



- John Bytheway: 00:00:05 Hello everyone and welcome to another episode of followHIM. We're so glad you are here. We can't do this without you. Thank you for joining us. We are here today with Ross Baron and this is one of those backstory type lessons, Thoughts to Keep in Mind. Sometimes thoughts come out, sometimes you keep them in your mind. We're actually gonna talk about them right out loud today. Thoughts to Keep in Mind, we have Dr. Ross Baron with us, and our topic is the House of Israel. Hank, when you hear House of Israel, what do you think?
- Hank Smith: 00:00:41 John, I can't tell you how excited I am for this. Maybe in the last 10 years of my teaching, this has been central to me. President Nelson lit the fire in me. I was interested before, but then he put the gasoline on the fire. Sometimes students will say in class, when am I ever going to use this? If we're talking House of Israel and the covenant like we did last time, and they say that, I think you don't have to know your purpose in life if you don't want to. If a young Latter-day Saint is wondering, why am I here? What does God want me to do? Give them this episode. I think every Latter-day Saint, if they're not participating as a member of the House of Israel, they'll always feel something missing. Your most joyful, pure moments will come when you are participating in this with those who love. I know this is kind of a serious way to start, but this is it.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:37 Yeah, and it goes to our very identity. We emphasize I am a child of God a lot and we should. This is an even more specific-- not only are we children of God, we are House of Israel. What does that mean, Ross? What are you gonna take us through today to help us understand why we need to know this?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:01:59 I feel like both you, John and Hank about the House of Israel and the fire that's lit, I felt that way kind of my whole life. I think what you said about President Nelson and his famous talk, we are children of God, but children of the covenant. This House of

Israel plays into that role as an identity marker. We are children of the covenant knowing that we're children of the covenant. I love the way you said it, Hank, if you wanna know your purpose here in life, well, you tie into who you are. That helps me understand what I'm to be and what I can become. What I'd like to do is talk about Jacob because Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, is going to be the one who's gonna be renamed. I'm gonna suggest to you today that the Jacob arc, his life arc--and he has an arc, by the way, it's an exciting arc.

00:02:52 That life arc of Jacob is actually emblematic of our story. That his story is our story and it's not always pretty. This is the great thing about it. One of the neatest things about the Old Testament, it doesn't sanitize. I wanna be careful here. I love the prophets and sustain prophets. The Old Testament has them in all their living color. They're human beings. They have growth and they don't know everything and they move forward. Let me just again say, I love the prophets. I sustain them. When Jesus comes among the Nephites, first thing out of his mouth, he declares who he is. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. The second thing he says is, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world, he immediately upholds his prophets. That's not to say, however, that the prophets don't have to stretch and have effort and to move forward and to repent as well.

00:03:47 When we meet Jacob, interestingly, Rebekah, who is Isaac's wife, she's pregnant with twins. They're striving within her according to the text, and she doesn't know why. She goes and inquires of the Lord. By the way, this is again a great story about women and their influence in the Old Testament. And Rebekah, she doesn't go to Isaac who's the prophet. She goes and inquires of the Lord and she gets her own revelation, which is like a section from the Doctrine and Covenants. It's a written-out text and she gets this revelation about the twins in her womb. That's kind of the first time we get about Jacob, but the first real story of Jacob is the story of the birthright, which most people are familiar with. Just in summary, there's two boys, Jacob and Esau. Esau. He is a hunter slash man of the fields. Apparently, Jacob is not.

00:04:43 The text says he's a plain man. The word plain in Hebrew is Tom, and it's an interesting translation. It just means complete or whole. He's not a guy out in the field. The story is, in comes Esau and apparently, Jacob is making some kind of lentil soup. Esau comes in and then he does the drama move. I need that food or I'm gonna die. Jacob, he says, sell me your birthright and I'll give you some lentil soup. Then interestingly, Esau says, well, what profit is this birthright to me? He basically agrees to

sell his birthright for some lentil soup. Now prophets, lots of prophets, lots of apostles, lots of preaching has been done on this particular topic. Don't sell your birthright for a mess of potage, meaning don't in the moment give up that great thing for something less. That's the sermon that's been preached on this, and I like that sermon. I agree with that sermon. Interestingly, I think we get insight at this point in their lives to both Esau and Jacob.

- John Bytheway: 00:05:54 Tell us about the birthright because it seems that so often the firstborn doesn't get it in so many stories in the Old Testament.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:06:03 I gave a talk once at an education week in BYU Idaho called the forsaken firstborn where I cannot think of a time until we get to Jesus where a firstborn actually got the birthright. I don't know Abraham's birth order. That was one asterisk. I put that there, but even in the latter-days, Joseph Smith is not the first born. Alvin was the first born, then Hiram, then Joseph. Super interesting. Nephi is not the first born. In any case, the birthright, just as a reminder to most people, is simply the idea that the father would give to the firstborn or to the favored son, a double portion. This is critical to understand. The double portion wasn't so that the son could live the high life. It wasn't so that the son could live in a bigger mansion and drive nicer cars and have people fan him.
- 00:06:55 It was so that he could redeem his family, if there were problems. He could take care of those that were marginalized. He could take care of those that were on the outs. He could help redeem the family, right? Christ is the ultimate firstborn. The idea is with that endowment of power, with that endowment of resources, you literally then bless your family. Think about Christ. When he was tempted and the tempter said, turn these stones into bread. Christ could have turned those stones into bread. We know that. That would've been using his power, his endowment, his birthright for himself. That's not the purpose of the birthright. The purpose of the birthright, we gotta get clear, and it's gonna be a theme throughout the Old Testament, is to then redeem the family. Christ is the perfect example of that.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:50 You get a double portion basically because you're gonna be the administrator of the will. You're gonna help everybody else in the family.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:07:58 It's a good way to look at it. I would even say again, with the Savior, he got resources. I use that phrase because it, it wasn't money. He says in his ministry, foxes have holes and the birds of

the air have nest, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head. He was Jehovah. He had an endowment of power, but that endowment of power to redeem his family was not to be used for his own benefit. That's the key.

- John Bytheway: 00:08:27 Being chosen isn't a thing about yourself. Being chosen is chosen to serve, chosen to gather, so being birthright is not about you, either. It's about redeeming. Give us a definition of redeem. I wanna say to buy back, right?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:08:43 It's to buy back, to bring out of a bad situation into a good situation, using more vernacular language. You think about in the Book of Mormon, Laman and Lemuel's misunderstanding of being the firstborn. They get angry and pretty much through Nephi history, they keep coming back to this idea, well, you know, you robbed us of our birthright. You robbed us of our rights. Your rights were to bless your family.
- Hank Smith: 00:09:09 Right.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:09 You're trying to kill your dad and kill your brother. Like that's not what the Redeemer does. That's why Nephi got it, because Nephi is going to serve and bless and redeem and preach and teach and do all those things we talked about with respect to the Abrahamic Covenant. He's going to extend that to everyone.
- John Bytheway: 00:09:31 Apparently. This is so embedded in the culture that centuries after Laman and Lemuel and Nephi were dead. That's still going on in the war chapters. It's saying this war hath been to avenge their wrongs. This war has been waged to--so wait a minute, what you're talking about a birth ordered theme centuries old, but that just tells us how embedded it must have been.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:09:55 Amen. No, that's exactly right. One of the things I love to do when I teach about the New Testament, to look at the questions that people ask Jesus. They're quantifying questions. Who's the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Peter, James, and John. They're hoping he's gonna be like, you are Peter. You're the one. You're it. You were right all along. It was your sneaking suspicion and you in fact are the greatest. Then what does Jesus do? He turns it on its head and he teaches what a powerful lesson he brings a little child. This is the greatest, the attributes of a little child. That's the greatest. I'm likening this to the birthright. Literally a responsibility you have to bless others. Let's say you're not the birthright son. You're not the birthright child. Great. The whole purpose of that birthright child is to help redeem you, to bring you up to the status of that birthright child.

00:10:54 The whole idea is that we get back and become like them. There's nothing that we're gonna lose out on. Looking at the text here in Genesis 25, verse 32, "And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die" I again, a drama moment, I think that's not true. I'm gonna die. We've all heard that. Just reel it in, brother. I am at the point to die. And then this line, "what profit shall this birthright do to me?" Fundamental misunderstanding, doctrinally, to me of what the birthright is. Fundamental misunderstanding. That will take prophets constantly teaching us, that's not what the birthright means. You're not losing anything. Jacob desires the birthright, and Jacob said, "Swear to me this day", verse 33, "and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink; and rose up, and went his way". And then it says "thus Esau despised his birthright."

00:11:55 Okay? Whoever's redacting, editing the book of the Old Testament, and when I say redact, I mean they're compiling documents, deciding what's gonna go in, what's not gonna go in, much like Mormon did with the various records of the Book of Mormon. We believe that Moses was one of the main redactors of the Old Testament. When he says, thus Esau despised his birthright. That word despise is a strong word in Hebrew. When Nathan comes to David, after David has killed Uriah and committed adultery with Bathsheba, he says, you have despised the Lord, and he uses that same Hebrew word, which is strong language. You despised the Lord. Thus Esau despised his birthright. Think about it. He despised his opportunity to be a "goel". That's the Hebrew word for redeemer. He despised that opportunity to redeem the family, to use that power, not for himself, but to bless others. But we're talking about Jacob here. Hank, you're a dad, John, you're a dad. If you heard this story, like let's say you were in the other room and you're like, I just wanna see how this plays out. Tell me, not how you're feeling about Esau, but what's your take on Jacob here?

Hank Smith: 00:13:20 I don't know if I'm falling into a trick question, but I I can hear me from the other room. Jacob, stop. Right? You're taking advantage of the situation.

John Bytheway: 00:13:29 You've pointed out the mindset of what will it do to me? What's in it for me? Maybe our question today. Like Hank, I'd be, "Hey, you guys get along in there."

Hank Smith: 00:13:39 Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:41 And by the way, not a trick question. Again, Jacob becomes an amazing person. I have a saying that the way history was is not the way history had to be and that Jacob's going to get the birthright. He doesn't have to get it this way.

Hank Smith: 00:13:56 This way. Yeah. It does seem sneaky.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:13:59 It's sneaky. It's gonna create contention between the brothers. Overlaying again, President Nelson on this thing. We could be peacemakers. He could have had a conversation with, listen, let's sit down and have some legumes together and, we can talk about the birthright. What do you think, brother? I don't know how it would've went or it would've gone. The point being, I read this and there's a part of me that thinks is Jacob the mature disciple yet? And I'm gonna say probably not. This is again the beginning, the middle, and the end, because Jacob will become a mighty prophet. This to me is a hint of maybe some of the immaturity and some of the rough edges that have to be knocked off.

Hank Smith: 00:14:42 Ross, can we just stop and talk about this skill for a second? In scripture reading lingo, it's called exo Jesus, and it has nothing to do with Jesus but it's the idea of let the text say what it says. Don't read into it, don't try to twist it, wrest it. Just say, yeah, that's what it says.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:14:59 He's young, they're brothers. There's probably some rivalry going on here and they probably have some history. Again, this is redacted, meaning it's been edited. So, we have a fragment. I wanna say we have a fragment of a story. I don't wanna read too much into it, but I love what you said. Just let the text speak for itself. The Old Testament doesn't sanitize it and the Old Testament is gonna allow it to just speak for itself. But again, I think it's purposeful because we have a story arc here about Jacob's life. And then the next story is Genesis 27. In one of the more bizarre chapters. By the way, that's saying a lot because there's some bizarre chapters in the Old Testament. In one of the more bizarre chapters of the Old Testament, your main characters in this story are Isaac, who is the prophet, but old and maybe a bit out of it sometimes, which is fine.

00:15:52 God can lead his kingdom through whoever he wants. You've got Rebekah, you've got Esau, and you've got Jacob. People know the story and I've been in lots of situations where people, in fact, Hank don't wanna let the text speak for itself, but I love it when I teach this in class and we go through the whole story. Students aren't often as familiar with the details, but the bottom line is Isaac's getting old and people want blessings

from their prophet-dispensation-kind of guy-father. Jacob wants a blessing, but Rebekah thinks that Esau is gonna get the blessing, the blessing, the right blessing, and she had that revelation back in Genesis 25 where Jacob's gonna be the first born. She's a little concerned maybe looking at it through her normal eyes. She's one of the great matriarchs, but we're just looking at a human story. You guys know the story.

00:16:48 Esau's gonna go out in the field 'because Isaac's requested it. I'm gonna get you some really good meat. We're gonna have some good meat. This is gonna be great. I'm gonna make it just the way you like it. Rebekah heard it. Rebekah's like, Hey Jacob, quick, I'm gonna make some savory meat for your dad and you are gonna put on Esau's clothes and you are gonna get the blessing. Now, here's the interesting thing. She says all this to him, then he says, verse 10, And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau, my brother, is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him a deceiver. I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing. He didn't say, mom, that would be a lie. Mom, that would be inappropriate. I should never do that to deceive father. What are you thinking? Let's sit down and talk.

Hank Smith: 00:17:39 The lie's not gonna work. Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:17:42 He's like, the lie ain't gonna work.

Hank Smith: 00:17:44 And I'm gonna take the blame.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:17:45 And I'm gonna take the blame. And she says, no, no. If he curses you, it's on my head. This is a very human story. I don't need to sanitize the text. It is what it is. People are being human, everything's gonna be fine. We're gonna work it out. The Savior's gonna work it out. All's good. Now, look what happens here. They go into the closet of Esau and they put on the skin. I've never fully pictured how it works, but he's got on his clothes. Verse 18, he came unto his father. I'm in Genesis 27 and said, my father, and he said, here am I. Who art thou, my son? Jacob. 19: And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn. What do we call that sentence? That is a lie.

Hank Smith: 00:18:30 That's called a lie.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:18:33 And there's no two ways around it. There's no exegetical Hebrew. I can yoga position, I can get out of. It is a lie. There's no other way to say it. Isaac feels like there's something up and you know, and he is like back and forth and again, verse 24, and

he said, aren't thou my very son Esau? He said, I am. Okay. He eats. 28 and 29. I wanna read the blessing that Jacob gets, who's acting like he's Esau. Now what we're gonna do, anybody who's listening or watching, I want you to rate the blessing, [ratetheblessing.com](http://ratetheblessing.com), okay? This is what this is going to be. One is low, 10 is the highest. We ready? 28: Therefore, God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be Lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." Let's rate it. John, what are we thinking?

- John Bytheway: 00:19:38 That's pretty good. If anybody goes against you, they'll be cursed. If anyone blesses you, they will be blessed. I don't know what you'd add to that, Hank, maybe a Ford F-150 or something, but...
- Hank Smith: 00:19:50 And it's also very Esau, the smell of the field, the fatness of the earth, plenty of corn and wine. He's --Jacob's gotta be thinking, this is definitely not for me.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:20:03 Then you get that part, people are gonna serve you and they're gonna bow down to you. And this is 10 out of 10. My patriarchal blessing doesn't say this in my blessing.
- Hank Smith: 00:20:12 Yeah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:20:13 Okay, exit stage left. He goes, he's got this blessing. Boom. In comes Esau, Isaac says in verse 32, who art thou? And he said, I am thy son. Thy firstborn, Esau. Now, here's an interesting thing. He says, please give me a blessing, Isaac kind of vacillates, but then he gives him a blessing. Verse 39, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven from above. Very similar to verse 28. Like you said, Hank very Esau like, but then look at this, by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass that when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. I mean, it's a good blessing, clearly different. Now, at the end of verse 33, there's a critical line, and Isaac, who is the prophet, at the end of verse 33, he says, yea--speaking to Esau about Jacob's blessing--and he shall be blessed.
- 00:21:17 Meaning, in my view, when Isaac blessed Jacob, the spirit was leading it. Whether he received it deceptively or not, it was the blessing that Jacob was supposed to get. Esau got the blessing he was supposed to get. You with me? This is my hot take. Everyone got the blessing they were supposed to get and none

of the machinations, none of the trickery needed to be done. Had Esau come back and fed him, he would've got the blessing in verses 39 and 40. And if Jacob would've come in later, he would've got the blessing in 28 and 29. That Isaac was being led by the spirit and had Isaac felt like the deception was sufficient, that the blessing wasn't correct. He with his power could have revoked the blessing, but didn't. He testifies at the end of verse 33, yea, and he shall be blessed. I think this story in connection with the selling of the birthright is an immaturity on the part of Jacob and a little bit problematic with Rebekah. Again, I love Rebekah. She's one of my heroes, actually. She, again, human side, it's okay, we're gonna work through this. God's gonna do his work and we don't need to try to manipulate it. We don't need to do that. We don't need to try to jockey for position. We don't need to do that. The Lord's gonna do his work through his servants, period.

- John Bytheway: 00:22:49 I like the way you've said this here. Those humans, they just humaned. Those humans are gonna human. Is that, is that a verb now?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:22:57 It is a verb now.
- John Bytheway: 00:22:59 But God gave the person who was supposed to receive the blessing, received the blessing.
- Hank Smith: 00:23:06 Here's the famous quote, I'm sure both of you have thought of here, Elder Holland, "Except in the case of His only perfect Begotten Son, imperfect people are all God has ever had to work with. That must be terribly frustrating to Him, but He deals with it. So, should we." And then this line, Ross, seems to come right out of this story, "And when you see imperfection, remember that the limitation is not in the divinity of the work."
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:23:33 I love the story we have to take a lot of time. People are working through it, so Jacob lied. I was like, yeah, yeah, yep, he did. And Rebekah, yeah, for a moment, man, she lost bearings on who Isaac actually is and God's doing his work. Wow. Like God's doing his work. Now, now. Here's the fun part of the story. In Alma 41, verse 15, I call this the karma verse of the Book of Mormon. It says, "For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again". Jacob has been deceptive, been a little sneaky, been a little tricky, and we might think, man, that guy got away with it. Brother Baron, that guy got away with it. Mm, did he? We're gonna get some karma. Now that which you send out, it's coming right back to you. They're gonna send him up to Padanaram.

00:24:26 He is going to be with Rebekah's brother, Laban. So, his Uncle Laban has daughters and he wants to marry Rachel. He's in love with Rachel, but on the wedding night, they do a switcheroo and it's Leah. This is the karma. He gets deceived. He deceived. Now he gets deceived. Now we know the story. He ends up marrying Rachel. Then he ends up marrying two other women, Bilhah and Zilpah, who are the handmaids. Later in Genesis 31, this is starting in verse 38. He now is recounting to Laban. Now think about what Jacob did and think about now the karma. Think about that which ye do send out is coming back to you. Quote, starting in verse 38, "This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes, and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was..."--now listen to his description--"in the day, the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house;"-- so two decades. "I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou has changed my wages ten times."

00:25:50 The deceiver, initially. The tricky one, initially, got tricked and he got deceived in his own life. And then God wanted to see how are you gonna respond? But he responds in a Christ-like way. He responds as God wanted him to respond. He's honest, he has integrity, he's faithful, he's loyal, and he does what's required of him. This is beautiful, again, in terms of the story arc because then God can use him. God can use him. Eventually, he's gonna have some supernal visions that will then crown who he is and the promise that he's gonna get. Then we can move into the House of Israel.

John Bytheway: 00:26:32 I've never connected those events before. This is great.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:26:38 Well, good.

John Bytheway: 00:26:38 What goes around, comes around.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:26:40 Exactly. That's another way of saying it.

Hank Smith: 00:26:42 John likes to say, I think he's quoting Elder Maxwell that the Lord has his macro plan of salvation made up of billions of tiny little micro plans of salvation. This is maybe one of the micro plans is Jacob, I'm gonna teach you some things along the way. As I'm going about my great purposes, you are gonna have some tutoring.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:04 I like that a lot and I think that's well put and I think it's right on, but sometimes people literally will think, oh, he got away with stuff. No, he paid for 20 years.

John Bytheway: 00:27:15 Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:27:15 He paid for 20 years. He did, and becomes a different person. Not only does he become a different person in respect to his integrity and loyalty, but in his relation and I think in his pondering about Esau, he wants to reconcile with Esau. That's his brother. They've been estranged because of certain things that have happened and now he is becoming the man of God that he needs to be. I wanna talk about a couple of super important events quickly. Then I wanna get to the House of Israel and to the children and how that all plays out. In Genesis 28, we get this vision he has, or it's a dream where he sees the ladder. He sees a ladder going up into heaven and he sees God at the top of the ladder, and then he sees angels descending and ascending the ladder.

00:28:04 He says something super significant. He says, this is Bethel in Hebrew, this is the house of God. This is the entry, the portal. As Latter-day Saints are listening in terms of those who know about the temple, who've read about the temple, this idea of a ladder going into heaven and the angels descending and ascending and reporting to God and then coming back with missions. He is in fact seeing what we know as the temple, as a temple ceremony, learning. And then the prophet Joseph Smith said, the rungs on the ladder are ordinances and covenants that help us ascend the ladder to come back into the presence of God. He has this incredible vision, which is I think a turning point for him in terms of who he is to become and what he is to do in mortality. That's number one. Number two, Hank and John, you guys have been to the river Jabbok, right? In Jordan.

00:29:01 And the river Jabbok is where Jacob is going to see Esau the first time in decades and he's actually concerned. He thinks that Esau is still angry at him that he could kill him or kill his family. He has a supernal moment at the River Jabook. He sends everybody and he is alone there. This is Genesis 32:24-30. I'm gonna quote President Nelson who's gonna talk about this event. This is from the October 2020 general conference. He's the president of the church and he says this: "...let us recall a crucial turning point in the life of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. At the place Jacob named Peniel (which means "the face of God"), Jacob wrestled with a serious challenge." It's really interesting the way President Nelson's doing this. "His agency was tested. Through this wrestle, Jacob proved what

was most important to him. He demonstrated that he was willing to let God prevail in his life. In response, God changed Jacob's name to Israel, meaning "let God prevail." God then promised Israel that all the blessings that had been pronounced upon Abraham's head would also be his."

00:30:13 That's October, 2020. That is a powerful prophetic interpretation of a tricky couple of verses there that back to Hank's comment about exo Jesus. Biblical scholars have wrestled themselves with what in the world's going on in this text. It's very difficult. Here you have a prophetic interpretation that is very subtle, by the way, this idea of him wrestling with a decision and some agency that is being tested, and I wonder, given the context if that is, do I really wanna reconcile with my brother? Is it worth it? Do I wanna risk that? I think in the end, letting God prevail, God is saying, Hey, you need to reconcile with your brother. This is Jesus's teaching. He that forgiveth, not his brother's trespasses, standeth condemned before the Lord. Like, you've gotta do this. If you're not one with your brother, you can't be one with me. You've gotta do this thing, and he finally, through this wrestle says, I'm gonna do it. It doesn't matter. I'm gonna do it. He lets God prevail. The very next chapter is this beautiful, by the way, reconciliation with Esau where they are brothers. Indeed.

John Bytheway: 00:31:41 I think it's significant that this is the first time the name Israel comes up. It's God that gives him the name. It's possible to say, and I've heard this said before, there was Israel before Israel, because of pre-mortality. That there's certain souls that were sent to come through the house or the family.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:32:06 Correct. Somebody might be listening, thinking, these guys were chosen in pre-mortality? You have to go back. Chosen for what? Chosen to wear out our lives, to bless humanity. If that's what you're chosen to do, so that those other people can come up to the exact same station you're at. Again, it's not to lord over people or that you're better than other people. It's about choices and agency, but extending those blessings to everyone.

John Bytheway: 00:32:36 I love that. You could say, let's do again now what we did, premortally. We let God prevail. Then let's let God prevail in our lives. Now let's be who we are as House of Israel. I love that.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:32:53 That's exactly right. Back to my idea of the story arc. You have Jacob who starts out maybe a bit immature, makes a couple mistakes, doesn't fully trust God. There's some trickery going on. He eventually has all these things come back to him. He responds in appropriate ways. God then bestows upon him

gifts, meaning gifts of the spirit. He has dreams and other things. Then he gets all these promises sealed upon his head. His story's my story, his story's your story. We've all made mistakes. We've all done dumb things. Then we get opportunities to repent, to change, and then God's promises. Just like to Jacob, he'll bless us. He'll endow us with power and then he'll seal upon us all the blessings he wants to seal upon us. It's not a story to be mad at Jacob or to point out the deficiencies of Jacob. It's simply a story to say, his story is my story. He is like me and I can receive all these amazing blessings. I can repent, but you gotta know something. What you gotta know is that choices have consequences. Choices have consequences. Jacob made some choices. He got some consequences, and in the end, after repentance, fully 100% blessed and didn't become Jacob anymore, became Israel. New name, he gets a new name.

- John Bytheway: 00:34:15 Wow. What benefit is there going through the lives of early Latter-day Saints, for example, looking for flaws? Newsflash, you'll find them.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:26 Yep. Check.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:26 What have you proven?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:28 Right. Somebody comes to me and is like Joseph Smith, dot, dot dot, and I'm like, okay.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:33 Therefore?
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:33 Therefore, he's not Jesus. Okay. Neither are you. Neither am I. Yep, we're good.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:38 Neither am I.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:34:39 We're good. We're all good. I also think it's fascinating on that topic that Isaiah says there's no form nor comeliness that when we behold him, we should desire him to the naked eye. Jesus, to many would've appeared imperfect and not up to their standard, anyway. That's so fascinating.
- Hank Smith: 00:35:00 If a seminary teacher or Sunday school teacher or parent can help a young person walk through this and see, yeah, look at the Lord using this prophet. Prepares them for church history and also today.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:35:13 Yes.

Hank Smith: 00:35:14 Right. Their bishop, their stake president, their relief society president. Their--themselves.

00:35:17 Their parents. Now, I do want to make a comment and it'd be an interesting episode to do. Again, the women in the lives of these patriarchs. Sarah plays an enormous role in the life of Abraham. Enormous. I don't believe, and I mean this, that Abraham would've been Abraham without Sarah. I believe that with all my heart. I believe that Isaac is not Isaac without Rebekah and that she is a woman of massive faith. You remember when Eliazar goes to get her and she says, I will go. Just like Nephi. I'm gonna go. I'm gonna do this. This is what God wants. Rebekah is incredible getting her own revelation. Then the wives of Jacob, Leah and Rachel and Bilhah and Zilpah. These are amazing women. Faithful, being tried and tested to the core. It's incredible. We don't have, I don't think, the full account, obviously, we're gonna get the full account one day.

00:36:19 I think it's specifically interesting. I'll just make this aside that in Genesis 22, which is one of the more incredible chapters of when Abraham is asked to offer up Isaac, that Sarah is glaringly absent from that story. She's not mentioned one single time. The way it's written in Genesis 22, it's Abraham's story. One day we'll get Isaac's story and one day we'll get Sarah's story, but right now we have Abraham's story in Genesis 22, which is apparently what the Lord wants us to have. But one day we'll get these stories. I wanna give a shout out to these incredible women who played critical roles, crucial roles in all of the events that we've been talking about. Now in terms of the House of Israel, Jacob, remember, has Leah and then Rachel. Then Bilhah and Zilpah. With Leah, he has six sons and one daughter, Dina. Rachel, who is kind of the wife that Jacob really loved.

00:37:18 I mean, he loved them all. I think in the end he did love them all, but she is having a hard time conceiving. He prays to the Lord. Then she has Joseph and then Benjamin. So Rachel has two children. Then Bilhah and Zilpah each have two as well. You've got six through Bilhah, Zilpah, and Rachel, and then you've got six with Leah. Those 12 sons become what we call in the church, the House of Israel, the children of Israel. Israel. Those are all names for those, and we call them the tribes of Israel. In certain blessings, that are very poetic, each tribe gets a blessing. Each tribe has a corresponding responsibility. So you have this situation where everyone gets a blessing. Now, we need to say this, the first-born son of Jacob is Reuben, but because of some iniquity on the part of Reuben, he lost his birthright.

00:38:21 Then it went to the first-born son of the next wife, which is Joseph. Joseph then becomes the birthright son. Then Genesis 37 through Genesis 50 is essentially the story of Joseph as a type of Christ, as a redeemer, as a kinsman redeemer, fulfilling the role of redemption, and again, as a type of Jesus Christ. If somebody's wondering what's the house of Israel? The house of Israel is simply those 12 sons and their descendants. So, anybody who's descended through Reuben, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Joseph, Judah, Levi, those are the tribes of Israel. Those are the tribes. Now, one of the biggest questions I get all the time is let's say somebody gets a patriarchal blessing. Now, Hank, you look like you're an Ephraimite. Are you from Ephraim?

00:39:20 Absolutely.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:39:21 Okay, and John, I think you look like an Ephraimite too. Are you? Ephraim was the second born son of Joseph. Manasseh is the firstborn son. There are certain blessings Joseph has. President Nelson in an incredible statement told us that the tribe of Judah prepared the world for the first coming of Jesus Christ and that the tribe of Joseph will prepare the world for the second coming of Jesus Christ. When somebody comes to me and says, brother Baron, I got my patriarchal blessing. I'm from Zebulun, or I'm from Judah, or I'm from Issachar, or I'm from Dan, what's my role? My absolute categorical statement is before the second coming of Jesus Christ, we are all co-partners with Joseph to gather Israel in preparation for the world, for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Now, what other responsibilities you might have at in the millennium will be made known to us.

00:40:18 But right now? I am not an Ephraimite. I am from Judah. My responsibility is to be co-partner with Joseph, with the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh to gather Israel from both sides of the veil period. That's my role. Anybody listening who's from any other tribe, we get the privilege, the blessing, to partner with each other, to be in the most glorious work, which is literally gathering Israel on both sides of the veil. That is the answer to that question, like, what's my role? What's my responsibility? That is. Now again, there might be other roles and responsibilities made later by the Savior himself, but at this point that's what's going on.

Hank Smith: 00:41:00 We've said this before, Ross and John, but we should say it again. The Lord has a chosen family to bless all the families of the earth because he loves everyone. That question. If he loves everyone, why would he have a chosen family? This is clearly

why he has a chosen family. Their covenant responsibility is to bless all the families of the earth.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:41:26 That's exactly right, and I do think there's a doctrine of foreordination, which is true, and there's a doctrine of predestination, which is false. Predestination is the idea that God elects certain people to be saved and certain people to be damned. They can't do anything about it, and moral agency is really not a thing. Foreordination means that in pre-mortality we were foreordained to certain tasks, responsibility, and missions that we could either live up to or not in accordance with our moral agency. God's plan cannot be frustrated, but we have choices with respect to our foreordination. The House of Israel was foreordained to come to earth, to bless the earth and to bless all the inhabitants of the earth, both living and dead. That's foreordination. That was super helpful, Hank to answer the question like, why did God use a family to do this? Because they were foreordained to do it. That's the way that has to work.

Hank Smith: 00:42:32 Let's tie this in, Ross, to as members of the church, as part of the House of Israel, we are the birthright where we get all these blessings from the gospel that we are to use to bless everyone else.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:42:48 In other words, we don't have sort of a birthright, literally as members of the church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-day Saints. You get baptized, you get the gift of the Holy Ghost. There's priesthood, there's keys, there's temples. There's the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There's re-revealed scripture in terms of the Book of Mormon. There are prophets and apostles on earth who hold the keys of the kingdom, so we're not blown about by every wind of doctrine. We are that birthright kingdom whose responsibility is then under the direction of the Savior to redeem all mankind. I wanna do backhand springs. I'm so excited about that. I can't do a backhand spring, actually, but I want to because I'm so excited about what you said because that's our covenant obligation. The covenant obligation is to do that. I've talked about this before. I was serving in Rexburg as a stake president and I got a call from the temple president.

00:43:41 It was probably about nine or 10 in the morning. He said, Hey, I want to talk to you about some of your members. That can create some fear on the part of a stake president. He said, I had a bunch of your members that were knocking on the door of the baptismal door font at four this morning because they were so excited about the family names they had got. They wanted to do baptisms. We have to get in there. In Isaiah chapter two or

2nd Nephi chapter 12. It says, all nations shall flow into the temple. The temple is in the top of the mountains, according to Isaiah chapter two. Rivers don't flow up, rivers flow down. I've thought, like, what's going on with that imagery? That's because those young people at 4:00 AM are going 100% against the natural man. That's not natural. You don't have a bunch of 18 to 20 year olds getting up at four in the morning, pounding the door of the temple to say, we've gotta do baptisms for the dead.

00:44:45 That's what Isaiah saw. He was excited about those guys. They are flowing into the temple against nature, against the natural man. Doing that, which immortality seems this cannot possibly be. That's what's going on. That is so powerful and beautiful. Back to your comment, Hank, are we the firstborn? Yeah. Do we have that endowment of power, those resources? Yes. And it has one sole purpose. That's to bless all of God's children everywhere. It's a hundred percent inclusive, not exclusive.

Hank Smith: 00:45:18 We can sometimes be a little bit like Esau. What's in it for me?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:45:23 That's right. What does it profit me?

John Bytheway: 00:45:26 Can we go back to that question that so often comes up? I'm of this tribe, of this tribe. Sometimes what they'll do is go in to the Old Testament and look for what Jacob said to Dan or something like that and think that's their blessing. And I wanna say, you have your own patriarchal blessing. We probably have a fragmentary record in the Old Testament of what was said to each of the sons, but you've got your own blessing. Look at that.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:45:53 Amen. That calling to be a patriarch is one of the holy and blessed callings in the kingdom. When I joined the church--I was 18 when I joined the church and my bishop said to me, you need to get a patriarchal blessing. I, of course, had no clue what a patriarchal blessing was. He kind of explained it to me and I thought, okay, that sounds good. I drove to this little house and parked in front, walked in, knocked on the door that this old guy with white hair answered the door, introduced himself, and frankly I was 18. He seemed like he was at least 170 to 180 years old, and a little out of it. So, we sat down and he probably chatted with me for two or three minutes and then said, well, are we ready? And I said, yeah. And he put on two recorders.

00:46:43 He put, like he put over his head, he put, this is, you know, way back when, and he put these tape recorders and he said, I do these two tape recorders in case one fails. He says, so don't mind me. I'm gonna push start and then I'm gonna lay my hands

on your head. I said, okay. Puts his hands on my head. I am telling you, he gave me this blessing that was out of this world. And he said things in there that literally only God and I knew and about my experience and reading scripture and about my inheritance as a descendant of Judah, which he didn't know, by the way. He didn't know any of that stuff and he just said incredible things. To this day, I read my patriarchal blessing, the specific fulfillment of prophecies that he uttered upon my head. Now everyone knows that patriarchal blessings are conditional.

00:47:30

That is, they're conditioned upon our faithfulness to the covenant. Our faithfulness, not perfection, but that we're striving to do what we are supposed to do that those blessings will be fulfilled. Using this language that God has endowed his kingdom. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with power to redeem children on both sides of the veil is astounding and all the different helps. That's the words that President Oaks use. Divine helps that he's given us in the latter-days. That patriarchal blessing has sustained and blessed me my entire life. Anybody who has not had a patriarchal blessing yet, you get that blessing. Part of it, is to be declared that lineage. You are of the house of Israel, you are part of the covenant, and now you have an obligation to go and do the works of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, our fathers and our mothers. My great grandmama's, Leah, your great grandma, is Rachel. We are same dad, different moms.

John Bytheway:

00:48:29

Our listeners might wanna go to Ensign College and listen to Hank's talk about this, because it was all about who are we and what does House of Israel mean? What are we supposed to do with that knowledge? So, people might wanna listen to that because it's in true Hank Smith style. You'll enjoy it. You'll laugh.

Hank Smith:

00:48:49

You're kind. John, on that same message, this is all about this. I remember Sarah saying, you're really spending a lot of time on that. I was at the kitchen table late into evening, after evening after evening, really trying to shape this, because like we said earlier, a young person needs to know why they are here. If they don't know, there will always be something missing. Once they catch the vision of the House of Israel and who they are, it locks you in. It locks you in as a member. I have yet to hear a friend say, I really locked in as a member of the House of Israel, but I left the church. I've heard people say, oh, I was in the bishopric. I was in the Relief Society presidency and I left the church. I get that. Everyone has their own journey, but I've yet to hear someone say, the Book of Mormon taught me that I am of the covenant people, that God has a work for me to do.

Dr. Ross Baron:	00:49:47	That's powerful.
John Bytheway:	00:49:48	Yeah.
Dr. Ross Baron:	00:49:49	The idea of the baptismal font. We go and you have an open house and we take people to the baptismal font. Of course, the fonts on the back of 12 oxen, each tribe has their own symbol, but it's Ephraim, that's the ox. The responsibility for the salvation of humankind, rests correctly so on the back of the House of Israel, but specifically on the back of Ephraim. When I said we're all co-partners with Ephraim, that baptismal font is symbolic of that truth. And if we go to section 133, it's interesting. This was, at one point, the appendix of the Doctrine and Covenants. Well, it isn't anymore because we have other sections after it. In section 133, the Lord makes this comment to Joseph about Ephraim. He says, and they, the others from Israel shall bring forth their rich treasures under the children of Ephraim, my servants. I'm in verse 30 of 133. 31, and the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall tremble at their presence and there shall they fall down and be crowned with glory.
	00:51:05	Ephraim is crowning people with glory, bringing them up to their same status, not lording over anyone, and they shall be crowned with glory even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim. Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows. Isn't that powerful? There's the concept, this blessing for what? This endowment. These gifts, these helps, they're all there to bless everyone. We've got a responsibility.
John Bytheway:	00:51:41	Can you connect Ephraim and Manasseh with Joseph?
Dr. Ross Baron:	00:51:45	Joseph is sold into Egypt. When he's sold into Egypt, through a series of events and through his faithfulness and loyalty, he becomes the number two in the land of Egypt. He is the vizier. He is Jafar, but a good guy.
John Bytheway:	00:52:03	Yeah.
Dr. Ross Baron:	00:52:04	He's the vizier in Egypt. He's only second in the throne to Pharaoh. He marries Azeneth. With Azeneth, they have two children. One of them is Manasseh and one of them is Ephraim. They're both the children of Joseph. Now, when Jacob gives the blessing to Joseph's sons, because they have the reconciliation,

Jacob blesses Ephraim as the firstborn son. Well then there's 13 tribes, right? There's 13, because we have Ephraim and Manasseh. That technically is true, but Ephraim and Manasseh are Joseph.

- Hank Smith: 00:52:40 I wanted to read these two paragraphs from the manual Thoughts to Keep in Mind, The House of Israel. This is beautiful. I think it sums up what we've said so far. "In the church today, you may hear about Israel in expressions like "the gathering of Israel." We sing about the "Redeemer of Israel", the "Hope of Israel" and "Ye Elders of Israel.: That's a great song. "In these cases, we aren't talking or singing about the ancient kingdom of Israel or the modern nation called Israel. Rather, we are referring to people who have been gathered from the nations of the world into the Church of Jesus Christ. We are referring to people who persevere with God, who earnestly seek His blessings, and who, through baptism have become his covenant people. In the words of President Russell M. Nelson, to be of Israel means "to let God prevail in our lives,... to let God be the most powerful influence in our lives."
- 00:53:34 Second paragraph here. This is the two paragraphs at the end of the manual. "Your patriarchal blessing declares your connection to one of the tribes of the house of Israel. That's more than an interesting piece of family history. It has to do with your present and future. Being a part of the house of Israel means you have a covenant relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. It means that you, like Abraham, are meant to "be a blessing" to God's children. It means in the words of Peter, that "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who have called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." It means that you "let God prevail"--that you are one who "perseveres with God" as you honor your covenants with Him." How was I? As I read that, I thought, wow, that's succinct and powerful.
- John Bytheway: 00:54:27 Yeah, so when we're watching The Other Side of Heaven or one of those movies and they say, hurrah, for Israel, they're not talking about a piece of land. They're talking about the people, the House of Israel, that that name continues now and is talking, as you read Hank, we're talking about people who have been gathered from the nations of the world.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:54:48 What you read is so powerful and so succinct, and I appreciate the clarity of the statement. If I was listening, there might be an outstanding question I had. What if I'm not the literal seed of Jacob? What if somebody's listening and they're thinking, is everybody in the world? Are they all from the 12 tribes? And I

think the answer is probably not. That person. When they accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and are baptized by proper authority into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, confirmed a member of the church, they then become part of Israel. They are now adopted in. We use that phrase, adopted in. They are now members of the House of Israel. They can get a patriarchal blessing. In all likelihood, that patriarch will bless them and they will probably be descendants of Joseph and get that Ephraimite blessing to participate in the gathering of Israel.

00:55:44 No one is excluded. I am from Judah. I have bloodlines that say, I'm House of Israel, but let's be careful. When I was not a member of the church, I wasn't a participant in all of the blessings that accrue to those that are the house of Israel because I needed to be born again, i.e. baptized, have the gift of the Holy Ghost, receive all those blessings to be able to fully participate in all of the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Anybody who's listening, you don't feel excluded, feel included. And that's one of the reasons we send missionaries out. My wife's an Ephraimite, so I married an Ephraimite so that the prophecy of Isaiah would be fulfilled that Judah wouldn't vex Ephraim and Ephraim wouldn't vex Judah.

John Bytheway: 00:56:32 Nice.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:56:34 I wanted to help Isaiah on the other side of the veil. He appreciates it. I wanna be in good with Isaiah.

Hank Smith: 00:56:40 Can I think of it maybe less as a declaration of my DNA and more of a mission call? Perhaps? Like you are assigned to labor in this tribe.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:56:54 I like that a lot. When I interviewed missionaries, I was serving as stake president, when President Monson lowered the age of missionaries. I ended up doing sometimes between 30 and 35 mission interviews a week. Now, if you know anything about a mission interview, it's about a 45 minute to an hour interview. That was in addition to all the other responsibilities I had. And I went to the Area Seventy above me and I said, I'm gonna have to quit my job and be a full-time stake president. He's like, no, no, we're not gonna do that. One of the questions I asked every single missionary, and still do, by the way I'm currently serving as a bishop in a young single adult ward, is Will you go wherever you're called? Hank, connecting what you just said. Oh yeah, yeah. I'll go wherever I'm calling. I go, okay, good. If you got called to Reno, Nevada, you're going to Reno, Nevada. Yep. And if you get called to Helsinki, Finland? Yep. Okay, good. What about the Spanish Fork, Utah mission? Are you gonna, you

going? Oh, absolutely. Okay, good. Because you go where you're assigned. That's not our prerogative. I had one young lady, you guys, it was funny. She comes in and I did the interview. She was awesome and worthy, and I said, you'll go wherever you're called. And she goes, yep, but I'm going to Paris, France. And I said...

Hank Smith: 00:58:11

Okay. Wow.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:58:12

Okay, I like that. But, that's not really our prerogative. And she goes, oh, no, no, no, president. She goes, I'll go wherever I'm called, but I'm going to Paris, France. We went back and forth for about 10 to 15 minutes on this, because I had to get comfortable. She sees me about two weeks later, she runs and she says, I got my call. I go, where are you going? She goes, Paris, France.

Hank Smith: 00:58:40

Wow.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:58:41

And I was like, I need to know the backstory on this. She said, when I was five years old, I was in primary sharing time. The theme was serving a mission and we sang all the mission songs in primary. She said, the spirit came over me and said, you'll serve a mission and go to Paris, France. And I thought, you are one faithful young lady. So she served in Paris, France.

00:59:04

I thought that was great, but I really like the idea of it's an assignment. And Heavenly Father, I think said, well, you go wherever you're called? Yep. Okay. You are assigned to serve in the Judah mission. Okay, cool. I'm gonna go and do whatever my responsibility is. I'll happily carry it out. Yep. Love that. I think that's great. I was teaching a class at BYU Idaho. The first person on the list, it was Cemal Aktash. I said Cemal, and he said, it's Jamal. I said, Jamal, where are you from? He said, Turkey. Are you a member of the church? No. I said, what are you doing here? He said, I don't really know. My wife and I looked on the website of different colleges I saw the BYU Idaho website and I was just attracted to it. I said, I know why you're here. Come see me after class.

00:59:59

So he come after class and I said, you've gotta have the missionary discussions. Oh, no, no, no. Anyway, he ended up getting baptized and his wife and, and it was a beautiful story. I just thought, how interesting it is. How the Lord is bringing his people in at the right time. He speaks fluent Turkish and fluent English and he's just a wonderful, wonderful soul who's blessing so many lives. He read parts of the Book of Mormon and he told me, this is a good translation, but this wasn't a native Turkish

speaker. And I thought, oh, okay. God does have a work for you to do. We sometimes have a narrower view of what the gathering is, or we think it's only missionaries in Uruguay or missionaries in someplace. It's way bigger than that. It's bigger than all of us. Jesus Christ is in the details and coordinating the details through his servants, the prophets. It is powerful.

John Bytheway: 01:00:55 We have talked so many times, haven't we, Hank, about how God has the long game, the long view in mind. It's just another testimony of that. The fact that the Abrahamic Covenant talks about blessing the families of the Earth, that's what this is all about.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:01:12 And thee and thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

John Bytheway: 01:01:15 What's a way to explain this to children about there was this family of Jacob and now we're part of it. How would you say it?

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:01:25 What we've been talking about and what cuts through maybe some of the complication is what everyone knows and that's family connections. That's how you explain it in primary. You have to bring it back to maybe getting away from some of the complicated stuff about all the tribes, because you might get lost in some of the details, but if I just talk about dads and moms and sons and daughters, they'll understand that. That's powerful.

John Bytheway: 01:01:51 I was a kid, but I just remembered watching how wonderful my dad thought it was, when Alex Haley, the movie Roots, that's exactly what we're talking about. When he was on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson and he presented Johnny Carson with his family history. He could have presented Johnny Carson with the keys of a Cadillac or something. But imagine the look on Johnny Carson's face about the treasure he just had in his hands when he had this family history. Here's who you are now. Now we're back to identity. Here's who you are, here's where you came from. What a treasure that would be long after your Cadillac's in the junkyard, right? But you've got this sense of identity.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:02:35 My grandma used to tell the story when they were in Russia. There was what's called a pogrom. A pogrom is when Russians would come into little villages and just for fun, they would shoot their-my family, they would kill people. So, my great-grandfather finally said, enough. They escaped on the Trans-Siberian railroad went east. They were in Minsk and they went east to Vladivostok and then to Kobe Japan. And then from

Kobe Japan to Seattle. So, my grandma used to tell that story and I remember thinking, you know, as I got older I thought, is that true? Could that possibly be true? Then through family search and you know, some effort, we found all the records. We found the manifest from Vladivostok to Kobe and then from Kobe to Seattle. And we found the manifest when they came into the United States.

01:03:27 And I thought that is a rich treasure right there. That is incredible. These little peasants from Russia show up in Seattle. They don't speak a word of English. They make their life here. It was incredible. Again, that's part of that family idea. I was once at a dinner party, and this can be sensitive for Jews, because you guys know we don't do baptisms for Holocaust survivors unless we're directly related and that's church policy. And I was once at a party, it was my, my whole family on my mom and dad and we were all there and everyone knows that I do family history and that I'm a Latter-day Saint. One of my cousins said, Ross, why are you doing all this family history work? It was like the record went <scratching sound> and like the light went on. Me and everyone stopped talking. Roy, I said, you know that verse at the end of the Hebrew Bible that says the hearts of the fathers will turn to the children, the children to the fathers? And he goes, yeah. And I go, that's why I do it. My heart's turned to the fathers. Then everyone waited. And Roy goes, that's beautiful. And then the music went back on and the lights went on. It was so interesting. It was one of those moments where it resonates with people, because my heart's turned to my fathers. I'm just interested in my family. Everyone was like, got it. That's great.

John Bytheway: 01:04:52 Ross, this has been so fun. I can't wait to have you again. And when we do, our topic is the tabernacle. They had it in the wilderness. It was at the center of everything, which I think is really cool how they moved. Can you give us kind of a preview of what we'll talk about when we talk about the tabernacle and we're not talking about the one at Temple Square. This is tabernacle means what? A building, a tent even.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:05:15 So it's not the tabernacle in Montpelier. It's not that tabernacle.

Hank Smith: 01:05:19 No. St George.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:05:21 Yeah. It's the ancient tabernacle. And am I ever excited to talk about the tabernacle? President Nelson used to say that the temples in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and what goes on in the temples is of ancient origin, went on in the tabernacle, is a type and shadow of Jesus Christ. And it's a type

and shadow of what we do in temples in the latter-days. It is one of the best temple preps is to learn about the tabernacle and understand not only what went on in the tabernacle and the symbolism of the tabernacle, but what the priests had to wear and how the priests had to be prepared to work in the tabernacle. And like you said, John, where the tabernacle is in relation to everyone else. Oh my word. I gotta be careful not to just go crazy right now. I'm gonna stop. But there is so much we can talk about. It'll be such a blessing.

- John Bytheway: 01:06:13 Oh, thank you so much. Everything you've done today has been I, the word I keep thinking of is clarifying some really nice things to clarify that people will say, okay, okay. House of Israel, I'm not gonna just run past that phrase anymore. That's everything. That's who we are. It's what we're doing. It's what we're supposed to do, what we're called to do. It all comes down to blessing all the families of the world.
- Hank Smith: 01:06:38 Yep. Blessing the families of the earth. I love it. I'm so grateful for this series, John. Thoughts to Keep in Mind. Thank you, Ross.
- John Bytheway: 01:06:47 With that wonderful discussion that we get to keep having with Dr. Ross Baron. We're so glad that you joined us today. Join us again soon on another episode of followHIM.
- Hank Smith: 01:06:59 As a thank you to our wonderful listeners, we'd love to gift you the digital version of our book, Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. It offers short, meaningful insights drawn from our past Old Testament episodes. Visit [followHIM.co](http://followHIM.co). That's [followHIM.co](http://followHIM.co) to download your free copy today, and you'll also find the link to purchase the print edition. Thank you for being part of our followHIM family. 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 Annabel Sorensen. Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to Him. Follow Him.