



*"Jesus Christ will Gather His People"*

## 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:

Is it possible to force the Lord's return? Brother Eric Richard explores the answer to this question. He also looks at the characteristics of the Millennium, the Lord's work with His Children, and the expected joy in Millennial reunions.

#### Part 2:

Eric Richards continues to examine the Second Coming and the redemption of all through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

## Timecodes:

### Part 1 -

- 00:00 - Part 1 - Brother Eric Richards
- 04:15 Bio of Eric Richards
- 04:49 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 07:07 Primary questions
- 09:53 Gathering you to restore you to God
- 13:54 Pickle suckers and yeast
- 17:30 An Advocate
- 20:47 God inspires people everywhere
- 24:11 Racing toward conversion
- 25:57 Rock throwing and saving souls
- 29:41 Moroni's Little Handbook of Instruction
- 31:46 Gathering in one place
- 34:54 Why write about the Second Coming?
- 36:53 Jesus cannot be forced to return early
- 37:40 I thought Satan would be taller
- 40:03 Birthdays in the Millenium
- 44:32 Checklists may disturb spiritual focus
- 46:57 Darkness, hail, and destruction
- 50:18 What maggots teach us
- 52:12 What is the Abominable Church?
- 54:37 Can we spend time in Babylon?
- 56:02 What do we marinate in?
- 59:38 The joy of the Resurrection reunions
- 1:05:45 God's work and God's children
- 1:07:50 Member of other faiths and the Church of the Lamb
- 1:11:03 - End of Part I - Brother Eric Richards

### Part 2 -

- 00:00 - Part 2 - Brother Eric Richards
- 04:16 Lucifer and a calculated rebellion
- 07:41 Natural man vs. fallen man
- 10:53 Jesus redeemed little children
- 17:32 The Lord is merciful
- 18:06 Winning team chant
- 23:17 Second Coming Prep
- 27:06 The ultimate message of the Savior
- 29:38 Flee Babylon
- 31:30 Brother Richards shares his testimony of Jesus
- 38:31 End of Part 2 - Brother Eric Richards

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## Biographical Information:



Eric is a member of the Veritas society and is a contributing author for the Patheos project. In addition to speaking at several interfaith events, he is a featured speaker at Brigham Young University's Education Week and is the author of "Preparing for the Second Coming" and was a contributing author for the 2020 publication "Hear Him." He has authored several articles for the Ensign, New Era, and the LDS Living magazine and has produced six inspirational audio messages. His oldest son is studying business at Utah State University and his oldest daughter is attending Columbia University in New York City studying law. His youngest son attends High School and plays volleyball and water polo while his daughter is on the drill team.

Most of all, he loves teaching and connecting with great people around the world.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:00	Coming up in this episode on Follow Him
Bro. Eric Richards:		First day in the mission field and you're getting pelted with the rocks. I can't imagine. One of the rocks though hit this young Elder right? Right in the kidneys, right in the back. In a moment of rage and anger, he turned around and back in the day, he was a pitcher on his high school baseball team.
Hank Smith:	00:00:24	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I am your host. I'm here with my co-host John Bytheway. Listen to this John, my co-host John Bytheway, whose eyes are still in his sockets.
John Bytheway:	00:00:38	Thankfully.
Hank Smith:	00:00:39	Yes, thankfully.
John Bytheway:	00:00:40	Yep, they're still here. Yeah, I got them.
Hank Smith:	00:00:42	John Doctrine Covenants 29 talks about maggots eating flesh, flesh falling off bones and eyes falling from sockets. A very happy little verse right there. I have a feeling my little boys are going to enjoy this. Our friend Eric Richards is here, one of our favorite people. John, he hasn't been on the show before. Eric, welcome.
Bro. Eric Richards:		Thank you both. All you do, this is awesome.
Hank Smith:		John and I have known Eric for, it's been 15 years. Eric has been speaking with FSY. He's the best of EFY years ago. I don't know if either of you remember that with Gary Bauer, our friend Gary. Eric is one of the best teachers in the church. He's up in Logan teaching at the institute there. John, Eric, we have one section of the Doctrine and Covenants today, section 29. This is quite a section. It's unlike anything we've seen before. John, what are you thinking going into this?



John Bytheway:	00:01:43	Sometimes we react LOL about some things. This is WOL. This is a whoa out loud section. Yeah. This is some of the things you see here, including maggots, make you go, what is this about? But it also has a really nice plan of salvation feel to it from beginning to end. A lot of great information about here. So hope it gives people some sense of what in the world is going on here type of a thing.
Hank Smith:	00:02:09	I have two 12-year-old boys and a 15-year-old boy, so I can't wait to read, the flesh shall fall off their bones and their eyes from their sockets, right? I think this is, they'll probably say that's my favorite verse so far this year. Eric, as you've prepared Section 29, what are we going to do today?
Bro. Eric Richards:	00:02:27	The beginning is just beautiful. Verse one, listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your redeemer, the great I am whose arm of mercy hath atoned for your sin. Is there a more beautiful first verse of any section? It's all about Christ. All scripture points to our amazing, beautiful Savior Jesus. <a href="#">Joseph Smith</a> , he taught this. "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the apostles and prophets concerning Jesus Christ. That he died, was buried, rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven. And all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it." I think this first verse just testifies of Christ. It's him. It's his voice. He is introducing himself and his marvelous Atonement to us. What a great way to start this section. I was reading last week, a friend of mine and I were texting back and forth, I'm a bit of a word nerd. The word worship is interesting because he's inviting us to worship him. Rightfully so. He is so worthy of our worship. But old English, the original meaning of the word worship was worth shipping if something was worth shipping. That's where the word worship comes from and boy, it has changed me as I think about how I go to church to worship or go to the temple to worship. My effort should be worth shipping to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Hank Smith:	00:04:00	Wow, I love it. Just verse one, you're feeling the power of this section and I'm sure it's going to continue. John, we mentioned before that Eric hasn't been with us. He's a good friend of both you and me. Introduce him to those listening.
John Bytheway:	00:04:15	Eric has one of the more interesting backgrounds because he grew up attending Mountain View Baptist Church in San Diego and Eric and his mother were baptized. Then Eric later served a mission in Honduras and so did your son. Right? Your son Dawson served there too.

Bro. Eric Richards:	00:04:33	Yeah, he did. So fun.
John Bytheway:	00:04:35	He moved to Utah to teach seminary. He's played water polo and volleyball at Utah State University. He actually participated in writing online seminary curriculum for a long time. So welcome Eric.
Hank Smith:	00:04:49	Let's read from the <a href="#">Come, Follow Me</a> manual and then Eric, I'm excited to just hand this over to you and you walk us through this section. This is how the Come, Follow Me manual starts. "Even though the Church of Jesus Christ had been organized in 1830, many gospel truths were still yet to be revealed. And several early church members had questions. They had read the prophecies in the Book of Mormon about the gathering of Israel and the building up of Zion. How would that happen? The revelations Hiram Page claimed to receive speculated on that subject, which only increased the member's curiosity. Other people wondered about the fall of Adam and Eve and spiritual death. The Lord welcomed these questions in 1830 and he welcomes our questions today, whatsoever ye shall ask in faith, he told the saints, being united in prayer. According to my command, ye shall receive. In fact, as the doctrinally rich revelation in Section 29 shows, the Lord sometimes responds to our questions by giving us truth and knowledge far beyond what we ask." John, you've said that before. Joseph Smith at some point in his life says, I just wanted to know which church to join.
John Bytheway:	00:06:01	That was it.
Hank Smith:	00:06:02	And look how much, look how much the Lord has given me. Eric, with that beginning, how do you want to take on this section?
Bro. Eric Richards:	00:06:11	We are encouraged with that introduction to ask questions. That's part of what we do. We're here because a young boy asked a question in a grove back in 1820 and I've noticed with young adults that I am able to be with, sometimes they wonder, where do I go to find these doctrines? Like what counts as official doctrine? We've had some really fun discussions in my classes over the last few years about that. And you know, we have our core doctrine that Jesus came, lived, died, rose again. That is our core doctrine. We have some official teachings and those can change with time. Conference talks, Liahona, Ensign, our church materials websites, we have some supportive teachings that we love. BYU's Religious Studies Center is awesome. The RSC, our devotionals we have, BYU campuses. We have policy, kind of policy doctrine that can change as well.

	00:07:07	That general handbook the newsroom side of the church. And then we have kind of those esoteric teachings that are perhaps taught by a few apostles and prophets. Maybe they threw them out there as different ideas and things they were thinking on, but they're interesting, obviously not essential. I think as we search for truth that in doctrine, as the introduction to this week's Come, Follow Me teach, it's so important to know where that level of truth fits in big picture so that we're actually consuming good doctrine, good truths that are eternal and will help us return to our Savior Jesus Christ.
Hank Smith:	00:07:44	This would be what <a href="#">Elder Corbridge</a> called the primary questions. Let's get these first. There are secondary questions that are fun to look at. That talk was called Stand Forever. I have all of my students read that BYU devotional. So Eric, it seems like we're going to have some first rate primary questions in this section.
Bro. Eric Richards:	00:08:05	There are so many. Because this section, like John said in the introduction, it's a plan of salvation type section, not in chronological order, but boy, these topics are amazing, you know, looking verse two, you know, just his invitation for gathering it says he who will gather his people even as a hen gather her chickens under her wings. What great imagery of this gathering. A couple months ago now you had <a href="#">Chelsea Chipman</a> on with section 10. She pointed out to us verse 67 of Doctrine & Covenants 10. Behold, this is my doctrine, whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Interesting that anyone that repents and wants to come unto Christ, that is his church. As I was thinking through that, Christ, we have evidence of his mission farewell in <a href="#">Luke chapter four</a> and notice that his topic for his missionary farewell talk was that of restoration and coming unto him.
	00:09:09	Let me read that. You know the story, He comes "to Nazareth, where he had been brought up as custom was he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read. There was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. When he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised to preach acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book and he began to say to them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He wants people to know out of the gates as he begins his ministry, that he is here to heal.

	00:09:53	<p>He is here to promote happiness and peace and provide any type of relief from any ailment that anyone is feeling. This gathering in Section 29, verse two I think is the same thing. Up in Logan, <a href="#">Patrick Mason</a>, he's at Utah state and he has written and said so many things on that topic and interesting. He pointed out to us in a meeting recently that the term restored church wasn't really used during Joseph's time. It wasn't until 1913 <a href="#">James E. Talmage</a> used the term restored gospel. It was only used three times before the year 1900 originally. This gathering and restoration was about restoring god's people to him. The term restoration, even the Book of Mormon, was more about restoring our souls to our heavenly Father from Alma 11, Alma 42. I love that. Verse two is an invitation. Look, we're trying to gather you so we can restore you to God. Yes, we are restoring a church and a system and a governance and priesthood keys. The end purpose of that is to restore God's people to him. And what a great introduction from our Savior Jesus Christ.</p>
John Bytheway:	00:11:08	<p>I love that verse you read in Luke four. Sometimes I'll quiz my students, Hey, what is the best Old Testament verse you can think of to describe the Savior after we hum and haw for a minute. You know what, we don't have to choose one because Jesus chose it. He chose it and he chose to focus on, he came to heal the broken hearted. I've always just loved that. It doesn't speak of wrath or judgment or punishment. His focus is I've come to liberate captives to heal the broken hearted. Okay, here's a question I've always had for you two about that verse. Did Jesus say hand me the scroll of Isaiah or did the minister hand him a random scroll or did he deliberately choose that? I've always wondered how that worked because I think he knew exactly what he was doing and maybe it was all meant to be that he got Isaiah 61 right that verse.</p>
Hank Smith:	00:11:56	<p>Yeah, I think the Lord in the spirit world must say to Isaiah, still love your book. Right? Have it on my bedside stand. Yeah. I think whenever the Lord wants us to learn about him, he says, why don't we read from Isaiah if it was just handed to him? I think it's the one he would've chosen anyway.</p>
John Bytheway:	00:12:14	<p>Yeah, and I loved Eric that you said that, what did you call it? It's like his announcement of his mission.</p>
Bro. Eric Richards:	00:12:20	<p>Yeah his farewell.</p>
John Bytheway:	00:12:21	<p>Right? Yeah, that's a great way to put it.</p>

Hank Smith:	00:12:23	<p>Yeah. He's starting his mission. This is it. Just on a side note, both of you, we've actually talked about this before we hit the record button. I have noticed John, our best episodes, my best lessons, my best talks that I've given if I'm focused on healing, delivering, if I'm focused on those things, I feel good afterwards. But sometimes I've tried to impress, I've thought about what are people thinking about me? That person in the back, they're observing my class. Do they like what they're hearing? Do I sound smart enough? Those lessons usually fall flat. Obviously I don't think the Savior intended that, but I do think that there's a pattern there for us as teachers. Focus on what can heal today.</p>
Bro. Eric Richards:	00:13:07	<p>And that imagery, that's what the mom chicken does. That's what the hen does. She wants to protect and gather and heal her little chicks. And that's what Christ is inviting us to do and enjoy that peace and safety and protection and mercy and power that comes through his gathering. This section is one of those, it is 50 verses we can't do all of them, but you know, look at verse four. Verily I say unto you that ye are chosen out of this world to declare my gospel with the sound of rejoicing and with the voice of a trump. I had a colleague that overheard a conversation with President Hinckley. They happened to be in the same elevator at the same time and as they were going up and that's have to be quite the moment when you're in an elevator with a prophet of God, he's just bantering.</p>
	00:13:54	<p>He made a comment that my friend mentioned that he felt like there were too many pickle suckers in the church. Just people that were a little bit sour. And granted there are some heavy things in this world. I don't want to minimize those at all. But this idea in verse four that we're supposed to declare the gospel with the sound of rejoicing. It's interesting all throughout scripture, you know, we're commanded to be light and yeast and you'll be the salt of the earth. We're supposed to help those that suffer in any way we possibly can to heal those broken hearts, promote peace and happiness. One of my colleagues, another friend of mine, he used this analogy, I've stolen it and he heard it from another guy. It's one of those that's maybe been shared here and there, but a lot of my students are in a school there at the university. And so this idea of a scholarship, there's two different scholarships that someone could qualify for. First is the hardworking Latter-day Saint scholarship. To qualify for it, you need to be a Latter-day Saint. You have to score above 31 on the ACT, you have to have a 3.9 GPA or higher. You have to take at least 12 credits every semester. Each year your progress is reevaluated to see if the scholarship will continue. Hank and John, would you consider that scholarship to be a gift or a reward?</p>

Hank Smith:	00:15:24	Oh wow. That sounds like work. Right? Sounds like payment almost for all that work.
Bro. Eric Richards:	00:15:33	Listen to the other scholarship. They called this the Grace Scholarship. First of all, full tuition in addition to tuition, books, fees, a meal plan, free tutoring, a brand new laptop every year, a cell phone upgrade every year. No GPA requirement, no credit hour minimum, no conditions to keep the scholarship. It's offered freely to all who ask for it. Would you consider that scholarship to be a gift or a reward? That sounds like a gift. That's our gospel. I really think that when the Lord invites us to declare his gospel with the sound of rejoicing, I think that's the message that we need to shout from the rooftops. It's just beautiful. And I think sometimes we get worried about, am I doing enough and baking enough bread and enough trips to the temple and am I fasting exactly 24 hours? And those things are all good, don't get me wrong. But boy, the gift that free gift of grace that he's given us is marvelous.
Hank Smith:	00:16:39	Eric, doesn't that just bring to mind <a href="#">Elder Kearon's</a> talk, Welcome to the Church of Joy. He says, we are members of the Church of Jesus Christ. We are members of the Church of Joy. And nowhere should our joy as a people be more apparent than when we gather together each Sabbath in our sacrament meetings to worship the source of all joy. Here we assemble with our ward and branch families to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's supper, our deliverance from sin and death and the Savior's powerful grace. Just what you said, Eric, here we come to experience the joy, refuge, forgiveness, thanksgiving and belonging found through Jesus Christ. My accent's not as good as his, but everyone should go back this week from that verse four, the sound of rejoicing and listen to that talk.
Bro. Eric Richards:	00:17:30	John, if I could pick on you, you know verse five has one of your favorite principles about him being an advocate. You have taught so much on that topic. Can you insert here just something that you love about him being our advocate?
John Bytheway:	00:17:42	Oh, you're so nice. <a href="#">Elder Holland</a> recently wrote a book called A Witness for His Names. You love words, went through all of these different names for the Savior. For me right now, Advocate is my favorite nickname for the Savior. When you think of an advocate, there's at least three parties involved. There's someone is going to advocate for someone else. The more I've read about it, the more I see it like an advocate is like an attorney for the defense. This verse along with some others, in fact I thought we might talk about this. So I opened up my favorite advocate verse is <a href="#">First John chapter two verse one</a> .

Speaking of joy, and if any man sin, let's say if any woman sin, if any man sin, if any teenager sin, if any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

00:18:39 I mean talk about good news. That's how this section starts is so hopeful. Guess what? We have an advocate since you asked. There's an artist who did a lot of paintings that we use. I don't think he's a member of our church. I think he was a Seventh Day Adventist named Harry Anderson. Just Google Harry Anderson, Jesus, advocate, and look at that depiction of the final judgment and notice how it fits with the first few verses of section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which also mentions our advocate there. When I think of an advocate, I think of someone who rushes to your side to advocate you before the Father, which is a very hopeful image to imagine.

Hank Smith: 00:19:25 Yeah, I looked it up before we got here, John. To publicly support a person who represents another person's interest, a person who upholds or defends a person, that's exactly what you want in the Lord.

John Bytheway: 00:19:41 Yeah, what the Savior does there in section 45, I'd just like to read this and I know we're going to be coming up on section 45 later, which is another amazing section. But listen to starting verse three. And this is the Savior talking. Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father who is pleading your cause before him saying, Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin in whom thou is well pleased, behold the blood of thy son, which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified. Wherefore, father spare these, my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life or spare these my sisters that believe on my name. And notice he's not saying spare these that as you just mentioned, Eric, were perfect and fasted for exactly 24 hours. Spare these that believed on my name. Wow, what a hopeful verse. He's not talking about what you did, he's talking about what he did. Being an advocate before the Father for you. Isn't that beautiful?

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:20:47 What an awesome introduction by our Savior here. The reminders of his goodness and and now turning to verse seven, with these truths he's inviting us to go and gather. You are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect, for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts. It's interesting. Historically, the Lord has given truths to people all over the world. He loves all of his children. [The First Presidency](#), issued a statement years ago that says that "the great religious leaders of the world, such as Muhammad, Confucius, and reformers, as

well as even philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. These moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten the whole nation and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals. And then they conclude we believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation."

00:21:49 I love that. The gathering is of all of God's children and that invitation is given. Hank, you have Mason that's going to go and gather the elect. Washington, DC South. John, your kids have served I think on almost every continent., right? I mean France and Iceland and Tahiti and West Virginia and Uruguay, I mean all over. We've seen that firsthand. Me and my son's able to serve. My daughter's looking to go next year. It's delightful. Obviously that gathering is on both sides of the veil as [President Nelson](#) has taught us. I want to just thank people that have served full-time or service mission, a teaching mission, proselyting mission. If you have invited others to consider the truths of the gospel, I just thank you. If you've gone to the temple to help on that side of the veil, thank you. It's an awesome work that we're doing.

00:22:40 Our ward, we have this little challenge in the Fall, we invited everyone to go to the temple. We had a picture of the temple artists drawn and every time someone went, they could put a sticker on and it became this competition between the Elders Quorum and the Relief Society. And each week there were stickers being put up and our little YSA ward of 150, they wound up doing almost 500 ordinances in two months. It's now shifted to indexing. We're using the [Get Involved](#) app. If you're unfamiliar with the Get Involved app, just go to wherever you get your apps, type in get involved. It's an AI way to index names. It's through the family search and it's awesome. We are going to finish that up here in just a few weeks. Our little ward of 150. It looks like we're going to index about 200,000 names. The electricity, knowing that we are providing names to the temple of several stakes worth of people has just been so fun. This gathering that the Lord talks about is so fun. And you, our gatherers, you've seen people gather.

John Bytheway: 00:23:44 Eric, you started out with that example of a hen. And notice the exact words in verse two, who will gather his people even as a hen gathereth. And that is such a wonderful theme that we're hearing. Verse seven, you're called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect. I don't know about you guys, but after COVID I'm just thinking about gathering to church again. Wasn't



that wonderful just to see everybody and think what a blessing it is just to be able to gather.

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:24:11

Yeah, it's so true. And we've seen these miracle stories of gathering. It's just so fun to watch the Lord work among his children. I read a couple of stories on this. Jason Hinds. This is in the June 2012, [New Era](#) magazine. He was one of Jamaica's top runners before serving a mission. He was called to New York to the North Mission. The coach, of course, told him to stay home. He had too many prospects in terms of running in the next level, but he decided to serve. So one day they were in Washington Square Park in New York. My daughter lived right by there when she was going to school at Columbia. And so I've seen this park and I've tried to picture this moment. His companion said to this group of performers, Hey, we've got the fastest runner in New York who would like to race him in a race.

00:24:58

All of a sudden this crowd starts to gather together. Poor Elder. He's like, what are you doing? What are you doing? No, no, just watch. This young kid came up and said, well, I'll race you. So they kind of set up this little makeshift starting block. Elder Hinds had his jacket on holding his Book of Mormon and the other guy said, do you want to take your jacket off? Put the book down? Nope, I'm good. So with the mark, set, go Elder Hinds let this guy get a few seconds head start. It wasn't a long race, I'm sure it was probably less than a hundred yards. So after waiting a couple of seconds, he decided to take off, ran the guy down. And as he as he passed him, he held up the Book of Mormon and said, the church is true bro and went on to win the race. And because of that, they became very popular in the area. And every time they came across little groups, they would, you know, ask for the race. He wrote in this New Era article, I ran 77 races on my mission and never lost one.

00:25:57

It's amazing how the Lord can take our unique gifts and talents and put us in the right place at the right time to enjoy that. Another story, [Elder Perry](#) tells this, there was a mission president that was called to Brazil. And it was the same mission in which he had served as a young missionary. And he said when he first got there, he and his companion were asked to open a new area. They were just kind of walking around getting their bearings of this new area. When they passed a church, the pastor asked his congregates to follow him out into the street and he pointed out these two LDS missionaries and started to rile them up. This group grabbed rocks and started chucking them at these four missionaries. Can you imagine first day in the mission field and you're getting pelted with the rocks? I can't imagine one of the rocks though hit this young Elder, right?

Right in the kidneys, right in the back, in a moment of rage and anger. He turned around and back in the day he was a pitcher on his high school baseball team. And he, Elder Perry says, he wound up in his famous pitching poles, was ready to let the rock fly when the Holy Ghost said, Hey, I didn't send you all this way to throw rocks at people.

Hank Smith: 00:27:04 Right?

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:27:05 But he froze because he thought, well, if I just drop the rock, they're going to keep hitting us. What do I do? And the Spirit helped and we're so grateful for the Spirit's help. There was a telephone post off in the distance. And so instead of throwing rocks back at these congregates, he turned and threw this rock right in the center, the dead center of that telephone post. And the people took a step back realizing, wow, he could have hit any of us right between the eyes, the old David and Goliath story. And then a few of the people picked up rocks, started to throw them at the telephone pole, and they tried over and over again. Couldn't hit it. Couldn't hit it. One after another, this Elder just hit that telephone post dead center. Well, every time they passed this little church people would come out and would challenge these missionaries to throwing rocks.

00:27:50 And those rock throwing contests turned into missionary discussions, which turned into convert baptisms. And I've always wondered, you know, years later, when this young Elder is now the mission president, were some of those leaders in that little area, were they some of the rock chuckers from back in the day? What is he good at? He's good at throwing rocks. No matter what our gift, no matter what our talent, we are asked to just bring that to the feet of Jesus. He wants to gather his people together and he can use any amount of talent. If your talent is throwing rocks or running races or if you're good at music or if you're good at ballet or dancing, whatever it is, he can use that gift to forward his work to bring people to his marvelous son, Jesus Christ.

Hank Smith: 00:28:34 Wow, that is fantastic. And it just, I don't know, those type of stories are the sound of rejoicing. Declare my gospel with the sound of rejoicing. If every missionary put that verse up in their apartment for a couple of weeks, this is the Church of Joy. As Elder Kearon said, I thought of this verse in [Moroni six](#), the church did meet together off to fast to pray, to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls. There's something about church for me, when we gather and someone is teaching a lesson, a very prepared Elders Quorum lesson that just, it's refreshing, it's filling, it just gives you that energy that

you can do this. John, I've talked before about when I was a young father and the older elders in the ward would give wonderful counsel and advice. There's something about gathering together to speak to one another about the welfare of our souls.

John Bytheway: 00:29:41

I love that verse, it's kind of like [Moroni's little handbook](#) of instructions he said to speak one with another. It isn't that we're just going to listen to one person every week. It's, we're going to talk with each other about the welfare of our souls. How you guys doing in your family? How you doing? How do you handle this? Yeah, this is how we've been working on that. And this is how the Savior has helped us with that. That little phrase means a lot to me, that we speak one with another and we have callings and then we play musical callings and we all rotate and we keep going.

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:30:17

And I'm personally so grateful. You know, missionaries tracted into me and my mom years ago, Elder Jolly, he was from Australia and served a mission very late. I think he left at age 25, had almost aged out. And during those final months of his mission was out tracting being a good missionary and ran into us. And on a side note, his mission president very inspired, had him serving with his Elder Jolly serving with Elder Smiley and yeah inspiration, right? In fact, when they knocked on the door, my mom, you know, after the door approach, I'm Elder Jolly, I'm Elder Smiley. We want to talk about Jesus. She said ain't nobody got time for that. She sent them away. And thankfully one of our, her dear friends at work said, Hey, listen, just get over their names, listen to their message.

00:31:07

It is so good. They came back and the rest is history. But I have been nurtured by so many good people, as you quote from Moroni that have been just so good to my family growing up, you know, the Plums and Touchet and you know, the Jackaloni and Wisely's and Dolores. The list goes on and on. And now as a dad raising kids, there's people in our wards, the Lunds and Blotters and I mean I could go on and on with all these people that have just been so good. There is a beautiful doctrine here that we take care of each other, that we know each other's names, that we love each other and are there to support each other. So good.

Hank Smith: 00:31:46

Yeah. They shall be gathered in unto one place, upon the face of the land to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things. That sounds like a ward family gathered together to one place to prepare in all things for the future.

Bro. Eric Richards:	00:32:03	<p>Let's start tackling out the second coming. That's such a Christ centered introduction that he gives in <a href="#">section 29</a>. And then he's going to get into some of these events that are going to happen before his return. In verse nine, he actually quotes from <a href="#">Malachi four</a> one, for the hour is nigh, the day is soon at hand, when the earth is ripe. When something is ripe, it means that it can't get any better. It can only get worse. Picture a fruit that is ripe, it is perfect. It's time. It's not going to get any better. It's only going to get worse to the point where it becomes inedible. His list continues. The proud, people that put their will in front of God's will, they that do wickedly, in Malachi four one there's a footnote for do wickedly and it says sexual immorality. There's going to be a time in our world where we are consumed with sexual immorality and we're seeing that.</p>
	00:33:01	<p>I'm so grateful for the wording of our temple recommend question about do you strive for moral cleanliness? I love that. And obviously the Saviors offered to forgive as we need to seek repentance for having participated in unchaste actions. And then he says this, I will burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts that wickedness shall not be upon the earth. I don't know about you, but I have wondered about that. Because some of these verses are a little bit hard. You think of burning and destruction and that when my daughter went out to New York, this was just after the pandemic started in the subways, they had this cart that they would bring in car by car with a UV light. Literally within just one push of a button that virus would be killed. I historically have thought about the destruction of the wicked as this drawn out long, weeks and months, of people just suffering half dead as it were for maybe days or weeks.</p>
	00:34:02	<p>But I wonder if his arrival could be an instantaneous cleansing, almost like that UV light system they had during the pandemic. Because His purpose is it to cleanse or to torture? Ezekiel 33:11 says, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He does not enjoy that at all. It's interesting that all throughout scripture that the term that is used most often is cleansing more than destruction from Luke and Second Thessalonians, even Jacob five, with the parable of the vineyard. There is a cleansing that takes place and I'm grateful that he understands that if people have not repented, that they will not be able to endure his presence and we'll have so many signs leading up to his second coming where people can choose to repent and be prepared for his coming.</p>
Hank Smith:	00:34:54	<p>Eric, just as we're getting started here, not very many teachers in the church go ahead and write a book about the second coming. Can you just give us this, what happened there? I know</p>

it was a while ago, back in 2017, but one of the reasons I invited you on is not only you're an excellent teacher but you've studied [the second coming](#). So what brought that on?

- Bro. Eric Richards: 00:35:18 I have a friend Terry White, who I taught with that just lit a fire within me about the second coming. And I picked his brain after school for a couple of years and just became enthralled with it. The more I read, the more I realized this is a hopeful thing. I think a lot of our people worry about the death and destruction and all that. That is part of the process. I wanted to just share a message of hope and goodness about our Savior Jesus Christ and how to prepare for his return. It's just so fun to spread these good messages that we can rejoice in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And once we understand maybe the context and what prophets have said about these events, it becomes a lot more hopeful, and a lot less gloom and doom.
- Hank Smith: 00:36:06 Yeah John, I don't remember who it was. We had a guest, I can't even remember how long ago, who said, let's make sure we don't water down sin. Let's call sin sin. Let's call wickedness wickedness. Saith the Lord of hosts that wickedness shall not be upon the earth. If we don't call it what it is, how do we know what the Lord is going to get rid of? Wickedness shall not be upon the earth. So I don't think we need to shy away from that. Like Eric said, we're not about destroying people, but definitions that helps people know where to stand.
- John Bytheway: 00:36:43 Yeah. If that's the word that the Lord's going to use, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth.
- Bro. Eric Richards: 00:36:50 I want to know what that is.
- John Bytheway: 00:36:52 Yeah.
- Bro. Eric Richards: 00:36:53 Yeah. I'm so grateful for those boundaries. You know, in verse 11, then he's going to reveal himself from heaven with power and great glory. Here he comes to the world. This section is not in chronological order as I mentioned earlier, because in verses 11 to 13 we see here he starts to talk about the millennium. All of a sudden, and there's some other events that are going to happen before his appearance, he starts talking about the resurrection of the dead and the millennial reign. There's been so much written on the millennium and people have asked, you know, can we speed it up? You know, can we pray extra hard? [McConkie](#) and his millennial Messiah said no, he's going to come at the appointed time. It's going to happen. It's not going to be ushered in prematurely because people are righteous or it won't be delayed because of iniquity.

00:37:40 People have wondered, what will it be like to see Satan? I don't know if there'll be a news broadcast or TikTok videos created when we actually see footage of Satan being bound. It's interesting, the prophet Isaiah who saw this event, you know, Isaiah 14, 16 and 17. He says, they that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider the saying is this the man that made the earth to tremble? That did shake kingdoms, that made the world as a wilderness and destroyed the cities thereof? That opened up the house of his prisoners? Oh, so you are the one I listened, I listened to you, right?

Hank Smith: 00:38:19 I thought you'd be taller.

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:38:22 Better looking or whatever. Will we miss things of the old world when this event happens? I don't think so. [Isaiah 65:17](#). For behold I create a new heaven and a new earth. The former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. You think of some of the great things of our world, fresh, Krispy Kreme donuts or maybe it's a Crumbl cookie or I don't know why I always go to carbs, but I do like carbs, all of that will be forgotten. I think we might joke, oh remember how we used to love bacon back in the old world and now maybe there's a new food and we just rejoice over it. So many promises during this millennial reign of parents, righteous parents being able to raise their children. What? Think of those reunions, singleness and childlessness that is gone. Death is overcome. Divorce frustrates life now. But boy, in the end everything will be made right.

Hank Smith: 00:39:19 Eric, you wrote your book on the book of Revelation. Those last few chapters, they are beautiful. You know, we think of the book of Revelation and the beasts and the woman on the waters. This is [Revelation 19 :7](#). Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his wife Israel, his people hath made herself ready. This is [Revelation 21: 4](#). God shall wipe away all the tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death. Neither sorrow nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. And what you said, Eric, for the former things are passed away, right? The former Earth is gone.

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:40:03 Can't wait. You think through more I mean hundredth birthday parties during the millennium. When you turn a hundred [Isaiah 65:20](#), there shall be no more thence an infant of days nor an old man that has not filled his days for the child shall die and a hundred years old but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed. Can you imagine that transformation that happens when we turn a hundred? Can you imagine grandma's hundredth birthday party and happy birthday dear grandma.

And then as she blows out the candles, maybe she just transforms back into the prime of her life and what a time. Life will continue somewhat normally on some levels in our Old Testament student manual there's a statement that says crops will be planted, harvested, eaten, education fostered, we'll still go to school. Men will continue to care for their own needs and affairs.

00:40:53 The advancement during the millennium though will exceed anything that men have supposed. Picture the advancements of technology. Maybe during the millennium picture the truths. Think of the books that we're going to have access to during the millennium. It's going to be quite the time. Of course jobs might have to shift. Physicians, beauticians, mortician I think they'll be unemployed. So sorry if you're in those fields, but we'll probably be unemployed as well because Isaiah 65:24 says before they call, I will answer while they are yet speaking, I will hear. It's interesting that if we have a question during the millennium before we ask it, we hear the answer. So let's say you're reading the book of Isaiah or the book of Revelation and I wonder if that may, oh but what a oh. But how? Oh before they call, I will answer. What a time to be alive.

00:41:51 You know the highlight is of course Satan being bound. The book of Revelation talks about that binding what a time Section 101 that you'll study later. In that day Satan shall have no power to tempt any man. 1 Nephi 22:15 because of the righteousness of his people. Satan has no power. It sounds like he will be bound by the power of God but also by the people of God who choose not to listen to him. President Kimball once taught that when we choose to follow the Savior, Satan is bound in that person's life. At some level

Hank Smith: 00:42:29 You can start the millennium in your home.

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:42:32 What an imagery.

00:42:34 And people from the beginning they've been wondering about different specific events. We teased earlier about knowing the exact day of the second. We don't know, I mean no man knoweth the day nor the hour. People have wondered throughout history, was it the burning of Jerusalem? Was it in 1666? The great fire of London. Mary Bateman, I was reading this in preparation for today, 1806 she had chickens that were laying eggs that said on them the eggs had written on them the message Christ is coming. And it kind of went 1806 viral people came from all over. This lady has chickens laying eggs that say Christ is coming. She would charge people a penny to look at

one of these eggs. Turned out I feel bad for the chickens that Mary would take the egg, right? The message Christ is coming and it would actually reinsert the egg.

00:43:26 And it was this great big hoax but people bought into it. They really thought that it was a thing that Christ was going to come in 1806 and World War I people thought in 1914, this is the event he's going to come soon. And of course you remember Y2K the year 1999. What's going to happen when we hit the year 2000 and the Mayan calendar back in December 2012? Is that going to be the end of the world? because their calendar ended and even last year, 2024 with that total solar eclipse, seven years after the previous one where it crisscrossed the nation and happened to go over Missouri and oh there it is. X marks the spot, that's going to be a sign and we're going to have that second coming and nothing happened. So people have tried to figure out when this is going to happen. We simply do not know.

Hank Smith: 00:44:11 Eric, let me follow you here. So you said between verse 13 and 14 we switch. Is that right? So he was talking about the millennium and how great it's going to be a crown of righteousness. You're going to be with me, we're going to be one. And then you're saying in verse 14, we now jump backwards. Is that right? to before he comes?

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:44:32 Yeah. And much like the book of Revelation, the first couple of chapters are his witness of Jesus. And then we have his letters and then it goes to the signs of the times. But then all of a sudden there's this big break in chapter 12 of book of Revelation. It goes back to the pre-earth life of where this war began and then in 13 or 14 that this beast and this dragon and what's it going to be like in the latter days with wickedness? And then finally, it's not until chapter 19 that we have the second coming and chapter 20, the millennium with the resurrection. John had a very similar vision that it was not chronological. I don't know why the Lord doesn't have a chronological list of events. I wonder if he's worried about a checklist mentality among his children. He scatters these truths all throughout maybe so that we turn to scripture to try to piece things together.

Hank Smith: 00:45:23 If I'm just making a mark, I might mark between 13 and 14 that there's been a shift

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:45:28 In that same verse 14. It says that there shall be greater signs in heaven above and in the earth beneath. Our prophet [President Nelson](#) has echoed almost the same words. This is one of his



first talks after he was sustained. Our savior and redeemer, Jesus Christ will perform some of his mightiest works between now and when he comes again. We'll see miraculous indications that God the Father and his son Jesus Christ preside over this church in majesty and glory. We've seen so much since 2018 in terms of seeing God's mightiest works and I think we will continue to see those leading up to his appearance to the world.

John Bytheway: 00:46:12 I just wanted to look at the very end of 13 and get this Atonement message, the very last phrase in verse 13, even as I am, to be with me, that we may be one, that was the great intercessory prayer. Like the point of all of it is that we can be one with Christ. How's that accomplished? The at onement or the atonement?

Hank Smith: 00:46:36 Eric, I wonder if the Lord is showing us the end. So the middle seems it's going to get dark here but we already know it's going to be light here at the end.

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:46:46 Love that section 76, very much the same way outlined in terms of our vision and that order must, it obviously is inspired. These are the words of Jesus Christ. Right back to verse one of section 29 here.

Hank Smith: 00:46:57 Yeah, so let me show you what it's going to be like. Now let's get into it's going to be dark. Isn't that the next few verses we have?

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:47:05 Verse 16, A great hailstorm sent forth to destroy the crops of the earth. Revelation eight, seven talks about how it's fire mingled with blood. I'm not sure how that works. Wow, there could be a studio C about how that could work. Revelation 16:21 says that these stones are the size of a talent. Talent is 76 pounds. Picture a bowling ball, average ball, I don't know, 13, 14, 15 pounds. This is a 76 pound hailstone mixed with fire and blood. When I was going to school there was a meteorologist and he took the molecular density of ice and hail and his estimations showed that this hail ball would be 20 and one half inches in diameter and would travel at a terminal velocity of 200 miles per hour. Can you imagine the destruction that's going to happen to crops? Yeah, just that would flatten a building. Verse 17, because of the wickedness of the world, I will take vengeance upon the wicked for they will not repent.

00:48:11 And this is so, so good to underscore here. Remember who gets cleansed? Well it's the Telesstial people that are living a Telesstial type lifestyle that they love to sin and they have no interest in

repenting. Back in section five verse 19. The Lord says if they repent not. The Lord is going to cleanse those that do not want to repent, that maybe they know about repentance but they have no interest in changing their lives. But it's interesting, the Lord's mercy is so good all throughout the Old Testament, especially Ezekiel saw these end days. Oftentimes he would say, in fact it's used 50 times in the Bible alone. In that day they shall know that I am the Lord their God. There will be so many signs, great signs, great wonders, his mightiest works. It will be so obvious that there is a God. It will be so obvious that someone is coming, this is going to happen. People will have a full knowledge that Christ is coming. Despite that they choose not to repent. This is not a sneak attack with these hailstones. There'll be plenty of signs and warnings along the way and he's just inviting people, come, come repent. Let me cleanse you. And if they'll listen, they're going to be spared. If not, they're going to have to be cleansed in preparation for the return of our Savior.

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| Hank Smith:         | 00:49:31 | John, do you remember section 19 where the Lord says, I don't want you to suffer. Please repent. Please repent. It's not that the Lord says, oh this is my favorite part. He's giving, like Eric said, plenty of warnings saying that wickedness, that whole system is coming down. I don't want you to be in there.  |
| John Bytheway:      | 00:49:53 | The phrase he uses I think, I God have suffered these things for all that they might not suffer, if they would repent. And Eric, thanks for reading that they will not repent. Those always jump out at me. What's the difference between will not and cannot.  |
| Hank Smith:         | 00:50:08 | Yeah.   |
| John Bytheway:      | 00:50:09 | You made a deliberate choice not to repent and you're invited all the time to repent. God is merciful to repentance. So three cheers. Let's repent.   |
| Hank Smith:         | 00:50:18 | Eric as a scripture teacher as we get into these next verses about maggots and flesh falling off bones. How do you as a teacher help your students see between the figurative and the literal? Sometimes something is figurative, sometimes it's a symbol, and then other times it's literal. As a teacher, how do you do that? I know it's not always clear cut. |
| Bro. Eric Richards: | 00:50:43 | I think there's a pattern. I've seen that if there is an isolated prophecy or vision or even principle, if it's just one time, I don't put as much weight into it. But if it's multiple prophets, multiple visions, seeing the exact same thing, I think there's something there. And verses 18, 19, and 20, these are gross verses. I mean                       |

it's maggots and flies and flesh falling off bones that might happen. This is a revelation from the Lord himself. It is isolated and I'm just curious, I don't know what will happen if it will be literal in verses 18 through 20 because it seems like this is the only time that those words are used

John Bytheway: 00:51:26 When I looked at the footnotes there, like footnote 18A says a plague. That sounds like what happens during a plague of some kind.

Hank Smith: 00:51:36 Eric, with that, I'm looking at verses 14 through 21. At least to me as I read it, it seems like a description of the fall that we have this garden of Eden state, then we have the fall of Adam and Eve and it could be a list of things that happen with the fall, wickedness, weeping and wailing, death coming upon people, a great and abominable church. It just seems that the Lord is saying, you're already in this, you experience the fall every day.

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:52:12 I think one of the biggest indicators of the fall is this mindset towards things that are not celestial. You mentioned verse 21, this abominable church in Revelation 13, in kind of 17 and 18 we learned about this beast and the more I've read, especially commentaries from our beloved prophets and apostles, it seems like this beast is a mindset. Yes, there'll be an antichrist that will be a spokesperson for the beast, but there's an ideology towards wickedness. Revelation 17, one through four, the great horror that sitteth upon many waters with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, having a golden cup in her hands full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Elder McConkie taught this in his doctrinal New Testament commentary. All the governments of the earth are at league with the great horror from time to time. They do such things as, and let's see if this is happening in our lifetimes, prohibit the worship of God, deny freedom of religion, belief to all their citizens, fail to guarantee the free exercise of conscience.

00:53:21 Enact laws that curtail the agency of man require the teachings of false principles and their education systems deny the representatives of certain churches the right to teach their doctrine. They fail to punish crimes and protect the rights of their citizens. This ideology, this beast is among us. We have to be careful. We have different messages to temptations that are inviting and enticing us to do things that heavenly Father has begged us not to do. He's so hopeful that we become more and more like his Son. It's a slippery slope. We have to be so careful that we are in the gospel, that we're having gospel study every day, that we're teaching gospel principles for our children that

we gather at church to edify each other because this beast is serious. This ideology, its goal is to tear down God's children.

Hank Smith: 00:54:12 Eric, this mindset is something the Lord is not okay with. It sounds like.

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:54:18 Hank, I wonder if one reason why [President Nelson](#) has invited us to think Celestial is because of this beast, this mindset. Obviously he's very familiar with scripture. He's inviting us to have that celestial mindset so we are prepared for the return of God's son.

Hank Smith: 00:54:37 I would like to ask you both a question. It seems that, you know, sometimes we have the idea of, oh, I'll just spend some time in Babylon and then I'll get out of there or I'll come over to Zion. And I think the scary part is Eric, about this mindset that it really can change your nature. It can really change the way you think and what you desire. Is that something both of you might agree with or am I off on that?

Bro. Eric Richards: 00:55:04 There's no doubt that it's a slippery slope. Whatever we think on, we ultimately become. Why do we read scripture? Why do we attend the temple? Why do we study the gospel? I think we're just trying to fill our minds with thoughts that are celestial and Christ centered to help us combat these latter day points of wickedness.

John Bytheway: 00:55:25 I like the phrase of you guys both remember how Amalek poisoned Lahonti. What was the phrase?

Hank Smith: 00:55:33 Yeah, by degrees.

John Bytheway: 00:55:35 By degrees. And I think in the same way, sometimes by degrees we can be affected by what we're surrounded by. A lot of worldly ideas. I love what Sheri Dew said, go to sources that only speak truth and that's why our scriptures are so important to keep us grounded in truth.

Hank Smith: 00:55:54 Yeah. John, didn't you teach the parable of the marinade for a long time? What you surround yourself with becomes part of you.

John Bytheway: 00:56:02 Yeah. I don't know if you guys have ever met Dallyn Bayles. He's been in a lot of church productions. He's played, I think probably Hiram a lot. I think he's Alma the Elder in some of the church videos. But he was the Phantom in the traveling group of the Phantom of the Opera. Just terrific singer. I mean, if you

ever felt intimidated, have Dallyn Bayles sing, bring him home, bring the house down, and then you're next and I can do Barney Fife, but I can't sing. Anyway, we got on a plane to go home. I asked him what he was doing these days and if he was still traveling. He said, actually I'm teaching seminary. And this was many years ago. I don't know what he's doing now, but he said that his mentor had told him something in the, I guess the music business and he said, Dallyn, regardless of your original intention, you'll eventually become what you surround yourself with. And I had to get out a paper, write that down, but that was the basis of that whole idea, Hank, of that what you marinate in, you become what you marinate in. And we have to marinate in the right stuff.

- Hank Smith: 00:57:13 Eric, I like that you called that a mindset. I think that's wise.
- Bro. Eric Richards: 00:57:16 You know, as you look at verse 22, I'm curious if that's what causes verse 22 to happen. Verily verily I say unto you that when the thousand years are ended, men again begin to deny their God. It's as if they have forgotten the thousand years and they start to make choices. Some people refer to this as the battle of Gog and Maygog and Hank, you mentioned these shifts in timeline. This seems to be another shift. Now we're going into that the last moment of the millennium leading up to the final judgments that that will occur. I read this poem, when you get to heaven, you will likely view many folks whose presence there will be a shock to you. But keep it very quiet. Do not even stare. Likely there'll be many folks surprised to see you there. I know that'll be me, but what a moment to stand and have an accounting of what you have become. [Elder Oaks](#) has that famous talk about, it's not sum total, it's just what have you turned into. And I think turning into a celestial creature begins with thinking celestial thoughts.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:27 Eric, I love that poem. I think my ninth grade math teacher at Snow Canyon Middle School will be shocked and amazed if she sees me in the celestial realm.
- Bro. Eric Richards: 00:58:40 Let's look next at verses 23 to 26. The end shall come, the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and passed away. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth. The old things are passed away. All things shall become new. Michael the archangel's going to sound his trump, all the dead awake. Their graves shall be opened, they shall come forth. Yea, even all. This moment of resurrection, can you imagine? [Elder Holland](#) gave a talk years ago, Like a Broken Vessel. It's October, 2013, the beauty and majesty. He wrote, one day loved ones whom we knew to have disabilities in mortality will before us glorified and

grand, breathtakingly perfect in body and mind. What a thrilling moment that will be. I do not know whether we will be happier for ourselves, that we've witnessed such a miracle or happier for them, that they are fully perfect and finally free at last.

00:59:38      What a day this is going to be in verses 23 to 26. In fact, [President Snow](#), he said there's nothing grander than a resurrected body. Do you have plans for the resurrection? Where do you want to be when this moment happens? I want to be at a grave site. Oh, take me to the graveyard. I just want to watch those reunions. People that suffered from mental unwellness, people with special needs, people with bodies that didn't function properly. People that are missing arms or organs. Can you just imagine what it must feel like for them and to be enveloped into the arms of their loved ones? What a sight it will be to behold.

Hank Smith:      01:00:21      John, both you and I have lost both of our parents and what a day, what a day, right? To hear those voices again, to talk. And how have you been?

John Bytheway:      01:00:37      I know. What have you been doing?

Hank Smith:      01:00:38      I can't imagine the joy for parents who have lost children. Can you imagine the reunions? The Lord must smile at that idea of all of us seeing those. We long to see, to see them again and to embrace them and hear their voice and laugh with them.

John Bytheway:      01:00:59      That's like the phrase, there's hope smiling brightly before us. There's so much hope before us. There's so much anticipation before us that helps us get through the hard today's when we think of what's coming.

Hank Smith:      01:01:14      Here's a thought from [Joseph Smith](#) I've always loved. All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it. More painful to me are the thoughts of annihilation than death. If I have no expectation of seeing my father, mother, brother, sisters, and friends again, my heart would burst in a moment and I should go down to my grave. The expectation. I love that he says that. The expectation of seeing my friends in the morning of the resurrection cheers my soul and makes me bear up against the evils of life. It is like they're taking a long journey and on their return we meet them with increased joy. Isn't that beautiful? Sign me up for that. I want to see.

John Bytheway:	01:02:04	Kind of anticipating those reunions. We just, in my Elders Quorum talked about general conference talk <a href="#">Elder Brook P. Hales</a> gave, he said, I had a dream I've never forgotten. In my dream I was sitting in my office at the church administration building. Mom entered the office. She had passed away. I knew she had come from the spirit world. I will always remember the feelings I had. She did not say anything, but she radiated a spiritual beauty that I had never experienced, and which I have difficulty describing. Her countenance and being were truly stunning. I remember saying to her, mother, you are so beautiful, referencing her spiritual power and beauty, she acknowledged me again without speaking, I felt her love for me and I knew that she's happy and healed from her worldly cares and challenges and eagerly awaits a glorious resurrection. I know that for mom, mortality worked and that it works for us too. That was the title of his talk. Mortality Works. So many stories like that too, that kind of a pre resurrection glimpse of a reunion.
Hank Smith:	01:03:11	I think you would both agree that that future day is something worth living for. I'm holding onto that expectation and how I live today is going to affect that day. I don't know. There's a strength in that. There's an energy in that.
Bro. Eric Richards:	01:03:27	I want verse 27, the righteous shall be gathered on my right hand unto eternal life. What a promise. Are either of you left-handed?
Hank Smith:	01:03:37	I am not.
Bro. Eric Richards:	01:03:38	11% of the population is left-handed. I'm a lefty. So when I read verses about the right hand, I get worried. You think of that right hand. How often we use it. Each week with sacrament. We use our hands in the temple and other ordinances. There's something beautiful about being on God's right hand. That covenant hand. President Nelson taught that one of the greatest compliments we could receive in mortality is to be known as being a covenant keeper. Our apostles and prophets, they have invited us to come join that gathering on his right hand. Hank, you read part of Elder Kearon's talk. Let me read another paragraph. Our father's beautiful, fabulous plan is designed to bring you home, not to keep you out. No one has built a roadblock and stationed someone there to turn you around and send you away. God is in relentless pursuit of you.
	01:04:33	He employs every possible measure to bring you back. Isn't that so good? <a href="#">Elder Cornish</a> a few years earlier, this is 2016. Let me be direct and clear. The answers to the question, Am I good

enough? Will I make it? Are yes, you're going to make it. You are good enough. Yes, you're going to make it as long as you keep repenting and do not rationalize or rebel. The God of heaven is not a heartless referee looking for any excuse to throw us out of the game. He's our perfect loving Father who yearns more than anything else to have all of his children come back home and live with him. Yeah, that promise of being gathered is amazing.

Hank Smith: 01:05:16 That's wonderful.

John Bytheway: 01:05:17 That phrase, God is in relentless pursuit of you. It kind of goes along with, this is my work and my glory. And sometimes we read that this is your job and your glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of your children and you are failing. We read it totally wrong. What he says, that's not your work. It's says my work. Love that Elder Kearon said, God is in relentless pursuit of you and your children. That gives a lot of hope to people. I hope

Hank Smith: 01:05:45 Eric, John, I can hear a parent at home with children who are no longer active, who are not living God's commandments and they're thinking, oh no. Right? They're not going to be on the right hand of God and I'm going to lose this child. So what would you say to anyone who's home feeling their, you know, chest tighten and their heart racing, that they're going to lose that child? John, I liked what you said there, which is this is God's work. God's glory. That's his child.

John Bytheway: 01:06:18 Yeah. I know how you love Zenos's allegory in Jacob five. Zenos's allegory is the A of a Q and A. The Q is in Jacob four. How is it possible that these, after having rejected the head of the corner, will ever be built upon it and well, because God is a really good gardener and he knows when to prune and he knows when to wait, and he's in relentless pursuit of these olive trees. He doesn't want to lose one. It helps me just to think this is his work, his glory, and he is really good at what he does and be available. Be attuned to promptings. Keep the faith you keep going you, and you let him do his work.

Bro. Eric Richards: 01:07:05 The prodigal son, as he sat in that pigsty, I mean having spent and wasted all of his inheritance, living among pigs, what's the thing that allowed him to return home or even to think to return home?

John Bytheway: 01:07:22 He knew he could come back. Mm-Hmm.



Bro. Eric Richards:	01:07:23	He knew his dad loved him, that he could, he would always be welcomed home. No family is perfect. If anyone has any children that are struggling, wondering about the gospel, if they're on their own journeys, I think the thing that's going to bring them home is that love. If we love them with unconditional love, I think they'll be encouraged to come home because it's reflection of the love that Heavenly father has for them.
Hank Smith:	01:07:50	Hmm. That's fantastic. John, Eric, I love what you said there. When I think of someone listening who thinks, oh no, oh no. I think what both of you said can calm that heart. That's the Lord's child. He loves that child more than you do. In the words of Joseph Smith, he has made ample provision for that child's redemption. One more thought on this comes from <a href="#">Stephen Robinson</a> , which Eric, you channeled your Stephen Robinson in that saying, this is a mindset. He was writing on Nephi's vision, which is very similar, right Eric, to what we're reading today. He says, just as there are those on the records of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who belong to the great and abominable church by virtue of their loyalty to Satan and his lifestyle, Eric would say mindset, so there are members of other churches who will eventually belong to the Lamb by virtue of their loyalty to him and to his lifestyle, which will lead to their accepting the saving ordinances. And then this, I ask every parent who says, what am I going to do about this child? I ask them about their child's heart. Is their heart good? And every time, oh yeah, they're such a good person. They love their neighbors, they love their family. Brother Robinson said, the distinction is based on who has your heart not on who has your records. I've always loved that, that you can look at a child who's maybe not active in the church, but their heart is good and the Lord has their heart.
Bro. Eric Richards:	01:09:30	There's so much time. There's so much time. Yes, we want to repent quickly. But boy, in the eternal scheme of things, there's plenty of time for God to continue that rescue mission for his children.
Hank Smith:	01:09:38	And like you said, Eric, the prodigal son, his father waits. But when he sees him right? full sprint, right at him.
John Bytheway:	01:09:49	And remember Hank four years ago, section 46, verse 15, that the Lord suits his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men. A teenager growing up in the seventies, like me is different than a teenager growing up in the 2020s. It is, it's a different world. The conditions are different, and the Lord suits his mercies for that. Please join us for part two of this podcast.



- John Bytheway: 00:00 Stay tuned for part two with Eric Richards, Doctrine and Covenants, [section 29](#).
- Bro. Eric Richards: 00:07 Looking next verses 28 to 34, that's a big chunk. Talk about another shift. He's now going to teach some doctrine. It's beautiful, especially verse 34. "Wherefore verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal." Nothing is temporal. All things are spiritual. Wait, tithing, the paying of my temporal money is actually a spiritual practice. The word of wisdom, what I eat, what I avoid is actually spiritual in nature. When I have to bring my family to clean the church Saturday morning, that's actually a spiritual practice, not a temporal practice. I think if we have that approach to our gospel activities that everything, everything the Lord has given us, if I'm reading this correctly, is spiritual in nature. There's nothing temporal. Sometimes in our callings, we might think, man, this is a temporal thing. I'm trying to organize a blood drive or whatever. No, we're doing everything in the gospel for spiritual reasons. I think it gives us a better approach and we can approach it with some confidence that goodness will come, that we will feel connected to Christ, even though it feels very temporally in the moment.
- Hank Smith: 01:26 That's great because sometimes you think, I don't have time to go to the temple. I don't have time to go serve. I can't go to the meat packing plant, but it's going to help me spiritually. Is that what you're saying, Eric?
- Bro. Eric Richards: 01:39 Yeah. You can see the next verse. He's going to talk about agency. We can use our agency in terms of how we approach our different gospel duties. You see that in verse 35. I gave unto him that he should be an agent unto himself. That word agency is only used a handful of times in scripture. This is one of them, so it becomes very precious to us. In section 101 that you'll study later, the term that's used is moral agency. [Elder Dean I Larson](#). He was actually quoting Albert Payne, who was one of the contemporaries who wrote with Mark Twain, but he said, an act is only moral if it arises out of knowledge, faith, love, or

religious intent, fear and force have not placed in the kingdom because they don't produce moral actions. They're contrary to God's gift of agency. What a blessing that we have this moral agency that we can make decisions that will help promote our salvation, but also make decisions that will help others come unto Christ.

John Bytheway: 02:39

I've sometimes heard agency defined as freedom to choose. I remember [Joseph Fielding McConkie](#) saying, let me give you a better definition. It's the power to act. We're given [power](#) to act. As an agent. In some religious traditions, we are predestined to act in a certain way, and isn't this saying something different? Didn't God give us power to act as evidenced by this verse?

Bro. Eric Richards: 03:07

It's one of the greatest gifts of love that our heavenly Father has ever given to us. He can entice us. He can invite us, but at the end of the day, it's going to be our decision to accept those invitations or reject them. There's no compulsion. There's no force. There's no handcuffs. He's inviting us to consider him and his son. In the end, those in the celestial kingdom, it's going to be their decision. We'll read later this year in Doctrine and Covenants that if they are willing to accept those conditions, if they're willing to keep celestial laws, they're going to be in that celestial kingdom. There are some that are only willing to live those terrestrial, telestial lifestyles. It is our choice. He's going to love us, but in the end, he loves our agency. In fact, to the point where you look at the next two verses, this ties in with agency because he then talks about how agency was used in the pre-earth life where Satan used his agency to rebel, saying, give me thy honor, which is my power.

04:16

Also, a third part of the host of Heaven turned he away from me because of their agency, and they were thrust down and thus became the devils and his angels. It's interesting that Lucifer used his agency to rebel against God. Sometimes it's been taught that God had a big meeting and presented a plan and didn't know exactly how it was going to play out, and started asking suggestions from the audience. All these plans were presented. No, it was a calculated rebellion. The use of his agency to rebel and revolt against God is why Lucifer was cast out. We have to make sure that we're making choices that show our allegiance. In verse 40, it talks about the conditions after the fall of Adam and Eve. It says, wherefore it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment wherein he became subject to the will of the devil.

	05:14	Notice that that fight for agency began in the pre-earth life, but now continues in mortality. There's something interesting here about the fall that I have loved, says he became subject to the will of the devil. Mosiah 3:19 is one of those beautiful doctrinal mastery verses from seminary. A natural man being an enemy to God and has been since the fall of Adam will be forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticing of the Holy Spirit. We love that passage. In Moses 5:13 it says, from that time forth, men began to be carnal and sensual and devilish. In faculty meeting I learned that in our Book of Mormon student manual, it says, though born innocent, all men through the fall of Adam come into a fallen world and experience a resultant fall of their own. In other words, it's through transgression that one becomes a natural man.
	06:09	Have you noticed there's a difference between natural man and the fallen man? Fallen man, we're weak. We make foolish decisions. Fallen man happens because of our psychology or biology or our environment. It could be the result of our families or our relationships. The effects of other peoples and the misuse of their agency. Sometimes people are victims of abuse or infidelity or addiction, apostasy. The list goes on and on, and that is part of Fallen man. It's part of our world, but the natural man is different. The natural man is an enemy to God using their agency to rebel against him. In other words, they sin and they continue to sin. They have this fall of their own, and as they sin, they are not interested in seeking repentance. I wonder if a lot of people, myself included, have conflated the idea of fallen man with natural man. I wonder if a lot of my sins and mistakes and shortcomings are because I am simply a fallen man and not because I am a rebel trying to destroy God's plan.
Hank Smith:	07:21	Mm-Hmm.
Bro. Eric Richards:	07:22	I think a lot of, at least a lot of the students I have up in Logan, they worry about that. They make a mistake and they think, I've done too much. I've gone too far. Who am I? I'm just such a natural man. No, you're, let's see, what's the word? Mortal? Yeah. You're human. You are fallen.
Hank Smith:	07:37	You're what scientists call alive, right?
Bro. Eric Richards:	07:41	Exactly, and the beauty is heavenly Father knows that as he weighs us, as he looks at what we've become, he knows if we have just have moments of being fallen, he knows that, and he knows if we have truly rebelled against him. Both are handled so differently. <a href="#">Elder Scott</a> , you know the Lord, he deals with rebellion so much differently than he does with weakness, and a

lot of our foibles of human nature to quote Joseph, are because we are fallen, not because we've been rebellious.

John Bytheway: 08:12 I have never thought of that. You're making a distinction between the natural man and a fallen man, and the natural man is like preferring the natural man. Yeah. Fallen man is more like, yeah, I fall, but I get up again. I'm trying. I'm failing, but I'm getting up again and I'm going to keep trying. Keep repenting.

Bro. Eric Richards: 08:34 Yeah. "Don't you quit", to insert Elder Holland.

Hank Smith: 08:36 Yeah. Speaking of [Elder Holland](#), listen to this. I think maybe he makes this distinction here too, Eric, this is April, 2010 Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul. Like thieves in the night, unwelcome thoughts can and do seek entrance to our minds. Sounds like fallen man, but we don't have to throw open the door, serve them tea and crumpets, and then tell them where the silverware is kept. You shouldn't be serving tea anyway. He says throw the rascals out. Maybe that's a distinction too, Eric. I didn't seek this out. It enters because I'm a fallen person living in a fallen world, but natural man opens the door, says, come on in, take over my life.

Bro. Eric Richards: 09:25 Back to the temple recommend wording. Do you strive? Those that are fallen and weak, they strive, they try. The natural man, there is no effort. There's no pumping the brakes on their way to sinfulness. They're day planner. Don't forget to sin today. There are shirts, I love to sin. There's no interest in repentance at all, but most of us, especially those listening to this podcast, are in that fallen category in my opinion, that we are trying and we slip up every week and yet we try again.

Hank Smith: 09:58 Yeah. John, how often have we talked about repenting to your kids?

John Bytheway: 10:02 And how often have we talked about the sacrament table bolted to the floor in the chapel? Correct. Because the Lord knows you're going to fall down again, but come back.

Hank Smith: 10:09 Yeah. I've had those frequent moments where I'm so sorry you guys, right? Sorry kids.

John Bytheway: 10:15 Yeah. Lost it for a second there.

Hank Smith: 10:18 You won the lottery with moms, but with dads, you really pick the bottom of the barrel and Eric doesn't the Lord say that in the end of 42? I, the Lord God should send forth angels to

declare unto them repentance and redemption through faith on the name of my only begotten Son. Yes, you have your agency. Yes, you are a fallen man. Here's your escape. Here's your chance.

Bro. Eric Richards: 10:45

It's like he's in relentless pursuit of you.

John Bytheway: 10:49

Good phrase. Where'd you get that?

Bro. Eric Richards: 10:53

On verse 46, behold I say unto you, that little children, another shift here, Hank another doctrine. Little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world through mine only begotten. Wherefore, they cannot sin for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children until they begin to become accountable before me. And this is a beautiful idea here. It's a doctrine I think that is very unique to us as latter-day saints, and it's beautiful to me about the salvation of little children. I mentioned earlier [Patrick Mason](#) and his work with the word restoration and restore, and you read an idea from one of his articles about this vineyard, this farm that God has planted. It's called Earth, and he has so many different religions and sects and ideas and people and ideologies and approaches to faith. The latter-day saints have been asked to take care of and cultivate a very unique part of that vineyard.

11:54

I think we have special oversight in a few areas. I think eternal families is something unique to us. The Lord says, I want the latter-day saints. This is one of your unique, beautiful doctrines, priesthood keys, the idea of eternal progression through covenants, the redemption of the dead, a complete view of the plan of salvation, the nature of God, the depth of Jesus Christ's atonement, modern revelation through living prophets. These are unique principles and doctrines to our faith in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul, you know, his analogy is about the body where we have different parts of the body, but all the parts are necessary to make the body run and do its thing. Back to section 10, verse 67. This is the church. God's people, his church are those that repent and come unto Christ. I emphasize this Hank and John because this verse is one reason why I joined the church when Elder Jolly was out tracting and then teaching my mom with his good companion.

12:55

One of the first principles they felt impressed to teach was this idea of salvation of little children. Rewinding, years previous, my mom was down in Ecuador as a child with her parents. They were in the military. Side note, my son got called to serve in that same area. He's in Quiel, getting home later this summer. Can't wait to see him again. And it's been fun for him and his

grandma to bond over Quiel Ecuador. My mom was born just fine, but she had two little sisters and because of Rh factor with blood and how it's metabolized, they did not live long. The first one was born and lasted about a week. The second one, they were twins. She passed away about a month later. My grandparents were not religious at all, but they went to a local church asking for just counsel and help.

13:42

I mean, you lose twins and seeking comfort. They just went to ask some questions about what's going to happen to them. Is there an afterlife? If so, are they going to be okay? I think he was a good man, but he shook his head and said, I'm so sorry. Did you get them baptized? They said, oh no, we're not, we didn't, we're not religious at all. And he apologetically said, yeah, I'm so sorry. There's no hope for them. My grandparents came home and just told my mom like, okay, we're never going to be Christians. Like, if that's what Christians believe, we're out. Fast forward, my mom was just so curious. She was a little girl and she thought, well, no. They were so sweet, so innocent. There's just no way they have to be okay. When the missionaries opened up Moroni chapter eight and talked about this doctrine in section 29, 46 and 47, she just blurted out, I knew it. I knew, I knew that little children are going to be okay. It's a beautiful doctrine. How big is the Celestial Kingdom going to be, by the way, with all these children that have passed away before the age of accountability? What a marvelous, marvelous plan our heavenly Father has for us.

John Bytheway:

14:48

How many of you have seen the movie where the prophet Joseph Smith is in the middle of translating the Book of Mormon and hears about this doctrine and he just gets up and runs outside? Emma is putting clothes on the clothesline or something. You don't hear the conversation, but you know he's saying, guess what I just learned? Guess what the Lord just revealed to me about this very thing? It's a great moment in the world that he had grown up in, he probably understood similar to what your mother heard as a child.

Hank Smith:

15:23

Eric, this reminds me of something we talked about earlier this year was the death of Alvin Smith, 25 years old. Everybody says later, Joseph Smith says the best of my father's children. Just before he dies, he reaches out to his younger brother Joseph and counsels him to be obedient to what he's been told to do. The family asked a Presbyterian minister in Palmyra to officiate at his funeral. As Alvin had not been a member of the minister's congregation, the clergyman asserted in his sermon that Alvin could not be saved. William Smith, Joseph's younger brother recalled the minister intimated very strongly that Alvin had

		gone to hell for Alvin was not a church member, but he was a good boy and my father did not like it. Now I know Alvin's not a little child, as in verse 46, but the principle of a merciful God is the same.
John Bytheway:	16:26	Yeah. I think it would be hard for anyone to accept that and especially somebody going to hell. Well define that idea of hell. Oh, that would be burning forever. It would be hard to wrap your head around that kind of thing for someone through who no fault of their own had not heard about Christ or didn't have time to in this life, people in hell forever, trillion years to the trillionth power. I can't worship that kind of a God. You know, that's...
Hank Smith:	16:59	John. You're right on. The more I hear about that type of God, the more repulsive it seems that there's a God who wants to punish people unendingly eternally, something as a latter-day saint, I cannot accept.
John Bytheway:	17:21	How many billions of people have lived and died without even hearing the name of Jesus Christ before.
Bro. Eric Richards:	17:29	It just doesn't taste right.
John Bytheway:	17:31	Yeah.
Bro. Eric Richards:	17:32	There has to be more. There has to be more. If we understand the nature of God and our status as his children, we're not simply created beings. We are literally his spirit sons and daughters, and surely he's going to show mercy to all as much as he can, as much mercies he can offer. That seems to be his default setting is mercy, mercy, mercy.
Hank Smith:	17:54	And redemption. Yeah. You think like Joseph Smith, Eric, I think he said it's God's chief attribute is his mercy. It's not one of his attributes. It is his chief attribute.
Bro. Eric Richards:	18:06	Yeah, so true. Well, should we start to steer this ship back to harbor? We're at the very end here. Wow. If people are still listening, I think they're going to heaven along with all these babies. Yeah. You know the end, this section just wraps up with a simple invitation to come. This section is so full of doctrine. We are now accountable because of what the Lord has shared. I think he's reminding us in these last three verses to continue to gather and invite and great things are required. Verse 48, great things are required of us because of this knowledge that has been shared in this beautiful section. Where I'm teaching



currently at USU we're kind of famous. There's a chant and a cheer. I know there's big rivalry between USU and BYU. But years ago the student section came up with this cheer and at the end of the game, if we're ahead and we usually are, the spectrum is a tough place for opponents to come in and win, but at the end of the game, the students will look up and point out the final score in unison.

19:14

There's going to be a thousand or 2000 students in unison calling out the score and they'll say, is that not the winning team? And they'll point to us and the other part replies, yes, that is the winning team. And then they'll say, is that not the losing team? And the other half of the section says, yes, that is the losing team. And then back and forth they'll point winning team, losing team, winning team, losing team. Brutal. It's so brutal. I feel bad. It's one of those, you enjoy it but you feel kind of bad, but you're also rejoicing that USU has another victory. I think in the end that every time we choose to live the gospel, every time we choose to forgive someone, every time we choose to study the gospel, go to the temple, say our prayers, pay our tithing. Every time we do that, it's winning team, winning team, winning team. And I just hope through studying section 29, that we can feel inspired through God's loving kindness to make decisions that help us become members of that winning team. Every time we repent, every time we change winning team, winning team, winning team.

Hank Smith:

20:24

I love it. We were coming up on section 29 and I knew there was going to be talk of the second coming. I have two favorite thoughts. One is from [C.S. Lewis](#). It's kind of a long quote. I want you both to hear it and tell me what you think. He says, the Lord is delaying his coming. He says this, well, why? He wants to give us the chance of joining his side freely. I do not suppose you and I would've thought much of a Frenchman who waited till the allies were marching into Germany and then announced he was on our side. God will invade. But I wonder whether people who ask God to interfere openly and directly in our world quite realize what it will be like when he does. When that happens, it is the end of the world. When the author walks on the stage, the play is over.

21:13

God is going to invade all right, but what is the good of saying you're on his side then? When you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else, something it never entered your head to conceive comes crashing in, something so beautiful to some of us and so terrible to others, that none of us will have any choice left. For this time it will be a God without disguise. Something so overwhelming

that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. There's no use saying you choose to lie down when it becomes impossible to stand up. And then this closing thought, the second coming will not be the time for choosing. It will be the time when you discover what you have chosen. Then he goes on, now today, this moment is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back to give us that chance. It will not last forever. We must take it or leave it. I love it. I love the boldness of that.

Bro. Eric Richards:

Yeah. Winning team. Choosing team.

Hank Smith:

Right? And anybody listening, you have this chance. Let's take it. Why not seek peace while peace can be obtained?

John Bytheway: 22:32

I think this whole section is just this evidence of the Lord's mercy to tell us I'm going to lay out the whole plan for you. And there's everything in here. There's premortal existence, there's millennium, there's resurrection, there's fall of Adam and Eve. When I look at verse 42, it's okay, here's the point I gave unto Adam and unto his seed, they should not die until I will send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption. And that's the probationary state. Maybe Satan said in the day you partake, you're going to die. And the Lord says, well actually I'm going to give them a probationary state and I'm going to teach them the beautiful gospel. Now we have that probationary state to choose like C.S. Lewis just said.

Hank Smith: 23:17

Here's my other favorite quote. This is from [President Oaks](#) Preparation for the Second Coming. I bet both of you remember this April, 2004, so it was a while ago, he said, what if the day of his coming were tomorrow? If you knew that you would meet the Lord tomorrow, what would you do today? What confessions would you make? What practices would you discontinue? What accounts would you settle? What forgiveness would you extend? What testimonies would you bear? If you would do all those things then, why not now? Isn't that great? He makes a funny little quip here. A 72-hour kit of temporal supplies may prove valuable for earthly challenges, but a 24 hour kit of spiritual preparation is of greater and more enduring value.

Bro. Eric Richards: 24:12

With general conference coming up. [President Nelson's](#) last talk was on that, that we need to prepare for the second coming. We don't know what he sees, what he knows, but it seems like he has felt impressed to remind us of the reality of this event. It's coming. It is. Of all things I know. I know that Christ lived. I

know that he died. I know that he's resurrected. I know he's coming again and I can't wait for that day.

- Hank Smith: 24:39 What a beautiful day. Eric, a couple more questions for you. You said in writing the book you wanted to make it a hopeful message, and I think you've done that for us today. How would you sum up that hopeful message of the Lord's second coming? That when I read this with my children, the maggots come upon them, the flesh from off their bones, their eyes from their sockets. I think my children might say, I don't want the second coming to happen. How would I turn that around to make it a hopeful message?
- Bro. Eric Richards: 25:09 I try to picture all of the things in this world that you and I hate being washed away. Think of all the ugly wickedness that will no longer exist. And yes, it's going to be a process. We've got prophecies here of hailstorms and all kinds of others, especially from the book of Revelation. But the end product is this beautiful, cleansed earth that will ultimately become a celestial kingdom. The focus, yes, it's good to know both. We've got the good, the bad, and the ugly. The good is so good for those that exercise their faith in Christ and love him and love their brothers and sisters. The blessings promised are absolutely amazing. That's been my focus and I hope that others can just feel an excitement, aware of the prophecies of wickedness and things like that enveloped in that hope and love of God.
- Hank Smith: 26:08 I love it.
- John Bytheway: 26:09 I think there was a time when I was young, when I went through the same things. That sounds scary. Today I hear people say, oh, bring it on. There's just, there's just so much, not just wickedness but sadness in the world because of it. The results of that, that people are sad, people are suffering, that people are victims of horrible stuff. And yeah, I think now more people are saying, yeah, let's focus as Eric has helped us do today on how positive and beautiful this is going to be. The fact that we have an advocate who's going to be by our side, that makes it so much more positive, who's coming back.
- Hank Smith: 26:45 Eric, I love that you said that the things that we hate and we hate them because of the suffering they cause. All of us have seen, and I'm sure all of our listeners have seen sin, immorality, violence, these things destroy lives. To have that washed away, Eric, that's a beautiful message
- Bro. Eric Richards: 27:06 To bring this all full circle. Let's go back to verse one. Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the great I Am whose

arm of mercy hath atoned for your sins. That's the message you want us to remember is that it's all about him and his goodness and his mercy and his kindness ultimately so we can return home with him.

Hank Smith: 27:27

Yeah, that's beautiful. Personally, I love the [Come, Follow Me manual](#) this week because it says that you might consider reading or listening to the hymn, Israel, Israel God is Calling, and that was written by an ancestor of mine. If you just listen to the words, it's such a beautiful message. I'll just read some of it to you. I'm sure both of you could sing all four verses, but isn't this a beautiful second coming message? Israel Israel, that's everyone listening today, God is calling. Calling you from lands of woe. Babylon, all this evil on the earth, the great is falling. God shall all her towers o'er throw. So come to Zion, come to Zion. Israel, Israel, God is speaking. Hear your great deliverer voice. A glorious morning is breaking. Come to Zion. Come to Zion. Israel. Angels are descending from celestial worlds on high and to man their power extending that the saints may homeward fly. So come to Zion. Come to Zion. Can you linger still in errors gloomy ways? Mark how judgment's pointing finger justifies no vain delays. Come to Zion. Come to Zion. Zion's walls shall ring with praise. My ancestor there, Richard Smith, if you're listening today, great job. You did the family proud, right? with that verse.

John Bytheway: 29:00

I love what [President Nelson](#), how he expounded on the word Israel. If you look in the Bible Dictionary, it says, one who prevails with God, thinking about Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, but then it's, and those who are willing to let God prevail. That part of the talk was so good for me. If we are Israel, then be Israel. Those who are willing to let God prevail in their lives. And I'm looking at verse seven, mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts. Those are those who are willing to let God prevail. That's such a great definition for who Israel is God is calling.

Bro. Eric Richards: 29:38

In the book of Revelation chapter 17 and 18, leading up to his appearance of the world, over and over again Hank, the Lord is inviting us to flee Babylon. Flee, flee. Israel, Israel, God is calling you. Stay away. It's not good. You think of Nephi who saw the same vision as John. He saw those people pointing and mocking with their finger. I think Nephi is trying to help us get away, flee. Don't go there. It's not worth it. It's not worth it. And our loving heavenly Father begging us to come home, let Israel, let God prevail. Let him prevail in your life.

Hank Smith:	30:17	Do both of you remember this moment six years ago, <a href="#">President Nelson</a> towards the end of general conference. I bet you'll both remember this. He says, my dear brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ invites us to take the covenant path back home to our heavenly parents and be with those we love. As president of his church, I plead with you who have distanced yourself from the church and you who have not yet really sought to know that the Savior's church has been restored, do the spiritual work to find out for yourselves and please do it now. Time is running out. Do both of you remember that?
Bro. Eric Richards:	31:00	Yeah. It's so good. It seems like this second coming theme is on his mind. He has testified of its reality several times. He must be sensing something.
Hank Smith:	31:10	Yeah, that's wonderful. Eric, this has been fantastic and I knew it would be. You and I have been friends for a long time. My kids have enjoyed some time in the car listening to Eric Richards give his great talk. It was when they got tired of John Bytheway for a while I said, let me grab Eric Richards. He's just as good.
John Bytheway:	31:29	Those were cassette tapes.
Hank Smith:	31:30	Oh yes. Those tapes. Yeah. If anybody remembers what that is. Eric, let's wrap this up with a question. Our listeners today are bombarded with the message of Joseph Smith is not a prophet. In fact, not only is he not a prophet, he's an evil man and it comes from everywhere. Now it comes with the voices online, even from family members, from former members of the church. It is a prevalent message. Yet here you are having taught in church education. We're going on 30 years. You definitely don't look old enough. John, can you imagine having the Eric Richards youth? When he said he had a missionary, I thought, there's no way.
John Bytheway:	32:17	He must be just a great man.
Hank Smith:	32:19	Yeah. I think of anyone who would say, okay, I've read some stuff. I've studied a little bit. You're the guy who could easily say, with all my study and all of my research, here's what I've seen. So Eric, can you just speak to our listeners, is Joseph Smith really who we hope him to be?
Bro. Eric Richards:	32:37	From my high school years to now, I have been attacked for my membership in the church. Lots of questions. Last spring, I was invited to teach a class answering my gospel questions. We've retitled it to sacred truths and difficult questions with that

course and just because of my life, I have spent hours reading some of those attacks on our great prophet Joseph. I have read so much and studied so much, and the deeper I dive in, the more I am blown away at this boy prophet Joseph. There's simply too much to discount what he's done. So many of those claims against him are so unfounded. They are so spurious, so secondhand, so removed from when he was involved in different incidents in our church's history. The more I read about him and his connection with God, the more I hear him.

33:38 Speaking of the love that he felt from Heavenly Father, the more I read about his humility, trying his best with his limited knowledge and vision, trying to not mess things up in terms of the restoration, the more and more I am convinced and know that he was called by God. Not perfect. We all have mistakes. Prophets have mistakes as well, and Joseph along with others had some through it all. Though I am so grateful that the Lord called Joseph and that somehow the Lord felt good enough to allow me to come in contact with this beautiful gospel, to be able to teach it to my family, to be married in the temple to an awesome wife. How am I so lucky? I still don't know. I wake up every morning kind of pinching myself, but praise to the man. I'm so grateful that he has been able to teach us about our Savior Jesus Christ. I love the prophet Joseph. I love what he has helped me learn about my Savior. And this section 29, it drips with Jesus. I'm so grateful for the restoration of this chapter, this section and other revelations. I love that the Lord works through prophets like Joseph and President Nelson.

Hank Smith: 34:46 Thank you Eric. You practice verse four, declare my gospel with the sound of rejoicing. You could almost write Eric D. Richards right next to that verse. John, what a fantastic day.

John Bytheway: 35:00 Yeah, and I think people will be excited about this because it's about the second coming, but it's about come unto Christ. I'm going to tell you what it's going to be like before I come, but the point is, come to Christ right now and then you're kind of already there when he comes back. Oh, like the last word in the second to last verse is repent. That's the invitation. Come to Christ and then you'll be a little more settled because I'm going to tell you what's going to happen and you'll look around and it'll actually build your testimony because you'll go, yep, I was expecting that. Yep, that's supposed to happen. Yep, it's supposed to get like that, but already come to Christ. He's coming. But come to him.

Hank Smith: 35:41 John, you could almost connect verse one to what you just read. Verse 49, the great I Am, whose arm of mercy hath atoned for

your sins over to verse 49. Have I not commanded to repent? That is the message of section 29 that Eric has shown us today. Eric, thanks for being here. Thanks for taking time away from what we've heard is heaven, Cache Valley to come visit us.

Bro. Eric Richards: 36:08 This is my pleasure and, and just a shout out behind the scenes. You guys are great. They might even be better what they do to make this happen. I am just thrilled to be here. Grateful for everyone that makes this happen. You've been a blessing to thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of people. And really the pleasure is all mine. Thank you. Thank you.

Hank Smith: 36:28 Eric. We loved having you. Hey, come on to YouTube everybody. Tell Eric where you're listening from. It's fun for us to share with our guests where their voice has been heard. Anywhere from Provo to Madagascar. I think it'd be fun to send Eric those comments. And with that, we want to thank Eric D. Richards for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen. David and Verla Sorensen, our sponsors. And with every episode, we will never forget our founder Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We have more sections of the Doctrine & Covenants to study on followHIM. Today's show notes and transcript are on our website. Followhim.co. That's followhim.co. Of course, none of this could happen without our production team. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, Amelia Kabwika, Heather Barlow and Annabelle Sorensen.

## THE PARABLE OF THE ONE QUARTERBACK



Hank Smith:

00:02

Hello everyone. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, we're in Doctrine and Covenants section 29, which is all about the second coming. When you think second coming, you think could happen anytime. I better be prepared. All right. This comes from Howard W. Hunter, who told the story of a quarterback on a high school football team. This young man managed to make the team, but it was clear he was not going to be an All State or All American player. Indeed, it didn't look like he was going to be all anything except perhaps all battered and bruised. He was the fourth of four quarterbacks. By season's end, he had never been called into a game and had given up hope. During the final game of the year, he pulled off his shoes, wrapped himself in a blanket and settled down on the bench to watch his buddies play.

00:54

Midway through the game, he heard the coach shout his name. He was startled and wondered if he had been mistaken. Then it came again right from the coach's lips, Hey, you get in there and move the ball. What should he do? His first impulse was to lapse into a coma. His second was to pretend he didn't hear. His third was to say, wait, wait while I put on my shoes. He did the only manly thing. Strapping on his helmet as he ran, he made straight for the huddle. His white stocking feet were conspicuous to the players on both teams as well as the spectators and the coach, who also must have been ready to lapse into a coma. He called the play, but the shock of his first game was obviously a little disconcerting. By the time he took the snap from center, he had forgotten the play. His teammates moved to the right, but he gamely went left. There alone against the world he met the opposition head on and was swallowed up in a snarl of onrushing linemen. He later said, no one expected me to make a touchdown. Even running the wrong way was understandable, but there was no excuse for a quarterback without shoes. So the idea is keep your gospel shoes on because you never know. You never know when it's going to be your turn to get called in.



John Bytheway:	02:14	Boy, that reminds me of a BYU quarterback named Riley Nelson, who suddenly, with I don't know how many minutes in the fourth quarter, got put in the game and led the offense to score and win that game at the end. They interviewed him afterwards and Riley Nelson said this thing that I was like, man, I got to write that down. He said, well, my attitude is to have my toe on the sideline, my head in the game, and to be physically prepared. And I was like, whoa. Toe on the sideline, head in the game and be physically prepared. And I was like, I'm going to remember that.
Hank Smith:	02:47	We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We are with Eric Richards this week. He's been a friend of both John and mine for a long time, and you're going to love what he does with Section 29. Then come back here next week. We're going to do another followHIM Favorites.