly believe in the importance of the sacrament, but see things a little bit differently from us. I'm thinking of Roman Catholics in the medieval period, they'd started to describe the

way the sacrament works using the word transubstantiation. They believe that as the priest pronounce the word of blessing over the bread and wine, that it is transformed literally into the body and blood of Christ. It's not in form like you look at it and still looks like bread and wine, but you are literally ingesting Jesus and that that is life that you are taking into yourselves. I think oftentimes in church, we talk about it more in symbolic terms.

00:53:04 At the same time, I don't think we would go as so far as some of our Protestant brothers and sisters would go to say it is purely symbolic because we absolutely believe in the power of the priesthood. In fact, we believe that God gave priesthood to us and that priesthood has to be used with the proper keys and authority to pronounce the words of blessing over the bread and water, and if those words are mispronounced, if they are not pronounced properly, they need to be pronounced again. You need to say the whole prayer over again. So we absolutely believe that priesthood power is involved and that the sacrament is therefore not only symbolic, it is powerful and effectual because priesthood power is involved.

00:53:50 That it actually, it does something for us. Again, I don't think we would go so far as the Catholics to say that the water and the bread is transformed into something else, that it is literally transformed into the flesh and blood of Jesus, but we would say that that power and authority of God has to be present in order for the sacrament to be functional. So it's more than just a symbol. Symbolism is absolutely involved, but it's more than a symbol because power and authority needs to be there as part of our renewing our covenants and taking the name of Christ upon us again every week.

00:54:27 I really like this symbolism of literally taking Jesus into ourselves, of taking into ourselves that which gives us life, becoming one with him as he is one with the Father. He's already hinting at that sort of language here, even though we won't get that precise language till a little bit later in John, but he's hinting at it here that the Father has given him life. He lives by the Father and that as we eat him, now we live by him. I think it's just a really, really beautiful way of thinking about it.

John Bytheway: 00:55:00 Sister Ardeth Kapp, I don't know if you guys remember, she was in the general young women's president years ago when she told a story about traveling around the churches they do and staying in a home, and a little eight-year-old Brent was like, "Have you ever met the prophet," and she said, "Yes," and he said, "Boy, I'd like to meet the prophet," and she said, "Shake

my hand. Now you can say you're shaking hands with someone who's shaken hands with the prophet," and he said, "I'll never wash my hand," and Sister Kapp thought, okay, that could be a problem. So she said, "Why don't you wash your hands, but just remember in here."

00:55:32 And he said, "Well, I'm going to wash my hands, but I'm going to save the water." So he went in the other room. When he came back in, he had a bag of water and they were like, "That's a nice way to remember." He scurried off again and the next time he came back, Sister Kapp said he had water on his shirt, water on his t-shirt, and they said, "What happened," and he proudly announced, "I drank the water." Sister Kapp made it beautiful. She said, "I told him that he could just remember in here, but he wanted so much to remember this experience that he took the water and he put it inside," and she kind of made a comparison to the sacrament with that. I think it was Elder Bruce C. Hafen that we've had on the program who said when we take the sacrament, we kind of assimilate the atonement into ourselves. We take the water and the bread inside. So anyways, thought that was a cute story.

Dr. Jason Combs: 00:56:24 I think there's a tendency in modern culture to spiritualize things, to dismiss the importance of the material, and yet we are material beings. I think it's really important that we have these moments in our religious life where we connect with God through material actions, whether that's being immersed in water, whether that's eating some food, whether that's going through the process of the endowment in the temple. All of those are very tangible, physical actions that help us as material physical beings to make a connection between ourselves and the divine, to connect with something beyond ourselves.

John Bytheway: 00:57:08 When I think about, and I guess we'll talk more about this when we get to the last supper, but the Lord would have us perform this simple thing each week, as you said. We don't just say something. We take something and put it inside. I think it's so interesting. The things the Lord has us repeat fascinate me and that's one of them, and I remember the day, I think it was something that Stephen Covey said, but I equated the bread and the water of the sacrament with Moses 1:39 because of the bread, because of Jesus' body will live forever, will be resurrected, but because of the blood, the Atonement, we can not only live forever, but have eternal life, which is a quality of life, not just a duration of life. Next to verse 51, I noticed this in here, 51, take the bread, live forever. That's immortality. Verse 54, drink the blood, eternal life, and he uses those different phrases just the same way Moses 1:39 does.

- Dr. Jason Combs: 00:58:12 Very nice. To continue on with the story then, the disciples cannot deal with what Jesus is teaching. We need to take off our sacrament lenses and remember these disciples are hearing this teaching for the first time in the context of John, and it is strange to them and foreign to them. It seems to them to go against that covenant that the Lord made with Noah back in Genesis 9. So it shouldn't surprise us that we get this passage that describes them saying this is a hard saying in verse 60, who can hear it, and then just a few verses later, learning that at this time in verse 66, that many of the disciples went back and walked no more with him, and that leads us into the conclusion of Mark 6, where Jesus then turns to the 12 and says, "Will ye also go away?"
- 00:59:07 I'm starting to get a little emotional here because this is a passage that's meant a lot to me in my life at several important moments. Simon Peter then answers, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God." It's a powerful passage for me. It's one that came to me at a time I wasn't expecting it. It's not something I had been studying at the time. It's something that I'm sure that I first learned in early morning seminary. I attended a couple of years of early morning seminary as I was working on joining the church, and the first time this passage really impacted me was on my mission, I was called to serve in Columbia, or actually, I was called to serve in Venezuela. Then I couldn't get my visa.
- 00:59:58 So then I was recalled to serve in the Columbia Bogota North Mission. That meant that I had to spend a little extra time in the missionary training center and because of that, a lot of us were really struggling. It's a challenge for any young woman or young man who serves a mission and who hasn't been away from home much before to suddenly be away from home and to be in a very taxing, very difficult situation where you are spending all day, every day fully immersed in scriptures and learning a language sometimes, in learning missionary discussions, in practicing teaching people. It's an intense experience, and I remember a time where my entire missionary district were feeling lost and where a lot of us were wondering, maybe we should just give up.
- 01:00:53 Maybe we should just go home. So let me share one more instance where this passage really impacted me. It was not easy for me to get into a PhD program, at least not into the one that I really wanted to be in. One of the challenges for me was applying to these PhD programs. To get somebody to really pay attention to your application, you have to do really well on the

GRE, on the graduate record exam. If you're applying to medical school or to a law program, there are different sorts of standardized tests like these, and for me, it was incredibly challenging. It was actually after completing my first master's degree that I learned that I have attention deficit disorder.

01:01:34 And that was probably the reason why time and time again, I would take the standardized test and could not get the grade up high enough that I could get into a PhD program. So after laboring literally for years to get that grade up high enough that I could get into a PhD program, I found myself, I can still picture the place, I was in this park in New Haven, Connecticut. We lived in New Haven while I was attending Columbia. So by now, I was working on my second master's program that didn't require a high GRE score to get into, and I remember being in this park alone. I went there just to have some time to myself and reflect, and I remember actually feeling angry, feeling angry with God. I felt that God had called me to study what I was studying and that alone was a difficult decision.

01:02:33 It was incredibly difficult to decide not to pursue a two-year psychology master's degree and instead go into a two to three year master's program at Yale and then another year at Columbia. And then there was a year in between where I was doing other things, all the time just trying to make ends meet as I had a young family, and so I feel like God had called me to do these things and I was feeling like, why, Lord, have you called me to do this and yet time and again, I'm failing and I'm not feeling like you're helping me, and I started not only to get mad at God, but to feel like maybe this is all just in my mind. Maybe I'm making this up. Maybe it was just my own wish to do this, and maybe even there is no God. It was at that point that this passage came to me one more time.

01:03:28 I felt the blessings I've received from the gospel, I know that there is a God and I am confident that God has inspired me and guided me in my life and called me to do these things, and I felt once again to say, "Lord, to whom should I go? Where else could I turn? Thou hast the words of eternal life and I believe that thou art the Christ." Of course, there is a happy ending to that story. It turns out that year, I did get into multiple PhD programs and was able to select the one that I was most excited about. There is a happy ending to that story, but oftentimes in my life, I found that God allows me to get up just to that point where I can't see any other possibility, where I can't see how things are going to turn or where things are going to end up, and then he steps in and provides the answer for me. I'm

grateful for this passage that has meant so much to me at those moments in my life.

- Hank Smith: 01:04:33 Thank you, Jason, for sharing that, and thank you for spending your time with us today. I've learned so much. I can't believe how much I've been missing as I pass by some verses and don't know what I'm missing. So thank you for pointing those out and thank you for being here. We're just grateful for you.
- Dr. Jason Combs: 01:04:52 Thank you. This was great.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:55 We want to thank Dr. Jason Combs for his time and his expertise today. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen, and of course, we always remember our founder, the late Steve Sorensen, and we hope all of you will join us next week. We have more coming up in the New Testament on Follow Him. Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references are available on our website, followhim.co, and you can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on Facebook and Instagram. All of this is absolutely free, so be sure to share with your family and friends. To reach those who are searching for help with their Come, Follow Me study, please subscribe, rate, review, or comment on the podcast, which makes the podcast easier to find. Thank you.
- Hank Smith: 01:05:42 We have an amazing production crew we want you to know about. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Cuadra. Thank you to our amazing production team.

WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M GOOD ENOUGH?



- Hank Smith: 00:04 Hello my friends. Welcome to another Follow Him Favorites. My name is Hank Smith. I'm here with the wonderful John Bytheway. Welcome. Wonderful John Bytheway.
- John Bytheway: 00:12 I am always wondering something that's true.
- Hank Smith: 00:15 We are taking a section of this week's Come, Follow Me lesson to talk about it briefly. This week, John, our question is, what do you do when you feel insignificant or small? It comes from John chapter six, where the Lord has asked Philip and Andrew, hey, how are we going to feed these people, all these thousands of people, and Andrew's stealing someone's lunch here and says, I found a boy who has five barley loaves and two small fishes. And then he asks this question, but what are they among so many? What are they among so many? What do you do when you feel that way? You're just small and you've got these huge things that we want to do. We want to feed these thousands and thousands of people, but you don't feel like you're enough. What do you do?
- John Bytheway: 00:59 Well, this is the right chapter to look at that it, and it's like the Lord, what have you got? Well, give me what you've got and I will multiply it to a degree you won't even believe until at the end they're taking up the extra, which is a fun part of this story. Have 12 baskets full of the leftovers. So I think there's a beautiful way to apply that is that the Lord will never run out of his ability to help you, I think is the way Elder Holland said it. And just bring what you have. Recently, President Nelson quoted President Ezra Taft Benson, who said a long time ago that men and women who turn their lives over to God can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. And then he went on with this list of all the things he can do, and that just sounds like somebody going, what have I got among all these needs? And the Lord says, I can do that. Just give your life to me, I can make more out of you than you could by yourself.
- Hank Smith: 01:57 Absolutely. Whether it be maybe you get a calling and you don't feel like you're adequate or you're a brand new missionary and you don't feel like you can measure up. Maybe you look at the

church. We have our 16 million members among billions of people. Lord, what are they among so many? And the answer comes in the next few verses. The Lord basically said, give me what you have. He gives thanks for it. And it's way more than enough. There's 12 baskets which remained over and above what they had eaten. So I think John's answer here is, once you bring what you have to the Lord and keep his commandments, try to live his gospel, he'll make you more than enough. You'll see that you can do it, and then some.

- John Bytheway: 02:40 And maybe that's how we use that word, magnify. Sometimes the Lord will magnify you. He'll make you bigger than you think you are, and you'll be able to do more. I love that you pointed out that Hank, verse 11, he gave thanks. Not only do you bring what you have, this is all I've got, but I'm thankful for that. But can you magnify me? And maybe that's another echo of that whole idea of I'll make weak things strong.
- Hank Smith: 03:06 Become strong. It reminds me of the brother of Jared saying, here's the stones, this is my idea, here's what I have. And the Lord says, I can make that work.
- John Bytheway: 03:15 I can fill it with light. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 03:18 I can use you, what you've given me, and make it enough. So anybody listening out there, go to the Lord and he'll make you more than enough for any obstacle, any difficulty that you face.
- John Bytheway: 03:30 Hank, this reminds me of something that Elder Neal A. Maxwell said years ago, and I might get it close to right, but God does not begin by asking about our ability, but only our availability. And then when we prove our dependability, he will increase our capability. Something like that. So that was that idea. I'm willing to try. I'll bring what I have, I'm willing to try and God will magnify and increase you.
- Hank Smith: 03:55 Beautiful. I love that question. What are they among so many? Well, more than enough. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called Follow Him. You can get it wherever you get your podcast and then come back next week and join us here for another Follow Him Favorites.