



"O God, Where Art Thou?"

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

followHIM: 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:

When trials confine us, how do we find faith and power? Dr. David Holland unpacks five principles from Liberty Jail that reveal how affliction refines discipleship.

Part 2:

Dr. David Holland examines Doctrine and Covenants 121-123, exploring how persecution and personal choice distinguish between being called and being chosen.

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Part 1 -

- 00:00 Part 1 - Dr. David Holland
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- 06:32 *Come, Follow Me Manual*
- 07:46 American Revolution review
- 11:43 Commensurate power between power and cost
- 15:40 Beauty at great cost
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- 23:45 How long until promises are fulfilled
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- 56:40 Many are called, but few answer
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Part 2 -

- 00:00 Part 2 - Dr. David Holland
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- 05:04 Unrighteous dominion
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- 12:52 The Savior has descended below
- 17:25 Some are kept from the truth
- 14:20 Religious persecution the early 19th century
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- 25:05 Joseph's statement about religious freedom
- 28:41 The value of a rudder
- 32:18 Being a billboard for the gospel of Jesus
- 35:56 Dr. Holland shares his testimony of the Savior and His Restoration
- 46:22 End of Part 2 - Dr. David Holland

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Biographical Information:



JOHN A. BARTLETT PROFESSOR OF NEW ENGLAND CHURCH HISTORY, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR FACULTY AND ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

David Holland's scholarship and teaching focus on the intersecting theological commitments and cultural changes that shaped American life from the early seventeenth century to the late nineteenth. He earned a degree in history at BYU and graduate degrees in history at Stanford University.

His first book, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2011. He has also published a number of articles and chapters on early American intellectual history, secularism, and new religious movements. His volume in the Brief Theological Introductions to the *Book of Mormon* series appeared in 2021 and his editorial project, *The Oxford Handbook on Seventh-day Adventism*, was published this year.

Holland is currently at work on a co-authored volume, *Ideas and Ideals in the American Past*, commissioned by Oxford, and a comparative biography, *A Particular Universe: Ellen Gould White, Mary Baker Eddy and the Nineteenth Century United States*, to be published by Yale University Press.

Holland and his wife, Jeanne, are the parents of four children.

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Hank Smith:	00:00	Coming up in this episode on followHIM.
Dr. David Holland:	00:04	Serving as a bishop in Las Vegas in 2008 I was called and 2008 was a terrible financial time for the country in general and for you know, Las Vegas in particular. I was relatively young. I was 34 at the time I was called. Didn't have a lot of life experience. Suddenly I was responsible for this ward that was in financial peril, financial crisis.
Hank Smith:	00:39	Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with John Bytheway, who I can accurately describe this way, persuasive, long suffering, gentle, meek. He has pure knowledge, and no hypocrisy. John, section 121. You know these sections. Well, Joseph Smith is in Liberty Jail. What are you looking forward to today?
John Bytheway:	01:08	I've been thinking for days, how do I answer this question that I knew you were gonna ask me? Because some of the most amazing soaring beautiful language and ideas come from a prison, so I'm really looking forward to it.
Hank Smith:	01:24	Yeah, there's almost nothing like it. I remember being just a young teenager and reading this going, wow, this is really good. Yeah. John, we are privileged today to have with us Dr. David Holland. Dr. Holland, welcome to followHIM.
Dr. David Holland:	01:39	Thank you. I'm really grateful to be here.
Hank Smith:	01:42	We are excited as well. I've been looking forward to this for a long time. Dr. Holland, John, is a very busy man. Getting him to squeeze us in is quite a blessing, quite an honor. As you look ahead at these sections, David, what do you see? What are we gonna do today?
Dr. David Holland:	01:58	The first thing I'd like to talk about is the universality of the principles and some of the experiences that are touched on

here. We've all had those long, dark nights of the soul, and one of the things that weighs on us in those moments sometimes of despair or discouragement is a feeling that somehow the experience we're having is uniquely ours. Now, that's always true, we are particular people living particular lives and our stories are uniquely ours, yet the general experience of a sense of forlornness, of feeling, maybe even sometimes forsaken, of wondering why the heavens seem silent in our moment of need. I think that's among the most universal of human experiences. Joseph Smith was able to capture that in a way that speaks both to the specificity of his circumstance and to the universality of the human experience that ends, as John mentioned, with such remarkable and vivid language.

03:06 It cannot help but pull us out of that moment of despair that we all experience at times. I'd like to talk a little bit about that aspect of it. I also want to think about the principles that are conveyed in the process of the prophet's wrestling with his particular challenge, and I think the Lord calls him and calls us to a renewal of perspective, to a recommitment to patience, to a fundamental dedication to persistence, to a belief in divine presence, and finally to a belief in divine power. If we can think a little bit alliteratively about all of those P starting words, perspective, patience, persistence, presence, and power, I think it'll help us navigate these remarkable sections and think a little bit both about their historical meaning and about their personal application for us.

Hank Smith: 04:08 As I heard those, the five Ps there, I thought I could improve in all of those. There's room for improvement there. John, I'm sure many of our listeners know Dr. Holland, but there might be a few who don't. Do you have a bio?

John Bytheway: 04:24 I do, and I first want to say that I was watching a wonderful documentary that is on BYU TV called [Kirtland America's Sacred Ground](#). One of the expert commentators that comes on is Dr. Holland. I was excited to see that he would join us on our podcast. I'm so excited. This is right off of the Harvard Divinity School website, but David Holland serves as the Bartlett professor of New England Church history at Harvard Divinity School. In July of 2024, he became the associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs. His research focuses on the intersecting theological commitments and cultural changes that shaped American life from the early 17th century to the late 19th. His first book is called [Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America](#) was published by Oxford University Press in 2011. He has since published a brief [theological introduction](#) to the Book of

Mormon and is an [editor](#) of the Oxford Handbook on Seventh Day Adventism, which is now in press. His research has also appeared in New England Quarterly Law and History Review and in a variety of other scholarly collections, including a recent [essay](#) in Secularization and Religious Innovation in the Atlantic World by Oxford University Press. That's amazing, and we're just so thrilled to have you. Thanks for joining us.

- Dr. David Holland: 05:51 Well, thank you. Glad to be part of the conversation.
- Hank Smith: 05:55 How are things in Harvard?
- Dr. David Holland: 05:56 One of the blessings of an academic life is the way the rhythms of the year play out and they kind of breathe in and breathe out. As students graduate and new students arrive and we get the opportunity to encounter a whole new group of people that represent the thinking of their generation. We're just on the cusp of a new year, and that's always an exciting time.
- Hank Smith: 06:19 Wow. Yeah, it is. I tell my friends sometimes, listen, I go underwater in September. I don't come back up to breathe till December. Then I go down again and I'll come up next April. Yeah.
- Dr. David Holland: 06:31 That's how it goes.
- Hank Smith: 06:32 The rhythm of the year. I like that. We need to jump into these [sections](#). They're so rich. I'm gonna read from the [Come, Follow Me manual](#). It starts out beautifully. The bottom level of the jail in Liberty, Missouri was known as the dungeon. The walls were thick, the stone floor was cold and filthy. Food was scarce and rotten and two narrow iron barred windows near the ceiling allowed for very little light. This is where Joseph Smith and a few others spent four frigid months during the winter of 1838 into 39. During this time, Joseph was constantly [receiving news](#) about the suffering of the saints. The peace and optimism felt in Far West had lasted only a few months, and now the Saints were without a home once again driven into the wilderness in search of yet another place to start over, this time with their prophet in prison, and yet even in that miserable jail knowledge from heaven came pouring down. Joseph's question, oh God, where art thou? was answered clearly and powerfully. Fear not for God shall be with you forever and ever. With that beautiful start, David, how do we want to jump in here?
- Dr. David Holland: 07:46 Maybe a little bit unorthodox, but I'd like to actually start a number of years before these sections begin, before even

Joseph Smith was born and go all the way back to the [American Revolution](#). I should note for listeners that among the instructions that I received when getting the invitation to participate in this conversation was to lean into our own areas of interest and expertise. One of the examples was if you're a historian, be a historian, so I'm gonna be a historian for a minute.

Hank Smith: 08:22

Okay.

Dr. David Holland: 08:23

Because I want to invoke a particular line that comes from the late winter of 1776. Now, a lot of your listeners will know this history. The American Revolution had begun in earnest, really in the spring of 75, but had pitted two identifiable armies against each other. By the summer of 76, George Washington's continental army was being consistently trounced through those early months of the war. He was in despair. If you can sort of picture an army in retreat with one of the most powerful fighting forces in the world hot on their trail all the way through New York and down through Pennsylvania. Washington was lost. He didn't know if this effort could prevail. We have the benefit of hindsight. He obviously did not. To make matters worse, most of the men that were in his army were going to be finished with their contracts at the end of the year.

09:38

So in late December, he's about to become a general without an army, and all he has is basically a string of defeats and retreats to show for this effort. He has one last moment of resolve, won't get too much into the weeds of the geography of the battle at that point, but suffice it to say he is facing an icy river and a dangerous foe on the other side of it, and very few options when he was obviously otherwise preoccupied with the logistics of running a war and leading an army. He thought it worth his time to give his troops some words of encouragement. He also had the humility to know that he was probably not the wordsmith to provide those, but he had a traveling writer with the troops by the name of Tom Paine, who had been so influential in kicking off the independence effort with his treatise Common Sense from a year earlier.

10:39

He asked Paine to write something that could stiffen the resolve of these despairing soldiers. Most of us know the way it opens. These are the times that try men souls, reminds us not to be sunshine patriots, but to retain our principles even in those winter months. But he says something there in that opening that I often think about when I encounter these sections. He said, heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods. It would be rare indeed, if so great a gift as liberty did not come at

a steep price. That's a paraphrase. What Paine is saying is the things that are of great value often come at steep cost. He was pointing out to the army that if they really thought that liberty was something worth striving for, they should not be surprised that it took them into the depths of despair to ultimately attain it.

11:43 I think about that when I think about this series of sections which have been so valuable, so meaningful, so moving, so redemptive for me personally in some pretty difficult times, and they came at a very, very high price, that there is a commensurability between the power of the passages and the depth of the darkness from which they emerged. I don't pretend to know all the ways in which God calculates those prices and that cost, but I do know enough from history and from my own personal experience that sometimes we come to know him in ways that cannot be acquired other than in those deepest, darkest recesses of our own need. You see that happening in these passages for Joseph, I'm grateful that we have them recorded so that we can learn from his experience as well as our own. I said at the outset that one of the striking things about these passages is that they seem to speak to such a universal human need, and it's striking to me that perhaps the oldest book in the Hebrew Bible is Job which is referenced in this section.

13:11 It's on the same topic. You could make the case that our earliest scripture is a testifier to the reality that from the beginning of time, human beings have always found themselves in these moments, even good, noble, faithful human beings, which the Book of Job takes pain to characterize Job as that's been a recurring preoccupation for men and women from time immemorial. Think about St. Augustine who wrestles with the same question repeatedly all the way up to [Rabbi Harold Kushner](#), who wrote a bestselling book a couple of decades ago called Why Bad Things Happen to Good People. Everything from this deeply ancient poetry of Job to the bestselling lists of our contemporary moment are grappling with this question why bad things happen to good people. Here we open up in Section 121 with Joseph Smith wrestling with the same question from a purely aesthetic point of view, from a purely literary point of view.

14:21 It's striking to me that these moments evoke some of the most beautiful language in scripture. I was reading through the Book of Job recently in anticipation of this conversation and was struck again and again by the majesty and beauty of his anguish and of his searching and of his determination to persist,

including going so far as to creating this beautiful poetry about the beauty of death compared to the pain that he's living. He goes into some pretty extreme places, and that's true of these passages as well, that Joseph is capable, obviously of beautiful language, but there's a vividness here from a purely literary point of view that I think exceeds most of his other language. He creates these images of God's pavilion. He talks about lambs being stalked by ravenous wolves. He talks about being in the deep billowing surge. He has this beautiful metaphor in Section 123 about large ships and small helms and turning into the wind and the waves.

15:40 He talks about shackles and fetters and the puny arm of man compared to the mighty Missouri River. This is an imagery. This is an evocative expression that can only come out when those deepest heartstrings are being plucked by the urgency of despair sometimes at least of some suffering. If you just wanted to measure it on purely aesthetic grounds, you could come back to Tom Paine's line that heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods that if the beauty of this prophetic declaration is of great worth, it's not surprising that it came at great cost.

John Bytheway: 16:27 That's a great introduction. When I think about this, it wasn't just Joseph, I'm hurting, I'm suffering. It's my people are out there. I'm hearing reports and I can't do anything. That question how long it's not, I'm not doubting God's existence, but what is the reason for this prolonged suffering? This is not doing anybody any good, but that question, how long? I notice that Isaiah asks that when he gets his call, he's basically told that your mission to won't go well, and Isaiah says, how long? And the Lord says, until the earth is wasted without inhabitants or something like that, Alma and Amulek are in prison. How long the agony of waiting and knowing your people are suffering and you can't do anything about it. A lot of times we talk about Emma's comment about Joseph who could not dictate a well worded letter or write a well worded letter, but it just seems like he grew and he learned. When we see this language, we see a different Joseph.

Hank Smith: 17:38 I think most of our listeners have probably heard of this BYU speech. It's from [Elder Jeffrey R. Holland](#).

John Bytheway: 17:43 Lessons from Liberty.

Hank Smith: 17:45 Yeah Liberty Jail. He says, every one of us in one way or another, great or small, dramatic or incidental is going to spend a little time in Liberty Jail spiritually speaking. Then he says this,

this is what David just said, you can have sacred revelatory, profoundly instructive experience with the Lord in the most miserable experiences of your life, in the worst settings while enduring the most painful injustices. When facing the most insurmountable odds, reminds me of Washington, and opposition you have ever faced. A great thing to add to your study this week would be this BYU speech, Lessons from Liberty Jail. Every one of us is going to spend a little time in Liberty Jail.

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| Dr. David Holland: | 18:37 | That's the message of this section and the message of the standard works generally I think because from beginning to end they seem to witness to that effect. It's not always our tagline on the advertisements or the publicity material we put out there. You know, come and be assured that you'll have moments of suffering. |
| Hank Smith: | 19:01 | A message from the church. |
| Dr. David Holland: | 19:03 | Exactly. That's probably not straight outta Madison Avenue but it is the message of scripture. I know it to be true. The Lord gives us some principles to guide us through those moments again and again. I'm not sure that those are articulated any more clearly anywhere in our canon than they are in these sections. I noted at the outset that one of the things he calls us to is perspective. He reminds Joseph that he still has friends. We know from multiple sources how important friendship was to Joseph. That was of central importance, not only to his own sense of life's enjoyment and survivability, but also to his sense of its theological significance. He said, friendship is one of the grand principles of the faith. That sociality that exists among us here will exist among us there it is eternal principle. When God says to Joseph, thy friends stand by thee, that for me is a indicator that the Lord knows how to speak to our particular need. |
| | 20:20 | I'm not sure if the Lord would've said that to everybody, in part because maybe friendship doesn't mean the same thing to everybody, but we know it was of the utmost value to Joseph and the Lord speaks in specific ways to our specific hunger. The other thing that's beautiful about that is that beginning in section 84, as you're well aware, the Lord refers to Joseph as his friend. There is a kind of implication here when the Lord says, your friends stand by you, that he's reminding him that I am your friend. I stand by you. There's a reference there in that same portion of the letter to Job, which reminds us that the Lord draws from scripture in teaching us and from the experiences of others. Then of course, ultimately one of the primary ways or perhaps the culminating way that the Lord |

seeks to give us perspective is to remind us the experience of Christ who has descended below them all.

- 21:25 Putting our suffering, putting our troubles into historical perspective to remind us that there are still things that we can cling to and hold to, which in Joseph's case includes friendship, which is so meaningful to him. That perspective, when we think that all is lost, when we think that nobody has suffered the way that we have suffered, when we think that nobody can understand the pain that we are feeling, the Lord patiently reminds us that that's not true, and in fact it can never be true based on Alma seven, where the Lord has taken upon himself all the pains and sicknesses of his people. That reminder in and of itself is of enormous potency in my mind as the Lord tries to help the prophet put his experience into that kind of perspective.
- Hank Smith: 22:21 Perspective is so difficult in pain. My son just recently left on a mission. The first 18 and a half years seemed to go by in the blink of an eye, but the next two seem to be an eternity and my wife has to tell me, no, they'll go by pretty fast just like these others, but at times the days go by slow in suffering.
- John Bytheway: 22:47 Hank texted me when his son left and said, you did this five times.
- Hank Smith: 22:53 Five times.
- John Bytheway: 22:54 Yeah. I remember on a lighter note, our friend [George Durrant](#), he wrote a book years ago called Get Ready, Get Called, Go about missions. These chapters were divided. Go for your mom. Go for your dad. Go for your siblings. Go for your ward. Go for the Lord. Something like this. One of his last lines was, go for a hundred reasons, but go for the glory of coming home. That's a moment Hank, I'm so excited to have you experience that moment. I was watching some videos on my phone of some of my kids coming home. Then you get that idea, okay, maybe it was a small moment that's kind of coming up in verse seven.
- Hank Smith: 23:36 That fits John with verse nine. Your friends will hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands. You'll see them again.
- Dr. David Holland: 23:45 Yeah. John mentioned at the outset this question of how long, how long until these promises can be fulfilled. That puts me in a mind of what must have been Joseph's feeling in these opening verses. He begins with what may be a mistake or at least maybe a failure of perspective, maybe, maybe not. It seems to me that

possible that he mistakes circumstance for God's feeling. He says, why isn't your heart softened toward us? As if to say, if I'm suffering, that there must be a hardness to God's heart toward us. There are some passages of scripture that might reinforce that thinking, but there are so many others that suggest that we cannot equate the specifics of a circumstance to the nature of God's relationship to us. It reminds me a little bit of Moses seven, where Enoch wants to high five God, that Zion has been redeemed.

24:51 They've been taken up to heaven, and he finds a weeping God. Enoch says, why are you weeping? We've won. You've won. You're the best. We're the best. Why are we not celebrating? And he said, don't you get it? Those are my children down there too. They hate each other. In that moment where God's detailing all of the crimes of humanity and the reason why he's weeping, even at that moment, his heart is soft toward them. Even at that moment, he is open to their suffering and seeking to save them. The idea that when we're suffering, it means God's heart is hard toward us I think flies in the face of the testimony of so much scripture. You think about Christ's compassion for his crucifiers, that even in the moment of ultimate betrayal and crucifixion, his heart is soft toward them. I think the passage is reminding us of the fallacy of assuming that suffering suggests God's displeasure or his closedness to our need.

25:57 I had this experience once with a woman that I home taught when we lived in California. Remarkable woman born in the South, and as with many African Americans, migrated to the west coast, work in the war industries, built a life in the Bay Area and in some pretty difficult circumstances and seen a lot of pain in her life. Joined the church a couple of years before I moved into the ward, and then I was assigned to be her home teacher and we grew very close. I was in grad school and had limited means and limited capacity to do too much for her. We tried, but it all felt so inadequate. I prayed and felt like I had an answer that God was going to provide something beautiful and glorious for me and in my mind I assume that meant that I was going to go, my material circumstances were going to dramatically improve.

26:57 I was gonna have an opportunity to get her out of her circumstances. We'd have this beautiful experience together and I remember getting the phone call one night that she'd passed away and I remember just, you know, I'll confess, shaking my fist at heaven a little bit. You told me that she'd have this moment of glory. You told me that she'd have this

moment of rest and relief, and I remember distinctly this sort of rebuking answer coming, you know, what do you think I'm doing for her now? This idea that we cannot confuse the appearances of the moment for the depth of God's love, the appearances of the moment will never be equal to the profundity of his care. Joseph's wondering if God's heart is hard toward his people is an opportunity for us to maybe reflect on that truth as God comes back to him in beginning in verse seven with such patience and such kindness and promises of great love.

Hank Smith: 27:59

We read scripture daily yet when dark hard things happen, it's almost our first question, what did I do wrong? Did I offend you? It's fascinating to me that I read scripture pretty frequently, yet it's almost always that first reaction, why would you do this to me? I was trying hard I promise. Almost like you're convincing God that you're really trying to be good.

John Bytheway: 28:26

[Elder D. Todd Christofferson](#) used a vending machine example once in General Conference, the model of a vending machine as you put something in and something comes out immediately. For us in life, you put something in and Job said how long? David said, how long? In the Psalms, Isaiah said, how long? you could see us standing outside of a vending machine going, I did the right thing. How long until the dispensary comes? I remember too, President Benson, what a great statement. He said, one of the trials of life is that we do not usually receive immediately the full blessing for righteousness or the full cursing for wickedness. He said that it will come it is certain, but oftentimes there is a waiting period that occurs as was the case with Job and with Joseph. That Joseph example, I run from Potiphar's wife, yay, here comes my blessing. Yeah, years in prison. How long? Yeah, it's a tough question.

Dr. David Holland: 29:37

It's interesting to me that part of the substance of that question is a recognition that it's the lack of knowledge. It's the lack of the ability to see the end from the beginning that is so painful for us. It's the uncertainty of what's coming next, the uncertainty of each chapter of mortality that sometimes is the most agonizing part of being mortal. We wish we knew exactly what was gonna happen. I've actually said to the Lord, I think a time or two I can take whatever it is, don't leave me hanging. I need to know. Interesting to me about 121 is that it actually provides a lot of promises of knowledge. If you look at verse 26, God shall give unto you knowledge by His Holy Spirit, yea by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost that has not been revealed since the world was until now.

- 30:30 Again, in verse 33, we've already referenced the vivid language. Here it says, how long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri River and its decreed course, or to turn it upstream as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints. In a sense, it's God's way of saying, not only am I not going to leave you suffering forever, I'm not gonna leave you in the dark forever. Part of the promise is a promise of eventual understanding that knowledge will come and that nothing can stop that knowledge from coming according to God's decree. That particular verse, verse 33 is quite interesting when I read it, sometimes I remember an experience being at Caesarea Philippi in the Holy Land, which is an interesting location.
- 31:24 It's the setting for Matthew 16 where Jesus tells Peter that he is the rock and that you know, he will have the keys to the kingdom. It's a big rock. The Lord's having an object lesson right there. This massive immovable stone that represents the foundation of God's work in the world, and it's also the area that's the headwaters for the Jordan River. You can see from a vantage point of some elevation how crucial that river is. There's this verdant stretch of vegetation and greenery wherever that river flows. Where the river doesn't flow, it's a very dry and somewhat desolate landscape. Then it ends in the dead sea, which is aptly named. That's where water stops flowing. It's almost as if when Jesus is talking to Peter, he's doing it not only with the object lesson of the rock sitting right there, this massive geological structure that underscores the power of his words, but he's also doing it at the headwaters of this life-giving river.
- 32:36 Part of what he promises Peter is he tells Peter that revelation is the source of his testimony and this promise of revelatory continuation as this river rolls through a dry and dusty land and everywhere it goes, it brings life as if to say, as long as revelation is flowing, as long as, here it's the references to the Missouri River, but the idea of the river as the flow of divine knowledge, as long as it's flowing, you will be all right. You will have the ability to navigate the things that life presents to you, but make sure you keep it flowing because in the places where it ceases to flow, the places where it stops, that's where trouble begins. So when I think about the sacred landscape of the Savior's life, thinking about the use of these local images to be object lessons. Here, Joseph's using the Missouri, but Jesus was using the Jordan, but the principle is the same, which is that truth flows and when truth flows, we're gonna be okay and we need to make sure that we keep it flowing. Life without it is not

life. It's interesting that in the depths of this despairing moment, one of the things that the Lord promises Joseph is the continuing revelation of divine knowledge.

- Hank Smith: 33:56 That's a perspective changer. I was looking at section 121, verse one and verse two, where are you? How long? And then you go to the very end and it's let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power. So his perspective definitely changes. That's gotta be one of the factors is revelation is not stopping. No one can stop it.
- John Bytheway: 34:20 I love what David said, your friends stand by thee and I am one of them. For the Savior to say that, what would that do for you?
- Dr. David Holland: 34:30 I mean, there's some interesting verses right here in verses 28 through 31 or so. Partly this is about a very intimate moment. It's a prophet and his God, and they are working out this critical moment of pain and frustration. And to John's point, I jotted down my notes as well, the desperation of leadership feel like you're responsible for people that you now can't help. So it's a very specific and very intimate moment, but it also expands outward to remind us that God is also the God of the universe. He's also the God of powers and principalities. If there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas or to the dry land or to the sun, moon or stars, you know, a reminder that he's in control of the big things as well as the intimate moments of a particular person's pain.
- 35:19 My father was called as a general authority. At that time he was still serving as president of BYU. There was about a, he was called the April conference and he, I don't think he wrapped up his BYU responsibilities till July. So there was a period of months there where he was already getting assignments as a general officer of the church and still trying to run a university. And I just remember those being trying times, difficult times. He was feeling pretty inadequate to his call. He'd spoken about that publicly so I think I can mention it, but in the midst of all that, in the midst of his own struggle with his own sense of inadequacy and with the demands of his circumstance, he knew that this change also entailed a move for me that I would have to move from Provo to Bountiful, which doesn't sound like a massive move if anybody knows the geography of the state, but to me it felt like a massive move.
- 36:20 He knew that at that point in my life, all I really cared about was football, and I loved playing football and had dreams of glory. I made up for being small by being slow. So that wasn't a good combination, but it didn't hamper my ambition. So he knew this

move was bringing some disruption to the things I cared about, including this high school football team I was on. He knew that two a day, I don't think they, I think by law you can't do two a days in the summer anymore, but this was back in the olden times when they didn't care about kids.

36:57 We did these two a day practice sessions. He would drive me up there and we were still living in Provo. He'd drive me up there, go into the office in Salt Lake. I'd find a way to kill time between the two sessions and to come back to get me after the second session. I understand after the fact, sort of the depth of the spiritual struggle he was in trying to, you know, rise to the moment and how really deep and difficult that was. But I didn't, you know, I was a 15-year-old selfish, self-centered kid, sort of mad that we were moving. But he faithfully took me to those practices and I remember we were driving home one day and I was feeling a little discouraged and he was feeling a little discouraged. Calls me Duff, he said, Duff read us a scripture and there was a little blue Book of Mormon in the pocket of the car, as there often seemed to be, and I picked it up and just randomly opened to Enos. Enos 12, as a matter of fact that says, you know, you'll have the desires of your heart because of your prayer of faith.

38:03 And I remember us both being moved in that moment. I'm kind of feeling it again now that I look back on it. The enormity of the difference between our areas of concern. You had somebody that was trying to run a 30,000 plus student university and take on a new calling, then you had a guy, then you had a sophomore in high school who was trying to get on a football team. You know, you think about the dramatic contrast between those, the macro, the micro, the global, and the self-centered, and yet that verse of scripture was designed to speak to both of us. God loved us both in the place that we were in the grand scheme of things, perhaps my little high school worries were as important to the Lord as my father's global concerns. He sent the same verse to both of us in the same moment. In Section 121, we see both parts of God.

39:01 We see him in the details of the particular wrongs and the particular challenges. We also have him remind us, and also, I'm the God of the planets. I'm the God of the universe. I have control over all of these things. And we get to those parts of the section that we often quote when we're talking about leadership. You quoted them Hank, when you were introducing John, some of his characteristics. It talks about there are many called but few are chosen beginning in verse 34. Why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are so much upon the things

of this world and aspire to the honors of men. It goes on to talk about the rights of the priesthood being inextricably bound to the principles of righteousness and the ways in which we can abuse that. And it gives us a reminder, a warning about human nature, and this is part of what I was alluding to at the outset about the universality of the things that are being taught here because the Lord wants to tell us something about our tendencies.

40:04 It is the nature and disposition of almost all men that as soon as they get a little authority, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Part of my area of historical research is the Puritan period. I think about the Puritans, there's a lot to be said about the Puritans pros and cons, and history's always complicated and cultures are often equal parts light and dark. But one of the things that I've come to appreciate about Puritan theology, this Calvinist theology that they carried was its warning about human nature. I think as moderns as products of the 20th and now 21st centuries, we've inherited a kind of optimism. People are intrinsically good and human nature leans toward the positive. There's a sort of an Americanness to that, that positivity about human nature, which is all well and good. We are created in the image of God and we have divine DNA and all the things that I believe, but the Lord will occasionally, as King Benjamin does, to remind us about the natural man being an enemy of God, or as this passage does remind us to take care that there are tendencies in us that are dangerous.

41:23 I remember being in a bishopric many years ago when a member of another bishopric had had some trouble, and I remember the stake president just speaking to all the bishoprics saying, we're all subject, we are all subject to these temptations. We are all subject to human nature and we have to take care. We have to recognize our own imperfection. It's interesting that in this section God reminds us of those tendencies. God reminds us of human nature's capacity for corruption then tells us to lean into the better parts of ourselves, the angels of our better nature and remind us about persuasion and long-suffering and gentleness and meekness and love unfeigned and kindness and pure knowledge, and to avoid hypocrisy and to avoid guile. Then to show an increase of love, even when we have to reprove with sharpness. You see these two parts of humanity's capacity, the beauty of verses 41 through 43, and then the dangers of the verses that proceed it and the call to be committed to our best selves and to be mindful of our weaknesses.

Hank Smith:	42:38	This reminds me, I brought this with me today, a talk from General Conference Continue In Patience. This is President Uchtdorf speaking at priesthood session. He said there is a reason that almost every lesson on priesthood leadership at some point arrives at the 121st section of the Doctrine & Covenants. In a few verses, the Lord provides a master course in priesthood leadership. He quotes what you just quoted, verse 41. The character traits and practices described in these verses are the foundation of godly patience and are inseparably connected to effective priesthood service. These attributes will give you strength and wisdom in magnifying your callings, in preaching the gospel, in fellowshipping quorum members and in giving the most important priesthood service, which is indeed the loving service within the walls of your own homes. It really is in one or two verses a masterclass in not just priesthood leadership, leadership in general, in parenting, how to have influence. In today's terms the word influencer has become a common word. I think this is the Lord saying, you wanna be an influencer, this is how you do it.
Dr. David Holland:	43:51	And quite candidly, quite explicitly says there's no other way. These other ways simply are no way at all. That's a pretty stark reminder to us. I was serving as a bishop in Las Vegas in 2008 I was called and 2008 was a terrible financial time for the country in general and for, you know, Las Vegas in particular. I was relatively young. I was 34 at the time I was called, didn't have a lot of life experience. Suddenly I was responsible for this ward that was in financial peril, financial crisis, and I was running around trying to keep the lights on and keep people housed and fed, and I remember feeling quite overwhelmed and I was out on a walk in the desert sunrise, in my head and wrestling with these concerns. I had been praying for confidence. I felt a lack of confidence to really go in and help people with clear sense of purpose and knowing what I was doing and some clarity of plan for this situation.
	45:10	And I'd been praying for confidence and praying for confidence and didn't feel it coming. And as I was out on my walk, this verse came to my mind in verse 45, let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men and to the household of faith and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly, and then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God. It occurred to me on this walk that I'd been praying for the wrong thing. I'd been praying for confidence and it wasn't coming, but the Lord says here that confidence is a product of charity. Let your bowels be full of charity. There's some link between the depth of our love and the confidence that we bring in our effort to help people. I began to pray for more charity for my ward, more charity for

the people, and as my love grew, I found myself acting with greater confidence and I don't know exactly what the relationship is there except that in the purification of motive and in the depth of strong feeling for one another, I think there is strength.

46:13

There's power in that. I've also always been struck that, you know, the first part of that verse, let thy bowels be full of charity toward all men and to the household of faith. I've often wondered why that formulation is as it is. Wouldn't the household of faith be included in all people? That seems pretty comprehensive, but then again, and maybe this is a reflection on some time as a bishop or other callings that are involved in the councils of the church, I've been struck a time or two in ward councils that sometimes we're bending over backwards to be charitable and patient with people that never really darken the door of the building, and yet we're really impatient and sharp with the person sitting next to us. Maybe the Lord knows what he is doing when he says, look, yeah, I want you to love everybody, but you also need to love the household of faith because these are the people that we work with and worship with. It reminds me of that passage in the Screwtape Letters when they're talking about how to tempt a person that's sitting at church and they said, well, just remind him that his neighbors on the pew are annoying. Just remind him that the people that he's worshipping with are imperfect. It's interesting that the Lord reminds us here that in our charity for all people that we should include the household of faith and it's, I think, quite telling that we need to be reminded of that a time or two.

Hank Smith:

47:40

Yeah, these are the ones you're gonna bump up against the most, most likely. We had a wonderful interview last year with Dr. Melissa Inouye, a historian for the church. She talked about Mosiah 18, about the church coming together as the church. What'd she say, John? You and she both. It was funny. The Lord, he commands us to love our enemies, so he puts them in our ward. So many enemies, one convenient location, but the idea is, I think, David, that's what you're saying. It's almost easier to love someone you never see, you never really talk to, yet here's the neighbor next door who made that comment in Sunday School that I just can't get past.

John Bytheway:

48:25

As a young person I felt like there was some missing punctuation or something in some of these verses. Like verse 36, the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled. I felt like semicolon only upon the principles of righteousness. Do you see it that way?

Dr. David Holland:	48:50	I see what you're saying. Yep.
John Bytheway:	48:52	Then it made sense to me, okay, cannot be controlled nor handled only, no can not be controlled or handled, only upon the principles of righteousness, and then I just love this line that they may be conferred upon us. It is true. Okay. I may have been ordained, but then the word amen. That sounds like sayonara. Sayonara to the priesthood authority of that man if you try to cover your sins, gratify your pride, your vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion, then you may have been ordained, but you don't have the priesthood and this idea of formal authority perhaps versus moral authority. When you do any of that, you don't have the priesthood anymore. Oh, you may have been ordained, but you don't have it, which is so different than maybe the way we think of leadership in other settings like at work or in the military or something like that. So when you see amen to the priesthood authority that man you, you get the same meaning, right? It's like that's done.
Dr. David Holland:	49:52	Mm-hmm.
John Bytheway:	49:54	There's a story Elder Hugh Pinnock gave a talk at BYU in the seventies, if you can imagine such a thing Hank. It's like 10 keys to marriage and family relationships, and he talked about a couple coming in to see him. We're talking about a church with two and a half, 3 million members a long time ago. A husband saying, tell her she has to obey me because I have the priesthood Elder Pinnock. When this man said, tell her she has to obey me. He just looked at him and said, you don't have the priesthood. He said, yes, I do. I was ordained when? When was that Ethel? Right? And he just kept saying, you don't have the priesthood. He said, I guess I don't know what you mean. And guess what Elder Pinnock opened right here and read this to him. You don't have the priesthood if you are behaving that way.
	50:43	This was in a marriage relationship. I never forgot that idea. This is a different kind of power and authority. These verses are so good and so profound. You said it, Hank, about how do we influence others and then we have this beautiful list in verse 41. The other thing I wanted to mention was, I'm kind of a nerd when it comes to this. I'm looking at the footnotes here. I had Robert J. Matthews for a professor for a time. He talked about being on the scriptures publication committee that put out our edition of the scriptures, so it was exciting to me to see if this has 27 lines of footnotes. This is doctrinally rich.
Hank Smith:	51:27	It's like one of those 2 Nephi nine, 2 Nephi two.

John Bytheway:	51:30	2 Nephi nine, Mosiah three. Yeah, yeah. There's one, one page in the Old Testament that has zero footnotes. Guess what it is?
Hank Smith:	51:40	Yeah. It's the Song of Solomon.
John Bytheway:	51:42	Song of Solomon.
Hank Smith:	51:43	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	51:44	But these are doctrinally rich, ought to be read slowly.
Hank Smith:	51:50	When I read verse 39 and I'm looking inward, I kind of hear this. We have learned by sad experience that is the nature and disposition of almost all men, including you, Hank, as soon as you became a parent, you immediately began to exercise unrighteous dominion. When you have someone like a child who is dependent upon you, you have complete control of the situation and you use that control in a way to almost take shortcuts. I don't wanna build the relationship that takes too long. I will make you do these things 'cause I'm in charge. I'm the dad. I said so. Those shortcuts end up costing you enormous sums in the long run. 'cause the pup grows up. Right?
Dr. David Holland:	52:43	There is no substitute for the ratio that's described in 43 reproving betimes with sharpness, but then showing forth afterward an increase of love. The idea that the proportionality of truth and grace, love and doctrine, these things have to be overwhelmingly on the love relationship side of that ledger in order for any of the rest of it to have any kind of positive meaning.
John Bytheway:	53:12	Yeah. I have in my notes Elder H. Burke Peterson , I think he was Bishop H. Burke Peterson at one time, Presiding Bishop, and he actually said that the word sharpness is maybe misunderstood. He said, perhaps we should consider what it means to reprove with sharpness. Reproving with sharpness means reproving with clarity, with loving firmness, with serious intent. It does not mean reproving with sarcasm or with bitterness or with clenched teeth and a raised voice. I've appreciated that idea, giving real clarity. It's not, oh, you're fine, nevermind. Oh no, it's reproving, but it's with clarity.
Dr. David Holland:	53:58	I had a student once tell me that clarity was kindness. I was being a little vague in my expectations of the course, and she said, clarity is kindness.

Hank Smith:	54:06	Interesting. I talked about myself being a parent. I'll give you an example and I hope there's some parents out there that can see themselves here, but I think my daughter was 15 or so and she was on the couch and she was on her phone, and I had a big pile of dishes. John, I'm sure you've heard me tell this story, I said, hey, you wanna help me with the dishes? She turned and looked at me and said, no, went back to her phone.
John Bytheway:	54:33	That's content communication right there. Do you want to? Nope. Okay.
Hank Smith:	54:37	I should have thought to myself, how can I have more influence? How can I be more long-suffering and gentle and kind? But I didn't. I went immediately to unrighteous dominion. I said, Hey, we're gonna make a new rule. It's one of the best parts about being a parent, right? I can make a brand new rule, new law. She who does not help with the dishes, doesn't get to use her phone. I said, now, do you want to help me with the dishes? Right? And she said, yes. Right? And she came over and we didn't build the relationship at all. I was really disappointed in her for not wanting to be my friend. That is, to me, what the Lord is saying here is it may feel like you made progress. You made no progress. In fact, you took a step back.
John Bytheway:	55:24	You digressed maybe, right?
Hank Smith:	55:25	Yeah. You hurt the relationship in your unrighteous dominion, but it's such a natural tendency. Like David said, it's inside of us. Lean into the best part of ourselves. I wrote that down.
Dr. David Holland:	55:40	Well, I think that's a constant effort. I mean, if it is part of our nature, which this section seems to suggest it, it also means that it's a constant effort, maybe a lifelong effort, maybe even longer than life effort to fully come to embody verses 41, 42 and completely eliminate verses 37 from our life.
Hank Smith:	56:04	You think, oh, I'm a good person. I'm a church leader. This would not happen to me in my church leadership. Yet there are stories of the best among us hurting those in their flock. Mission presidents hurting missionaries and stake presidents and bishops in a moment of anger saying something. It's hard. This is one of those, David, where I frequently say this to John. If we just get this section from Joseph Smith, who is this? Right? Who is this? This is incredible. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	56:38	Yeah.

Dr. David Holland:	56:38	Yeah. It's true.
John Bytheway:	56:40	I would love to hear what you both think about the difference between being called and chosen. I have always wondered exactly what that meant. Behold there are many called, but few are chosen. How do you guys perceive that?
Hank Smith:	56:56	Maybe I'm wresting the scriptures here, but I've always rephrased it as many are called, but few show up. The signup sheet is full, but the attendance is lacking.
John Bytheway:	57:09	Yeah. I have in my margin many signup, few show up. Maybe that was from four years ago.
Dr. David Holland:	57:14	Yeah, I'm not sure that it really matches the language here, but I've thought a lot about the passages of scripture where the Lord says, and then you shall be the children of God, which has always been in tension with this doctrine and theology of ours that we're all already the children of God. So why do the scriptures sometimes make it sound like that's contingent, that by certain actions we become the children of God? I wonder if sometimes it's not so much that there are really substantive differences between the words called and chosen any more than there are substantive differences between being the child of God in I'm a Child of God, children's hymn, or being the child of God described in Romans eight, which says, then we shall become the children of God. For me, maybe the analogy is when somebody says to one of my children, wow, you're really your mother's daughter. Of course she is. Right?
Hank Smith:	58:20	Yeah, yeah.
John Bytheway:	58:21	Right.
Dr. David Holland:	58:22	But when you say that, you mean that yeah you have chosen to act the way that she acts. The words are the same, but the relationship is different, and we all sort of know what that means. Maybe calling and choosing in terms of their actual dictionary definitions are not all that different, but in this context, it's like being a child of God or being a child of God, that we have chosen to hear that calling and that's what makes the difference.



- John Bytheway: 00:00 Welcome back to part two with Dr. David Holland, Doctrine and Covenants 121 to 123. We don't get very far in the Book of Mormon before we're confronted with this idea that Nephi was favored. That's in first Nephi chapter one verse one. We go, wait a minute, does God have favorites? I feel like as you keep reading, you find out that you choose that status by He loveth those who will have him to be their God, or he favors those. Hank, you've heard me make this joke. There's the Nephites. There's the Lamanites and there's the Favorites. The way we respond to God's call perhaps is how we become chosen, maybe.
- Hank Smith: 00:48 Yeah. Well, that's how [Elder Bednar](#) took it on. This is The Tender Mercies of the Lord, April, 2005. He references these verses. He says, to be or to become chosen is not an exclusive status conferred upon us. Rather, you and I ultimately determine if we are chosen. He says, please now note the use of the word chosen in Doctrine & Covenants, section 121:34. Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. Why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men. He says, I believe this implication of these verses is quite straightforward. God does not have a list of favorites to which we hope our names will someday be added. He does not limit the chosen to a restricted few. Rather, it is our hearts and our aspirations and our obedience, which definitively determine whether we are counted as one of God's chosen.
- 01:47 He goes on through this talk to talk about Enoch in Moses chapter seven. When I've read that same verse, many are called, but few are chosen. It reminds me of what I think is the most disappointing word in Jacob 5 where there's one last time they're gonna serve in the vineyard. They've brought forth these servants. It almost sounds like these servants were held back. It's verse 61. Called these servants, and we'll go labor diligently, and it says in verse 70, they call the servants, and they were, and you're kind of hoping for a big entry, a big moment of they were amazing. They were the hosts of heaven. It just says, and

they were... Do you remember what it says, John? They were few. It's they were few, but it works. I've wondered why. Only a few show up in the allegory. Well then I think Section 121 helps us with that. Two reasons. Their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men. I know neither of you struggle with that. So I would like to know how you have overcome that.

Dr. David Holland: 03:00

Don't quote me on this scientifically because it's just a vague memory, but I recall a description of [addiction](#) in clinical laboratory sense. What will the test subject give up in order to get the thing to which they're addicted? So if you're testing rats level of addiction, what will they give up in order to get that thing to which they're addicted? And I think the study actually that I was reading was about Oreos, the addictive power of Oreos, and what rats will give up once they get a taste of Oreos in order to get it. That for me is maybe a kind of measure of where our hearts are, is I don't suppose there's anything wrong with wealth, but what are you giving up to hold onto it, to get it? I don't suppose there's anything wrong with the gaining the good opinion of others. What are you giving up in order to get it or hold onto it? When we talk about how do we live in a material world, how do we recognize that to be carnally minded is death, even though we're all incarnate, I think the question is what are we sacrificing in order to achieve these things? And that's sometimes a pretty stark illustration of where our heart might be.

Hank Smith: 04:23

Maybe both of you'll remember this, that a man was gonna take his kids to the circus and gets a call in to go to work. He says, no, hangs it up. And his wife says, oh, shouldn't you go into work? The circus will come again. And he says, childhood won't. Like, what are you willing to give up? That's great. Both of you remember Samuel the Lamanite, your riches are cursed because you have set your hearts upon them. You have not hearkened unto the words of him who gave them to. You do not remember the Lord your God and the things which he has blessed you, but you always remember your riches. Remember your stuff.

05:04

This last half of this section could be a lifetime of study. Let me go through this. Let me not to get down on yourself, but to note areas where you think, Hmm. And I like the final results. David, you talked about confidence and then verse 46, the Lord says, the Holy Ghost will be your constant companion, a scepter of righteousness and thy dominion, an everlasting dominion without compulsory means meaning you won't have to force it. It will flow unto thee forever and ever. I think that ties back to verse 39, the use of unrighteous dominion. Anything that you

want to come to you naturally won't. You'll have to force it. It will be compulsory.

- Dr. David Holland: 05:52 Yeah. It sort of gets back to that point that we made in verse 26, in verse 33, about the flow of knowledge or the flow of revelation as the gift of life. Here we see the actual verb flow, and we've had it compared to a river that this river is gonna flow forever. That that's the gift of, you know, applying these principles. There is no dead sea. There is no termination to this, but it goes on and on.
- Hank Smith: 06:26 Without compulsory means. When I go to the Lord, it's not under compulsion, it's, I want to.
- Dr. David Holland: 06:36 Right.
- Hank Smith: 06:37 I want to go to him.
- John Bytheway: 06:39 That's the easiness and the willingness that [Elder Bednar](#) talked about. It's that I wanna have easiness and willingness to accept, apply the gospel. You know?
- Hank Smith: 06:50 Yeah. This is [Edward Partridge](#), first bishop of the church who just gave and gave and gave. He says, I have torn my affections from this world's goods. I am willing to spend and be spent in the cause of my master. He's overcome the heart set on the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men. David, we've had you here for a little while and we've spent a lot of time in this section, but there are two others. What should we do next?
- Dr. David Holland: 07:20 Well, let's just move sequentially here. As we were saying before about the infinite scale of God's care and concern, we saw 121 sort of accordion. Sometimes it's very intimate and personal. Sometimes it's big and global. Sometimes it's the particular, sometimes it's the universal that God can function at all those scales. I recall again, don't fact check me on this 'cause I don't know the source, but I remember a course at BYU as an undergrad on the Enlightenment, and we were talking about deism. This idea that God is creator of the universe but is otherwise unconcerned about it, or sets these laws in motion and then lets the clock run for itself. One of the philosophes, one of the enlightenment thinkers that was being quoted in the course, was quoted as looking at the majesty of a sunrise and saying, Lord, I believe and muttering under his breath, but as for madam and her babe, I have my doubts, meaning I can believe

the big universe, the creation, but the story of a baby born in a manger was harder for him to believe.

- 08:34 For me, the grandeur of the gospel is that God functions at all those scales. Yes, I've had that moment when you look at a sunrise or the enormity of the ocean and you're overwhelmed by the power and possibility of God, and then when you look in the face of your child and you're overwhelmed by the power and goodness of God, that God is both in the details and in the overarching plan. We've seen that sort of accordion take place in 121 to remind us that God is all of these things. Then we transition into very personal things in 122 where he is speaking to Joseph very personally about his name will be had in both derision and in praise.
- 09:23 The noble and the virtuous will seek him, but he's also going to be cast into trouble. That these are the promises that come with discipleship. I was reading in Acts actually a little earlier today just in my personal study, and reminded of those early apostles who were just following the Lord, they were doing their best, yet were called before counsels and judgment. That this is often the lot of those who follow the Lord. And then it gets very, very personal. It's rendered in the hypothetical, but we know that it's literal. About being torn from the society of his mother and his brother and his sisters and this heart wrenching if thy elder son, although but six years of age shall cling to thy garments and say, my Father, my Father, if these things happen, it's not an if, it's not a conditional. In Joseph's case, these things do happen.
- 10:23 These things did happen. Then this extraordinary promise after the greatest threat of all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open their mouth wide after thee, know thou my son that all these things, it's interesting that another use of the comprehensive, all, all these things shall give thee experience and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. So once again, the comprehensiveness, there is no pain, there is no difficulty, there is no despair that's beyond the reach of these promises. This is about all because Christ is about all. Therefore fear not what man can do for God shall be with you forever and ever. It's interesting that this particular section ends on the same note that 121 ends on, which is about God's power and its combination with our empowerment. You know, thy priesthood shall remain with thee, their bounds are set. They cannot pass.
- 11:21 God is in control and within that control, he's given us the opportunity to retain some agency in all of this and that that cannot be taken away according to the promise. Compared to

121, it's so brief, nine verses and yet it captures in many ways all the same principles that we've been talking about in the longer section and even ends on the same note. God repeats himself intentionally, I had a Mission President used to always say that if you hear God repeating himself, it's not an accident. Pay attention. These two sections seem to echo one another in a particularly beautiful way.

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| John Bytheway: | 12:02 | I just love that the how long questions are turned into small moments and I think our how longs in life when we approach God, he can turn them into small moments. It's like I had a sister that I minister to who said that the Lord told her once, I'm gonna turn all of your question marks into exclamation points one day, take our how longs and make them small moments. I think that's kind of poetic how the Lord does that here. |
| Hank Smith: | 12:32 | And then that perspective comes the Son of Man hath descended below them all, art thou greater than he? He and the Lord have discussed this back in Section 19 when he said, you taste it to the least degree. |
| John Bytheway: | 12:48 | He's talking to Martin Harris. Yeah. When I withdrew my spirit. |
| Hank Smith: | 12:52 | This is section 19 verse 20, and he says, I want you to repent lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken of, which in the smallest yea, even in the least degree you have tasted at the time, I withdrew my spirit almost bringing back to memory Section 19. The Son of Man hath descended below them all far more than you can even comprehend. I don't think it's a trump card, but it's a principle of leadership I believe I'm not asking you to do anything I have not done myself. |
| John Bytheway: | 13:26 | I know what you're going through. There's something nice about somebody else saying, yeah, I've been there. David, you brought up Caesarea Philippi, which is just gorgeous, and this idea of descending below all things has its physical component too and being baptized in the Jordan. Isn't that, if I understand correctly, the lowest point on earth is the Dead Sea. How poetic and elegant is that, that he was baptized in descending literally in the topographical way below all things. |
| Dr. David Holland: | 14:03 | Yeah. |
| Hank Smith: | 14:04 | Right above section 122 I have written Ensign article January of '03, and this is Elder Holland . However dim our days may seem, they have been a lot darker for the Savior of the world. |

Dr. David Holland:	14:20	Hmm hmm. Yeah. Speaking of darkness in section 123, Joseph says, we need to take note of it. This is the lawyerly or historian coming out in him that we need to make a record of these things. Now, partly he's making a record, obviously as a case against persecution. He talks about making sure that the persecutions that they've faced are known to the powers that be. It's also a reminder that hard and difficult things are not something that we need to shy away from or turn away from. I think we treat our gospel experiences, if it's supposed to be a summer's picnic, it's all the sunshine and roses. I'm reminded of the fact that the Savior himself asked if the cup could pass from him. Nobody was skipping along to Gethsemane. The difficulties and the dark things deserve to be remembered and recorded. In part, he's making a contemporary argument for the legal value of that record.
	15:32	But for our own learning, if the saints hadn't been willing to record their experiences, the difficult ones as well as the light ones, our understanding not only of the Restoration, but our understanding of discipleship would be terribly one-sided and not particularly reflective of reality. In verse 16, when he finally gets this point of saying, holding onto these details, holding onto these records may seem like a small thing, but that small thing can guide a large ship when it's kept workways with the wind and the waves. That's not just about a legal record at that point. He's moved beyond the recording of charges against their enemies. He's talking it seems to me about a bigger principle about being willing to work into the wind in the waves. That that's how you stay afloat is by paying attention to the difficult things and the easy things. Relatively small act of keeping a record can help you manage that storm. It's one of the sins for which I feel culpable because I've never been a great journal keeper. Partly, I think that's the historian in me, is I know what people do with journals once you're gone.
	16:51	So I've always been a little bit hesitant to keep one. But holding onto that record, recognizing your story, recognizing the good and the bad, and the beautiful and the ugly, and the way God's gotten you through it all, which is really what these sections are doing, that this is that little helm that can get our ship through the storms that come. I think it's interesting again that he's talking about a very particular call for the, I think, particular legal and political purpose here. Once again, we end up at a very transcendent principle here that I think applies to all of us.
John Bytheway:	17:25	Yeah, this is beautiful. At the end, I love this line in verse 12, that there are some yet on earth who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it. I'm always

reminded of Lehi's dream when he tastes the fruit and says, where is your mother? Oh my goodness, this is so good. Where is your family? I called to them. They stood as if they knew not whither they should go boom right there. They just didn't know where to go. So I called to them with a loud voice and said, come unto me and how many are looking, just don't know where to find it. To me, it's a very charitable verse and a motivating verse to say, there's some who are looking, they just don't know where to find it.

- Dr. David Holland: 18:13 Yeah. In a section that's otherwise overwhelmingly about some pretty dark and difficult things. Murder, tyranny, oppression, grief, sorrow, bow down, iron yoke, handcuffs, chains, shackles, fetters of hell. This is not the sun shiniest section that you could find. But then there's this beautiful interjection in 12 that says, there's goodness out there. There's a lot of goodness. There's a lot of good hearts out there too. The Lord's always trying to help us see both the light and the dark. Joseph talked about that repeatedly. If you lead a man to salvation, you gotta be able to stare into the darkest abyss as well as contemplate the highest heaven. A lot of this first part is about the abyss, and then 12 is about, and there's a lot of good people out there, and if they hear the truth, they're gonna resonate with it.
- Hank Smith: 19:12 As I read these later sections, it seems that Joseph one, is studying the Constitution. He is interested in the rule of law. At times he seems shocked that this is the United States of America where the freedom of religion.
- John Bytheway: 19:30 We've got a Bill of Rights. What's going on?
- Hank Smith: 19:34 Even runs for president because there's not a political candidate who's willing to at least stand up for the Latter-day Saints. If I lean into your history here a little bit, the constitution's only 55, 56 years old. Is this a common occurrence in 18 hundreds of America? The religious persecution?
- Dr. David Holland: 19:55 Not uncommon. The persecution, for instance, against [Catholics](#) could be particularly intense. I work not far from the site of the famous burning of the Ursuline convent just outside of Boston, depended on the nature of the religion. If you were an evangelical Protestant Christian by the time you got to the 1830s and forties, you were pretty safe. That wasn't always true. Baptists were mercilessly persecuted back in the 17 hundreds. Methodists faced their share of persecution, you know, shortly thereafter. But by the time you got to, you know, mid-century, if you belonged to the evangelical family, you were in pretty good shape. But if you were outside that there could

be a price to be paid, particularly if people thought that you were a little bit mysterious. And that's sometimes the claim that was thrown both at Latter-day Saints and at Catholics that tended to raise a great deal of suspicion and anger.

21:00 The Latter-day Saints are not alone in facing persecution, but part of the challenge here is that the Latter-day Saints were relatively small. Catholics grow quickly during the 19th century with immigration from Europe and had the numbers to begin to control, you know, certain neighborhoods and certain precincts began to have some say over New York politics pretty quickly, for instance, and until they get to Latter-day Saints don't have the critical mass to defend themselves in the same way. It's not entirely unusual, but the intensity and the circumstance of it, I think make for a particularly difficult story.

Hank Smith: 21:46 Here these Latter-day Saints, they have to leave the country. They feel. In order to freely practice their religion. The founding Fathers had a different idea.

Dr. David Holland: 21:57 We could talk for a long time about the First Amendment, but part of the challenge here and this is the famous [Martin Van Buren](#) line, your cause is just, but I could do nothing for you. There was a pretty strong constitutional theory about federal jurisdiction that religion was actually the purview of local authorities and that the federal government doesn't have any right to intervene on matters of religion. That doesn't really change quite literally until the incorporation of the First Amendment in the 1940s series of cases involving Jehovah's Witnesses and pledging allegiance set off a new doctrine there where the federal government gets more and more involved in religious freedom issues. Now there's an exception to that, to your question about Latter-day Saints facing particular persecution. One of the exceptions to that is if it's a territory, the territories were treated differently than the States.

22:55 Polygamy became an object of federal intervention because Utah was a territory and that's how you get some Supreme Court rulings regarding polygamy because of the territorial status versus statehood. The question of how does this happen in a constitutional republic, partly that has to do with the way the constitution's being read at a particular time. And Joseph had a very 20th century reading of the Constitution. He thought that the First Amendment should be federally enforced and protected, that that should involve federal intervention. When the states like Missouri were, he felt persecuting the saints on the basis of their religious faith. But that's where somebody like Van Buren is coming from saying, not a federal issue. Wish I

could do something for you, but sorry, you gotta face the locals on your own.

Hank Smith: 23:48 As you get into these later sections, he's getting himself a little law degree.

Dr. David Holland: 23:53 Yeah, yeah.

Hank Smith: 23:54 He really wants to understand this and go to bat for the Saints.

John Bytheway: 23:58 I appreciate that perspective. There was always somebody to pass it off to. Well, that's a state's rights issue. You're gonna have to figure that out with Missouri. I can see how a President would do that. We talk as much about states' rights versus federal rights now as much as we used to. I think, boy, at the time of the first Constitution, it was a bunch of different states, united, but they were, they were their own thing and they wanted to be that way.

Dr. David Holland: 24:27 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 24:28 Missouri was really far west. Is that complicated as well? Proximity, the

John Bytheway: 24:34 Vigilante justice out there, right?

Dr. David Holland: 24:37 Yeah. There probably was a sense of distance that made the federal government perhaps even a little bit more hesitant to wade in. By the same token, the westward expansion and the territories also had a degree of federal power in them. So it's a complicated history. But I think to John's point, there was both constitutional theory and political interest in not getting involved.

Hank Smith: 25:05 This is [Joseph Smith](#) in 1843, so a year before he dies, he says, the Saints can testify whether I am willing to lay down my life for my brethren, if it had been demonstrated that I have been willing to die for a Mormon. He says, I am bold to declare before heaven that I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or a good man of any other denomination for the same principle which would trample upon the rights of the Latter-day Saints would trample upon the rights of the Roman Catholics or of any other denomination who may be unpopular and too weak to defend themselves. It's gotta be breaking his heart.

Dr. David Holland:	25:47	Of course, after all of that, verse 17 is this beautiful concluding principle that after we've done all of this, after we've been through all of this, after we've done what we can, then we can stand still with the utmost assurance and see the salvation of God. Even when we detail all of the difficulty of the world in which we live and all of the opposition that we face. He's ending on this note of optimism. He is ending on this note of reassurance, this idea of standing still. Sometimes we get a little frenetic in our thought that we've got to fix everything and there's only so much we can do. At some point, you have to stand still and see the salvation of God.
Hank Smith:	26:36	Yeah. I've always been interested in the word cheerfully there. I'd be okay if it said dearly beloved brethren, let us do all things that lie in our power. Right?
John Bytheway:	26:49	No, but you have to do it cheerfully.
Hank Smith:	26:51	Yeah. But now cheerfully, same type of verse. This is Mosiah 24. The people of Alma the Elder are praying to the Lord for help in their bondage to the priests of Noah and Lamanites. The Lord tells them, I will ease the burdens upon your shoulders. Then this statement from Mosiah 24:15, the Lord did strengthen them, that they could bear up their burdens with ease and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord. I'm okay with that. They did submit with patience, but it's that they did submit cheerfully and with patience. I'd be interested in how you both do that. Cheerfully do things. I don't know if he's talking that you have to be permanent smile on your face and a big happy button. But there does need to be a measure of enthusiasm. John, how do you do it? John you're a cheerful person. Does it come natural?
John Bytheway:	27:51	No. I appreciate the adjectives you, the impossible task you've laid out before me these past four years with the adjectives that you've given me. I marvel too at that. I marvel and I love it. I go, wow, look at that level to aspire to. But there is a piece that comes when you can say, Lord, I've done everything I can think of. There's a piece that comes when you can hit your knees and say that I've done my best. I've done everything I can think of and then this awesome statement, then stand still and watch. I still wanna talk about verse 16 too. You know, brethren, I just love this. This outta the book of James. You see the footnote there, James 3:4. He says the same thing. A very large ship is benefited very much by a very small helm.
	28:41	And that is to me, the rudder in the time of a storm. Oh my goodness are we living in the time of a storm. But what if we

have a rudder, a helm that implies that there's a course, a destination, there's [President Nelson](#) might say a covenant path. All the winds and the waves out there, with a helm we can be kept workways. We can make progress even in a storm because we have a helm. I'll never forget [President Monson's](#) talk about the German battleship, the Bismarck. Do you remember that? He talked about how big it was and how the walls were so many feet thick of steel. It was just this incredible battleship and the allies forces pounded it and couldn't do anything until somebody scored a hit on the rudder, the very small part. And then President Monson, all it could do is steer a circle. The allies pounded it until they sunk it because it couldn't be kept workways with the wind and the waves anymore. What's our rudder? I have a canoe in my garage. That's what it does most of the time, hangs in my garage. But does a canoe have a rudder?

Hank Smith:	30:03	No.
John Bytheway:	30:05	No. I learned back in the Boy Scouts of America days, I learned the J stroke where you paddle and then you twist your oar and hold it and it becomes the rudder. For a second, I'd learned to do figure eights and anything I wanted to as long as I had my oar. But one of the cool things that I learned that I love to equate with this verse is what do you think is the safest thing to do in a canoe when you come across a big wave and it seems counterintuitive.
Hank Smith:	30:36	Head right into it right? Don't turn sideways.
John Bytheway:	30:38	Go right at it. If you go, oh no. Oh no. Oh no, it's gonna tip you over. You go right at it. You go up and over. That is being kept workways with the wind and the waves and I love to tell young adults, go right at it. Go right at life and do your best. Do all things that lie in your power 'cause you have a course and a helm and a destination. And then you can say, I'm doing the best I can, Lord, help me out. I love these verses. It's great life advice.
Dr. David Holland:	31:09	It's illustrated by all of the material that we've spoken about in the lead up to 16, which is again, these sections, they head right into the wave. They're not sugarcoating it. They're not suggesting that we should overlook the difficulties that come in a disciple's life. We should stare 'em right in the face.
John Bytheway:	31:33	There are gonna be storms. Here's my own footnote to Mormon 5:18. But now behold, they are led about by Satan. Even as chaff is driven before the wind or as a vessel is tossed about upon the

waves without sail or anchor or without anything wherewith to steer her. If we don't have a sail, we don't have an anchor, we don't have a rudder. We are driftwood. We're just going with the flow. The opposite of going with the flow, yeah, you're in a storm, but you don't have to go with the flow. You have a helm, a destination to keep your workways with the wind and the waves. I dunno, I got all aquatic there for a second there, but I kind of,

Dr. David Holland:	32:15	Yeah,
John Bytheway:	32:15	I like that metaphor.
Dr. David Holland:	32:17	I love it.
John Bytheway:	32:19	You pretty cheerful David?
Dr. David Holland:	32:21	Um, I think as a principle I am, yeah. I'm optimistic by nature. My wife sometimes calls me pathologically optimistic.
John Bytheway:	32:36	That's a good thing to be.
Dr. David Holland:	32:38	Even given that tendency, I've known some long, dark nights of the soul as I think everybody has, where the optimism is hard to come by based on situations you're facing or circumstances you confront. I think we all need those reminders. Even those of us that might be naturally inclined to certain cheerfulness. These sections are reminders to us that we all need to be called back to that. So I think it's interesting that 123 ends on that note after everything else that's proceeded at, remember to be cheerful because even those of us that tend to view the world optimistically, those waves can get pretty big sometimes.
John Bytheway:	33:23	Mm-hmm. I like the statement of Joseph Smith speaks of his own native cheery temperament.
Hank Smith:	33:29	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	33:30	That's something I aspire to. Elder Kelly Comstock, one of my mission companions that taught me a ton about just being cheerful. I'm so grateful to mission companions that I just watched him at thought I'm gonna be like him.
Hank Smith:	33:48	Maybe it ties back to that confidence we talked about in Section 121. I find that I'm more cheerful when I feel like I'm in control of a situation and that confidence that comes from charity that we talked about earlier. I think that cheerfulness can come

naturally when we feel confident. And maybe that's what the Lord is saying. You can be confident in me and in this work. You feel settled. It's okay to be cheerful. Verse 13, Joseph Smith, we should wear out our lives. I have noticed that among our church leaders. John, you can go a little bit further back than me. Not too far. I watched President Hinckley wear out right in front of us. I remember President Monson, do you remember President Monson stood up at the pulpit? It was one of his first talks as a president of the church and he's wiggling his ears. Do you remember his last talk? He can't even hold himself up. President Nelson going on 101. We watch and their wives, they literally wear out in front of us. It's a privilege. It's a hard thing to witness, but it's a privilege to watch that happen. It's so inspiring. Didn't President Kimball hold up his shoes and say, I wanna be like this old pair of shoes. Right. Worn out in service.

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| John Bytheway: | 35:19 | Like you said, David, the first several verses of this 123, look at some of these terms. Diabolical, rascality, nefarious, hellish, hiding without excuse and then we get to the end and it is so inspiring. I guess the Lord knows how to end a talk. Let's do all the things that lie in our power, then stand still. |
| Hank Smith: | 35:44 | I've often thought that with my children, I need to be pretty cheerful 'cause I'm a billboard for the gospel. You know, I don't want my kids to go, well, why would I wanna do? David, I have a, a question before we let you go. For me personally, and I know John and I have talked about this at length, we love to hear every testimony, but one of the reasons we do our show is that we like to bring on people who have been taught in the secular world. You have a doctorate degree in history. You are teaching at Harvard, a well known school. |
| John Bytheway: | 36:24 | Yeah, I've heard of Harvard. |
| Hank Smith: | 36:25 | Yeah. Where I'm sure not everyone is a believer, especially a Latter-day Saint believer here. You've studied a lot, you've experienced a lot. You're out in a territory where there's not a lot of people that believe what you do. In some people's minds, that should be a recipe for losing your faith. Yet here you are a believer. |
| Dr. David Holland: | 36:50 | Well, I do have great appreciation for the secular institutions that have given me opportunity, and through which I have encountered wonderful forms of knowledge and understanding, and I've dedicated my professional life to that. But quite honestly, the church will counterbalance everything if we let it. I've had the opportunity along that journey to be a bishop and to be a stake president. I actually have two different stakes and |

to have pretty demanding callings, which at times can feel overwhelming. Sometimes you wonder why the Lord asks of us what he asks. But it's been the counterbalance in a way. My professional life has never been the entirety of my life because I've tried to take seriously opportunities to serve. It's allowed my secular training and my ministerial life to enrich each other. I'm sure there's a lot of my educational background that filters into what I'm doing. I'm currently an early morning seminary teacher.

Hank Smith: 38:11

Oh really?

John Bytheway: 38:12

No kidding? Ahh.

Dr. David Holland: 38:13

I'm sure it comes up there as well. But my point is that the church will create a counterbalance to anything else that is trying to draw all of us in. And I've found that enormously helpful. Notwithstanding its challenges, I know that there are times when I've had absolutely nothing to fall back on but the Lord and his mercy and his message, and I know that I've found him there. I'll just be candid with you. It felt to me like a providence, like a work of the Lord that you asked me to do these sections, because I won't get into details, but I'm battling some pretty difficult challenges currently and have wondered sometimes about Job and Joseph. Not that I would compare my little piddling concerns with theirs, but this is a good example of, you know, I thought, well, summer's busy and it's gonna be right before the start of the school year.

39:23

Should I hop on this podcast? Just a feeling that when you have an opportunity to discuss the gospel and share your faith, you ought to take it. That's sort of my default position. Obviously, you can't do everything all the time, but back in the relative sunshine of May, you accept an opportunity and then you find yourself in the middle of a storm. Lo and behold, this thing you committed to do happens to bring into your life the very sections that you should be studying, that you should be focusing on in this particular moment. And that's just been my experience over the course of my life. If you make yourself available, God will give you opportunities to find him. I am grateful to him. I love him and I'm grateful for the chance to discuss his goodness and his power in good times and in bad, and I'm grateful for my testimony.

Hank Smith: 40:18

That's wonderful. David, I actually have one more question before I let you go. I know John's probably giving me the signal. Let him go. Let him go.

Dr. David Holland:	40:26	Let my people go.
Hank Smith:	40:28	Yeah. Let my people go. Such a blessing to have you here. There is an idea, I think, among some that you don't wanna learn too much of this history. You don't wanna learn too much about Joseph Smith or Brigham Young or any of these people. You'll lose your faith. Yet, as a historian, I'm sure you've done a little work here and the historians we've had on John, we've yet to have one of 'em say, yeah, don't know too much history. You definitely wanna shy back. What would you say to that myth, David? That someone's scared of history of the church?
Dr. David Holland:	41:08	A few things. I think one of them is that my own view is to whitewash or to shy away from history is to rewrite God's work in the world. The fact that people are blemished and histories are challenging. As we have just been discussing in these sections, God does not want us to shy away from the dark and difficult things. Partly for me, it's that my testimony is rooted in principles rather than personalities. You don't see Jeremiah insisting that you believe in Isaiah, that he's preaching the message, he's preaching the principles. It reminds me a little bit of the story in John nine, when Jesus is healing the blind man, the critics come up and say, don't you know that man's a sinner? And the blind man says, I don't know. What I know is that I was blind and now I see.
Hank Smith:	42:10	Yeah.
Dr. David Holland:	42:11	Which is to say, I have lived the experience, so when people ask me, was this church leader or that church leader, were they worthy of belief or not? For me, it's always the Christ's principle, you gotta live it and you'll know it. I don't get too caught up on the relationship of my eternal commitments to the temporal facts of history. And my eternal commitments are based on my own experience of living the principles and seeing the promises fulfilled. I can do nothing else but believe on the basis of my own experience. I could do nothing else but believe. History enriches our capacity to understand how God works, the imperfect ways that human beings try to apply perfect things. Joseph says in 121, what is human nature? You know, it is the tendency of almost all men.
Hank Smith:	43:06	Right?
Dr. David Holland:	43:07	We learn things by studying that history, but I don't base eternal decisions on temporary events. I base them on my testing of eternal principle. That's why I believe.

Hank Smith:	43:21	I'm so glad I asked you that.
Dr. David Holland:	43:22	David, you might not know this, but that's one of Hank's very favorite verses. The blind man in John nine. I don't know, but this much I know, I was blind and now I see, and as Hank has taught me, can be such a great answer to so many questions people have. Well, I don't know about this or that fact of church history, but this much I know, this has changed my life and I have the fruits of it. Thank you for bringing that. That's why Hank's smiling so big right now.
Hank Smith:	43:54	Oh, I just and that little story to me is so impactful because these are very powerful people telling him, you need to stop.
John Bytheway:	44:05	They're gonna kick you outta the synagogue.
Dr. David Holland:	44:07	Right.
Hank Smith:	44:10	And I love that he's honest. I don't know about that. He might be. I've never even seen him. I was blind this morning, and now I'm not. That's pretty significant. Yeah. David, this has been a fantastic day with you.
Dr. David Holland:	44:23	Thank you. Enjoyed the conversation.
Hank Smith:	44:25	So much fun to have such a great teacher with such great content. You feel uplifted and edified and I know the Holy Ghost has been here 'cause I don't want to leave, I don't want it to end. We have listeners all over the world and we love them and I'm sure that they are grateful, and so we wanna voice that for you. In fact, if you'd like to come onto YouTube and leave a comment, we'll make sure that Dr. Holland gets those. If you'd like to send a message or you can come over to our website, followhim.co. It's a wonderful day, wonderful time to be with you. With that, we want to thank Dr. David Holland for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and every episode we remember our founder Steve Sorensen.
	45:19	We hope you'll join us next week. We have more Doctrine and Covenants coming up on followHIM. Thank you for joining us on today's episode. Do you or someone you know speak Spanish, Portuguese, or French? You can now watch and listen to our podcast in those languages. Links are in the description below. 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 incredible production crew. David Perry,

Lisa Spice, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra,
Heather Barlow, Amelia Kabwika, Sydney Smith and Annabelle
Sorensen.

followHIM Favorites



Hank Smith:	00:03	Welcome to followHIM Favorites. This is where John and I share a single story to go with each week's lesson. John, Come, Follow Me this week, we're in sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants. These are very important, very critical big sections. The story I thought of goes with what the Lord tells Joseph in the very beginning of Section 121. He says, my son, peace be to thy soul, thine adversity and thine afflictions, so they are real, shall be but a small moment. But the time it seems huge and awful, which it really is. Later, the Lord is saying, you'll look back and it will be a small moment. In fact, he says later it will be for thy good. It will give you experience. The story comes from General Conference, October, 1999. Now, I know you'll remember this story, John, and a lot of our listeners will, but there's gotta be a few out there who have never heard it.
	01:03	This is Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, who at the end of a talk called the High Priest of Good Things to Come says, forgive me for a personal conclusion, which does not represent the terrible burden so many of you carry, but it is meant to be encouraging. 30 years ago, last month, so John, we're now talking.
John Bytheway:	01:24	We're talking even earlier than 1999.
Hank Smith:	01:26	Yeah, I guess this would be 1969. He said, a little family got in a car across the United States to go to graduate school. No money, a really old car and everything they own in the smallest U-Haul trailer available. Bidding their apprehensive parents farewell, they drove exactly 34 miles up the highway and their car erupted. Pulling off the freeway onto a frontage road, the young father surveyed the steam, matched it with some of his own.
John Bytheway:	02:02	That's good writing.
Hank Smith:	02:08	Left his wife and two children, the youngest just three months old to wait in the car while he walked three miles or so to the

southern Utah metropolis of Kanarraville, population, I think 65. Some water was secured at the edge of town. A very kind citizen offered to drive back to the stranded car. The car was attended to and very slowly driven back the 34 miles to St. George. After two hours of checking and rechecking, no problem could really be detected. So once again, the journey began. This is the best part, in exactly the same amount of elapsed time and exactly the same location on the highway with exactly the same pyrotechnics from under the hood, the car exploded again. It could not have been 15 feet from the earlier collapse, not even five feet from it. Can you imagine? You're just like, are you kidding? Elder Holland says, obviously the most precise laws of automotive physics were at work. Now feeling more foolish than angry, the young father once more left his wife and two children and walked to the same guy's house.

John Bytheway: 03:35 I'm back.

Hank Smith: 03:35 This time the man providing the water said either you or that fellow who looks like you ought to get a new radiator for that car. For the second time, a kind neighbor offered a lift back to the same automobile with the same little occupant. He did not know whether to laugh or cry at the plight of this young family. How far have you come? He asked. 34 miles, I answered. How much farther do you have to go? 2,600 miles. And then this man says, well, son, you might make that trip and your wife and those two little kids might make that trip, but none of you are gonna make it in that car. He proved to be prophetic on all counts.

04:33 Now we're in 1999. Elder Holland speaking, just two weeks ago this weekend, I drove by that exact spot where the freeway turnoff leads to a frontage road just three miles or so west of Kanarraville. That same beautiful and loyal wife, my dearest friend and greatest supporter for all these years curled up asleep in the seat beside me. The automobile we were driving this time was modest, but pleasant and safe. In fact, except for me and my lovely Pat situated peacefully at my side, nothing of that moment two weeks ago was even remotely like that distressing circumstance three decades earlier. And then John, this is beautiful. Yet in my mind's eye, just for an instant, I thought perhaps I saw on that side road an old car with a devoted young wife and two little children making the best of a bad situation.

05:25 Just ahead of them I saw a young fellow walking toward Kanarraville with plenty of distance still ahead of him. His shoulders were slumping. The weight of a young father's fear

evident in his pace. His hands did seem to hang down. I couldn't help calling out to him. Isn't this beautiful John here? Elder Holland is 30 years later calling out to his younger self. This is something we can all do in our life. Here's what he calls out. Don't give up boy, don't quit. You keep walking, you keep trying. There is help and happiness ahead. A lot of it. 30 years of it now and still counting. Keep your chin up. It'll be all right in the end. Trust God and believe in good things to come. Don't you wonder, John, if that Elder Holland from the late sixties kind of, do you hear that? Right? You just wonder, did he hear that?

06:30

The Lord is maybe saying that to Joseph here a little bit. I know it's hard right now. Endure it well, God will exalt thee on high. Good things are coming. Great things are coming. Our guest for this week is actually mentioned in this story. Here is a quote from the story. Elder Holland says, this is later on when he's in the car grown up, he said, the two children in the story and the little brother who later joined them have long since grown up and served missions, married perfectly, are now raising children of their own. Well, John, that little brother who later joined them is our guest on followHIM. His name is Dr. David Holland. Come on over wherever you get your podcast and listen to Dr. Holland walk through these sections. It is incredible the things he shows us and the tenderness he brings out of these sections is really touching. Really touching. Then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.