



*“Glory, and Power, Be unto ... the Lamb for Ever”*

## Show Notes & Transcripts

### Podcast General Description:

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

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

### Podcast Episode Descriptions:

#### Part 1:

How can I study Revelation in a way that makes sense to me? A warning, a contextual outline, and the promise of Jesus' salvation are all included in Dr. Frederick's framework for studying Revelation.

#### Part 2:

Dr. Nicholas Frederick continues to explore the themes in Revelation 1-5, including keys to understanding the role of Jesus Christ and the key to peace in a tumultuous book of scripture and a chaotic world.

# Timecodes:

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Nicholas Frederick
- 01:36 Teaser by Dr. Frederick to Revelation
- 03:37 Biography of Dr. Frederick
- 06:26 William Miller and dangers of the Book of Revelation
- 10:52 Revelation in The Book of Mormon
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- 1:09: 50 End of Part 1–Dr. Nicholas Frederick

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Nicholas Frederick
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- 14:46 Trust in God

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- 21:07 A throne in Heaven
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- 27:03 Four beasts and Four Horseman
- 30:00 The Apocalyptic Genre
- 33:11 Animals and pets in the eternities
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- 56:11 Review of Revelation 1-5 and what comes next
- 58:45 Symbolism and the Big Picture
- 01:02:04 The Lamb moves to behind the scenes
- 01:04:42 Main takeaway from Revelation
- 01:07:16 End of Part II– Dr. Nicholas Frederick

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## Biographical Information:



Nick Frederick is an associate professor at Brigham Young University. He was born in Provo and raised in Delta, Utah (Go Rabbits!). After returning from a mission in Brussels, Belgium, he attended BYU, where he received his BA in Classics (2004) and his MA in Comparative Studies (2006). While completing his MA, he taught part-time for Classics and for Religious Education. He then attended Claremont Graduate University, where he completed a PhD in the History of Christianity with an emphasis in Mormon Studies (2013), after which he returned to BYU to teach full-time in Religious Education. His research focuses primarily on the intertextual relationship between the text of the Bible and Latter-day Saint scripture, specifically the Book of Mormon. He enjoys teaching courses on the Book of Mormon and the New Testament, particularly the writings of Paul and the book of Revelation. He has been married to Julie Parker Frederick for eighteen years and is the father of four children, Miranda, Samuel, Kassandra, and Madelyn. He is passionate about all sports, especially baseball and hockey, and enjoys watching old films and reading good books.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:03	Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith, I'm your host. I'm here with my divine co-host, John Bytheway. Hi, John.
John Bytheway:	00:00:13	A blasphemy.
Hank Smith:	00:00:16	Well, I opened up to the Book of Revelation, John, and it said "The revelation of St. John, the divine."
John Bytheway:	00:00:21	People who know me are laughing out loud right now, but yeah, thank you.
Hank Smith:	00:00:25	In the Book of Revelation, I know you've read it before. What are you thinking about over the next couple of weeks? Are you excited? Are you nervous?
John Bytheway:	00:00:33	Well, I'm really excited, because we have access to such amazing scholars. I love to use this word because it makes me sound smart. This book is written in a different genre. See? Did I sound smart right there? It's written in apocalyptic. It's like a different language almost, and that requires us to look at it differently, and I am ready to just learn on this one, because I know what I think it means, but I do not think it means what I think it means.
Hank Smith:	00:01:00	I think I'm going to do the same thing, probably adjust what I thought was happening to what probably is happening. I read this from Elder McConkie this week. He was talking about the Book of Revelation. He says, "If you have already fallen in love with John's presentation of the plan of salvation as set out in this apocalypse, you are one of the favored few in the church. If this choice experience is yet ahead of you," which it might be for a lot of our listeners, "the day and hour is here to launch one of the most intriguing and rewarding studies in gospel scholarship in which any of us will ever engage."

- 00:01:36 Now, that's Elder McConkie leading us into this great book. John, we're joined by a Bible scholar this week, and also a good friend of mine. His name is Dr. Nick Frederick. Nick, what are we looking forward to? I know this is one of your specialties, the Book of Revelation.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:01:51 Over the next couple of weeks we're going to really get into what is one of the more fascinating books, at least for me, in the Bible. This is one of those books that's very different than the Gospels. It's very different than the letters of Paul. You can pick up and read the Sermon on the Mount and get some great insight from it. You can pick up a letter of Paul and get a snapshot of what's going on in the first century. The Book of Revelation is doing something else entirely. To call this a unique experience with the Book of Revelation is a fair one. What we're going to try to do today is talk about some ways of reading this book responsibly, how to approach it in a way that hopefully will be uplifting and edifying while also helping us ground ourselves in what the book is doing, and importantly, what the book isn't doing.
- 00:02:32 The Book of Revelation gets a lot of press, a lot of its fame because of how it's been interpreted over time. Someone once said that the only thing scarier than the beasts of the Book of Revelation are the interpreters of the Book of Revelation, because the book has been interpreted in so many different ways over time. We shouldn't expect to spend the next amount of time giving you the definitive interpretation of the Book of Revelation. That would be a mistake. What we'll try to do is go through here and suggest some possible ways of reading it, talk about who John was, what this text may have meant in the first century, and how we can draw from it in the 21st century today.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:11 That's exciting. I am really looking forward to this. John, one of my favorite quotes is from Richard L. Evans. He said, "It is good to be faithful. It is better to be faithful and competent." As I approach the Book of Revelation, I want to be faithful, but I also, over the next couple of weeks, want to learn. I want to worship God with my mind and really dig into this so I can understand what it's meant to say and, like Dr. Frederick said, what it's not meant to say.



	00:03:37	John, Dr. Frederick is new to our podcast. He's not new to me. He's a good friend, but our audience might not know who he is. Can you introduce him?
John Bytheway:	00:03:45	Absolutely. Dr. Nick Frederick is an associate professor at Brigham Young University. He was born in Provo and raised in Delta, Utah. Go Rabbits.
Hank Smith:	00:03:57	What? I didn't know that.
John Bytheway:	00:03:57	I love Delta. They've invited me down there a few times and I love those folks down there, and they have their own airline. No, just kidding.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:04:06	If only that were true.
John Bytheway:	00:04:08	After returning from a mission in Brussels, Belgium, which is French speaking, isn't it?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:04:13	It was, yep.
John Bytheway:	00:04:14	He attended Brigham Young University where he received his bachelor's in classics, a master's in comparative studies. Then he attended Claremont Graduate University where he completed a PhD in the history of Christianity with an emphasis on Mormon studies, after which he returned to BYU to teach full-time in religious education.
	00:04:35	His research focuses primarily on the intertextual relationship between the text of the Bible and Latter-day Saints scripture, specifically the Book of Mormon. He enjoys teaching courses on the Book of Mormon and the New Testament, particularly the writings of Paul and the Book of Revelation. He has been married to Julie Parker Frederick for 18 years, is the father of four children, Miranda, Samuel, Cassandra, and Madelyn. Welcome, Nick. Thank you so much for bringing yourself and your expertise today.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:05:05	Hey, happy to be here. Happy to be here. Big fan of you guys. In fact, I'll share a brief anecdote. Again, small town, Delta, Utah. Pretty cut off from everywhere else in Utah. Kind of do our own thing down there. Didn't really hear much about the broader Latter-day Saint cultural things

like EFY and things like that, so there I am, my first semester up at Ricks College, everyone in my apartment complex, my ward, gets super excited because there's going to be a special guest that's going to appear in Rexburg.

00:05:32 And they're all going around saying, "You've got to come watch this guy. You've got to come watch this guy." And I'm like, "Well, what's his name?" They're like, "John Bytheway." This is my first introduction to you, John. Blew my mind, I thought it was fantastic, but ever since then, I still remember your "Oh, and Bytheway" joke even 25 years later. "Oh, and Bytheway." And you're also amazing on guitar.

Hank Smith: 00:05:52 That's fantastic.

John Bytheway: 00:05:53 It was a Delta ticket agent who said, "Are you going to name your son Owen?" When he looked at my ticket, and I went, "Owen Bytheway, oh." I had literally never thought of it before, so I actually laughed.

Hank Smith: 00:06:06 You've heard all of them.

John Bytheway: 00:06:08 I thought I had until I heard that one. I was like, "Ha ha, give me that ticket."

Hank Smith: 00:06:14 That's funny. Let's get started here. Nick, how should we approach this book? I'm guessing we need some background. Before we hit Revelation 1:1, what do you want to talk to us about before we get started?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:06:26 Can I start with a story?

Hank Smith: 00:06:27 Please do.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:06:28 Turn of the 19th century, there's a young man named William Miller who's coming of age. He fights in the war of 1812 and comes out of that war a little bit disillusioned. So he turns to the Bible, starts reading the Bible. He's a Baptist by tradition, and he becomes particularly engaged by the Book of Daniel in the Book of Revelation. He begins to study it, looking for some of the patterns, looking for it for clues, and in the year 1818, he decides he can predict

the date of the second coming. "It's going to happen in 25 years," he says, "in the year 1843." As we roll closer to about 1840, he begins to attract thousands of followers to come be present for the second coming of Jesus Christ, and this is, again, quite a popular event.

00:07:13      Gather in 1843, Jesus doesn't show up, so he says, "Well, maybe I did my computations wrong. Maybe I need to use a different calendar." 1844, Jesus doesn't show up. And by the end of 1844, this has become known amongst Miller's followers as the Great Disappointment. Well, Miller's followers fracture into several different groups. A woman named Ellen White leads one of the groups of Miller's followers and founds the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A little bit later on, the Jehovah's Witnesses will spring off from this group.

00:07:46      And if we jump ahead to about the 1950s, there's a third group known as the Branch Davidians who come from the Miller tradition. And as their name indicates, they believe that the branch, the Messiah, the heir of David, the son of David, is going to be revealed through their faith tradition, and a young man named Vernon Howell, who's a disaffected Seventh-day Adventist, joins up with these Branch Davidians. He begins to read the Book of Revelation. He begins to think that he is the lamb who's going to break the seals, on the seven seals, and usher in the last days.

00:08:21      He changes his name to David Koresh, and again, representing as the heir of this Messianic line. And of course, as I'm sure the two of you remember, as I remember well, 1993, Waco, Texas, tragically, 80 people, about a third of them children, are killed in an unfortunate standoff with the FBI. The Book of Revelation is a dangerous book. There's literally a body count attached to this book, and not just here in America, but I mean, all the way from the second century AD with the group known as the Montanists who believed that they knew the date to the second coming, all the way up to the modern age. The stakes have run high with the Book of Revelation. There's something about this book that draws people's attention to it, and has changed the course of religious history in America.

- 00:09:15 Here's part three. We go back again to the 19th century, 1805. A young man named Joseph Smith was born in Vermont. Over the next few years, his family moves along the Atlantic coast up into New York. 1820, has a vision of the Father and the Son. 1823, see's an angel. 1827, he's given some gold plates. In 1830, he publishes the Book of Mormon. Now consider, what's the first story in the Book of Mormon? Prophet named Lehi finds himself transported into the throne room of God in almost an exact representation of Revelation 4, where John finds himself transported into the throne room of God. 1 Nephi 8, Lehi has a vision of the tree of life, which again hearkens back to Revelation 2 and Revelation 21, Revelation 22, where you have this image of the tree of life in a very prominent position and the new kingdom of God.
- 00:10:06 Then in 1 Nephi 11-14, Lehi's son Nephi has a vision that we're told has connections with the Book of Revelation, and this is what, to me, is remarkable. Nephi's even told the name of the person who's going to write the Book of Revelation. It's one of the disciples of the lamb. It's a man named John. That doesn't happen for any other book in the New Testament. No other author in the New Testament is mentioned in the Book of Mormon, not Matthew, not Paul, not Luke, but John is mentioned specifically, not once but twice, because then you go to the Jaredite record, where the brother of Jared has a vision likened to the revelation of John. And then Ether 4, again we're told to watch out for the revelation of the Apostle John.
- 00:10:52 The second most often cited New Testament text in the Book of Mormon is the Book of Revelation. So clearly the Book of Mormon is telling us, "Read the Book of Revelation, study the Book of Revelation." Well, Joseph Smith, after he publishes the Book of Mormon, 1832, devotes time to studying the Book of Revelation. He even produces a question and answer document with questions he has for the Lord about certain signs and symbols in the Book of Revelation.
- 00:11:20 It's unfinished. He only gets through Revelation 11. He doesn't include it in the 1833 Book of Commandments. He doesn't include it in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. But

in 1876, Brigham Young canonizes it as, you can't make this stuff up, D&C 77. If there's any number you're going to connect with the Book of Revelation, it's going to be seven, and what better way than 77, right? You won't forget that one. And if you look at the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, again, they cite and they quote all the time from the New Testament. The Book of Revelation is, again, the second most often cited New Testament text in the Doctrine and Covenants, so that's two books of scripture where the Lord and his prophets seem to be saying, "Study this book. This book has something to say."

00:12:06 Joseph will continue all the way up through 1844 to give sermons on the Book of Revelation, to give clues onto some of the symbols in the Book of Revelation. D&C 130, for example, contains some of those hints. What is the sea of glass mentioned in Revelation 4, right? I think you could argue that in a way, in 1842 when Joseph introduces the endowment ceremony, what is the endowment but a chance for not just the prophets but all of us to find ourselves transported into the presence of God conversing with his angels?

00:12:41 In a way, it's democratizing the Book of Revelation so that all of us can have that experience. The history of the Latter-day Saint tradition is one that is very much informed by the interpretation of the Book of Revelation, and this book has an incredible impact for both good and bad in the history of religion in America, history of religion in Europe, the last 2000 years of Christianity, the Book of Revelation has been a key player in that drama.

Hank Smith: 00:13:08 One thing I'm hearing, John, I don't know about you, is we need to probably be careful in our classes in the way we discuss this with our children. There's a way to read this responsibly. This isn't one to go crazy with and to start reading things that really aren't there.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:13:23 Things can go off the rails quickly. If there's any way of attaching a PG-13 rating or putting some caution tape around the Book of Revelation, that's what I would do.

John Bytheway:	00:13:34	What a great introduction. That is so fascinating, the impact this book has had on all those movements. That's amazing.
Hank Smith:	00:13:42	Yeah, that's pretty incredible.
John Bytheway:	00:13:44	We got the right guy, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:13:46	Nick, I would like to know a little bit of what's happening to the people this is written to. As we've heard from many of our guests, these books don't just fall out of the sky and say, "Read me." They have context. There's an author, there's an audience, and there's a lot of things happening to those people that are going to help us understand what's said and why it's said.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:14:09	Yeah, those are great questions. We should start with authorship. Book of Revelation, in the early church, up until about the third century, it was generally accepted that this was written by the Apostle John. That changes in the third century. You start to get some arguments that John the Apostle can't be the same as John the Revelator. The main reason is because of the text itself. The Greek of the Gospel of John. It's simple Greek, but it's pretty good Greek. The Greek of the Book of Revelation is the worst Greek in the entire New Testament. There's just no other way to say it. There's mistakes all over the place. It's like if you were reading a paper and they used words like "ain't" every few words, that's the kind of vibe you get from the Book of Revelation, to the point where today, most people don't associate the Apostle John with John the Revelator.
	00:14:58	Now again, Latter-day Saints, we have the advantage of the Book of Mormon where in two places we're told that the Apostle John is the author of the Book of Revelation. We can pretty safely say that the Apostle John is the one who has this experience. He has it, we're told, on an island called Patmos, which we can talk about when you get to chapter one. As far as the dating of this goes, when was this book written? Is it contemporary with the letters of Paul? Is it later? Because Hank, this goes to your question of, what are the people experiencing at the time? There's two dates that get thrown around with the Book of Revelation. It's written in the sixties or it's written in the

nineties, and there's good arguments for both, but they both revolve around the questions of what the Christians are going through. Are the Christians being persecuted?

00:15:43 Because this type of literature, what we call apocalyptic literature, tends to become popular when things are bad. Like when a people's undergoing persecution, what they want is a type of literature that gives them vindication, where they can watch their enemies get literally trampled under the hooves of horses. Chapters 13 through 17 very clearly bring the Roman Empire into the forefront, and it seems like it's events in the Roman Empire that are happening in the 80s and 90s. My best guess for a date of this would be sometime during the 90s where the Christians are experiencing certain things and the Book of Revelation's responding to certain pressures that they're under. There's our authorship, there's our dating.

00:16:28 The big one, to go back to a word that John used at the beginning of the podcast here, is genre. We have to understand the Book of Revelation and its genre. Different genres of books, as you know, have different rules. When we were done here, the three of us were to meet at Barnes & Noble, and we would all pick out a book. Hank picks out a book on the history of World War II and John picks up a book on John Grisham, he likes fiction. And I pick up a fantasy book by Brandon Sanderson. All of our books have different genres. We have history, we have fiction, we have fantasy, and there are certain rules that apply to those.

00:17:06 Hank would expect that his history of World War II would have footnotes, that it would be an accurate portrayal of events during World War II, and that the author of that would be unbiased, for the most part, in their opinion, that he could read that and he could find out accurately what would happen to real men and real women during World War II. John, your book, your John Grisham thriller, you would expect that it would not be about real people, but these would be real circumstances in the sense that they are people that you could meet on the street in any town in America. They're going to drive cars. They're going to buy food at the supermarket, they're going to live lives likened to yours.

John Bytheway:	00:17:45	It's plausible.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:17:46	Plausible, exactly. That's a good word for it. You're not all of a sudden going to find yourself on Mars shooting laser guns or something like that. All of a sudden you would say, "That's not the type of book this is." Mine on the other hand, fantasy, has its own rules. You would expect something to happen on a world far, far away. You would expect a magic system of some sort to be in place. You would expect that these are people who have names that you haven't seen before who are doing things that you haven't seen done before, and I would not expect that this is a factual retelling of an actual thing that happened, like Hank would be expecting for his book.
	00:18:22	If we tried to apply the rules of my genre to Hank's or vice versa, the book all of a sudden makes no sense, and that's the same way the Book of Revelation is. The Book of Revelation is complicated, that it is actually three separate genres. The first is, it's an epistle. There's very clearly parts of this book that are a letter. It's going to have some of the same rules you would expect a letter of Paul to have. It's located in the first century with real churches, with real people, to whom are getting written a letter, and all the things that that genre expects.
	00:18:58	Number two, the Book of Revelation is a prophecy. Prophecy has its own genre and its own requirements. A prophet stands up and says, "Thus saith the Lord." It usually revolves around moral issues. You've descended into sin, the Lord expects you to repent or you'll be destroyed. Think Abinadi or something like that here, Jeremiah. Prophecy is also predictive. Prophets can stand up and say, think Isaiah. Isaiah 7:14: "Behold, a young woman will conceive and bring forth a son, and you will call his name Emmanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, but before he knows to choose the good from the evil, the land that thou abhorrest shall be rid of both your kings."
	00:19:39	Within eight or so years, King Ahaz, "A young woman will give birth and a young boy will grow up," and then "These kings that you're worried about are going to be gone." Okay, that's a prediction.



Hank Smith:	00:19:49	These two smoking firebrands.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:19:51	Exactly, and we can look and we can say, "Okay, who's the fulfillment of that prophecy? How long until that comes to pass?" Is this Hezekiah? Is this a son of Isaiah? How does this play out with the Gospel of Matthew when Gabriel appears to Joseph and says, "You're going to see the fulfillment of this prophecy"? A prophecy is predictive.
	00:20:10	The third genre here is a complicated one. It's what's known as apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic literature, the word itself literally means "to unveil", and the sense is that what you're going to do is you're going to unveil. Apocalyptic literature unveils things from God's perspective. Often apocalyptic literature will have a tour of the heavens. Someone from earth gets transported to heaven and gets a guided tour. An angel will show them around, because you're seeing things from God's perspective.
	00:20:41	A prophet is on earth. Apocalyptic literature takes place in heaven, so the rules are going to be different, and what you're often going to see is apocalyptic literature is concerned with the end of the world. A prophet speaks to you somewhat about what applies to you and your time. Apocalyptic literature is concerned about the end. What does the end look like? Because again, this is God and God's perspective and God's plan, so what is God's end goal here?
	00:21:09	But this is different than prophecy. Apocalyptic literature isn't trying to predict what's going to happen in a few years. Apocalyptic literature wants to show you the big picture from God's perspective with the idea that you will have confidence and trust once you see he's in complete control. So you can maybe start to see, this is where the problem comes in. If I take the rules of prophecy, that it's predictive and it's going to tell me what's going to happen in a few years, which the Book of Revelation is, chapters two and three, and chapter 22, are prophecy.
	00:21:43	But the vision itself is apocalyptic. Chapters four through 21 are doing something different, and I can't take the rules of prophecy and apply them to the genre of apocalypse, or

else I have the same problem as if I try to take the rules of fantasy and apply them to Hank's history of World War II. It just doesn't work, and that's why I say this book has to be read responsibly. You're dealing with three genres, each of which have their own rules, and where we run into problems is when we try to apply the rules of one genre to a different genre that exists in the Book of Revelation.

- Hank Smith: 00:22:16 So well said. I feel like I'm creating some boundaries as I enter each chapter, what lens I'm putting on the text as I go in. I'm seeing a lot of yellow tape, caution tape around the book.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:22:29 Exactly.
- John Bytheway: 00:22:30 Yeah. I love what you've done here. Your first statement about reading the book responsibly made me laugh, but when you went through history to see what has happened for people taking this in a futurist or literalist type of a thing, it's "Whoa, this can be downright dangerous." I'm excited to read it responsibly.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:22:50 Yeah, the number 666 has always drawn their attention. So back in the 1980s, well, it was Ronald Wilson Reagan, six letters, six letters, six letters. "Okay, I've done it. I've cracked the code. I've figured out it's American democracy that's the mark of the beast" or something like that. Well, then you get into the 1990s and we're all still here and people say, "Well, the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet is the letter W. WWW. What are we thought? Oh, it's the internet. It's the worldwide web, is how Satan's going to infiltrate everybody and introduce the chaos of the end times." It's very easy to just let this get off the rails if we read this without just some general guidelines, some general caution in place.
- John Bytheway: 00:23:34 So interesting.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:35 I know you're saying there's some fluid ways to look at this, be careful, but are you saying as a hard and fast rule, don't try to look for things John hid in the numbers and the symbols that, really we're talking about the United States in 2023. Is that a hard and fast rule, stay away from that area?

- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:23:55 Great question, and when it comes to other texts, again, letters of Paul, I would say there are hard and fast rules you have to maintain. Book of Revelation, again, I get much more cautious, but one of the hard and fast rules that I would say we need to maintain is don't try to give everything a one-to-one correlation. Don't assume that John is telling you about one specific thing that is in a code that you then have to crack. I think that's where it becomes problematic.
- 00:24:23 I think the Book of Revelation uses images because images have polyvalent meaning. You can extract different meanings to those symbols. There are some exceptions. I think the lamb is Jesus. I don't think there's any other way to take the lamb. The dragon is Satan. I don't think there's any other way to take that. But the rider on the black horse from Revelation 6 or the two witnesses in Revelation 11... That's the one thing I've noticed among Latter-day Saints is every time we hear about apostles traveling to the holy land, we get super-duper worried, because Revelation 11 predicts that two witnesses are going to lie dead in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days.
- 00:24:57 We look for the one-to-one meaning there. "Well, that must mean two apostles are going to go to Jerusalem and they're going to die and be resurrected after three and a half days," so we get a little bit anxious when we hear about apostles traveling. I don't want to say that's not what it means or that's not what's going to happen. I just think if that's all we're looking for is that one-to-one hard and fast correlation, we're missing what the book is trying to tell us.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:19 Yeah, what an excellent limit. I like that.
- John Bytheway: 00:25:22 If we were to describe apocalyptic, apocalyptic means revelation. It has lots of symbolic, could we call them strange characters, symbols, animals, beasts, things like that. Would that be a way to describe apocalyptic? Because I know people have read the Book of Daniel and we studied that last year. Can you tie how Daniel is apocalyptic and how Revelation is apocalyptic?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:25:48 Yeah, and for those exact same reasons that you mentioned, the extreme use of numbers, the extreme use of animal imagery, those are all part and parcel of the apocalyptic tradition. It's almost like it's a different language that you have to learn. I mean, it's written in English or whatever language you're reading it in, but it uses numbers 7, 12, 4, 10, 144,000, 1,000. And these numbers, if you take them literally, you miss the point of what the number is trying to say. The numbers are metaphorical, they're symbolic. They're a language unto themselves. You got four horsemen that are white, red, black and pale. Those colors mean something symbolically. There is a second language of sorts, the language of symbolism when it comes to apocalyptic literature that you see in the book of Daniel, that you see in Ezekiel to some extent, and that you see in the Book of Revelation.

00:26:40 Again, another thing you have to do before you start is remember that the book is symbolic, and these symbols mean something. What does seven mean? It could mean that it's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, or seven could mean something like completion or perfection. If something has seven eyes and seven horns, you could imagine something with literally seven eyes and seven horns, or you could say horns represent power, eyes represent wisdom. Seven represents perfection or completion, so I'm looking at something that is complete or perfect in its wisdom and power. And those are two very, very different things. You almost have to learn a second language when you deal with apocalyptic literature, and that's the case for Daniel, and that's the case for the Book of Revelation.

Hank Smith: 00:27:24 Excellent. Nick, I've heard it said that in order to grasp the Book of Revelation, you need to have a background or an understanding of the Old Testament, almost as if John is saying, "I hope you know your Old Testament, or else you might miss quite a bit that's in this book." Is there anything to that?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:27:44 Oh, absolutely. Just like symbolism itself is a second language you have to learn to understand the Book of Revelation, the third language you have to learn is the Old Testament. Of all the verses in the Book of Revelation,

probably 75% of them contain at least one allusion to an Old Testament text. The language of the Book of Revelation is Old Testament scripture. John is taking images from Ezekiel, he's taking images from Daniel. He's taking references to Exodus and Genesis, and he's, in a way, extracting them from the Old Testament and re-situating them in a new context.

00:28:20 That new context is Christ and Christianity. You have to understand the meaning, and we'll see that especially in chapters two and three. Chapters two and three is all about these references to things from the Hebrew Bible, from the Old Testament, and so if you don't know your Old Testament, there's entire messages in this book that are going to whisk right over your head. John is demanding that before you read this book, make sure you brush up on the Old Testament.

Hank Smith: 00:28:45 It's a good thing that we have someone here to guide us. Thank you for being here. With that, I think we're ready to take a look at chapter one.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:28:53 Well, let's just start at the beginning here. Hank, would you just mind reading the first verse for us?

Hank Smith: 00:28:59 Absolutely. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant, John."

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:29:13 This verse, there's a lot to unpack. The name of the book is The Book of Revelation or the Apocalypse of St. John. The Revelation, that second word there, right? The word is apocalypse. And the unveiling of what? Jesus Christ. There we get our theme, there we get our topic. It's going to be about the unveiling, not of the future, not of what's going to happen. It's the unveiling of Jesus Christ. John's primary direction to us is, as you read this book and you look for a lens of interpretation, you need to ask yourself, "What does this have to do with Jesus Christ? What does this teach me about Jesus Christ?"

00:29:51 There's another way you could take that. You could take "of" as "from", the revelation from Jesus Christ. Both of

them work fine, the revelation about Jesus Christ, but the sense of verse one here, I think, is John saying, "Look, before I even get started, it's going to get crazy. It's going to get crazy quickly. Let's not lose sight of what matters here, which is the Savior."

- Hank Smith: 00:30:11 The point.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:30:12 Exactly. And then of course, "Things which must shortly come to pass." We can argue about, does that mean 10 years? Does that mean 100 years? Does that mean 1,000 years? And that's one of the arguments is, what does that mean? To me, it seems to mean shortly. This has to have application to John's audience in the first century. And of course our first reference to his servant John, which again, Christians today see John the Revelator and John the Apostle as two different Johns. Book of Mormon tells us this servant John, is John the Beloved.
- 00:30:45 Hank, do you want to just continue on, verse two?
- Hank Smith: 00:30:47 "Who bear record of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things that he saw."
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:30:55 "Record" here literally meaning "witness, a statement of truth." What John is going to tell you is almost his testimony in court, as if he's standing up, raising his arm, putting it on the Bible and saying, "I'm going to tell you what I saw. This is my witness, and it's a witness of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ," which again, you could take a couple different ways. Is this John's testimony of Jesus, or is this Jesus Christ's witness of God? And I tend to lean towards the latter there. What John is going to say is, "Here's how Jesus Christ witnesses of the Father." So we're going to see God the Father's plan unveiled through his son Jesus Christ. Okay, we're going all the way to the top here.
- Hank Smith: 00:31:35 Excellent.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:31:35 Want to keep going, verse three?
- Hank Smith: 00:31:37 "Blessed is he that readeth." Hey, that's good news.

Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:31:40	There you go.
Hank Smith:	00:31:40	"Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein for the time is at hand."
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:31:49	Here we get, in verse three, the first of a pattern of sevens that's going to appear in the Book of Revelation. We're going to have seven blessings that will occur over the course of the Book of Revelation. In chapters two and three, we get seven churches. In chapter six, we get seven seals. In chapter eight, we get seven trumpets, to be followed by seven bowls. We get our first indication of this importance of seven occurring early on here in the Book of Revelation, so that'll be something to track, this use of seven throughout the book.
	00:32:18	I like that, "they that hear the words". In the first century context, this would be read orally. You don't have a written text, so to speak, so someone's getting up in sacrament meeting, reading this out loud. It would take about 90 minutes to read the Book of Revelation from beginning to end. You can imagine, again, just a congregation, as somebody stands up there reading the Book of Revelation to them, as they're hearing themselves and their experiences represented in the text.
	00:32:44	It's mentioned as a prophecy, so we have our second, now, indication of genre, first one, apocalyptic, now what's called a prophecy, and "the time is at hand." The important things are happening now. This is again why I always get suspicious if people want to say, "Well, this is about the future, this is about things thousands of years in the future." John says, "The time is at hand. Something important is happening now. We need to figure out what that is."
Hank Smith:	00:33:10	Excellent. Do you want to go to verse four? Because it starts with John, so we probably ought to have John.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:33:17	John. Oh, there you go.
Hank Smith:	00:33:18	John. That's a big J there for you.

John Bytheway:	00:33:21	Verse four. "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: 'Grace be unto you and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne."
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:33:35	Here we have John now introducing this proper. Notice it takes the form of a letter at this point. Remember Paul would write his letter, "Paul, an apostle, to the saints who live in Galatia," or something like that, right? John to the seven churches. So now we've entered into that epistle genre that we talked about, so again, where it gets confusing. Seven churches. We'll meet those seven churches in chapters two and three, and again, the question becomes, is this seven specific churches, or is this seven symbolically?
	00:34:06	Is he addressing this to the complete or perfect or universal church? Anybody who considers themselves a part of God's complete and perfect church, I have a message for you, or is it perhaps both? Are both meanings implied there? "From him which is, and which was, and which is to come," we get our first reference back to the Old Testament. Remember Exodus 3:14, "The name of God, I am that I am. I am the one who is, or I am the one that exists." We seem to be saying that, connecting this divine being here in verse four, who John's going to talk about with that Jehovah figure in Exodus 3:14, the one who is, the one who was, and which is to come.
Hank Smith:	00:34:47	Exodus 3:14. John, you're a good reader. Let's have you keep reading.
John Bytheway:	00:34:53	Verse five. "And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of the earth unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:35:09	Beautiful imagery there, right? To put this in a first century context, one of the questions that Christians would be asking, "Is Jesus powerful enough to be able to save me? I mean, I've got the Roman emperor and he's pretty powerful. You talk about this fellow named Jesus. Is he powerful enough to beat the Roman emperor? Is he



powerful enough to beat these other divine beings that you might've heard about?"

00:35:39 What we're going to start to do is we're going to start to build Jesus Christ up as a God in whom you can trust. He's the first begotten of the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth. He's the Messiah, essentially. He's God's anointed one. What did he do? He loved unto him that loved us, and in Greek, this is actually present tense, even though in King James it sounds like it's a past tense or perfect tense. He loves us, he continues to love us, he loves us in the present, and he washed us. That's a past tense, that's a completed action. He washed us. The Atonement has been performed, it's been completed, and you are made clean by a God who's powerful and loves you and wants to help you and wants to help you make it through this world that is perilous and dangerous and scary.

John Bytheway: 00:36:28 It's always interesting to me that blood is, for us, a stain that needs to be washed and clean, but Christ's blood is a cleansing agent.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:36:39 The Book of Revelation is going to play on that image. We get to chapter seven, we're going to see that 144,000 are washed clean, they're made white through the blood of the lamb, and that's not how it's supposed to work. Blood does not make things white, blood stains things. But somehow, in Jesus' case, makes you clean. The Book of Revelation has paradoxes that run all the way through, and one of those paradoxes is blood turns your clothes, your garments, white.

John Bytheway: 00:37:05 Wow. Okay, verse six?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:37:08 Yep.

John Bytheway: 00:37:09 "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:37:18 Yeah. These verses, four to five and six, are the thesis statement of sorts. This is what you expect when you get to the Book of Revelation. You're going to be introduced to

Jesus Christ. You're going to understand that he's the one who loves you and saves you, and then what does Jesus want to do? He wants to make you kings and queens, priests and priestesses.

00:37:38 We have another allusion to Exodus here, in this case Exodus 19, where we're told that Moses wants to take the Israelites and make them a kingdom of priests, or as King James translates it, kings and priests, but it's more literally a kingdom of priests. You'll start to see that why Joseph Smith was so attracted to the Book of Revelation, that you'll start to see language like kings and priests. You'll start to see seals become a very big deal in subsequent chapters. You'll start to see echoes of our own tradition as we work our way more and more into the Book of Revelation.

00:38:11 The cool thing about this is when you get to chapters two and three, the churches are promised images that have to do with kingship and priesthood. So here we're told Jesus makes you kings and priests, queens and priestesses, and then in chapters two and three we'll actually see the promises and how the promise of becoming a king and a priest is actually brought about. And then in chapter five, we'll revisit this exact same image again, come full circle.

Hank Smith: 00:38:38 Let's keep going here. Verse seven says, "He cometh with the clouds. Every eye shall see him. They also, which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, amen." We're getting a couple of "amens" here.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:38:55 Cometh with clouds. What does that bring to mind? Daniel 7, "The prophecy of one like the son of man." Who is this guy Jesus? Well, he's also the powerful son of man. He is going to come on the clouds of heaven with the angels behind him and conquering the earth. We get a passage from Zechariah 12 here. "They also, which pierced him." You got to be fluent in the language of the Old Testament to understand all these illusions that are coming through here. This is a good example of how John adopts and adapts a language from Jewish scripture, Daniel 7, Zechariah 12, things like that.

John Bytheway:	00:39:29	Is this the first time we see that name title for Christ being alpha and omega?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:39:34	Yeah, this is where we start to see the description of God and Jesus in these absolute terms. Alpha and omega, the first letter in Greek and the last letter in Greek, the beginning and the end. The first and the last. The idea here is we want to situate Jesus and Jesus's father as having absolute power. You can put your trust in them because they can overcome this Roman Empire that has all this power on earth. This is one of the ways the Book of Revelation is going to do this is with those titles that stretch from one end all the way to the other.
John Bytheway:	00:40:07	I like how in verse eight, it says that like three times, "I'm alpha and omega. I am the beginning and the ending. I'm that which is, that which was, that which is to come. Are you getting this?"
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:40:22	Yeah. "You can trust me. I've seen it all. I can do it all."
Hank Smith:	00:40:27	Okay, let's keep going.
John Bytheway:	00:40:28	I'll read nine. "I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:40:44	This is where we can situate things a little bit more historically. One of the things the Romans would do, especially with astrologers and soothsayers, if you had people that were predicting gloom and doom upon Rome, they would relegate you to an island to cool off for a while. We shouldn't see John as being in prison here. He's not being sentenced to hard labor. They're just saying, "Go cool your jets for a while since you've been predicting this stuff, kind of doom and gloom about what's going on here in Rome."
	00:41:13	And he says while he's there on this island of Patmos, which is about 13 square miles, you can walk from one side to the other in about half a day, it's an island in the Aegean Sea. While he's there, he says, "I was put there for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Christians are still this

nebulous group. There's really no clear idea what to do with them. Are they Jews? Are they something else? Later on, there's going to be more of a policy in place, but right now it's just, "Look, we don't know quite what to do with them. They're saying things, let's send them over here, wait for things to cool off a little bit." We don't know how long he's there, then he comes back, but this seems to be at the instigation of Rome, specifically for what he's saying about Jesus Christ.

Hank Smith: 00:41:52 Nick, when he says, "I am your companion in tribulation," what's the audience? The people he's writing to, what have they been through?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:42:00 We'll see this more when we get to chapters two and three. What used to be said about the Book of Revelation, about early Christianity, was there was this myth of persecution, that Christians to the lions, that the Christians in the first century had all these terrible things happen to them. There probably was some persecution. Paul mentions persecution, say, for example in 1 Thessalonians, but it's probably overplayed a little bit as far as Christians being killed, Christians being fed to the lions, things like that.

00:42:29 It's probably more, not an imperial persecution of sorts, although Nero, the emperor Nero, did have a reputation for persecuting Christians, and the emperor who's currently in charge at the time of this, if we assume a later date for the Book of Revelations, the emperor Domitian, who reigns from 81 to 96 AD, perhaps doesn't look very fondly upon the Christians, but it's probably the tribulation is coming from their neighbors. It's coming from the fact that Christians, who live in cities like Corinth, like Ephesus, aren't playing along with the other members of society. They aren't attending the temple. They aren't eating the food that's offered to idols that everyone's expected to eat.

00:43:10 We might say today in America we have a civil religion. We stand up for the pledge of allegiance. We take off our hats when the flag enters the room, we have holidays that reflect patriotism and things like that. The ancient world was the same way, and all of a sudden the Christians

aren't playing along. They're not standing up for the pledge of allegiance. They're not putting their hands over their hearts. They're not doing the things you expect them to do. People are saying, "We don't know what to do with you. You're unpatriotic."

00:43:36 So the Christians are stuck between, "Do we go along with what the world wants us to do and accommodate as best we can, or do we stick to our beliefs and hold our ground even though we risk upsetting our neighbor, upsetting people in our community?" That seems to be more the case of what's happening here at the end of the first century. When John says, "My companion tribulation," it's probably something more like this. They're having a very hard time carving out their identity in society.

Hank Smith: 00:44:06 That's really helpful.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:44:06 Why don't we look at verse 11 saying, "I am alpha and omega, the first and the last." We get repetition of those ideas again. "What thou seest, write in a book." We're being told now that what John is going to see he's going to write in a book, in this case it would be a scroll. "And then send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia." And then we're given, again, we talked about seven blessings earlier. Now we're going to be introduced to the seven churches, and they are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

00:44:41 Thing about these seven churches is they all form a semicircle of sorts in Asia Minor, so they're all churches that are next to each other. All of them are within a couple of days travel from one another. John may very well have been familiar or maybe founded some of those churches. What we're going to see in chapters two and three is each of these seven churches is going to get their own specific message. Some of those churches are doing well. Others of those churches are not doing very well, but each of them will be promised something specific. Verse 11 really sets the stage for John to write down his vision and then brings these seven churches into the conversation.

Hank Smith:	00:45:18	And Nick, you said earlier, are the seven churches symbolic, or are they real? These are real congregations, though.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:45:25	These are real congregations. There were churches at these places. The question is, should we interpret this today as... I mean, seven, were there more than seven churches? Absolutely. It could be eight or nine or 10, but he chooses seven, because seven has a specific meaning. And so as we look at this and say, "How should we interpret it?" First century context, these are real churches, but does it have meaning to us today?
	00:45:45	In other words, when we read chapters two and three and we get these really cool blessings, can we apply them to us because we are "part of the seven churches" in the sense that they are God's universal or complete or perfect church, which just goes to a question of application, but absolutely these are real first century congregations with real people who would be undergoing real problems.
Hank Smith:	00:46:08	Let's keep going here, because it seems that John sees the Lord himself. He describes him in ways that we're maybe not used to.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:46:16	Yeah. Should we just go to verse 13, then?
Hank Smith:	00:46:19	Yeah.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:46:19	"In the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the son of man," which again, controversial phrase. Does it mean someone who's like a human being, or does this mean somebody, the son of man in the sense that Jesus is this messianic semi-divine figure? Probably more the latter in this case, probably closer to Daniel's son of man than Ezekiel's son of man. "Clothed with garment down to his foot and gird about the paps with a golden girdle." There's something majestic about this. You're supposed to see him as well-dressed, likened to, say, an emperor or something like this. There's majesty in this description here, but you could also see priesthood in this as well.
	00:46:59	"His head and his hairs were white like wool," echoes of the ancient of days in Daniel 7, "as white as snow, and his

eyes were a flame of fire," signifying divine power. "His feet like a defined brass as if they burned in a furnace. His voice is the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand," connoting strength. We'll see the right hand again in chapter five. Notice the seven stars. "He uses the right hand, his strong hand, to protect the seven stars," and that's going to come into play later on.

00:47:35 God, in his role as a protector. You can trust him. You are in his right hand. "And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword," the image here being one of defense, God can defend you. He can protect you. God's word being like a two-edged sword. We see this in Hebrews. We actually see this very prominently later on in Revelation 19, what comes out of God's mouth, right? A sharp two-edged sword. "And his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength."

00:48:03 John's reaction. "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." He's overwhelmed by this image. It's unlike anything John has ever seen before, and I love this passage. "He laid his right hand..." Again, he's been holding, protecting the seven stars in his right hand. He takes that same right hand, that same hand that represents power, and lays it on John, offering him that same protection. "Fear not. I am the first and the last." Again, you can trust me. Literally, I've got your back. I'm the one you should be following.

Hank Smith: 00:48:39 "I have the keys of death and hell."

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:48:41 Yep.

Hank Smith: 00:48:42 "You're okay." When I read this, should I say, "Oh, this is how the Savior literally looked," or should I say, "This is John symbolically describing the Lord"?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:48:55 I would lean more towards the last. Again, symbolism is his language unto itself. Fire means something, right hand means something, and so John is using symbols to describe certain ideals, certain features, certain characteristics of the Lord, and symbols can just carry more meaning than, say, just a word can. He was powerful, and I'll relay that to you by saying his eyes were like fire or something like that. His voice was, out of his

mouth came out, a two-edged sword, right? He just had this incredible power of speech.

00:49:29 He's relying on you as a reader understanding how symbols work. I would actually say more often than not, when you're reading the Book of Revelation, err on the side of metaphor and symbol before you take a literal meaning. If metaphor or symbol doesn't work and you want to take it literally, that's good, that's helpful, but more often than not, John's assuming, I think, you'll read this metaphorically.

Hank Smith: 00:49:53 Figurative first, literal second.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:49:55 Exactly. Maybe even figurative first, figurative second, figurative third, literal fourth. We get into trouble the more literally we take the Book of Revelation.

00:50:04 Close out chapter one, "Write the things which thou has seen." Revelation chapter one, "The things which are." Revelation two and three, "These seven churches that you have contact with and the things which shall be hereafter." Revelation 4 through 22. Here we get the structure in verse 19.

Hank Smith: 00:50:24 Fantastic. "Things which you have seen, things which now are, things which shall be hereafter." So we could watch for those.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:50:32 Yes, exactly. Gives you an outline of what things are going to be, where they're going to be, why they're going to be, in this particular order, and how to interpret them. Revelation 2 and 3, take it as present circumstances. Revelation 4 through 22, we're going to have a different picture. Now we're dealing with apocalyptic. What's the endgame from God's perspective?

Hank Smith: 00:50:53 I noticed in chapters two and three that there's breaks along the way as he talks to the angel of the Church of Ephesus, and then that's verse one. Chapter 2:8, the angel of the church of Smyrna. You go along and there's these individual letters to these congregations.



Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:51:12	Yep, that's absolutely right. This is the epistle part of this, is each church is going to get their own short letter, which gives them commendation. In some cases, it gives them condemnation. And then it leaves them with a promise. "If you can turn things around or if you continue on your course, you'll be blessed in some fashion." This letter, chapters two and three, or maybe the whole vision, would be taken to these churches specifically, but the idea that each of them is individually addressed here. This is maybe an itinerant route that a missionary would take. You can hit all these churches in about a two-day walk from each other.
Hank Smith:	00:51:49	Oh, okay. Each one starts with "To the angel of the church of," fill in the blank, and then it finishes with "He that overcometh," like you said.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:51:58	There's a fixed structure for each one of these. They'll all follow the exact same pattern. Each one has its own problems. Each one is very unique. Each one is given its own unique blessing. We could hit on all seven of them quickly, maybe just talk about what the problem is, and then maybe what they're promised. Because I think that's where the application will come in is, what is this church dealing with, and then what is this church promised by overcoming what's going on?
Hank Smith:	00:52:25	Is this to be seen as, here's the Lord speaking to this congregation?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:52:31	Yeah, because what John is going to do is John is going to write essentially what God is telling him to write. He's a scribe for these couple of chapters. These are individualized blessings from the Lord.
Hank Smith:	00:52:43	So the Mapleton 6th Ward gets a letter from the Lord.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:52:47	Yes. Essentially, something like that.
Hank Smith:	00:52:50	"I know what problems you're having." Which ones you want to look at, Nick?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:52:55	Well, we could start with the first one, Ephesus here, in 2:1. "Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus." One of the

largest cities in the world, Ephesus was famous for the worship of the goddess Artemis. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World was the temple of Artemis, a problem that's identified in verse two. He says, "First of all, I know your works. I know your labor. I know your patience and how thou canst not bear them which are evil. Thou has tried them, which say they are apostles and are not, and has found them liars."

00:53:26 So he's like, "You've been patient. You're doing the best you can. There are some that have come among you and you've recognized who they are, that they aren't necessarily what they say they're going to be, but unfortunately," verse four, the Lord says, "I do have a problem with what you're doing. You've left thy first love." Don't know quite what that means. Maybe the love you had at first, maybe this was a congregation that originally was very open, very welcoming, but over time has become more closed off. They've stopped loving their neighbors because their neighbors have been giving them grief.

Hank Smith: 00:54:02 "You're not where you used to be"?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:54:04 Yeah, something like that. "There's behavior you used to have that was good. You've lost that specific behavior." I think kind of that outreach, we might say today. You were a congregation that had some outreach, but you've tapered off in that. I want you to turn it around.

Hank Smith: 00:54:19 It feels like an Alma 5 type.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:54:21 That's that same sense. Go back to the basics. And then verse six, "Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans." Probably, this is a theme we're going to see throughout here, this has to do with eating food offered to idols. They're feeling pressure to go to the temple of Artemis, for example. From 1 Corinthians 8, Paul has this conflict about what to do with meat offered to idols, and the issue was, this is where the parties were held. This is where your socials as a community would be, and you were expected to be there and participate in this. And people are looking at you sideways because you're not going to the big community parties anymore.

- 00:54:59 And there's people in Ephesus who are like, "Well, is it such a big deal? Can't we do this? Can't we accommodate a little bit? Can't we go to the temple of Ephesus just to have a party on Saturday, then go to church on Sunday?" So the challenge here is accommodation. Assimilating with religion. God's saying, "No, you can't." And he's like, "Good for you for not doing it. You hate the people who are doing that. Keep that up." This is, I think, the biggest problem for these churches, is how do they live in the world but not of the world?
- 00:55:29 If we kind of look for a modern takeaway, I mean, this is something Latter-day Saints. You're going to get a lot of pressure socially, a lot of pressure politically. A lot of people might look at you sideways because you're not doing the things that people think you should be doing. So what should you do? Should you accommodate a little bit, or should you hold your ground and do what you know you're supposed to do? That's a age-old conflict here. And some of these churches are doing better than others.
- 00:55:53 Some churches are doing, "Yeah, we're good. We're not accommodating." Other churches are unfortunately accommodating. The Lord is going to have some harsh things to say. Then he closes out, every one of these closes out on a positive note. But verse seven, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches to him that overcome." And that'll be a constant theme. There's something about overcoming here. "Will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
- 00:56:22 So we have this first promise of, in some fashion, hearkening back to Genesis, back to Ezekiel, but also ahead to the end of the Book of Revelation where we're told that in God's new kingdom, when Zion's built on the earth, on both sides of the street was a tree of life. And so there's something about "Eternal life rests with me and I offer it to those who can overcome the challenges that the world offers you."

Hank Smith:

00:56:47 Got it. Who's next in line for the letters?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:56:50 Next in line is the Church of Smyrna, and all is well at the Church of Smyrna. These guys are doing great. Verse nine, he says, "I know thy works in tribulation and poverty." Smyrna was traditionally a very rich, prosperous city, but he says, "Your poverty, I know the blasphemy..." This is probably the slander. People are saying things about Christians because they won't go to the temple, which is not necessarily about worship, but it's just eating at the temples is a civic responsibility, and Christians won't do it.

00:57:19 "Of them which say they are Jews and are not," because they're not true Israel in a sense, is the idea here because they haven't accepted Jesus, and acceptance of Jesus, as Paul says, is the mark of true Israel, but "They are the synagogue of Satan," which is kind of harsh. We want to be careful here. This could very easily become anti-Jewish a little bit. The idea is there's the congregation of the Lord where the righteous are, and there's something called the synagogue of Satan where the wicked are. And in apocalyptic literature, this is one of the hallmarks. Everything's very dualistic. There's good and there's bad, and there's no middle ground. There's black and there's white, but there's no gray area. You're either in the congregation of the Lord or you're in the synagogue of Satan. Church of the lamb, church of the devil.

Hank Smith: 00:58:08 That's very Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 11, 1 Nephi 14.

John Bytheway: 00:58:12 Yeah, it's the same "this or that."

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:58:14 Yep, absolutely. He says, "Look," verse 10 "be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." So here we have another nice image of, call it exaltation, if you want to bring a Latter-day Saint lens into it, that's the idea. "You will have a space in my new kingdom." Probably the image here is of a laurel wreath. In the ancient world athletic competition, the winner would be given a laurel wreath to wear like a crown. And that's probably the image.

00:58:43 We shouldn't see like a crown that a king would wear, but someone who's triumphed in a competition, is the idea. You've made it through. Like Paul says, "I've ran the race, I've finished my course. I won the wrestling match." And here, that same idea. You overcame the obstacles, and so

you get what winners get, which is a laurel wreath. But in a sense, dying is its own victory. You die, you move on. And what do you get? You get a laurel wreath, you won the competition. The people at Smyrna, they're doing okay.

Hank Smith: 00:59:13 Yeah, these have been individualized. Ephesus, it's "You were doing well, you're not doing as well as you used to." Smyrna, it's, "Hey, you're doing really well. Keep going."

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:59:22 Yep, absolutely. Verse 12 we get our third church, which is the church in Pergamum. Verse 13, "I know thy works where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." In Pergamum, there was a humongous alter to Zeus. That's probably what he means here, on their acropolis, this big altar to Zeus, he calls Satan's seat. And he tells us that "A man named Antipas was slain among you," probably as a result of persecution. So that's probably why he says, "Satan dwells in your city because one of my disciples, Antipas, was killed there." So he has some harsh things to say about what's going on in Pergamum. We don't know who Antipas is, but something bad happens to him, and as a result, again, the Lord has some harsh things to say about this. Verse 14, "I have a few things against thee," he says, "because thou has there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam."

01:00:23 This takes us back again to Balaam in the Old Testament. He lures Israel into apostasy by convincing them to worship the Moabite gods. And what the problem is, assimilation. They start to indulge in Moabite practices because of the Moabite women. And that seems to be the case here, that people in Pergamum are assimilating into common cultural practices like eating things offered unto idols. "You're going along with it." Maybe they're even participating in the ritual and the sacrifice, which for the Lord is a big no-no.

01:00:55 "To commit fornication," he says, and that's probably idolatry, not fornication, the sense of anything immoral sexual sense. But in the Book of Revelation, I think when we're talking about fornication... And you'll see this with the image of the prostitute in Revelation 17 and 18, probably more about idolatry than about anything else. And they're feeling the pressure. It's something we can

relate to, right? You feel the pressure from society to act in a certain way. Your neighbors are expecting you to act a certain way. Your coworkers expect you to act a certain way. And in Pergamum, they're doing it. They're going along with what their neighbors and coworkers wanted to do, and God has to step in here and say, "You can't do it."

Hank Smith: 01:01:36 "You're different. When you chose Christianity, you chose to be different. Stay different."

Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:01:41 Yeah. So verse 16, "Repent or else I will come unto thee quickly," which does not sound like a good thing. "Will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." That's a promise that only applies to... Some people read this and say, "Well, this is the Lord saying the second coming's going to happen fast." It's just this church. He just says, "This church, I will come unto you quickly." But notice what they get. This is fun. In verse 17, "To him that overcome will I give to eat of the hidden manna." Not entirely sure what that means, but it suggests something secret that the Lord is going to reveal. Are there echoes here of the messianic banquet? "When I come and establish my kingdom, you're going to be part of it." Is it a reference to the manna that's traditionally in the Ark of the Covenant? "You'll be brought into the presence of the Lord in some aspect."

01:02:30 Of course, "I will give him a white stone." This is familiar to us from D&C 130. What this perhaps means in context is, when someone would be put on trial, the way that you would decide if they were acquitted or they were condemned, usually have a white stone and a black stone. And if you cast the white stone, it was for acquittal. If you cast the black stone, it was for a verdict of guilty. God is saying, "Here, I'll give you a white stone," meaning "You will be acquitted, you'll be declared not guilty, you'll be vindicated. You'll be judged as not guilty." "And in that stone, a new name will be written," perhaps Jesus's own name, as we'll see. It could be a different name, "Which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it."

01:03:11 So there's a lot of fun things there. If we're using our Old Testament reference here, Isaiah 62, "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, all kings of thy glory and now shall

be called by a new name." Perhaps something akin to that. "And you'll be given a crown of glory, a royal diadem in the hand of thy God," Isaiah says. So perhaps something again like that is in mind here.

- 01:03:37 To go back to Alma 5, "You have his image in your countenance." It's his name written on your forehead, so to speak. That's kind of the idea. "Declare this day whom you serve. You can serve the broader community or you can be my disciple and serve me. If you serve me, I'll claim you as my own. I will be there for you when you need me."
- Hank Smith: 01:03:56 Yeah, that is a different promise than the first two.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:03:59 Yeah, there's a lot of fun stuff there, right? Not that all of them aren't nice promises, but those are a little bit more intriguing than just of a generic crown of righteousness or something like that.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:10 Yeah, you're right. Something you would pause and say, "Oh, what does he mean?"
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:04:14 And it takes some time to figure that out. What is this hidden manna? What is this white stone? And of course, D&C 130, Joseph specifically addresses this. The white stone mentioned in Revelation 2:17 will become a Urim and Thummim to each individual who receives one. A white stone is given to each of those who come into the celestial kingdom, whereon a new name is written. Joseph gives us that interpretation of this specific verse in D&C 130. So again, a lot to play with there.
- Hank Smith: 01:04:41 That's interesting. I'm reading on Bible Hub the pulpit commentary. He's referencing Trench. Trench's explanation of the white stone as an allusion to the Urim and Thummim, which the high priest wore. So this isn't something that's unique just to Joseph Smith?
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:04:55 It is not, that's the case. You think of the high priest, he has the breastplate, and in the pouch is the Urim and Thummim. And the Urim and Thummim would work because the priest would ask a yes or no question, and then if he pulls out the white stone, it's a yes. He pulls out

the black stone, it's a no, or something like that. And that's how you would divinate in ancient Israel. That's that idea.

01:05:16 There's a priestly significance to this in the sense that the white stone is the Urim and Thummim, and we saw in chapter one where he says, "I'll make you kings and priests," crown of righteousness, now a white stone. We're getting these images of kingship and priesthood that are being stressed in these chapters. The idea of this being a Urim and Thummim is not necessarily unique for Latter-day Saints. There's a long interpretation, actually, of the white stone having Urim and Thummim implications.

John Bytheway: 01:05:43 Wow, that's great.

Hank Smith: 01:05:45 Yeah, that's a lot of fun. All right, so we're on our fourth church here in verse 18.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:05:50 Yeah. This is the longest of these individual letters, and it's the most severe, the most serious. This is addressed specifically to Thyatira, and as we can see in verse 20, this is the reason why. "Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel." Probably not her real name, and using symbolism here, Jezebel brings up images of what?

Hank Smith: 01:06:15 She's like the wicked woman of the Old Testament, right?

John Bytheway: 01:06:18 Yeah.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:06:20 Yeah, idolatry. Introducing idolatry to the Israelites. She calls herself a prophetess, which is not unusual. The Old Testament's full of prophetesses. Miriam, Huldah, Isaiah's wife, is called a prophetess. "To teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication," probably not sexual, but religious infidelity, "and to eat things sacrificed to idols." We see the same problem occurring. Do we accommodate with society or not? Not just about eating at Texas Roadhouse. Right? I know Hank's favorite restaurant.

Hank Smith: 01:06:53 Hey.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:06:54 There's more implied here when it comes to eating meat offered to idols. And he says, "I gave her space to repent,



but she repented not." And then verse 22, which is a difficult verse, "But I will cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds, and I will kill her children with death."

- John Bytheway: 01:07:15 This is the PG-13 part you were telling us about.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:07:19 Yeah, this is part where it gets a little bit tricky, and depending on how you interpret this, you could say that anybody is the Jezebel and talk about what's going to happen to them and have some vindication in punishing them. The bed here probably just means a sick bed. That's how it's used in the Old Testament, and "I will kill her children with death," probably meaning plague or sickness, again. "I, the Lord, will bring a plague upon them if they don't repent." That's not that unusual, but the language itself just casts her on a bed and "I'll kill her children." I mean, that's pretty intense.
- 01:07:54 But the promise is made to Thyatira just as it's made to the other churches in verse 27. "If you overcome, I'll give you power over the nations." In other words, "I as the Messiah will share my authority," and "He shall rule them with a rod of iron." Even though things are problematic in Thyatira, they have their problems, and they're big problems, the Lord still holds out hope. There's still a time to repent. There's still a time to turn around. What's the promise? "You can co-rule at my side as the Messiah." That's pretty cool.
- Hank Smith: 01:08:27 Nick, with this letter, I can see my children going, "Wow, is the Lord really going to wipe out these people who sin?" Could I take this to be just a contrast of sin versus righteousness and what sin brings and what righteousness brings?
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 01:08:45 It goes to how you interpret the Old Testament as a whole. When we see the Lord bringing plagues upon people, right? Are those literal plagues, or are those more symbolic of the sinful behavior of a community?
- Hank Smith: 01:08:58 The consequences of sin? Yeah.

Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:09:00	Exactly.
John Bytheway:	01:09:01	The absence of the spirit or something.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:09:03	Yeah. I'm more comfortable with that, I think.
Hank Smith:	01:09:06	Yeah, me too.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:09:06	Than strictly saying the Lord is going to specifically kill your children. Just more that, be aware that what you do has implications upon your family.
Hank Smith:	01:09:15	Generations.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:09:16	The behavior you demonstrate has implications upon your children and their children and their children. There's implications if you follow Jezebel. If you follow idolatry, then your kids are going to have to struggle with that, and a plague will come upon them, and they'll have to deal with the consequences. I would probably lean more towards that interpretation here.
Hank Smith:	01:09:34	Yeah, me too. All right, we have three more churches.
John Bytheway:	01:09:40	Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:01	Welcome to part two with Dr. Nick Frederick. Revelation chapters 1 through 5.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:00:07	So there's the first four churches in chapter 2. Chapter 3, we're going to get the last, so these final three churches. The first church is the church at Sardis. And here's what John says. "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God." Kind of these angelic attendants, right, that we saw in previous chapters. "The seven stars," the angels that oversee these churches. "I know thy works. Thou has the name that thou livest and art dead." My guess is something like they appear to be faithful, yet they persist in sin. Perhaps something like that. This church is going to have a specific problem with complacency, seems to be their issue. "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die." In other words, "Raise your game. You've got to take it up a notch here. You're getting complacent. You're getting comfortable, all is well in Zion, and that's not how I need my disciples to live."
	00:00:59	Verse 4, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." And this image of garment again. Defiled garments seem to symbolize sin. Cleansed garments seem to represent the Atonement. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy," because they've resisted sin. Then that clothing imagery continues in verse 5. "He that overcome," the promise is, "they shall be clothed in white raiment." "Your clothes right now that are defiled are going to be made white in the blood of the Lamb."
	00:01:32	"I will not blot out or condemn their name out of the book of life." Think of the book of life as something like a census for the new Jerusalem. If you want to be included amongst the community in the new Jerusalem, your name gets put in a book. Perhaps what we see in Exodus where Moses says in Exodus 32, "Don't blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou has written." "Don't take my name off the census," so to speak. "Don't boot me out of the community."
John Bytheway:	00:02:01	Yeah. "Keep me on the roster."

Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:02:03	Exactly. "Keep me on the roll." And then notice this. "I will confess his name." I will affirm that we have a relationship. Instead of blotting it out, I will confirm it before my Father and before his angels. And those that are struggling with, "I don't know if I should fully commit or not. I'm becoming a little bit complacent in the world," the promise here is if you're willing to go that extra mile, raise your game, do what you need to do as a disciple, the reward will be, "I'll have your back. I'll be right there. I'll make sure your name gets put on the rolls. I will confess your name before the Father."
Hank Smith:	00:02:36	I like that imagery that, "Thou hast the name that thou livest and art dead." It's, "You look like you're doing the right things, but it really hasn't happened for you internally."
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:02:49	Exactly. Going back to Alma 5, there's that step, that transformation that has to happen with discipleship, and this church hasn't made that leap yet.
Hank Smith:	00:02:58	These are applicable. Even though he's not writing to us, I can see myself in pieces of these congregations.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:03:06	These are problems in any dispensation. You're going to have churches, you're going to have communities that are going to struggle with things like complacency, things like accommodation, things like leaders who might be taking you one direction rather than another. "Who do I listen to in a world where I'm getting a lot of different voices and a lot of different suggestions? How do I phase out the rest of it?"
Hank Smith:	00:03:26	I mostly see myself in Smyrna where they're doing really well.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:03:31	Or the next one. Actually Philadelphia might be more up your alley.
Hank Smith:	00:03:34	Oh, okay. Let's go there.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:03:36	Our sixth church right here. Verse 7. "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia. These things saith he that is holy, he that is true." This is fascinating. "He that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." That's fascinating. If you remember from Isaiah 22, we get this interesting scene where a fellow gets fired from his job as essentially as a steward to the king, and he gets replaced by Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah. This is Isaiah 22, is about verses 20 to 23. This is what the key of David is, as far as we can tell, another Old Testament allusion.

	00:04:18	He says, "I will clothe him with thy robe, strengthen him with thy girdle. I will commit thy government into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, so he shall open and none shall shut, he shall shut and none shall open. I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place, and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house."
	00:04:46	So that's the promise here that's made. "I'll give you the key of David." Essentially it seems to me at least to be something akin to the sealing power that Peter gets in Matthew 16, "seal on earth and seal in heaven," but this image of "a nail in a sure place" is the image of a tent peg. You put a tent peg in the ground and it keeps the tent in place. And he says that's what he will be since he has the key of David. In other words, as it applies to Jesus, Jesus controls who has access to the Father. "And what I will do for those of you like the people in Philadelphia, I will make sure you have that access to the Father. You'll have the key of David. You'll get in the door."
Hank Smith:	00:05:31	That's fantastic. Yeah, I do feel like that's more me. Thank you for pointing that out.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:05:36	Yeah, sure. I'm glad I was able to reinforce some of that for you. But then verse 8, "I know thy works. Behold, I have set before thee an open door." And this access to God, "you've got it." "No man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and thou has kept my word and hast not denied my name." Verse 9, they do have some tribulation here. "I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet to know that I have loved thee." "You are my people. I will make that public. I'll make that demonstrable, that you're the ones that I have chosen."
	00:06:13	Verse 10, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience." We would say something like "endured to the end" here. "You've endured to the end." "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." The day of the Lord. Think Joel chapter 2. "Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The laurel wreath. They've won the competition. They've got the laurel wreath.
	00:06:41	Notice what they're promised in verse 12. "Him that overcome will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." "I'll make you a permanent member in my house." "And he shall go no more out. I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of

the city of my God." It was typical in pagan temples that you would write down the name of the donors on the pillars of the temple, the ones who had donated the money to build the temple. And Jesus is essentially saying, "That's what I'll do for you. In my father's temple, I will inscribe your name on that pillar." And to those in Philadelphia, that's what they're promised.

Hank Smith:	00:07:21	Fantastic. "I will write upon him the name of my God." I think of a book or my kids with their toys. "It's mine. I'm going to write my name on it."
John Bytheway:	00:07:31	Yeah.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:07:32	Yeah. I think that's the idea. "I'll claim you as mine." If you can see the difference. You can see the difference between how the Lord writes to the people in Philadelphia who have overcome those things, who are being loyal disciples, who haven't let complacency or accommodation settle in versus those who are still struggling.
Hank Smith:	00:07:48	Hmm. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:07:49	Nick, wouldn't it be interesting to be part of these letters, and to hear how everyone else is doing, right?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:07:54	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:07:55	You're like, "Oh no."
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:07:56	That's actually going to appear here. It's interesting that you bring that up, because it actually seems to occur at least here with the church in Laodicea. But he says in verse 14... Because this is the most accommodating church. This is the opposite of Philadelphia. This church is being very accommodating. So verse 15, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot." Understand both of these, by the way, as positives. Both cold and hot are positive things here. He's like, "I wish you were one or the other."
	00:08:29	Verse 16. "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit thee out of my mouth." Hot beverages, cold beverages have their purpose. You can bathe in hot water, you can drink cold beverages, but something that's tepid... Tepid water is pretty useless. Sometimes I hear people say it means the church is the middle of the road, because they're in-between. That's not the case here. It means completely out of

fellowship. "Pick hot, pick cold, do something to get yourself back into fellowship. You are as far out of fellowship as you can be. And the image we're going to use there is tepid, lukewarm water that you want to vomit if you drink it."

Hank Smith:	00:09:10	I can have hot chocolate, which is good. I can have a cold ice water, which is good, but a lukewarm drink is...
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:09:19	It serves no purpose.
Hank Smith:	00:09:21	So the application, Nick, I could take is, "Be useful."
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:09:24	Yes.
John Bytheway:	00:09:26	It's a good way to put it, because hot or cold are useful.
Hank Smith:	00:09:29	Yeah.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:09:29	Exactly. Verse 17. "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." So echoes of King Benjamin here, right?
Hank Smith:	00:09:41	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	00:09:42	I'm sorry I'm laughing, but that's a funny verse.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:09:46	They've embraced the lifestyle of the elite, and they think they've become that elite. Here's where we get the reference I made to Hank, what the reaction would be from the other churches. He says in verse 18, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." "Do these things so that no one has to know how bad you've actually been." And what happens for 2000 years? The shame of Laodicea has been preserved in the Bible. We do actually literally get to see the shame of their nakedness. The other churches would've read this, and said, "I'm really glad I'm not Laodicea."
	00:10:24	"Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see." Right? "Take pride in being my disciples. Be hot or cold." Being out of fellowship doesn't work. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore, and repent." If you've got some problems, I'm going to call them out. I'm going to chasten you, but repent and be hot or cold. And if you do, verse 20, "I stand

at the door and knock." I'm waiting for you. I'm still here. I haven't gone anywhere. I'm still here.

00:10:57 "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me." And the invitation to a special, intimate relationship, having a banquet together, echoes of the Messianic banquet that Isaiah talks about, that we'll see later on in the book of Revelation. What's the promise here? Verse 21, "To him that overcome will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and I'm set down with my Father in his throne."

00:11:28 I like the connection here. Back in chapter 1, "I'm going to make you kings and queens, priests and priestesses." And then when you get in chapters 2 and 3, you get all these images of kingship, all these images of priesthood, "pillar in my temple," "white raiment" like the priests are going to wear, "sit on my throne," "a crown of righteousness," like a king. All these images can be tied into images of kingship and priesthood. You read that and say, "That sounds great. I would love to be a part of that. I would love to be a pillar in God's temple. I would love to sit on God's throne. What do I need to do?" Well, "To him that overcome..." What's the next logical question? "Overcome what?"

Hank Smith: 00:12:09 Yeah. What does it mean to overcome?

John Bytheway: 00:12:10 Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:12:12 And so John says, "I'm glad you asked. Let me tell you about a vision I had that will show you how to overcome."

Hank Smith: 00:12:19 Oh, okay.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:12:19 "I'll identify heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I'll tell you how to find Zion. And I'll identify Satan and the forces of evil. And I'll tell you where Babylon's at, and the things you need to avoid so that you can overcome and find yourself in the new Jerusalem."

Hank Smith: 00:12:36 So chapters 4 through 21 answer the question, "What do I need to do to get these blessings to them that overcome? What does that mean?"

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:12:46 Exactly.

John Bytheway: 00:12:47 Could I go back to Revelation 3:20 for a minute? I'm thinking that some of our moms and dads out there with kids that are



trying to figure out how they're going to explain what apocalyptic is to a three-year-old.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:13:00 Good luck.

John Bytheway: 00:13:01 But Revelation 3:20, we had this painting in our house growing up and the Come, Follow Me manual actually has that reprinted, or a similar one, with Jesus standing at the door knocking. And I can still remember being very young, and my dad walking me over to that painting and saying, "John, what's different about the door?" I'm like, "It's wood. I don't know." And him saying, "No. Did you notice there's no handle?" "Oh, why is that?" And he said, "You have to open it from the inside." I still remember that. I think that might be a fun thing to share with the kids, this idea that he is so ready and willing to come in, but you have to open the door if you want him to come in.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:13:43 Yup. Especially for a church like this that's struggling with commitment. Jesus is saying, "I'm not going to break down the door and drag you to dinner. What I want is for you to invite me to dinner. I want you to want to be my disciple."

John Bytheway: 00:13:56 It's not, "Behold I bust down the door and force you to do it my way." It's not that. It's, "I'm here, but you have to open the door."

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:14:05 Yeah, exactly. That's a nice insight.

Hank Smith: 00:14:08 This last one is the only one that said, "I am rich. I have need of nothing." And they're blind, it sounds like. He says, "You're blind to the fact that you're in a really bad place."

John Bytheway: 00:14:18 Oh, I love it says, "And thou knowest not..." It's like, You're completely unaware that actually you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

Hank Smith: 00:14:25 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:14:25 You'd think if you were that you would know it.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:14:27 It doesn't leave much left out there, does it?

Hank Smith: 00:14:29 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:14:30 So I'm thinking that's a very 2 Nephi 9, "All's well in Zion." "No, I'm good. Everything's fine." "But you don't really realize you're in bad shape right here."

Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:14:39	Yeah. Once we started thinking that we have something over others. I see a lot of King Benjamin. "Are we not all beggars?"
Hank Smith:	00:14:46	Nick, could I take from chapters 2 and 3 as something that's not said, but maybe implied, that the Lord knows us as individuals, he knows these individual congregations? Instead of talking to everybody all at once, he said, "Look, I know your personal struggles." Is that kind of an unsaid message? Are you okay with that?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:15:07	I'd say absolutely. I think a lot of what the Book of Revelation is trying to do is convince somebody that they can put their trust in God, and put their trust in Jesus rather than put their trust in the emperor. "Where are you going to put your faith?" And what you're seeing here is that not only is God powerful, but yeah, there's this intimacy as well. God understands each of us. He knows these congregations. He knows their strengths and their weaknesses. And it's not like there's just seven congregations. There's dozens if not hundreds of congregations at the end of the first century. And the idea is that God knows them all.
	00:15:40	And the idea today is that thousands if not ten thousands of congregations, and my guess is we could each get an individualized letter from God telling you, "I know your congregation. I know what you're struggling with. I know what you're doing well." And you could push that even further. Each family could get a letter from God saying, "I know what your struggles are. I know what you're trying to overcome. I really appreciate all the good things you're trying to do. Here's what I'd like you to keep in mind." The Book of Revelation wants you to understand God, in a sense, as someone who gets you and understands you, and is therefore worthy of your trust.
Hank Smith:	00:16:14	That's fantastic.
John Bytheway:	00:16:16	I think any of us could sit down and say, "What would God write to me?" I think we're aware, "I need to do this better. I need to do this better." To actually get one from God, that would be sobering, wouldn't it?
Hank Smith:	00:16:30	Yeah. Get a letter.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:16:30	I don't know if I'd want one or not.
Hank Smith:	00:16:31	Yeah, me too. And to all of our listeners in Philadelphia, if we have any, you're doing great.

John Bytheway:	00:16:37	You're doing great.
Hank Smith:	00:16:38	Shout-out.
John Bytheway:	00:16:39	The City of Brotherly Love there. You're doing awesome.
Hank Smith:	00:16:43	So Nick, I like what you've done here. You've said, "Okay, he's written to these seven churches. And here's now chapters 4 through 21, here's what it means to overcome." So I don't have to get caught up too much in the individual dragon, the woman. I can look for that meaning throughout the whole text, right, of overcoming good, overcoming evil, and which side I want to be on.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:17:08	That's how I read it. Like I said, I tend to align myself more with the idealist perspective. That what you get in the Book of Revelation is a how to overcome for every dispensation. There are just some truths that exist no matter when you live and the Book of Revelations trying to talk to all those audiences at the same time. That's how I interpret it. But it doesn't mean that the dragon and the two beasts refer to more specific things, that they don't have specific comparisons with something with the Roman Empire, right?
	00:17:40	This is always the trick. When you deal with Revelation six and you start opening these six seals, you start saying, "Well, who's this white horseman?" Is this an actual figure in history? Is this somebody from John's time period? Is this somebody who's going to be in the future or does white just mean conquest? You kind of have to go through each of these steps as you work your way through the book of Revelation. As I read it, yes, that's how I would read it, is how you describe it there. I wouldn't say that's the best way or the only way. It's one of many ways, but it's the way I'm comfortable with.
Hank Smith:	00:18:15	That's how I would read it as well. It seems that the first three chapters have been centered on Christ, so don't lose that center as you continue through the book.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:18:25	Yeah. One of the mistakes I see people make is they want to jump straight to chapter four because that's where the vision actually starts. A door opens in heaven. That's where we start to get the cool and crazy imagery, and so we skip these first three chapters, but to me, these first three chapters are the thesis statement for the book, I made you kings and priests. Here's what you'll get. For those of you who are able to overcome, you'll be able to inherit and receive these blessings. Now, here's

a lesson on how to overcome, but if you skip these first three chapters, it becomes a vision without an anchor, without a final purpose to it. Those first three chapters I think are pivotal.

Hank Smith: 00:19:03

All right, we have you for a couple more chapters, so let's not let you go just yet. Chapters four and five are the beginning of the what you said this vision.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:19:12

Yeah. Chapter four is about centrality. I mean, Roman Jerusalem were typically seen as the centers of the world. So what the Book of Revelation is going to do is it's going to realign that. It's going to realign for you where the center really is, and the center of the universe is going to be God's throne. We're transitioning from the prophecies in these last two chapters into this much more broad perspective. Instead of one church that exists somewhere in Asia Minor, the church at Smyrna, we're now going to pull back and look at the big picture and we're going to start at the center of the big picture, which is God's throne room. You have to see John's audience. The first century audience would be intimately familiar with pagan temples. They'd be intimately familiar with images of pagan gods. There'd be a natural response would be to be in awe of temples, to be in awe of Gods.

00:20:06

Chapter four is going to show us that true awe, true respect belongs to heavenly Father, that he is more worthy, he is more deserving of your love, your respect, your honor, than the gods and the temples that you may be used to seeing and may have at some point in your life worshiped. I'm trying to convince you of where the true source of your devotion should come from. I'm going to do that by pulling back the veil and taking you to the heart, which is God's throne room.

Hank Smith: 00:20:41

This is the right place to start.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:20:43

Book of Mormon starts the exact same way. Lehi finds himself in God's throne room. So there's a lot of parallels here between Ezekiel one and Revelation four. Maybe before you jump into Revelation four, you may want to start with the quick review of Ezekiel one so you can see some of the images that John is going to use, some cases similar in some cases, different ways here in chapter four.

00:21:07

So the first voice, which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking to me, which takes us back to Revelation one. We saw how the Lord Jesus Christ was introduced, which said, "Come up hither and I will show the things which must be hereafter." The question of time, when is this stuff going to happen? And

immediately I was in the spirit and what does this mean? This reminds me of Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 where he is talking about his vision of the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body, right? I cannot tell. Joseph says the same thing in D&C 1:37. He has this vision in January of 1836. He says, "Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell." So is this just a shift in location, a shift in perspective? Is there something else that's happening here?

00:21:55 But he says, "I was in the spirit and behold a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne." Again, pretty typical for Old Testament visions in Isaiah six, Ezekiel, Daniel, and you'll notice that we don't see God described in human characteristics, but in very ways that preserve God's transcendence. That seems to be the theme here. God is not just another human being like the emperor. I'm not going to describe him in human terms. I want to preserve or maintain or promote the transcendence of God. We'll see that in the imagery that John is going to use to describe him. You don't want to take it literally what we're doing is using symbolism to promote transcendence.

00:22:39 Verse three, "He that sat was to look upon like a jasper," which is a greenstone and a sardine, which is a red stone, and there was a rainbow, much like Ezekiel roundabout the throne sight like unto an emerald. Probably what's meant here is not that there's a rainbow of seven different colors, but a halo of a greenish color, like a green halo surrounded his throne, okay, an emerald rainbow. But a lot of times I'll see a picture is like there's actually literally a rainbow there or something like that. It's probably more of an emerald halo is what he means.

Hank Smith: 00:23:19 The NIV says, "And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby and a rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne."

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:23:27 Rainbow more is a bow of light rather than seven different colors or something like that, and roundabout the throne were four and 20 seats. Here we get into numbers, significance of 24. Well, it's two times 12. What is 12 symbolic of? Tribes-

Hank Smith: 00:23:45 Tribes of Israel, apostles.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:23:49 It seems to be a number that used to describe or symbolize Israel, God's people in some capacity, and here there's two sets of them. So are we talking about 12 tribes and 12 apostles? Old Israel and New Israel come together. We know that in Judaism there were 24 orders of priests, of which Zacharias was one of those orders. Do we have that priestly imagery here again,

these are priests in the presence of God, numbers, we've been taken a number of different ways? Clothed in white raiment, we've seen this theme of white raiment perhaps referenced to priests. They had on their heads crowns of gold. So there's something regal. They are kings and priests. It's like we were promised in chapter 1:6, that Jesus made us kings and priests. So in a way, these 24 elders seem to represent the future state of the believers.

00:24:43 Those of you who overcome can become like these people right here, clothed in white raiment with crowns upon their head because they are part of Israel. You could look at it as something like that. The symbols could go a number of different ways, but that's one that seems to make sense to me. Verse five, "Out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunders and voices," symbols of divine power, right? Things that happen in heavens. Remember, prophecy stuff that happens on earth, apocalyptic is stuff that happens in heaven. So we're looking at things from a heavenly perspective, so things like lightning and thunder and voices. Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. All these images signifying God's majesty here. Then verse six, before the throne, there was a sea of glass like unto crystal, probably a reference to the firmament, this clear case or covering that separates the waters, the creation. Ezekiel one, the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creatures. So we're still following up Ezekiel here, but their perspective is a heavenly one, okay? The firmament in heaven.

John Bytheway: 00:25:56 I've heard people refer to this as Lake Powell, heavenly sea of glass on a summer morning when it's time to water ski.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:26:04 Why not?

Hank Smith: 00:26:05 It is quite pretty.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:26:06 Why not?

John Bytheway: 00:26:07 Yeah, and it's like emerald at Lake Powell too.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:26:12 That's the beauty of symbols is we can make them mean whatever we want them to mean.

John Bytheway: 00:26:16 That's right.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:26:17 If we want this to be Lake Powell, the throne could be a boat on Lake Powell.

John Bytheway:	00:26:22	There you go.
Hank Smith:	00:26:22	He was on a houseboat in Lake Powell.
John Bytheway:	00:26:25	And a sea of glass just ready to be skied on.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:26:28	You just have to be able to fit 24 people in there.
Hank Smith:	00:26:33	I think we've gone off the rails. That was a good example of how to go off the rails.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:26:37	How quickly it can happen.
Hank Smith:	00:26:40	So the sea of glass. Now are we talking about God the Father here?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:26:43	I think so.
Hank Smith:	00:26:45	So Nick, should I see this as here's God the Father, and he's looking out over all creation, all his creation, there's nothing hidden from him?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:26:53	That makes sense to me. The sea of glass, the way Joseph describes this, right? We have Joseph giving us insight about this in D&C 1:30. Joseph says, "It is the earth in its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state." So the idea there could be this is something that the immortal, sanctified earth God has a perfect knowledge of or something because he can see everything that's in front of him. That makes sense. I wonder from another perspective, we're supposed to see it as the firmament because we're in heaven and the perspective of earth from heaven is we see the firmament that divides the waters, the waters from above the earth and the water's below. So it's a heavenly perspective, therefore, it's a sea of glass. I think there's three or four really nice images that could emerge from that. In the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four beasts, literally living creatures, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind, and what we'll see about these beasts, they will come to exemplify true worship.
	00:27:58	They will initiate the divine threats. They will be the ones who call the four horsemen. They will give the bulls to the angels. So these four beasts will have an important role to play in unfolding or as the events of the book of Revelation unfold. Then we're given a description, verse seven of these beasts. The first beast was like a lion, the second beast like a calf. The third beast had the face of a man, and the fourth beast was like a

flying eagle. As follows Ezekiel pretty closely, except in Ezekiel, each of the four beasts had four different faces on them, and here it's four separate beasts, a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle. And of course, as-

- Hank Smith: 00:28:39 So John is borrowing from Ezekiel, but changing things a little bit.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:28:44 Yeah. That seems to be the case, and he'll do that a fair amount of time. So he'll take the imagery, he'll adopt the imagery, and then he'll adapt it to more of a Christian purpose, more of a Christ-centered purpose. Very rarely is he just taking something wholesale and just assigning it the same meaning it had in Ezekiel or Daniel. That's why you have to know what Ezekiel and Daniel are saying so you can see how John shifts it around, how John makes alterations and changes and adds nuanced ambiguity rather than taking something wholesale. Of course, this is where the idea comes from, that each of our four evangelists are often represented with a specific animal.
- 00:29:22 Matthew represented by an angel, Mark associated with a lion, Luke associated with an ox, right? Or a calf. Then an eagle represents John and all the artwork and things like that. So you can always tell which evangelist is by which animal is in the painting with them. That idea comes from here in Revelation and in Ezekiel, they just become associated with the evangelists. I don't think that's the case. I don't think John is saying the four evangelists were surrounding the throne, but that's often how it's portrayed in art.
- Hank Smith: 00:29:53 All of a sudden it's getting difficult, more difficult than it has been up until this point.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:29:57 Yeah, very much so because we switched genres.
- Hank Smith: 00:30:00 Yeah, that's a great point. We switched genres. The rules have changed. Would John's audience, do you think, read this or heard it and just known?
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:30:11 Apocalyptic was a language that your first century Christian is by and large going to be familiar with, especially if they have a Jewish background. So I would expect that John's audience would be familiar with this or else, I don't know why John would speak to them in this way, otherwise.
- Hank Smith: 00:30:29 He's not making it difficult on purpose.



Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:30:32	Right. I think it's supposed to be clear. What's happened is the first century speaks a certain language, and in the first century context, this would be plain and easy to be understood. In the 21st century in the West, we no longer speak that language. We don't speak the language of metaphor, we don't speak the language of symbolism. We want literalism. We want things to mean exactly what they say. So for us it's complicated, but for the first century church, and I think this would be just switching back between two very common ways of talking about things, my guess is they would be comfortable with this or else why would John choose it as a mode of expression?
	00:31:11	One of the things that I'll sometimes hear that always makes me raise an eyebrow is somebody will say something like, "Well, John didn't understand what he was seeing." He described it in a symbolic way, but I understand what John means, and Hank used the example earlier of the locust being helicopters. John didn't understand that when he's looking at helicopters, he's like, "Well, they look like they were huge locusts flying around." So one of the cautions I would say is that we probably don't want to get to the point where we're saying that we understand the vision better than John does. I would extend that prior to his audience as well, just to tie a bow around that. His audience probably has a firmer definition of this than we do today.
John Bytheway:	00:31:51	That reminds me of Nephi's comment after the Isaiah chapters. Well, you didn't understand the manner of prophesying among the Jews, so maybe in a different time and place this would be plainer to us, which for us, I like it makes it like a puzzle, like a parable. We're going to have to dig in and do some work, and I like that. I think it's like a parable takes a little more time to think about than if it were literal. If only somebody would have a podcast about it or something.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:32:20	That would be so convenient. I could have listened to it before I came on this one. But this is the trick, and this is what I tell my students when we get to book of Revelation, is honestly, you almost have to read this at least two different times, sometimes four different times. Is it literal or is it metaphorical? Then you have to ask yourself, "Is it historical? Is it just first century? Is it in the future, or is it just a spiritual point or principle?" And you have to do that for every verse in the Book of Revelation. That's what makes this so complicated. It demands our time. It demands our attention, and it demands that we be responsible when we do it. We bring the right tools to the table.

Hank Smith:	00:32:59	Nick, so far in chapter four, God is on his throne. He's incredible. He has a lot of followers. The creation is in front of him. Nothing is hidden from him. Am I okay?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:33:11	Yeah, I think so. The fact that we have these beasts here, this lion, this calf, this man, this flying eagle suggests something about the order of creation as well, that I've noticed there's one human being in here with three animals. Does that suggest something about, sometimes we think of ourselves as the peak of the created order, but maybe from God's perspective, all life somehow has a sacred nature that perhaps escapes us sometimes. Whenever I teach a gospel doctrine to the youth, they always want to know what happens to their pets right? They want to know what happens to their pets when they die. Sometimes I'll bring them here to show them that there are animals who are in some eternal immortal state surrounding the throne of God. Perhaps a sign that our own pets, our own animals, find their way into God's presence at some point.
John Bytheway:	00:33:58	Hank, you can have our cat in the next life.
Hank Smith:	00:34:01	Yeah. No thanks. I don't like cats. My wife likes cats, so we compromised and we have three cats.
John Bytheway:	00:34:08	Do you want four?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:34:10	Joseph Smith actually makes the observation in 1843 talking about these animals. He says they were probably actual animals from other planets. The idea being that other of God's planets also have animals on them and they're also represented at this point. So Hank, you may be encountering a planet of cats at some point in the future. Who knows?
Hank Smith:	00:34:31	Oh, my little boys would love that, but not me.
John Bytheway:	00:34:33	I want to go back to helicopters because I wouldn't mind having a helicopter. If I can just overcome in this life, maybe I could get a helicopter.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:34:41	There you go.
Hank Smith:	00:34:42	If there's a planet of cats, there may be a planet of allergy pills.
John Bytheway:	00:34:45	Yeah. All right.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:34:50	Yeah, once again, we found ourself going-

John Bytheway:	00:34:51	A little off the rails.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:34:52	... veer off the path of the Book of Revelations. So, yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:34:54	It's easy.
John Bytheway:	00:34:55	Yeah, it's easy. Yeah. And it's fun.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:34:57	It's a book like this. Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:34:58	Okay. These beasts, it continues in verse eight. He describes them.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:35:03	Yeah. They each have six wings, right? Which is very similar to the angels in Isaiah 6. The seraphim also had six wings. They're full of eyes. The idea of being that they watch over God's throne. They rest, not day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy," which is a nice Hebrew way of saying holiest, supremely holy. Lord God Almighty, which was and is to come, which it takes us back to, we said this saw the same thing that reference to Exodus 3:14 that we saw back in chapter one. Jesus is the one who is, who was and is to come. And this transcendent majesty of God and his son is what we're talking about here.
	00:35:45	We're trying to convince our first century followers to put their trust in God. And can the emperor, can any of the rulers in the first century, any of these mighty political figures, can they claim anything similar to what John has seen heavenly Father and Jesus Christ being able to demonstrate the world in which they live, the power that they wield here in Revelation chapter four?
Hank Smith:	00:36:09	Would you say that's the summary of these 11 verses, is God is all powerful, there is none like him?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:36:16	Yeah, that's what I would say. We start the vision here with the assertion that God is almighty. He is the one who has the power. He is the one in whom you should put your trust. You've seen thrones, you've seen temples, you would've seen triumphs and parades where generals and emperors and kings and queens would've marched down the street. But can any of them compare to what you're reading about right here or what you're listening to right here? And the answer is obviously not.
Hank Smith:	00:36:44	Yeah, like a Moses. One moment he sees God and he says, "I now know man is nothing." Which-

Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:36:50	Exactly.
Hank Smith:	00:36:51	... things I never supposed.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:36:52	I think we're seeing that same idea. Once you leave chapter four, there should be no doubt in your mind that heavenly Father is the being you want to put your support behind, because what's going to happen is going to get pretty rough. We're only a couple chapters from unleashing hell on earth. But you want to know that the one who sits on the throne knows exactly what he's doing. You can put your trust in him.
Hank Smith:	00:37:15	What a way to start the vision. Keep your mind centered on this throughout the rest.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:37:20	Exactly.
Hank Smith:	00:37:21	So now, I've got this set. God, the Father is all powerful, almighty, stronger than any earthly leader. What's next then? Once I've got that set and established in chapter four, what's chapter five?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:37:37	Well, chapter five is we're going to be introduced in a different sense to the Savior. We're going to see why the Savior holds the position that he does and how the Savior stands next to the father. So, this chapter five is the Savior's introduction. And what we'll see in chapter five is three different parts, all based upon perspective. So, verse one is kind of part one. "And I saw in the right hand," and we've got our imagery, the right hand and it signifies power, specifically the power to bring judgment, call it the covenant hand if you want to. In this case, the hand of the father, because he's the one sitting on the throne, he's holding a book. You have to think like a scroll, a papyrus scroll here, not a book with a spine and covers and things like that. And we find out that the book is written within, and on the backside sealed with seven seals.
	00:38:35	So, one of the questions is what is this book? Later on, we're going to see that the visions that are disclosed, what's going to happen is this God's plan that we don't exactly know why, what to make of the scroll. Is it kind of the plan of salvation that the Savior has fulfilled? Whatever it is, it's sealed. Not just sealed with one seal like you would typically seal, but sealed with seven seals. And each of these seals is going to have to be broken in order to be able to read it. In other words, to be able to understand what's on this scroll.

Hank Smith:	00:39:11	Nick, is a seal like a wax covering, like an envelope sealed shut and I've got to open it?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:39:17	Exactly, right? And you have to see seven of those just working down the side of the scroll, and it's written on both sides somehow. But it's sealed to the point where all seven of those seals are going to have to be broken before what's inside can be rebuilt.
Hank Smith:	00:39:32	Okay, I've got an envelope inside of an envelope inside of an envelope. Just got to keep cutting them open.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:39:36	Yeah, that's exactly what it is. I've got to get to that one in the middle. Time becomes an interesting question here. I mean, I tend to approach this as what happens following the ascension. I've also heard others approach this as we're in pre-mortality. We're starting at the beginning, and God is holding up a scroll or a plan and saying, "I need somebody who can go down and make sure this plan is realized." Kind of a council in heaven, so to speak. Depends on what perspective you take here. I don't know if either of them is necessarily right or wrong, but I think both of them work.
	00:40:11	Moral of the story is we find ourselves in some sort of counsel with God saying, "I have information that's important. But in order for this information to get out, someone's got to break the seals, and it has to be somebody special. It has to be somebody worthy. It can't just be a regular person." Verse two, "I saw a strong angel," which we'll see again in chapter 10 with another scroll and another powerful angel repeating the same scene. But this angel proclaims with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to lose the seals thereof?" And this idea being that it needs to happen, but it can only happen by somebody who's worthy to do it.
Hank Smith:	00:40:53	So is this like who has the authority? Who has the virtue, who has the ability?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:40:58	Yeah. Not everybody can do it. We've established how great heavenly Father is. Now we need some way to establish how worthy and how great and how honorable Jesus is. And this is how we're going to do it is through a scroll sealed with seven S seals that no one else can open up. We could bring D&C 77 into play here. Joseph asks, "What are we to understand by the book which John saw, which was sealed in the back with seven seals?" And he is told, "We're to understand it contains the revealed will, mysteries, and works of God, the hidden things of the economy concerning this earth during the 7,000 years of its

continued or temporal existence." So somehow, it's information that needs to get out there, but it's hidden. It can't get out there until someone special, someone worthy is there to do it.

00:41:44 And unfortunately, in verse three, we can't find anyone. "No man in heaven nor in earth, nor under the earth, was able to open the book, to crack the seals on the scroll, neither to even look thereon." And in the ancient world, your universe is what's known as a three-story universe. You have heaven, you have earth, then you have what's under the earth, and that's your entire universe. It's kind of those three stories. So, what John is telling you is, "We looked everywhere. We looked all over heaven, all over earth, all over under the earth. We can't find anybody who's worthy to do it." What that tells you here, we're setting the stage for Jesus. No one is like Jesus. There are not five Jesus' out there. We looked everywhere, we couldn't find anybody who could do this. That's how unique this task is. It requires someone special, someone specific.

00:42:36 And John starts to get worried. "I wept much," he says, "Because no man was found worthy to open the book and to read the book, neither to look thereon." Right? He's worried God's message is going to remain hidden. Whatever's here that's so important will never get out because we can't find the person who is worthy to do it, and we're getting anxious. But verse five, one of the elders said, "Unto me, weep not, behold the lion of the tribe of Judah." Here we have a reference to Genesis 49. Judah is a lion's whelp. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, is we have this regal imagery. There's a reason why it's called the Lion King, okay? Not the cat king or something like that, right?

00:43:22 The root of David, an echo of Isaiah 11. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, a branch that'll grow out of his roots". A regal, a kingly image. This individual hath prevailed, past tense. He has conquered. To open the book and to lose the seven seals thereof. So John, you were worried. Guess what? Someone's done this.

Hank Smith: 00:43:47 We found someone.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:43:48 Exactly. And he's described as a lion, to the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. Your expectations are of a certain sort of individual, somebody regal.

Hank Smith: 00:44:02 A lion king.

Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:44:03	That's what you're looking for. So verse six, here we get part two. "And I beheld." We see the shift. So, the first part of this chapter is about the scroll in the hand of the Lord or of the Father. Part two, introduction to the Messiah. "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood not a lion, but a lamb. And not just any lamb but a lamb as it had been slain." So, opposed to the regal unconquerable lion, you get the definition of vulnerability. The opposite of a lion is a lamb, having seven horns, which is curious. That horns seem to represent power. You expect like a bull. The image seems to be that while he's a lamb, he's not a sheep. If you can make that distinction.
	00:44:57	He's not without power. He's not this passive animal. He's a lamb with power. He's vulnerable, yet he's powerful. And seven eyes suggesting wisdom, knowledge, sights, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into the earth. The idea that Jesus and God see everything. There's nothing that he and the Father are not aware of. To go back to your point earlier about the churches in chapters two and three, the Savior sight is perfect. So, we have one of these paradoxical images. You don't make something white by washing it in blood. You don't expect a lion and receive a slain lamb. But that's exactly what's happened.
Hank Smith:	00:45:40	He hears about a lion. Turns and looks, and he doesn't see it. He sees a lamb.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:45:46	Yes, exactly. A lot of imagery there, a lot of symbolism there. One of the common ways to sort this out is that this is Messianic expectation. The Jews are expecting a political messiah, a Davidic messiah who's going to conquer the earth, and they're looking for that lion. But what they missed was the vulnerable lamb, right, who came down to earth, born in Nazareth, grows up in Galilee and is crucified.
Hank Smith:	00:46:13	Expectation versus the reality of what he wants.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:46:16	Exactly. But there's also something beautiful there about this incredible figure who has seven horns and seven eyes, yet he's defined by his vulnerability as a lamb, a really thought-provoking picture of the Savior here. A lamb as it had been slain.
Hank Smith:	00:46:36	Reminds me of John the Baptist, right? Behold the Lamb of God.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	00:46:40	I don't think it's coincidence that in the Gospel of John, uses that image twice, right? Lamb for Jesus, and the book of

Revelation, what are we going to use again? It's going to be John using lamb for Jesus. Connections between that story there, and a provocative imagery.

- John Bytheway: 00:46:55 I don't know how much the number symbols, what we're supposed to learn from them, but you can see that in the footnotes in the JST, it changes it to 12 forms in 12 eyes. And then says, "Which are the 12 servants of God sent forth into all of the earth." I'm looking at footnotes 6b from the JST. That's interesting. And the 12 servants of God sounds like the 12, I guess.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:47:21 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:47:21 Yeah.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:47:22 And seven makes more semi... You can't really have seven horns, right? You got to have an even number.
- John Bytheway: 00:47:28 Yeah, it's asymmetrical otherwise.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:47:31 12 representing Israel again. A covenant number. Is Joseph bringing this back into the sense of, back into the arena of God's people? Israel, the covenant people, that idea running through here?
- Hank Smith: 00:47:45 Yeah, reminding us of Israel.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:47:48 Tribes.
- Hank Smith: 00:47:49 Yeah. So the lion is a lamb, but in verse seven, he has a hand.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:47:57 He does. Or, yeah, he came and took the book out of the right hand.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:02 He was able to take the book.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:48:05 This is about expectation and perception. You might feel a lot better trusting a lion. Trusting a slain lamb requires a bigger leap of faith. A crucified Messiah requires a leap of faith. But we're going to show you how the people in heaven who are a whole lot smarter than you are down here on earth, we're going to show you how they perceive of the slain lamb. As the slain lamb comes and takes the book, we read this more metaphorical than literal. The Savior, the resurrected Savior comes and takes the book, the scroll sealed with seven seals, out of the right hand. He's now acting as God's agent. Power



has been passed, like a baton in this sense, has been passed from the father to the son. He now acts as the father's agent. If you can trust the father, you can trust the son. He has similar powers, similar responsibilities of him who sat on the throne.

00:49:03 And we had taken the book, the Four Beasts. Now we see the reaction to the lamb. We saw the reaction to the Father in chapter four, now we see the reaction to the lamb here in chapter five. When he had taken the book, the four beasts and the 24 elders fell down before the lamb, having every one of them harps, which he has a priestly idea, like it was a Levitical duty to play music in the tabernacle. There's golden vials full of odors, which it takes us back to the temple, the altar of incense perhaps. So, we see this priestly image as Jesus ascends to his throne. Prayers, we're told, these golden vials of odors are the prayers of the saints, and they sing a new song. We see this in the Psalms. It's often in the Psalms, you'll see people saying, "We're going to sing a new song." So, we have another Old Testament allusion here, and here's the song.

00:49:59 "Thou art worthy to take the book." Remember, no one else was worthy. We couldn't find anyone else. Jesus is unique. He has a special role, "And to open the seals thereof." And this is really nice. "Thou was slain," which in Greek is the verb sphazo, which is a very, very violent verb. It means essentially to slaughter. "Thou was slaughtered, but thou hast redeemed," which means literally to purchase, or agorazo saying in Hebrew, "Thou was purchased us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." That's why we should follow you. That's why you're worthy. You were slaughtered and you redeemed us. You saved us. You bought us back. You purchased us through that blood that you shed.

00:50:50 And not just us. Every kindred, every tongue, every people, every nation, that's John's way of saying everybody. Everybody everywhere has an allegiance, an obligation, a connection to the Savior through his sacrifice.

Hank Smith: 00:51:06 So I might've been looking for a lion to save the Jews, what I got was a lamb that saves everyone.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:51:14 I think that's exactly right. It might not make a whole lot of sense when you think about it that way. A crucified Messiah, it's a stumbling block, because we saw what Paul says in 1 Corinthians, it's foolishness. It doesn't make a lot of sense. What I'm going to do is I'm going to show you how the people in heaven react to it, and they react with honor and awe and

wonder, and maybe we should take a page out of their book and react the same way as they do.

Hank Smith: 00:51:38

Yeah, it's almost like they throw a party.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:51:40

Really, that's what it is. They're playing music. Verse 10, now notice this. This is going to take us all the way back again to chapter one and we come full circle. In chapter 1 we were told that Jesus redeemed us through his blood and made us kings and priests. Verse 10, "That thou the lamb has made us," which is actually them. There's a weird English translation here, "but thou has made them," meaning the people who've been redeemed, "unto our God, kings and priests." A kingdom and priests, what it literally means, but kings and priests more familiarly, and we or they shall reign on the earth. The idea here is that because Jesus gave up his life, because he yielded his will to the Father, he's now earned the right to take the book, open the seals and pronounce judgment upon the earth.

Hank Smith: 00:52:31

This one's a little bit easier than chapter 4, just a little bit easier.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:52:36

I think part of that is because the idea of a crucified, vulnerable, compassionate Messiah is not a foreign concept for us. We're comfortable with that. If you're not comfortable with that, it becomes complicated, but we're comfortable with that idea. This is very familiar from the Book of Mormon. Book of Mormon talks about compassionate to the lamb of God. That image is all over the place in the Book of Mormon. And so verse 11, part three, for the third time, John's going to behold something, and now we're going to branch out. It was Father, then it was Son, now it's everybody. Verse 11, "I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels roundabout the throne and the beasts and the elders, and the number of them was 10,000 times 10,000 and thousands of thousands." Now, you can do the maths on that. It's a lot.

Hank Smith: 00:53:28

It's a lot.

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:53:28

A very, very big number. If you put this in a first century perspective, if you're a Christian, you live your life every day feeling outnumbered. You're surrounded by Jews, you're surrounded by gentiles, surrounded by pagans. You're always in the minority, and then what do you have here? You have thousands upon thousands upon thousands of beings in heaven worshipping the Savior. You're now in the majority. You're now part of this larger party when you worship the Father and the Son. Saying with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and

honor and glory and blessing. Notice how many words there. Power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, blessing. Seven. John likes to use numbers. Sometimes he'll just give you the numbers like seven. You'll see with next week's reading, a number like three and a half, he finds four different ways to say three and a half, and you have to read carefully a time, times and half a time.

00:54:28 For example, for three and a half, there are 42 months or 1,260 days for all different ways of saying three and a half, so you always have to be aware of the numbers that lie beneath the surface here. Power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, remember our view is now, this is apocalyptic. We're unveiling the Father, we're unveiling the Son. Now, we're unveiling heaven itself. Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such are in the sea and all that in them are, everyone, everywhere. Previously, no one was found to be worthy when we looked in heaven and earth and under the earth, now everyone acknowledges the lamb is worthy. Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb forever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the 420 elders fell down and worshiped him that lived forever and ever.

00:55:29 And this is really nice. We end chapter 5, we began chapter 5 with some doubt, with some consternation, would we find someone worthy to open the seals? We end chapter 5 with peace and harmony in heaven. Everyone, thousands upon thousands are all joined in worshiping the lamb. All is well in heaven. That's the message of chapter 5. Everything's good up there. What's the next question? What about down here? What's going to happen on earth? And that question will quickly be answered in chapter 6 as we start breaking these seals that are on the scroll. We'll start to see how much disharmony is on earth as opposed to heaven.

Hank Smith: 00:56:11 This has been just fantastic. I've got Jesus being introduced in chapter 1. He speaks to these seven churches in chapters 2 and 3. I'm introduced to God the Father and his glory in chapter 4, and I'm introduced to the mission of the Savior in chapter 5 and his unique role in the plan. Do you feel like I got you there, Nick?

Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:56:37 That summarized it well. You're going to want to hold that and contrast it next week beginning of chapter 6, everything is going to be very different. It's going to be the opposite on earth. It's going to be chaos. It's going to be disharmony. The challenge

that the Book of Revelation faces is, do you want what I show you about heaven or do you want what's here on earth? You need to make a choice. Choose which one you want. Don't be lukewarm. Choose which one you want. And then if you want to overcome, if you want those blessings in heaven, pay attention to what I'm going to tell you in this vision because I'll lay it all out for you.

- John Bytheway: 00:57:13 I love the idea in chapter 5 of it sounds like the Father having the book and the Son the Lamb. I remember it seeing, I think maybe in the Book of John, the gospel called the Gospel of God, and I remember Elder McConkie saying, "Yeah, why don't we call it the Gospel of God?" Well, it's because the Savior put Heavenly Father's plan in motion and it became the gospel of Jesus Christ then.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:57:39 That sums up very nicely what's happening in the Book of Revelation.
- John Bytheway: 00:57:42 Yeah. That's what it reminded me of, the gospel of God, the Father's. Our Heavenly Father's plan became the gospel of Jesus Christ as the lamb is going to put it all in motion and have his blood slain from the foundation of the world, which is that was always known that would happen type of a thing. That's what I'm seeing.
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:58:05 Yeah, that's nice.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:06 Nick, this is from a non-Latter-day Saint Bible scholar, but a great one. He said, "The pastoral role of Revelation is to summon every generation of readers to follow the lamb in its footsteps and to resist the beast within and without, and to suffer along with the lamb if need be in bearing witness to what he's done." If that's not where it ends, we've totally missed the purpose of this apocalyptic literature. Do you feel like that's our first five chapters? It needs to culminate in how great the lamb is?
- Dr. Nick Frederick: 00:58:45 Yeah. I think that's absolutely right. Sometimes when we get lost in the language of cracking the code, I have to know what 666 means. I have to know what this red horse is. What we're doing is we're losing sight of the big picture. The big picture here, I tell my students this every semester. I can summarize the Book of Revelation in two words, Jesus wins. That's the point. You want to be on the winning side or do you want to be on the losing side? If you want to be on the winning side, then follow the lamb. As you work through these chapters, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 emulate what the 144,000 are doing, be aware of the tactics

that Satan's going to use in chapters 13 through 17. Make sure that you're there for the marriage supper of the lamb in chapter 19. The overarching purpose here is to remind us to follow the lamb and avoid the beast, and the beast is very, very good. The dragon is very, very good.

00:59:40 In fact, in chapter 13, the beast, what we call the antichrist is described as being like a lamb. Essentially he's a counterfeit lamb. He's very good at looking like he's the lamb, and it's up to us to be able to discern through the spirit of prophecy and revelation through text like, I think, the Book of Revelation through something like the Book of Mormon on how to figure out where the true lamb is so we recognize like those who are in heaven and have no problem recognizing that lamb is worthy, where we reach the point where we can say the same thing, and that's not an easy thing to do. The world is a very complicated place. Satan's very good at throwing things at us and presenting himself in a certain way and it takes a lot to cut through that, but that's why I love this book.

01:00:25 That's why I studied the Book of Revelation because to me that's the challenge. Find the right lamb. I understand who Jesus is, what his mission is, and make sure I'm doing what I need to do to be overcoming. That's the challenge of every day of my life is make sure I continue to overcome. Going back to this quote, the point is to keep the big picture in mind. It's so easy to get lost in the little things in the Book of Revelation, locusts and other things like that, that we lose the lamb and we don't want to do that. The lamb, it is the revelation of Jesus Christ. It's right there in the first verse. And if we start getting on directions that we're not talking about Jesus anymore, we're being distracted by something else, then we need to step back and refocus and find the lamb again.

Hank Smith: 01:01:10 President Nelson said, "I express special gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ. I am thankful for his loving kindness and for his open invitation to come unto him. I marvel at his matchless power. I testify of Jesus Christ as the master healer. It is, but one of the many attributes that characterize his incomparable life." This is almost like a chapter 5-esque quote. He says, "Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the son of God, the Creator, the great Jehovah, the promised Emmanuel, our atoning Savior and Redeemer, our Advocate with the Father, our great exemplar." Doesn't that seem to be the message of chapter 5, Nick? I like what you said there, "Choose the right lamb, there's going to be a dragon that's pretending to be a lamb. Don't choose that one. Choose the authentic lamb."

Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:02:04	It's interesting because as you work your way through the Book of Revelation, the lamb disappears. The lamb is so prominent in chapter 5 to the point where tens of thousands upon tens of thousands of beings worship him. And then he begins to open the seals and he recedes into the background, and we don't really see a parody of the lamb later on, but we don't actually see the lamb reemerge in a similar fashion if we get to chapter 19. I think that parallels why we need to keep these early chapters in mind, why we need to base our faith and testimony upon the revelation of Jesus Christ, like what he offers us in these early chapters, the promises of making us kings and queens, priests and priestesses, the transcendence of the Father and the power of the Savior because there's going to be times where it doesn't seem like he's there, that God isn't in the world, that things are going to feel oppressive.
	01:02:53	It is going to seem like the Lamb has disappeared, but he's always there behind the scenes. The Lamb is always watching things. God's hand is completely in control. That's the point here. There's nothing that's going to happen on earth that God isn't fully in control of. Don't lose that perspective even when it seems the Lamb might not be there or God may have lost part of the control. Christians in the first century, Rome may seem like they've got everything completely under control and you have no power of your own, just remember, the Lamb is always there. The Father is always in control, and sometimes that's hard for us to remember because the dragon can be pretty persuasive. Babylon can be a pretty persuasive place. The Lamb is always there.
Hank Smith:	01:03:38	So this is one of those books, Nick, that it's okay to read the end and say, "Oh, the lamb comes back."
Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:03:45	Yeah, absolutely. Jesus wins. That's the point of the book, Jesus wins.
John Bytheway:	01:03:51	I just had this phrase when John was writing, the revelation was to the churches about he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear, and if anybody's listening, they have an ear. That's a fact, but letting him hear, that's a decision of opening our ears to hear. I love that the Lord used it in parables that he who hath ears to hear, you have ears now, what are you going to do with this and decide to hear the testimony that we've talked about today? I like that, I've got to open my ears to hear this, and thank you for pointing us to Christ. If you're getting off onto timelines and what locusts are, you're off the rails as you put it. Thank you for that, Nick.

Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:04:34	It's fun. You can see what the appeal is. I can crack the code and figure out everything that's out there, but it takes us away from the heart of the book.
Hank Smith:	01:04:42	Awesome. Nick, if I'm at home, I've stayed with us here for the last few hours. By the way, thank you, for those of you who are still with us. What do you hope I walk away from this thinking? One, I'm ready to study the Book of Revelation responsibly, but what's my main takeaway?
Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:05:00	I hope it's confidence. I hope it's confidence that the path that you've picked as a disciple of Jesus Christ is the right one. I hope this book solidifies the decisions you've made to be where you're at, are the right ones. And the Book of Revelation is going to tell us there's going to be a lot of opposition. There's going to be a lot of things that are going to pop up that look like they're the right thing. There's going to be a lot of things that are going to happen that make you question whether you picked the wrong side, but I hope that what we've done with these first five chapters give you the confidence to continue in your path as a daughter or son of Heavenly Father.
Hank Smith:	01:05:39	Awesome. What a great day. What a great day. I don't know him personally, but I think John would be happy with what we've done.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:05:47	I hope so. I hope we did him justice. It's always a little bit uncomfortable commenting on someone else's work. You just hope you get it right.
Hank Smith:	01:05:55	Profound, beautiful work. Thanks for being here. It's just so fun to sit here and listen to someone who has done the research and done the work, explain things.
Dr. Nick Frederick:	01:06:05	Hey. Thanks for having me on. There's nothing I love more than just sitting and talking about the scriptures, so this was a pleasure.
Hank Smith:	01:06:10	Yeah, us too. We want to thank Dr. Nick Frederick for joining us today. It's been absolutely wonderful. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen. We always also remember our founder Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're going to go through these chapters of Revelation on followHIM. Today's transcript, show notes and additional references are available on our website, followhim.co. That's followhim.co. You can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on our

Facebook and Instagram accounts. All of this is absolutely free and we'd love for you to share it with your family and friends. We'd like to reach more of those who are searching for help with their Come, Follow Me study. If you could subscribe to, rate, review and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra and Annabelle Sorensen.

President Russell M. Nelson: 01:07:11 Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him, follow him.



## WHY DOES JOHN USE SYMBOLISM & IMAGERY?



- Hank Smith: 00:02 Hello, everyone. Welcome to another followHIM Favorites. My name's Hank Smith. I'm here with the incredible John Bytheway. You know the drill, John. We're going to take a single question from this week's lesson. We're starting the book of Revelation this week, John. So our question is pretty simple. What's with all these symbols in the book of Revelation? What am I supposed to do with all these?
- John Bytheway: 00:23 The symbolism was like an ancient language. We know that others used it in the scriptures too. Please don't get bogged down trying to understand this, that, or what everything means because then you might get too definite, too distinct. Take a 30,000-foot view. Look at the whole thing. What are we learning about the end? And there's one symbol that we all know, and I know you want to talk about this, Hank, and that is the Lamb. Who is the Lamb?
- Hank Smith: 00:49 We should look for themes in the book. One of the major themes throughout the book, you're right, is the Lamb. The Lamb is introduced in chapter 5, and then all throughout the book you watch for the Lamb, especially towards the end when the Lamb returns. That should be our major highlight, I think, of the book. Just focus on that one symbol of the Lamb. I think you'd walk away with at least a grasp of what the message of the book is. The Lamb wins.
- John Bytheway: 01:18 Yeah. Remember that way back in the book of John, when John the Baptist first saw Jesus, he used that phrase, "Behold the Lamb of God." And now we know that that's when Christ came, and that's what John called Him. Now, we're coming back to that name and that symbol. The happy news about the Book of Revelation, it is really hard, but in the end, everything comes out right and the Lamb of

God prevails, and that's the main thing. Then you can get more detail as you go through, too.

- Hank Smith: 01:47 If you have those major themes in mind as you're going through, you might go through a couple of verses and not really understand, and that's okay. You can come back to those later. But if you're just watching for the theme of the Lamb versus the dragon, what happens to the Lamb at the end and what happens to the dragon at the end? You could probably fill in the gaps later, but if you get bogged down in those verses and some of the symbols, you won't ever get to the main message of the book, which is a hopeful message. It's a victorious message.
- John Bytheway: 02:17 When Jesus said, "Come, follow me." Just think of it as, "What are we going to do? We're going to follow the Lamb." Because He is the Lamb, and that's what this is all about. What do I do today about this? Today, you just follow the Lamb.
- Hank Smith: 02:31 The world is getting dark, just like some chapters in Revelation. What does the Lamb do, how does He overcome, and how does He ask his saints to overcome?
- John Bytheway: 02:40 Be a Zion people, and let's keep repenting. Let's keep following the Lamb, that type of thing.
- Hank Smith: 02:45 Yeah. This is a book to first-century Christians about how to overcome persecution. You can use it too to say, "This is how I'm going to overcome darkness and persecution."
- 02:56 We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We're with Dr. Nick Frederick as we start this book. He's an expert in the book of Revelation, so come join us over there and then come back next week, we'll be back with another followHIM Favorites.