



John Bytheway:	00:00:06	Hello, everyone, and welcome to another episode of followHIM. One of our special episodes we call Thoughts to Keep in Mind, which means we have Dr. Ross Baron with us today, or as he is known across the pond as the Baron of Ross. We have Ross Baron with us. How many episodes is this, Hank? This is number.
Hank Smith:	00:00:28	This is number eight, and it's our last one. I'm pretty sad. I've loved the series this year.
John Bytheway:	00:00:28	You can just put these all together and listen and have quite a course on the Old Testament.
Hank Smith:	00:00:38	You would. I'm going to try to talk to our wonderful David Perry, see if he can put that on our YouTube channel as one continuous video of Old Testament, like, understanding. You'd walk away going, "I can read this book now." If anybody's coming across this going, "Wait, what is this?" Use your Google and thumb 'em, type in followHIM, Thoughts to Keep in Mind, you can find all eight.
John Bytheway:	00:00:59	Yep. The Thoughts to Keep in Mind lessons are in the, the digital version of the Come Follow Me curriculum, as well as the printed one, actually. They're not specific to chapters in the Old Testament, they're topics. Every time, Hank, I thought I knew something about this topic, Dr. Baron would start talking and I'm like, "Oh my goodness, I did not know that, and I'm writing like crazy." I'm excited to have him back here again.
Hank Smith:	00:01:25	Yeah. This is going to be a lot of fun and Ross, we're going to miss you. We need to rename the studio after you, the Ross Baron Studio.
Dr. Ross Baron:	00:01:32	The Ross Baron Memorial Studio.
John Bytheway:	00:01:35	Not quite yet. Our topic today is, and Hank, I'm thinking, "Yeah, I think I know about this. I'm just waiting prophets and prophecy." I want to start reading in the official manual. In the traditional Christian division of the Old Testament, the last section, Isaiah through Malachi is called the prophets. This section, about one-fourth of the Old Testament, contains the words of God's authorized servants who spoke with the Lord and then spoke for

him, sharing his message with the people between about 900 and 500 BC. Prophets and prophecy play a major role throughout the Old Testament, and then it mentions prophets that we are all familiar with. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, saw visions, spoke with heavenly messengers. Moses talked with God face-to-face. The first and second books of Kings recount the memorable works and messages of prophets like Elijah and Elisha. The Old Testament also speaks of prophetesses like Miriam and Deborah, along with other women blessed with the spirit of prophecy such as Rebecca and Hannah. And even though the Psalms weren't written by formal prophets, they too are filled with the spirit of prophecy, especially as they point toward the coming of the Messiah. None of this comes as a surprise to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In fact, the restored gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us prophets are not just interesting historical figures, but an essential part of God's plan. Ross, I know every time you've come, you've been totally prepared to give us something wonderful. What would you like to teach us about today?

Dr. Ross Baron:

00:03:17

I have felt, interestingly, that today's topic, prophets and prophecy, really powerfully relevant for anybody listening. It's been interesting in my preparation today, and then I want to have a conversation. So, I want Hank and John to be back and forth about the role of prophets. We're going to be zooming out a little bit about prophets in general with the context being prophets of the Old Testament, of course, but I want to talk about prophets. I want to talk about their role. I want to confront some questions that people have that are legitimate that we have to kind of hit head on today. So, I'm super excited, by the way. Very excited about our topic. And I wanted to say this, when you were reading from the manual and you talked about the traditional division, in the Hebrew Bible, um, what Hebrew readers will read, because they don't call it the Old Testament. Sometimes we think that maybe Jews worldwide are calling it the Old Testament. No, it's the Hebrew Bible because they don't have a New Testament. The Hebrew Bible is often called the Tanakh. I know you both have heard that. It's an acronym, TNK, that talks about the division T for Torah. The N is Nevi'im prophets and the K is Ketuvim, the writings. The Tanakh is this. And what we're focusing today is the Nevi'im, the prophets. I love how the manual you read from John, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob don't have separate books formally in the Nevi'im, but they were prophets. Elijah doesn't have his own book, but he was a prophet. Like you said, Deborah and Miriam and Huldah were prophetesses and don't have their own books. When we talk about Nevi'im in the Hebrew Bible, we're talking about Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are called the major prophets, and then you have 12 minor prophets starting from the longest one down to the end, which is Malachi. There's a line in the Come Follow Me manual that I love. It says, quote, "But reading a chapter from Isaiah or Ezekiel might feel different from reading a general conference message from the current

president of the church." Ain't that the truth? From a practical standpoint, somebody who's listening, who wants to teach their kids and they're like, "Yeah, we're in Ezekiel, this does not sound like President Oaks." Here's my counsel on that. You have ancient, and we'll call that there and then. And then we've got the present, which is here and now. How do I bridge Ezekiel stuff, which is there and then, to here and now? I believe one of the powerful ways we can do that is we're going to teach the eternal truths that are found anywhere that are now relevant to any time and place. I'm reading Ezekiel. By the way, it's good to get in the context and the history of Ezekiel and what Ezekiel's talking about, but you also have to be able to sift and read and study to say, "What are the eternal truths that are relevant for Ezekiel's time and relevant for this time right now?" If I was a mom or dad listening and I want to have a good scripture study with my family and we're reading kind of a thick prophecy or prophets like Hosea or Amos or Ezekiel, how do I make it relevant? Find the eternal truths that are relevant across time. Pull those, abstract those out. Then the manual says this, which I love too, "Recognizing that we can liken the scriptures by looking at certain items, types." And then it says, "For example, recognize that Babylon as a symbol of sin and pride, not just an ancient city. It could mean understanding Israel as God's people in any time and place, or it might mean seeing Zion as the latter-day cause that God's people embrace instead of seeing it as just another word for Jerusalem." That's such a great way. So, Babylon is an ancient city, but it's a code word for something else. Zion, that's Jerusalem. There's a place we can take you to, but it also is the Latter-day cause. That's a super powerful way, and I hope that's helpful for anyone listening. Again, we're going to teach eternal truths that are relevant no matter what. That is a helpful way to do it. You take the there and then, we got the here and the now, we got to create a bridge, eternal truths.

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| John Bytheway: | 00:07:52 | That's great. We're looking for Christ. We're looking for Jesus Christ of the New Testament and the Old. There are eternal truths and there's also the savior throughout. Jehovah, Jesus throughout. So, a- absolutely. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:08:05 | I'm very likely not going to go through an exegetical reading of Ezekiel with my 13-year-old boys. Yeah. Let's keep it light. Let's find some eternal truths. And there is a time and a place for that, Ross. There is a time to say, "I need to understand Ezekiel," in its context, but it's probably not going to be, "Come follow me Sunday night with your daughters." |
| Dr. Ross Baron: | 00:08:29 | Probably not. But are we going to have fun in Ezekiel and I'll bring up some context? Then we're going to look for Jesus Christ. We're going to look for God's character attributes and perfections. We're going to look for eternal truths that are relevant for them today. By the way, we've had incredible experiences in the Psalms. From our last episode, we've done the things that I talked about and we've had some great experiences. But did I do a Hebrew exegesis? I didn't with them. |

Dad, don't do that. They tell me. Please, please. I beg you. Incredible opportunity. I want to get that out at the gate that that's something we can do. Now, I really want to talk about prophets. We got prophets and we've got prophecy. So I want to spend the first part talking about prophets. This is from True to the Faith. I'm quoting, "Prophets today testify of Jesus Christ and teach his gospel." And I would suggest that prophets through time have taught of Jesus Christ and testified of him and taught his gospel. They make known God's will and true character. They speak boldly and clearly, denouncing sin and warning of its consequences. And at times, prophets may be inspired to prophesy for future events for our benefit. I think that's an interesting line. They don't always do that, right? We think, "Oh, a prophet's going to always prophesy about the future." But Revelation chapter 19 verse 10, which the prophet Joseph used to love to quote, that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. I don't have to be able to see the future to be a prophet. We should be small P prophets in the fact that I have a burning witness of the reality of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost. That's the spirit of prophecy. I do not have the office of the prophet. That's a different thing. In a former episode we did, we talked about Numbers chapter 11 verse 29, Moses says, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets?" He was not saying would that all the Lord's people were the president of the church. He was hoping and aspiring that every single congregant would have the gift of prophecy or the testimony of Jesus and what a blessing that would be. Your greatest safety, I'm continuing, lies in strictly following the word of the Lord given through his prophets, particularly the current president of the church. But the thing that we have to face head on, and this is what's been weighing on me since we did Hebrew poetry, knowing this was coming up, the question that comes up about fallibility. Prophets are fallible. And what that means, prophets are human, prophets have their own weakness, they have their own susceptibilities, predilections, and this concerns, especially moderns. I think modern people are very fixated a little bit on the fallibility aspect. So, I thought in our Thoughts to Keep in Mind today, we should address this clearly. The only perfect person, of course, and the only one without sin is the Lord Jesus Christ. That means the prophets, as the scriptures say, quote, and this is from James chapter five verse 17, "Are subject to like passions as we are." They're subject to everything we are. King Benjamin said in Mosiah chapter 2:11, quote, "I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities and body and mind." He's just coming out saying, "Look, I got my own issues." There's no prophet who wouldn't say that, right? That's something we do. Neil L. Andersen addressed this in 2012 in October General Conference. I'm going to quote. He said, "A few question their faith when they find a statement made by a church leader decades ago that seems incongruent with our doctrine. There is an important principle that governs the doctrine of the church. The doctrine is taught by all 15 members of the First

Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. It is not hidden in an obscure paragraph of one talk. True principles are taught frequently and by many. Our doctrine is not difficult to find. The leaders of the church are honest but imperfect men." Now, I have a policy and I'm wondering what you, brethren, think. When I'm teaching a class and I have some particular doctrine I like or I want to teach, I want to find two to three apostolic quotes. In other words, I generally can find one quote for pretty much anything from someone, but I like to tell students I have two to three witnesses of these apostolic quotes. Elder Andersen seems to be saying, look, it's not hidden. It's not obscure. It's taught frequently and it's taught often by all 15. Do you have any thoughts on that? John and Hank, you've been teaching for decades.

John Bytheway: 00:13:22

I just love that we're repeating it right now. It's taught by all of them. It's repeatedly. It's not hidden somewhere in one paragraph in one person's talk. Thank you for repeating that.

Hank Smith: 00:13:34

Ross, can we do this for the next few hours? This is crucial because what will happen is you'll see a teacher, a well-meaning teacher, throw up a quote from a former leader of the church as if the issue is done. In the history of the church, we have some that are much more prolific writers than others, so we end up quoting the same people over and over. I would say I am more confident to openly teach to my students the doctrines that have been repeated in scripture and by prophets. And as it comes down to a single scripture or a single quote, I am not confident that I should teach that as this is what we believe as members of the church. I'm not saying it's not true. I'm just getting less confident as it's not repeated.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:14:20

I think that's, both of you so well said and thank you. You know, I don't remember which episode it was, but I told the experience where the guy came to talk to me. He was an inner-city preacher, and I told him that the church is not based on the Bible or the Book of Mormon. The Church of Jesus Christ is based on what the Bible and the Book of Mormon are based on, which is revelation through prophets. That's a powerful idea. We love the scriptures. We love the text. You and I teach the text. We teach it in our families. But in the end, revelation through prophets is the only way. When we're talking about prophets today, we're talking about prophets in the text, actually ancient prophets, but we're also talking about a living prophet, Dallin H. Oaks. And we're saying in certain respects, and this is very difficult for the world, and I'm going to say some other things later about this, very difficult for the world to accept a modern living prophet. Very easy to accept dead prophets. 'Cause we can almost make a dead prophet say anything we want if we're not careful, if we're not bounded by the words of living prophets. I think Moses is instructive, and I'll tell you why I think Moses is instructive. Moses has a particular place, if we could say in the pantheon of prophets. He's referred to, after Deuteronomy, as Moses, the man of God. Moses from Exodus to Deuteronomy is pretty open

about his weakness. He's a guy who's like, you know, I didn't want this calling, argued with the Lord. It's all out there. So, here's an instructive instance. In Moses chapter 17 verse 6, you remember the people are murmuring, they need water. The Lord says, take your rod, go smite the rock. So, what does Moses do? He smites the rock. According to the instructions of the Lord, water flows. In Numbers 20, we have a similar episode, different episode, where they murmur because of lack of water. The people gather against Moses and they're like, we need water. The Lord says, take the rod, but this time he says, speak ye unto the rock, then water will come out. That's Numbers chapter 20, verse one through eight. But Moses goes. This is interesting. Moses went, he lifted up his hand, and with his rod, he smote the rock twice, and water came out abundantly. Numbers chapter 20, verse 11. The Lord pulls him aside. The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, because you believed me not to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them Numbers chapter 20 verse 12. Wait, so Moses, the man of God, the servant of the Lord, disobeyed the Lord, but the Lord still honored him in the eyes of the people, and then Moses got some personal consequences. Did you follow that line right there? In other words, it was God's business. His prophet did not fully obey what the Lord asked him to do, but the Lord still honored him, so in the eyes of the people, there was not an issue. They got the water, they saw Moses as the instrument of God in doing it, but he disobeyed the Lord and the Lord took him aside and the Lord said, we've got an issue here. What I'm saying is that these prophets who are humans, they're not Jesus, but the Lord loves them and he will guide and direct them. Any comments about Moses or other ideas with that fallibility there?

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| John Bytheway: | 00:18:01 | Moses was open about his own fallibility. I don't know of anybody. I've talked to Hank about this before. We never see, as far as living prophets, anybody, especially right after they're sustained saying, yeah, I was expecting this, totally prepared for this. Yeah, I got this. I think they've, they've got the right man. Maybe if it were a business, like a CEO or something, you might see somebody say something like that. But it's always like, oh my goodness, everything I've ever done came back to my mind. I'm grateful I'm humbled to the dust. I mean, it's a totally different thing and Moses was that way. And you don't hear the prophet say, "I am infallible." I've never heard that. |
| Dr. Ross Baron: | 00:18:41 | No, no. And in fact, you always hear whoever the second senior apostle is, he's like, I fervently pray - Prayed for it. To, to extend the life of the president of the church. Every day my wife and I are begging the Lord. And at a certain point when President Nelson hit 100, Dallin H. Oaks has to be thinking, um, the Lord can do whatever the Lord can do, but, you know, wow. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:19:04 | Yeah, it might be my turn soon. That little exchange between Moses and the Lord and the people tells you one, about the |

character of the Lord. I'm going to rebuke you privately. Come talk to me. It reminds me a little bit of Brigham Young saying, Joseph had his faults, but it wasn't my job to find them or correct them. He's the Lord's prophet. The Lord can do that himself.

Dr. Ross Baron:

00:19:27

That's exactly what happened here. It's God's business. I'm going to say these words and I love Moses. Did Moses make a mistake? The answer's yes. He disobeyed the Lord. But again, your point about the character of God, he honored him, but then privately, there were some consequences and he had to be corrected. Now, here's a Nibley quote. This is from *The World and the Prophets*. It's such a good quote. Here we go. "But must the church always have living prophets in its midst? Is it not enough that we have the words of the prophets of old preserved and holy writ? The true church must and will always have living prophets, but that is unwelcome news to the world. It has always been poison. It is the one teaching that has made the restored gospel unacceptable to the wisdom of men. A dead prophet the world dearly desires and warmly cherishes. He has a priceless tradition, a spiritual heritage, a beautiful memory, but woe to a living prophet. He shall be greeted with stones and catcalls even by pious people. The men who put the apostles to death, though they were doing, thought they were doing God a favor. And the Lord tells us with what reverence and devotion men adorn the tombs of the prophets whom they would kill if they were alive. Here we have something in the nature of a general principle. The rejection of living prophets and the veneration of dead ones is not a folly limited to one nation or to one generation. It meets us throughout the long history of Israel as a sort of standard procedure, nor did it cease with the coming of Christ, who promised his disciples that they would be treated as badly and rejected as completely as he is. The wise men of his time had a ready answer to Jesus, quote, 'We are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses as for this fellow Jesus, we know not from whence he is.'" Unquote. Wow. Isn't that a great quote? "We are Paul's disciples," some people will say, some of our friends. "We know that God spake unto Paul, as for this fellow Joseph Smith, we know not from whence he is. It is legitimate to question whether Joseph is a prophet or not. That's an okay question to have, but if you're saying there can't be any further prophets, that's a problem. Does that make sense? One question, is Joseph Smith a prophet? Legitimate? The other question, well, can there be any more prophets? No. Of course, there could be other prophets. Jesus never warned against prophets. He warned against false prophets who come to us in sheep's clothing. This idea of Brother Nibley is so powerful, so beautifully said. That was, again, from *The World and the Prophets*. It's such a great book. Then George Q. Cannon, this is again, hitting some stuff straight on. What about a difference of opinion with the authorities of the church? What if you, you have a difference of opinion? George Q. Cannon. This is a quote. He served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and as a counselor in the First Presidency. "A friend wished to know

whether we considered an honest difference of opinion between a member of the church and the authorities of the church was apostasy. We replied that we had not stated that an honest difference of opinion between a member of the church and the authorities constituted apostasy, but we could not conceive of a person publishing those differences of opinion, seeking by arguments, sophistry and special pleading to enforce upon the people to produce division and strife and place the acts and counsels of the authorities of the church, if possible, in a wrong light and not be an apostate." That's from the Deseret News, 3rd of November 1869. What do you make of that? What about, uh, John and Hank, you've had people come to you and say, you know, what about fill in the blank? Or I don't feel good about fill in the blank. How have you addressed those things and what do you think of the George Q. Cannon quote?

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| John Bytheway: | 00:23:16 | It reminds me of what Joseph Fielding McConkie, one of my professors, used to say. It's one thing to say, I believe in the living prophet, however, and another thing to say, I believe in the living prophet, therefore. And to say, I want to take this statement. I want to find other ones like you recommended. I want to put them all together. I want to pray about that, to approach it with faith. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:23:40 | Couple of things. One, don't we believe in Doctrine Covenants 21? You are going to receive my word, the Lord says, through him in all patience and faith, meaning it's going to take some patience and some faith to have a living prophet. Second, I would say Article of Faith nine. We believe in all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal. We believe he will yet reveal many great and important things. Don't consider the case closed. Be open to further light and knowledge, which the Lord often promises to send. |
| John Bythway: | 00:24:16 | Well put. |
| Dr. Ross Baron: | 00:24:17 | I had a young lady, this was years ago when I was an institute director in Southern California, she came to me concerned about plural marriage and the doctrine of plural marriage and all that kind of stuff, the teachings on plural marriage. In my first meeting with her, I talked a lot about like we read things together and she'd come prepared and I'd come prepared. It was an okay spirit. And then I left. I was like, "Why didn't that feel good?" So, I came back the second time and she came to my office and I said, "I don't think we're going to get any revelation or peace from the Holy Ghost about plural marriage because we don't practice plural marriage, but you can get peace that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God." She kind of went, "Huh?" And I said, "I think you should study it out and I think you should read all you can about it, but in the end, the revelation you're going to get from God is peace that Joseph was his prophet." And that's what she did. It ended up being this great experience. I'm not advising anyone to not study deeply and further. I'm simply saying there's some things where, like John, you said, I'm going |

to have to go vertical and I'm going to have to get some peace. The Lord is going to answer the way the Lord's going to answer, but since we don't practice plural marriage, I don't think we're getting many revelations about it, but we can get peace that the prophet was his prophet. It's

- Hank Smith: 00:25:33 Not my revelation to get, but maybe about Nephi killing Laban, same thing. The Lord would be like, well, what does this have to do with you? Like you weren't involved.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:25:43 So why are you so upset?
- Hank Smith: 00:25:45 Right. Yeah. Sometimes I stick my nose between the Lord and his prophet, like, hey, don't I deserve an explanation here? And they both would look at me going, what, what are you doing here? Go away. Yeah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:25:56 Don't be offended for them. Don't get mad for them. Let them work out their own thing. You guys remember when Thomas B. Marsh, this is Section 112, and he's pretty upset about a couple different things, and Heber got to go to England instead of him, and he was the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. And you remember all that. It goes to Joseph and Joseph gets the Section 112. Starting in verse 27, he says, "Therefore, see to it that you trouble not yourself concerning the affairs of my church in this place, saith the Lord." I love that. It's my church. Just like you said, Hank, this is my business. Then he says, "But purify your hearts before me, then go ye into all the world and preach my gospel." I'm like, that's like the answer to every question. Purify your own heart and go preach the gospel. There you go. What's going to happen, by the way, when you purify your own heart and go preach the gospel? You're going to have the Holy Ghost in your life. What a profound answer to Thomas B. Marsh. "Concern not yourself concerning the affairs of my church. Purify your heart, go preach the gospel." To me, that is, again, some important counsel. I'm going to quote from the handbook, chapter 5.1.1.1. Here we go. Under the direction of the Lord and by unanimous voice, this council, that is the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 15, has authority to declare and interpret doctrine and establish policy for the church. Right there is the lane they're in, and it's not my lane. And I'm going to read it again. Under the direction of the Lord and by unanimous voice, we have a council system of prophetic leadership. It's the council of the First Presidency. It's the Council of the Twelve. You serve in a stake presidency, which is a council. There's the high council, the bishopric, the relief society presidency. They're all council. It's not one person. Here the Lord is saying the Lord's voice, the unanimous voice of all 15 interprets doctrine and establishes policies for the church. President Nelson, you remember this phenomenal line, quote, "In our meetings, the majority never rules." A lot of people don't understand that. The decisions of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve have to be unanimous. And if one person's like, "Eh." It doesn't go forward. "We listen prayerfully to one another and talk with each other until we are united. Then

when we have reached complete accord, the unifying influence of the Holy Ghost is spine tingling. We experience what the prophet Joseph knew when he taught, quote, "By union of feeling we obtain power with God." No member of the First Presidency of Quorum of the Twelve would ever leave decisions for the Lord's church to his own best judgment." Wow, unquote. That is Russell M. Nelson, April 2018. When we're in our own particular places and we want to get, like you said, Hank, our nose between the prophet and whatever else is going on, you need to understand, pull back, get a big picture of what's happening here. The unanimous voice of the First Presidency and the 12, and the Lord, and we're not leaning on our best judgment, and we don't want to lean to our best judgment, we would never leave the Lord's church to our own best judgment. What a great line. It's a great line.

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| Hank Smith: | 00:29:23 | Ross, don't we often do that? Don't we often say, oh, man, this is what the church should do. Here's my best judgment. It's got to work. And they wouldn't leave it to all of them collectively. They're like, "Ooh." |
| Dr. Ross Baron: | 00:29:32 | And man, am I smart? That's my best judgment. And I wish they would take some counsel from me. Ooh, the Lord doesn't work that way. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:29:41 | We have recently undergone a major change in having Sunday School Come, Follow Me every week, Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women's and Relief Society and Priesthood every week. I like that you said that, Ross, because I think we can know that was a unanimous decision. There aren't three or four of them going, yeah, this is going to work and I'm going to let them know. And it does. Yeah, this was all of them. That gives me faith to know, okay, if I have problems or if it's tough for me, I'm going to figure it out because I think that this was an inspired decision for all of us. |
| Dr. Ross Baron: | 00:30:16 | So good. Now, this is from President Eyring. This is from 1997, so a while ago. He said, "Sometimes we will receive counsel that we cannot understand or that seems not to apply to us, even after careful prayer and thought. Don't discard the counsel. Hold it close. If someone you trusted handed you what appeared to be nothing more than sand, with the promise that it contained gold, you might wisely hold it in your hand a while, shaking it gently. Every time I have done that with counsel from a prophet, after a time, the gold flakes have begun to appear and I have been grateful." Henry B. Eyring, that was Finding Safety in Counsel, May 1997. When I got released as Bishop in Southern California the first time I was Bishop, my new bishop who had served as my counselor was teaching a fifth Sunday to the combined Relief Society and priesthood meeting male members. He gave this counsel. He said, "Don't be on the internet alone in your office. Don't do that." I had just been released. And I remember thinking as I stood there, that doesn't apply to me. I kind of, in my mind said, good for other people, not good for me. Got in the car, I was driving home, and I got the severest rebuke from the Holy |

Ghost. I got the, like, who do you think you are? That is now your bishop. He just gave counsel that I've asked him to give. Now you get in line. And I mean, I was like, Amen. Okay. Super sorry. But look how quick that can happen. I had literally been released the week before. Now, here's my bishop giving counsel, and I somehow thought I was exempt that somehow it didn't apply to me. That's not true. 100% applied to me. So, President Oaks, I don't know if you guys remember, this is then Elder Oaks. He gave a talk pretty controversial, picked up by a lot of people. This was in 1987 before Hank was born. And it was titled Criticism. That was the title of the talk. He addresses what about criticism of the church or its leaders? And he gives five practical ways to manage and navigate this. And he talks about, of course, we have to be Christians. We have to follow Jesus Christ. We have to speak the truth and love. He uses all these verses. But he says, "What about criticism of the church or its leaders?" He says, "The first and most benign of the procedures is to," wait for it, "overlook the difference." This was something you alluded to earlier, Hank. "President Brigham Young described his own application of this method in a circumstance in which he felt, "A want of confidence in the prophet Joseph Smith's financial management." Here's the quote from Brigham. "Though I admitted in my feelings and knew all the time that Joseph was a human being and subject to error, still it was none of my business to look after his faults. He was called of God, God dictated him, and if he had a mind to leave him to himself and let him commit an error, that was no business of mine. He was God's servant and not mine." And that's Journal of Discourses volume four, page 297. That's what you were alluding to earlier, Hank. Here's Elder Oaks. Sometimes we can just be like, okay, I'm going to overlook that. I mean, you've all rubbed shoulders with mission presidents, stake presidents, general authorities. There's a human side to every single one of them, and we have a choice. I was thinking recently about Mosiah chapter four, verse 30, where King Benjamin says, "Watch yourselves and your words and your thoughts and your deeds." It struck me for the first time, which is super sad. He didn't say, watch anybody else. He said, watch yourselves. Watch your thoughts. Watch your words. Watch your deeds. Not my business to watch John Bytheway's words, thoughts, deeds. I have to watch myself. That's enough for a lifetime. That's what Brigham's saying. So that's President Oaks' first counsel. Again, the most benign. Overlook the difference. Second. A second option is to reserve judgment and postpone any action on the difference. What he's saying there is a wise one. Sometimes we don't have all the information or we've seen a slice of what's going on. Can I share with you, brethren, I have been in. I'm not embellishing. I've been in hundreds of membership councils as a counselor in a bishopric, as a bishop, as a counselor in a stake presidency, as a stake president, and as a bishop again. I've heard people who weren't in the council talk about the council. They know nothing. I'm sorry. And I can't say a word, of course, because it's so

confidential. But I've heard people talk and I've had to zip my lip. They just didn't have the information. They didn't feel the Holy Ghost in that particular meeting. They don't know the circumstances. It's a very interesting thing. And Elder Oaks' counsel reserve judgment and postpone because we just don't have all the information. That's, again, been decades of experience that's been brought home powerfully to me when I've heard people talk about that. Sometimes you got to just let it go. Third, "a third procedure, which should be familiar to every student of the Bible", I'm quoting Elder Oaks, "is to take up our difference privately with the leader involved." Matthew chapter 18, you go to that person, you say, "Hey, here's what's going on. Can we work through this?" Can I tell you a cool Elder Bednar story? This isn't a published story and it's from a friend of mine at BYU Idaho who shall remain nameless. He gave me permission to tell the story, but he didn't want me to divulge his name. He, when Elder Bednar was president of Ricks and then BYU Idaho, this particular faculty member apparently got super upset with something Elder Bednar did and wrote a pretty nasty email. He shared some of the contents of the email, like pretty hardcore. Like I read. I said, you sent that? He goes, yep. I go, what happened? He goes, I sent it, started doing some other work. And he goes, in 15 minutes, there was a knock at my door. And it was President Bednar. And he walked in and he said, apparently, you and I have a problem about which I was unaware. And he shut the door. Can we work this out? I thought, wow. Then, by the way, this man, this faculty member who was sharing the story with me said, you know, everything changed for me at that moment. Like all of a sudden it, it melted away. He came in completely humble. He said, we got to work this out. I didn't know that I had offended you and I want to, I want to figure this out. I want to work it out. What a beautiful thing. And that's what Jesus enjoined us to do.

Hank Smith:	00:37:18	I often laugh with my students when Jesus says, if you have an offense between, take him between you and thee alone. This is Matthew 18, you and thee alone, which is what Elder Bednar just did. We often do the exact opposite. We talk to everyone else except the person involved. My students do this with their roommates. I'll ask, how many of you have had a problem with a roommate and you talk to every other roommate except for the roommate? And almost all of them raise their hands. That complicates the issue. Look what Elder Bednar does. He does the difficult conversation, right? Me and you alone.
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Dr. Ross Baron:	00:37:53	Uh, we have a colleague, Hank, and there was an article written, this is years ago. I did not like the article. Like I felt like, oh my word. You know, and I was kind of grinding about it and I said, "I'm just going to go to him." I knocked on the door. I had it in my hand. I walked in. I go, "Do you have a minute?" He goes, "Yeah." I go, "This is a disaster. Let me tell you why." I had it all marked up, margin right. We ended up having a great conversation and then our bond between each other, like instead
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of distancing, it was closer. Even though I was being very open, then later he said, "My least favorite thing is when I hear people talking about it, but no one ever came to me." And it's exactly what you just said, Hank. Kind of fun. And it can be hard. It can be hard because you don't want to go to that person. Elder Oaks. "A fourth option is to communicate with the church officer who has the power to correct or release the person thought to be in error or transgression." I mean, there are release valve options. We can go to stake presidents, we can go to the bishop, we can go to an area 70. There are options that we have. Elder Oaks is saying that's a legitimate remedy. Then Elder Oaks says this, "There is a fifth remedy. We can pray for the resolution of the problem. We should pray for the leader whom we think to be an error, asking the Lord to correct the circumstance if it needs correction. At the same time, we should pray for ourselves, asking the Lord to correct us if we are in error." Again, this is the February 1987 Ensign, which is now the Liahona. You can get it on your gospel library. It's Dallin H. Oaks and it's entitled Criticism. One of our colleagues, Hank, Stephan Taeger, and I have had numerous conversations about this, and Stephan's got some pretty interesting thoughts. And we had a conversation, he gave some good counsel, and I'm going to weave some of his counsel in here, but I want to make sure he got some credit for this. One of the things he thinks if somebody's trying to work out a disagreement with a prophet or the prophets, he said number one is, this is, again, Stephan and me, but spiritual discernment, but discernment with respect. So, let's say somebody comes and says, "John, I have a problem with the prophets about the family." The point would be like, "Huh, you do?" Well, every single scripture from Genesis to Revelation basically supports what we're saying about the family, and every single prophetic word, both ancient and modern, also supports what we're saying. In other words, we can hear all those things and people can have that opinion, but I think what we need to do is teach members of the church, look, we have solid foundation for this. This is grounded in text and grounded in prophetic sayings. Number two is a question, does this council harm my flourishing or my well-being? John, you brought up we're going to change second hour, right? I guarantee there's someone really upset about it. There's somebody going to be really upset about it. I'm like, leave it alone. We're talking about like a policy thing. Could it change in the future? Yes. In all probability, will it change in the future? Yes. Does it harm my flourishing or my well-being that we're changing this? And the answer is no. I don't know how many times you guys have gone here, but one of the great scriptures that addresses this, if you don't mind, I'd love us to go there. It's Matthew chapter 17. We don't talk much about this particular verse, but this is the time when they go to Peter and ask him if Jesus pays taxes. You guys remember this story?

Hank Smith: 00:41:37

Yeah. And he pulls him aside, Peter, what are you thinking?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:41:42

So verse 24, I'm in Matthew 17:24. I want to illustrate the second

counsel, like does this council harm my flourishing or well-being? Verse 24, "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?" In other words, is he paying the tax? Peter, yes, he does. He does. And when he'd come into the house, "Jesus prevented him saying, what thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute of their own children or of strangers?" This has got to be one of those moments where Peter is like, I did it again. You know what I mean? Like, ah. "Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him," he just makes a statement. Then the children are free. Verse 27, "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them." It's not going to harm our well-being or our flourishing if in this particular instance, we just minimize this. Go thou to the sea, cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shall find a piece of money that take and give unto them for me and thee. I love that story. We're not going to make a big deal of this. But just so you know, Peter, first of all, don't ask, don't speak for me when you don't have authorization. But we're not going to make a big deal of it. It doesn't harm us long-term. It's not going to be an impediment to the ministry. Nobody's soul is not going to be saved as a result of this, so we're not going to make a big deal of it. John, when you were talking about second hour change, it's not changing anybody's well-being or human flourishing. It's okay. Let's not offend anybody. Let's keep it to ourselves if we have a beef with it. We're not going to sow discord. We're not going to create strife. We're going to be champs. We're just going to launch in. Is that okay? Any thoughts on that?

John Bytheway: 00:43:43 I love the definition of meekness. S. Michael Wilcox wrote an article about the beatitudes and he talked about meekness being great power under complete control. Here's Jesus saying, "We know what's going on here, but we don't need to offend people." So, and then the pretty miraculous to go get a fish, there'll be some money in its mouth. Only Jesus could do that, but I love the point. We don't need to offend them. I love the way you've tied that in there.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:44:14 When Elder Bednar talked about meekness, I don't know if you remember, but he, he gave three defining characteristics. One was being willingly submissive, righteously responsive, and having strong self-restraint, what you talked about with power. And Jesus is always all those things. And Peter is learning to be willingly submissive, righteously responsive, and having strong self-restraint. But I think it, again, like to your point, John, Jesus saying, look, we're not going to make a big deal of this. We're not going to offend anybody over this. Why? Because it doesn't inhibit human flourishing or well-being. Like, it's just not a hill we need to die on right now. Maybe at some future point, that context might change, but for right now, no need. We don't have a need for that. We're totally good.

Hank Smith: 00:44:59 Yeah. Luke chapter nine, the Samaritan village offends James

and John, so much so that they want to destroy it, which by the way, that tells you a lot about prophets. Whoa, this is like James and John. Apostles willing to do this to this city. Maybe he should kick them out of the 12. Why doesn't he? But then my favorite part of the whole story is Jesus said, how about we just go to a different village?

- John Bytheway: 00:45:27 We're good.
- Hank Smith: 00:45:28 Yeah. How about we don't kill anyone? How about we go somewhere else? That's that same attitude. Like, we're okay.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:45:35 James and John were probably, Huh, not a bad idea.
- Hank Smith: 00:45:38 Yeah. You don't want to murder people? No, no, actually, there's a different hotel right over there. We're just going to preach over there.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:45:46 It's probably a good idea. The first thing, if somebody came to me and said, you know, I have a problem with such and such, I'd say, number one, do we have scriptures and words of prophets that are, can, we can ground ourselves in? Number two, is it harming my flourishing or well-being? Then number three, and this we're going to go back to, is prayer. You have to, in the end, go to the Lord and receive that peace, that revelation. I want to be clear, you might not get revelation about the particular thing you're talking about, but you will get peace and revelation about his prophets, his seers, and his servants. The Lord might say, I'm not going to answer you about fill in the blank. I'm not answering you about that, but Dallin H. Oaks is my servant. He's my servant. That's what you need to know. And once you know that from God, I think we could be okay. Like we can move forward.
- John Bytheway: 00:46:44 That willingness to pray indicates your own personal meekness in that situation. I think of section 50 verse 24, "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, (or she that receiveth light) and continueth in God, receiveth more light." It's a strange thing sometimes that those who want more light but they're upset about something to the point they discontinue God. They want more light and then they unplug from the source of all light. I like this counsel here to continue in God, which is probably the same thing as saying stay on the covenant path. If you want more light, be humble enough to say, let me pray about this and continue in God. I like that. Is there a spirit of meekness enough to say, let me pray about this? So, I think that's great advice from Stephan Taeger to pray about it. Be willing to pray about it. Have that spirit to pray about it.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 00:47:43 Something that President Oaks, I think if he were adding to this, coupled with prayer, like you said, John, is to trust the Lord, meaning oftentimes the Lord won't give us the detailed answer we want and he'll give us that peace. We have to be willing to go to God and kind of vent to the Lord. It's okay to vent to the Lord, but then trust the peace that he sends. Okay, I'm going to be okay with this. I don't fully understand it all. I don't get it, but I

trust the Lord.

John Bytheway: 00:48:17 Or in other words, I'm willing to let God prevail.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:48:21 I'm Willing to let God prevail in this. Yep. It's his kingdom.

John Bytheway: 00:48:23 It reminds me too of maybe you were going to bring this up, but when Section 76 first was revealed, and what did Brigham Young say? I don't reject it, but I don't understand it. He was willing to sit with it, willing to pray about it. And now we think, oh, really? Yeah, when we think of Section 76, but that was pretty new.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:48:46 And it was new for all of them. It wasn't just Brigham. A lot of people. I think it's one of the greatest doctrines ever revealed, obviously, but they struggled with it. Like you say, Brigham was like, okay, I'm going to wait on this. I'm going to pray. I got to let it sit. I got to ponder. I got to work through this. I think that's totally appropriate. It's fine. It's totally fine.

Hank Smith: 00:49:05 Ross, I would plead with people, don't leave.

John Bytheway: 00:49:09 Continue in God.

Hank Smith: 00:49:10 Yeah. That's going to be the worst thing you could do if you really want to understand.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:49:14 Hold onto the truths you know to be true. You stay, you're good. In the end, it's an interesting thing. I wanted to end this part, if that's okay. I just have literally a burning witness of the reality of modern prophets. I really do. I got baptized when I was 18, and since I was 18 until now, it's in my heart by the Holy Ghost, imprinted in my soul that the Lord works through his servants that he calls. And it's. I have my other issues and other weaknesses, but that's not one of them. I have a burning witness of the reality of prophets. To anybody listening, Dallin H. Oaks is a prophet. I know it. And there are prophets and apostles on earth and I know it. So, can there be hard things? Yeah, absolutely. Stay with the kingdom. We're good. We're being led by him, through his servants. As weak as they all might be, I don't think they're weak, by the way. They seem very strong and capable to me, but they're all human and like James said, subject to like passions as we are. That's an interesting thing. It's a beautiful thing.

Hank Smith: 00:50:20 I hate to say something I've said a thousand times, but I do not know where. I honestly do not know. Well, I know I wouldn't be here if it weren't for Gordon B. Hinckley coming into my life when I was a teenager. Obviously, I love the presidents of the Church, continue to love him, but when you think of those formative years, Mosiah eight, where Ammon says, "God has provided a means whereby a man, a prophet, can be a great benefit to his fellow beings."

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:50:53 On that note, it's Gordon B. Hinckley for you. For me, it was Spencer W. Kimball. I never met President Kimball, but I was in his presence a couple times, and I testified that he was a prophet when I was a missionary. I love what you said, Mosiah

8. That is so powerful. When Dallin H. Oaks came to BYU in February of this year and essentially gave his first address as the prophet, that was a unique experience. There was something there that's difficult to describe unless you experience it. It was powerful. I think President Oaks felt it, by the way. You could tell there was something going on, but that was an amazing experience.

John Bytheway: 00:51:33

Yeah, Ross, for me, I think it would probably be Spencer W. Kimball as well. I remember those General Conferences. I remember sitting with my dad. I remember priesthood conferences. There was something about him and something about a testimony of living prophets that I remember from those days. And every time there was a new one, I thought, oh, this is going to be different. It just seems to get better every time.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:51:57

Yeah. I'm glad you brought that up, John, because when Hank said Gordon B. Hinckley and you and I are saying Spencer Kimball, but the truth is Howard W. Hunter, Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, Russell M. Nelson and Dallin H. Oaks. Every one of them I've received a witness. Every one of them, I've felt that. I remember one time, I don't know exactly the context, but all of a sudden I heard President Hinckley's voice and I got tingles. I remember, like, I heard his voice and I just got chills just hearing his voice. I love that man, and every modern prophet. And I know we didn't talk about Old Testament prophets per se, but Old Testament prophets are prophets who had weaknesses who were fallible. But in the end, using Moses, circling back, if you followed Moses, you lived, and if you didn't, you died. There's the bottom line. By the way, Moses might not have said hi to you, John, when you walked into church, or he might have offended your uncle one time.

John Bytheway: 00:53:08

Oh, Ross, this has been great. I'm taking notes all over the place. Where would you like to go next?

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:53:14

I'd like to address the idea of what scholars call dual fulfillment of prophecy. And it's not always dual, it can be even more than two, but it can be multiple. I really appreciate in the Come Follow Me Manual, it uses Isaiah chapter 40 verse three, and it says, quoting, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord." The manual then says, "To the captive Jews in Babylon, this statement might have referred to the Lord providing a way out of captivity and back to Jerusalem. To Matthew, Mark, and Luke, this prophecy referred to John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the savior's mortal ministry. Joseph Smith received revelation that this prophecy is still being fulfilled today in preparation for Christ's millennial ministry." That's right from the manual. It's really beautiful that it's helping us understand. Sometimes we can get locked into that this particular verse means this. There might be in certain circumstances where that is the case, but oftentimes it can be layered, especially Hebrew prophets, especially Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and then going Hosea to Malachi. There can be layered prophecies. Walter C. Kaiser, who was a

biblical scholar, said, quote, "Dual fulfillment of prophecy is the view that a single prophetic word may have an initial historical fulfillment near the prophet's own time and a later fuller fulfillment, often messianic or eschatological, meaning of the latter days, or referring to the end of times, without requiring two unrelated meanings." I'm going to use a very famous passage from Isaiah chapter seven, starting in verse 14. "Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good." Verse 16, "For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." Now, I'm going to quote from Elder Holland, quote, "The dual or parallel fulfillment of this prophecy comes in the realization that Isaiah's wife, a pure and good young woman, symbolically representing another pure young woman, Mary, did bring forth a son. This boy's birth was a type and shadow of the greater and later fulfillment of that prophecy, the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The dual fulfillment here is particularly interesting in light of the fact that Isaiah's wife apparently was of the royal line of David. Isaiah's son is thus the type, the prefiguring of the greater Immanuel Jesus Christ, the ultimate king who would be born of a literal virgin." That's in Jeffrey R. Holland's. It was an article he wrote called "More Fully Persuaded Isaiah's Witness of Christ's Ministry" in the book Isaiah in the Book of Mormon. That's an example of, you can have discussions about scripture and fulfillment of prophecy and prophecies that are layered, that have multiple fulfillment, and that have historical fulfillment, which is prefiguring or typing later fulfillment. Hank and John, as we teach our university level classes, I don't know about you guys, but sometimes I've had some students who are a little reticent about accepting that. Push back a little bit like, wait, what? You're saying? Yeah, I'm saying this. And it's nice to have an Elder Holland quote to be like, we're good.

Hank Smith: 00:56:55

Yeah. I promise we're okay.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:56:57

Yeah. I promise we're okay.

John Bytheway: 00:56:59

The first time I really looked into the background, the current event of Isaiah seven, I thought, how could this possibly be referring to Christ before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, so like age of accountability, the land that thou abhorrest, these rivals who are trying to form an alliance, will be forsaken of both her kings? How could that be an event coming in 700 years? And that's exactly how, because there's a current event part and there's a coming event part. There's another fulfillment of this. So yeah, I love that Elder Holland statement. And of course, Isaiah would be that way. He was brilliant at being able to. You called it layered. I like that.

Hank Smith: 00:57:45

Ross, help me clear up my thinking then. Matthew takes this prophecy and says, this absolutely applies to Christ, which Matthew can do. This is scripture. The book of Matthew is

scripture. So we can say 100% that applies to Christ. Let's also see that it's talking about a woman in Isaiah's day who the baby is not going to be super old before both these kingdoms above them are going to be gone. Those both can be true at the same time.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:58:13 That's a beautiful thing. That, again, John, this is your point. Isaiah's a master at this. He's going to layer things. We say dual fulfillment, but it could be triple fulfillment or quadruple fulfillment. In fact, Elder Oaks quote, this is from Ensign, January 1995, quote, "The book of Isaiah contains numerous prophecies that seem to have multiple fulfillments. One seems to involve the people of Isaiah's day or the circumstances of the next generation. Another meaning, often symbolic, seems to refer to events in the meridian of time when Jerusalem was destroyed and her people scattered after the crucifixion of the Son of God. Still another meaning or fulfillment of the same prophecy seems to relate to the events attending the second coming of the Savior." You've got a historical context, one for the meridian of time when Jesus was on earth, then one that has to do eschatologically at or near the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is super important and actually quite fun and liberating to be able to say, this verse doesn't have to mean exactly this. It can have these multiple meanings and multiple layers and multiple fulfillments.

John Bytheway: 00:59:24 And that's why I think Jesus could say that great are the words of Isaiah because Jesus gave him a lot of those words, but the fact that he could use that paragraph and mean multiple things with it. The one I'm thinking of is prophesying in Isaiah the oncoming Assyrian army, another fulfillment is a latter-day army of missionaries with a totally different purpose, and it's described in the same words.

Dr. Ross Baron: 00:59:54 That's really good. I like the way you did that. That's really good. Now I want to talk about maybe a difficult thing, but I think it's super important. That is what I'm calling the nature of prophecy and agency. Generally, all prophecies I'm going to suggest are conditional. In other words, whether the condition is explicitly stated or not, prophecy often functions as an implied if-then statement. The example of Jonah. In Jonah chapter three, verse four, it says, "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey and he cried and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." A prophet declared that Nineveh would be overthrown in 40 days, but it did not happen. Nineveh was not overthrown in 40 days. Why? Because the people repented. Jonah, at least in the text, did not explicitly state that repentance would spare the city from destruction, but such a condition is generally inherent in prophetic warnings. Thus, Jonah was not a false prophet because his prophecy was not fulfilled in a literal kind of that sense. Rather, the prophecy was conditional and the unstated condition was met when the people repented. Also, Jesus, just so we're clear, repeatedly explicitly recognized Jonah as a prophet. Matthew chapter 12 verse 39, Matthew chapter 16

verse four, Luke chapter 11 verse 29, where Jesus calls Jonah a prophet. But you could say, oh, but his prophecy wasn't fulfilled. Now, part of me is layering this, John, because sometimes critics of Joseph Smith will be like, well, that prophecy hasn't been fulfilled. Joseph wasn't a prophet. Well, apply the same standard to all the prophets then, because there are yet to be fulfilled prophecies of the prophet Joseph. There are conditional prophecies of the prophet Joseph. He was a prophet in every single sense of Jonah or Moses or any other prophet. Hold them all to the same standard.

Hank Smith:	01:01:57	Maybe the Lord said to Jonah, what if they repent? He's like, they won't. No, no. What if they do? They won't. We already know that. The Lord's like, you should probably leave that open. I'm not going to.
John Bytheway:	01:02:05	No, we know the Assyrians. They're not going to repent.
Hank Smith:	01:02:08	Jonah didn't think they would.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:02:11	We know these people. I'm grateful, Lord, that you have that compassion towards them, but they're not going to repent.
Hank Smith:	01:02:15	So, there's a prophet being a person.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:02:17	Well, and we know from the book of Jonah, even when they repent, he's upset about it.
Hank Smith:	01:02:21	Yeah. He's like, see, I told you. I told you, you wouldn't destroy him.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:02:25	If you don't like Veggie Tales, this is the best episode is the Jonah Veggie Tales.
John Bytheway:	01:02:30	Really? Got to watch it.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:02:31	Oh, it's so good.
Hank Smith:	01:02:32	You haven't seen the movie? Oh, the Jonah - Oh, so good. This is a good one. The Fish Slappers? You haven't watched the fish slappers?
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:02:37	Fish Slappers? Yeah. This is one. This is a good one. You got to watch it. Now, here's another thing. Sometimes people wonder why the Lord calls certain individuals to significant responsibilities when they later fail or transgress big time. Then they're like, wait, if God called that person via inspiration, then later that person did whatever or was a buffoon at the calling, why did he call 'em? We probably all heard or thought similar things. King David, how about that as an example? Judas Iscariot, how about that as an example? Oliver Cowdery, the second elder of the church, Thomas B. Marsh, and many of the original 12 in this dispensation. People will be like, wait, the Lord called them? In 2002, there was a movie that came out called Minority Report. Did you guys ever see that movie?
Hank Smith:	01:03:35	I did.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:03:35	K- kind of a weird movie.
Hank Smith:	01:03:37	They're going to stop a crime before it happens.

Dr. Ross Baron:	01:03:40	Exactly. In Minority Report, it's set in the year 2054, there's a specialized pre-crime unit. Did you hear that? Pre-crime unit where they arrest people before they commit the crime because these arrests are based on foreknowledge provided by psychics known as precogs who can foresee the future criminal acts. So in essence, people are punished for crimes they have not yet committed because their future actions are, follow this, presumed to be fixed. The Lord is not a Minority Report God. This is critical to understand. When Judas was called to be one of the 12 apostles, he was worthy of that calling, had been foreordained to serve in that sacred office. His eventual betrayal of the Savior resulted from his own misuse of his agency, not from a predetermined destiny. God did not call Judas because he wanted him to fail. No one is foreordained to fail. I want to say that again. No one is foreordained to fail. That's not the nature of God. Rather, Judas was entrusted with an opportunity and he chose how he responded to it. In fact, the Lord says, "One of you shall betray me." And some people have thought, well, then he was predestined to do that. No, no, no, no. That is not. Foreordination is a true concept. Predestination is a false concept. Predestination is the idea that we have no agency. Foreordination is the idea that we are foreordained to certain tasks, talents, callings, and that we can then use our agency to live up or not live up. But again, I'll emphasize, no one is foreordained to fail.
John Bytheway:	01:05:20	And you know the example that I went to, Lehi's dream. Here's Lehi, partakes of the fruit. I saw your mother and Sam and Nephi and they stood as if they knew not whether they should go. I called to them with a loud voice, come unto me and they did. Whereas Laman and Lemuel, I called them and they would not partake. Was that a prophecy? No, because what does Lehi do at the end of 1 Nephi 8? He pled with them with all the feeling of a tender parent. It reminds me of, sorry to bring in a Christmas Carol and Ebenezer Scrooge, but when Ebenezer Scrooge sees his own headstone, he says, are these shadows of things that might be or shadows of things that must be?
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:06:01	Do you remember Orson F. Whitney, when he was on his mission, had a dream where he saw the Savior in Gethsemane? In the dream, he sees the Savior in Gethsemane and he's upset that Peter, James and John are asleep. In this dream, as he's looking at what's happening, the Savior looks at him and ends up like the next section of the dream, he's with Jesus. He says, basically the Savior says, what would you like? He said, I want to be with you forever. And the Lord says, that depends entirely now on you. Which is the Ebenezer Scrooge, this depends entirely on you. It's definitely a possibility, but I can't guarantee it now. Then he, by the way, end of the story, he also said, you were mad at Peter, James and John because they were asleep. You've been asleep on your mission. And then the vision ended. Oh, man. You're mad at them? Yeah, it's you. That's you. That's why that was shown to you.

Hank Smith:	01:07:00	You would've been reaped.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:07:01	Exactly. You would've been reaped.
Hank Smith:	01:07:03	You would've been reaped.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:07:05	No reaping. No reaping.
Hank Smith:	01:07:08	I think we struggle when principles of the gospel bump into each other. For example, God knows everything. He is omniscient. That is true.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:07:18	True.
Hank Smith:	01:07:19	We are agents. Agency is eternal. Those two things butt up against each other and we struggle. It's okay to struggle, but we're not going to say, well, one of them's not true. So, in that tension and say, well, I know they're both true. I just maybe don't know how, right now, how they're both true.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:07:38	God knows all things is a statement of faith and that I have agency is a statement of faith. Don't give one up. Well, how does it work? I go, first of all, we don't fully understand what it means when we say God knows all things. Like, there's a lot of interesting dimensions to that idea, but I know it's true. I also know I have agency. I know that's true. My friend, Phil Allred, who you've had on the show, he talks about. Because I've said, oh, we got to maintain that tension. He goes, why don't we call it fruitful balance? Like -
Hank Smith:	01:08:13	That was almost a good impression of him.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:08:15	Exactly. Let's hold those two things in fruitful balance. I was like, okay. He goes, the word tension seems to imply that maybe they are at odds, but in God's view, they're not at odds. Let's hold them in fruitful balance. I was like, all right, Phil, we'll do that. We'll hold them in fruitful balance.
Hank Smith:	01:08:33	One thing that's important to remember, section 130, the Lord says, look, past, present, and future, that's not a me thing, that's a you thing. I see them all at the same time. Look at people like Abinadi, who see something and then speak as it has already happened, because they saw it already happen. In their mind, yeah, it's already happened. I saw it. We've got to be open to my ways are not your ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:08:59	I really like that. Okay, so I said generally, I don't know if you guys noticed, but I was very careful. I said, generally, the nature of prophecy is conditional, but when it comes to members of the Godhead and their future actions, I'm going to suggest that prophecies about them are independent in their fulfillment of human agency. That's because of God's unchanging character attributes and perfections. In other words, when Jesus says, I'm coming again, the Second Coming, whether I'm in the church or out of the church, there's a Second Coming. There's a resurrection whether I believe or don't believe. In other words, my actions will not impede on or they're not hinging on that for me. Now, what kind of body I get in the resurrection does depend on my agency, but the fact of the resurrection doesn't

depend on my agency. So, they have one category of prophecy that has an inherent if/then principle, which I think generally has to do with the agency of human beings. Then there's another class, maybe a narrower class of prophecies that has to do with what God is going to do in the world himself. That is independent of what we do.

John Bytheway: 01:10:22 That's a great clarification. You're going to spend eternity somewhere. Correct. Right. Now you have an impact on where that might be, but you're going to be somewhere.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:10:33 You're going to be somewhere.

John Bytheway: 01:10:34 For eternity, forever.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:10:36 I like to tell classes, there's nothing you can do to not be resurrected.

John Bytheway: 01:10:40 I don't think you can opt out of that. I don't think there's a checkbox. That's, that's happening.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:10:43 There's not a checkbox. There's not a dropdown menu, not interested. No. You're coming back out of the grave.

Hank Smith: 01:10:49 By the way, if someone says, well, that's not agency. Well, you chose it when you came to come to earth.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:10:53 Boom. That's exactly right. No, you voluntarily already use your agency to choose it. And like Elder Maxwell said, they don't wake you up in the middle of your operation to ask you if you still want to continue. You already agreed. We're pushing through.

John Bytheway: 01:11:10 I'm so glad they don't too.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:11:12 I did wake up once during an operation, by the way. True story. Wow. And I went like this, "Ow." And they all went, froze. And then they put me back under and then didn't charge me for the anesthesia. Honest truth, that's a true story.

John Bytheway: 01:11:27 Really?

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:11:28 Yeah, good times. It hurt.

Hank Smith: 01:11:30 I love that from Elder Maxwell. You don't get to decide now. You already chose.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:11:35 I already decided to have the operation. So halfway through, they don't like, bring him out. Hey, are you still good with this?

Hank Smith: 01:11:40 Hey, you still good?

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:11:41 You still good with this? No, I'm out. Okay. Sew me back up.

John Bytheway: 01:11:45 You, you know what I like with that, Ross, is Moses 1:39," For behold, this is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality..." Check. Jesus was resurrected and you will be. That box has been checked. Now, the eternal life, that's different, but this one, done.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:12:05 And there's nothing Jesus didn't do on His end that would not allow me to gain eternal life. Everything that He can do, He's done. God empowered his son to do everything for me. I did want to add one other thing, and that's the famous lost

manuscript. I think Joseph Smith, he has two massive misconceptions. He thinks number one, that he personally could frustrate the plan of God. Then number two, that he's damned. Essentially, he has two completely false ideas. Number one, I've ruined God's plan, and number two, I'm going to hell. And the Lord's like, uh, verse one, remember the works, the designs, the purposes of God cannot be frustrated neither can they come to naught. So, the hubris you have that you think you could ruin my plan, done. Number two, no, you're not damned. You can repent. But then he says, if you're not careful, you'll fall. I can do my own work. I'll call someone else. It's my work.

John Bytheway:	1:13:09	Just like Judas.
Dr. Ross Baron:	1:13:10	Now, as a Latter-day Saint, I love, love, love the prophet Joseph. So even the idea that he wouldn't have been the prophet that's made, it's hard for me to even have it come out of my mouth. But the Lord's like, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Whoa. First of all, you're not damned. You can't ruin my work if you repent, but if you're not careful, you'll fall and I'll call someone else. There was no predestination. There was foreordination. And then there was like a razor's edge right there for Joseph where he had to learn some things and the members of the church had to learn some things. But what a powerful lesson, what a great lesson.
Hank Smith:	01:13:43	Do you think he would say, look, I got Joseph Knight Jr. and Joseph Knight Senior right over in the wings? Like they're ready to go.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:13:49	I got a bunch of Josephs.
Hank Smith:	01:13:49	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	01:13:50	Do you know what I love about this too? The Lord in his foresight, perhaps, section 10, he says, "I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. They've only got a part or an abridgment of the account of Nephi, but there are many things engraven upon the plates of Nephi which do throw greater views upon my gospel. Therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi and send forth in this work." And it's like, yeah, we lost those book of Lehi, but actually, this is even better. I'll give you something better. That in his foresight is awesome. So that's section 10 verse 45. I have something that throws greater views on the gospel. Yeah.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:14:32	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	01:14:32	Try to mess up the work of the Lord. No, won't work.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:14:35	Can't do it. You can't frustrate my work. One of the things I love to do is I take students to Mosiah 27. This is where Alma, the younger, is having his experience with the angel. And the angel says something fascinating. He says, "Nothing shall destroy my church except the transgression of my people." In other words, there is no external anti-Mormon press that'll destroy the church.

There is no external nuclear weapon that'll destroy the church. There is no external institution, organization, club, philosophy that will destroy the church. The only thing that will destroy the church is when the agency of the members of the church refuse to keep their covenants and move away from God. But God's church, God's church, and he's telling Alma, hey, man, there's nothing you can do to destroy my church. You can't do it. Now, transgression of the people, that could be the internal corruption. That's your choice because you're using your agency. But what a comforting, powerful verse that is for us to understand. God's in charge.

- John Bytheway: 01:15:34 Hugh Nibley says, the Nephite problem was not the Lamanites. The Nephite problem was the Nephite.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:15:40 That's exactly right.
- John Bytheway: 01:15:42 They're the ones who caused the most problems for Joseph Smith. Was it people not of the church? No, it was apostate members.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:15:49 Joseph's quoted as, "It is from apostates that we receive the greatest persecution."
- Hank Smith: 01:15:53 I think sometimes we walk into a-let's say we love a math class. We walk into the class and we know the teacher teaches a more advanced math. We see a math problem on the board and go, I want to know that. And the math teacher says, we'll get there, but there's no way I could explain it to you today, but if you'll keep doing what we're doing, you'll get there. I promise. I feel that way with some of these that the Lord would say, look, even if I tried to explain it to you right now, I'd just confuse you more. So, stay on the path, you'll get there.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:16:24 Right. Amen. The last thing I wanted to do today, I realized that you're going to have guests on the program that are going to dive into Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and then minor prophets. And I know you have some amazing guests who are going to do that. So, I wanted to do just one, if I could. I'm calling it a golden nugget from the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament. It's a fun one that we generally don't talk about that much, but the prophet Joseph had some things to say about it. So, if we could go to Zechariah chapter 14. Zechariah 14, and this is near and dear to my heart. You'll see why, obviously. Zechariah is the penultimate prophet of the Old Testament. I got to say penultimate today because he's second to last. Thank you very much. Check
- Hank Smith: 01:17:12 Check that box. Yeah.
- Dr. Ross Baron: 01:17:13 I know, you're welcome. Verse four. This is talking about the Messiah, talking about Jesus. "...his feet", that is Jesus's feet, "shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." Both of you have been to Israel multiple times. You know that the old city, if you look east, there's the valley of Kidron, and then there's the Mount of Olives. As you go north on the north end of the Mount of Olives, this is Mount

Scopus, which is where the Jerusalem Center is in Hebrew University, and as you go south, it tapers off and ends. But right across, this is exactly right, there's the Mount of Olives. So, it says, His feet, the Messiah's feet in the last days are going to stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. Then what's going to happen? "...the Mount of Olives shall cleave", in other words, split, "in the midst thereof toward the east and towards the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." Now notice this, "And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains." Now, the ye there, I'm going to suggest, are those that are believing in Jesus Christ, maybe Jews that haven't fully converted, but are believers. They're going to flee to that valley for protection. Here's the connection. Moses takes the children of Israel to the Red Sea. Egypt, the major power is going to overtake them. Then God does what? He cleaves the Red Sea. He parts the Red Sea, and into the valley between the two sides of the waters, his covenant people are protected. Christ, by the way, this is section 45 of the Doctrine Covenants where the Lord gives a kind of a modern view on this, but it's very similar to Zechariah 14. He is going to come at a horrific point. The Lord loves a buzzer beater. He loves fourth quarter. He loves the fourth watch. He's going to come and he's going to put his foot on the Mount of Olives. It's going to create a valley into that valley, just like in the Red Sea, his people will go. Then he says at the end of verse five, "...and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Then jump down to verse eight, "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem." Now, I'm going to suggest to you that living waters is Jesus Christ and that living waters are authorized prophets. They're going to go out from Jerusalem because they haven't been going out from Jerusalem. But if you notice something about the conference center, the conference center in Salt Lake City was, is made out of granite, but it's conspicuously made so that water is flowing out of the conference center. Every single April and October, we go to the conference center or we watch from the conference center or, and our homes at the conference center, and living water is proceeding forth out of the conference center because why? Because we have living prophets and Jesus Christ lives and because he's teaching through his prophets. But there's going to be a future day when living water shall come from Jerusalem. Verse nine, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth". Future prophecy, millennial day. In that day, there shall be one Lord and his name, one. Isn't that beautiful? Powerful prophecy, Old Testament. Now, here's Joseph Smith. The teachings of the prophet Joseph Smith, page 286. Judah must return. Joseph speaks so confidently. Jerusalem must be rebuilt and the temple, that part is not fulfilled yet. Jews have returned to Judah. Judah's returned. Jerusalem is being rebuilt, but the temple's not there. Water come out from under the temple and the waters of the Dead Sea be healed. Wait, the waters of the Dead Sea be healed? Wow. It will take

some time to rebuild the walls of the city and the temple, and all this must be done before the Son of Man will make his appearance. Wow. So, there's things yet to be fulfilled and we live in exciting times, but this is one of those things. Now, I checked the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, page 286, with the actual journal from which this was taken. You can go on Joseph Smith papers. You can look. The actual references, December 1842 to June 1844, book two, 10th of March 1843, page 75. That's where this is. It's been a little smoothed out by Joseph Fielding Smith and the teachings of the prophet Joseph, but it's very true to what is said in the journal from the notes when the prophet was speaking. It directly relates, of course, to Zechariah 14 and some future events and things that have already been fulfilled, but I just wanted to bring that up as a super exciting words of prophets that are fulfilled and still are yet to be fulfilled.

John Bytheway:	01:22:14	Beautiful. I love that it says, "Living water shall go out from Jerusalem."
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:22:21	Jesus Christ and his prophets will be speaking from Jerusalem. Obviously, it's kind of one of those no duh. Oh, of course. And living prophets and Jesus speak right now from Salt Lake City from the conference center.
John Bytheway:	01:22:33	And Ross, tell us what living water is and how that would be different from a cistern.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:22:40	Depending on the cistern. But the problem with cisterns is they're stagnant generally. They can get mossy and infested and poisonous, whereas living water is the kind of water that will replenish your physical being in a way that would promote health, well-being, as opposed to stagnant putrefied water. Now, not all cisterns were, but some cisterns could have problems.
Hank Smith:	01:23:04	I never noticed that about the conference center.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:23:07	Isn't that cool?
John Bytheway:	01:23:08	That's super cool.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:23:09	I always like to show my students a picture, and everyone goes like this, Hank. I never noticed that. They all do that. They all say. They're like, oh my word, because it's right there facing North Temple. It's, it's the water is coming out, pouring out. Out of the granite, this is Moses hitting the rock. The water comes out, living water from the conference center every April, every October. Pretty cool.
John Bytheway:	01:23:35	What did we just do? We found Christ. We just drew another image of Christ out of the Old Testament. Another one.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:23:42	Well, I could even go further. So, when it says, "His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives," and then I would go to Isaiah 52, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the founder of peace who publishes peace and publisheth good tidings." What is he doing when he comes to the believing Jews? He's publishing peace and he's publishing good tidings, and how

beautiful are his feet? What are they going to do when they touch his feet? They're going to be like, well, what are these wounds in your hands and your feet? These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Isn't that cool? That is my prophets and prophecy.

John Bytheway: 01:24:20 Ross, thank you for being with us this whole year on Thoughts to Keep in Mind. It's been so great. And one of the things you said at the beginning, you talked about small P prophets and capital P prophets, maybe president of the church, but everyone listening, if you have a testimony of Christ, what did you quote? Revelation 19:10? 19:10. Well, then where did you get it? The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. We're talking to small P prophets out there. What was Moses's?

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:24:51 Numbers 11:29.

John Bytheway: 01:24:53 Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:24:53 Would that all the Lord's people were prophets?

John Bytheway: 01:24:56 Yeah.

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:24:57 'Cause he says, "Envious thou for my sake," because Joshua says, "Forbid them from prophesying." And he says, "Envious thou for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets?" Would everybody had the gift of the spirit and could testify of Jesus?

John Bytheway: 01:25:11 Yeah. So, we have an audience, I believe, of people that are small P prophets and prophetesses that love Jesus and believe in him. And how did they get that? They got it by the spirit of prophecy, by revelation. Could you just talk to them as you sign off for our last episode of Thoughts to Keep in Mind?

Dr. Ross Baron: 01:25:32 You bet. Whether you're a volunteer seminary teacher in some remote part of the world with five or six students and you're preparing your classes, and sometimes it feels like those teenagers don't care, but you're bearing your witness of Jesus Christ, of the restoration of prophets, you are part of God's plan, and you are a small P prophet, whether you're a woman or a man, and you are part of this great work. Again, Old Testament, Daniel, who said, it's going to come forth and break in pieces all the kingdoms of the world. It's going to roll forth and fill the whole earth. Don't be discouraged. Take courage. You are blessing lives. Everybody in their own sphere can have the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. I want to say one other thing, too, about that. John, you talked about where'd we get it? Well, you got it from an authorized messenger. I've had certain people come to me and say, I just go directly to Jesus. No, you don't. No, you don't. You got it from Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, or you got it through the prophet Joseph Smith, or you got it because the book of Alma changed your life or Paul, but you got it from an authorized messenger. I'm not saying we don't go to the Father and ascend boldly to the throne of grace as Paul teaches us, but I receive that witness that way. Now, rounding out these Thoughts to Keep in Mind for the year, when I was investigating

the church, I was rereading the Old Testament and feeling the spirit and power of the Old Testament. A lot of people feel a little distant from it, but I felt the spirit and power of it. I knew it was true. And when I got my patriarchal blessing, which I've talked about on this podcast, the patriarch who didn't know anything about me said it was the spirit of your fathers as you read the holy scriptures, which has brought you to a knowledge of this truth. And I thought, wow, and ain't that the truth? Again, the small P prophets, which I am and which you are, look, there's only 15 capital P prophets on earth, and there's really only one capital capital P prophet at any given time. I have a witness of the 15 who are prophets, seers, and revelators and revelators. I'll tell you this, when I do temple recommend interviews, one of the questions, the third question is, do you sustain the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the prophet, seer, and revelator, and as the only person on the earth authorized to exercise all priesthood keys? The Holy Ghost, every time, bears witness to me, and I feel they do it to them. And then I say, "Do you sustain the members of the First Presidency in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators, the Holy Ghost?" Again, I might have shared this before, but I had a woman, it was one of my first interviews as a young bishop. She was like 80. She came in and I asked her those questions and I said, you know, I asked her about the president of the church, and she looked at me and she goes, "Bishop, with all of my heart." And I was like, "Wow." It's like the whole room changed. And I was being taught by this venerable woman about temple recommend questions and how sacred they were. Every single question was this kind of spiritual experience, but again, revolving around God the Father, His son, Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ is my Savior and my Redeemer, and that there are prophets on earth today. Back to the Nibley quote. We should be doing back handsprings about prophets and apostles. Our evangelical friends or our Protestant friends or our Catholic friends who are listening, who are upset about this, you've heard me say it's legitimate to question whether or not our prophets are true prophets, but don't reject the idea of modern prophets. That's not biblical. That's not a biblical thing. Don't reject the idea of modern prophets. It's legitimate to question whether the Book of Mormon is the word of God. That's a legitimate question, but don't question whether or not we can have additional scripture. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He had prophets in the past. He'll have prophets in the future, and he has prophets now. He had scriptures in the past, he has scriptures now, and we'll get new scriptures in the future. That's the way God works. I, again, am thrilled to be with you. I love what you guys have done. I commend you both, and what a blessing it is, and I'm grateful that I can be a small part of it and witness with all my heart, again, just like the spirit has imprinted itself on my spirit of the truthfulness of these things of which I humbly bear witness in Jesus' name. Amen.

John Bytheway:	01:30:11	Amen.
Hank Smith:	01:30:11	Amen. We love Ross Baron.
John Bytheway:	01:30:15	It was good for us to be here.
Hank Smith:	01:30:17	Oh, man. My way of showing Ross I love him is affectionate disrespect. So, I need to. But I will take a break from that for one second, just say I love Ross Baron. I love being his friend. I love tapping into his mind. I love everything about him. I'm going to go back to my usual way after this.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:30:36	Especially like, I like when you like. So, Hank, sometimes I would teach right after Hank, and Hank would take the first part of my class and make fun of me for about five minutes and then leave.
Hank Smith:	01:30:48	And that was my way of saying I love you. That I love you.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:30:50	Exactly. Yeah. And my class would be like, That's Hank Smith. He's making fun of our teacher. Uh, that's good.
Hank Smith:	01:30:57	He must love him.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:30:58	He must love him. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	01:31:00	He must love him. Hank, I think your idea, taking all the Thoughts to Keep in Mind episodes and stringing them together would be a great way to get fired up about the Old Testament. It's just been so much fun this whole year.
Hank Smith:	01:31:12	He's funny, he's informative, he's dedicated, he's faithful.
John Bytheway:	01:31:17	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	01:31:17	Ross, you have a gift and you use it, you use that gift to point us in the right direction.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:31:21	Well, I think it was funny, Hank says to me, and he's never serious, he's like, "Hey, Ross, I need to talk to you in your office." I was like, "Okay." And then he comes and he shuts the door. I thought it was like getting a calling. I'm not kidding. I felt like it feels like I'm getting a calling, but Hank has nothing to do with anything like that. Um, he goes, "How would you, how would you feel about doing Thoughts to Keep in Mind?" I was like, "Great." He's like, "Great." I was like, "You're going to have to come here eight times." And I go, "How many times?" You're like, "Eight times. Yeah. Okay. It's going to be a lot of work. It's going to be a lot of work. It's going to be worth it." And it is, it's been amazing. It's been so great and such a blessing. Again, I commend you both because it's a marvelous work, uh, and we're part of the marvelous work and we get to be part of it. Like what a blessing. Oh my word.
Hank Smith:	01:32:06	Amazing.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:32:07	Hank, remember when we talked about like, uh, in Psalm 23, my cup runneth over. Sometimes I think like, yeah, my cup runneth over. Like what are you doing today? Dad, this morning, we're going to have fun. They're going to make me laugh and John's going to do his final Barney Fife imitation.
John Bytheway:	01:32:25	Really? Is that a conditional prophecy or is that - It's conditional.

Hank Smith:	01:32:30	On his agency. If he'll use his agency to, uh...
John Bytheway:	01:32:33	Let's see if I can channel that. Now we'd like to thank Dr. Ross Baron for coming on today.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:32:40	It's actually better than the original.
Hank Smith	1:32:42	It is.
John Bytheway:	01:32:44	Oh, you know, some's got it and some ain't.
Dr. Ross Baron:	01:32:47	Oh, if they ever remake the show, he's got to be the guy.
Hank Smith:	01:32:50	Got the guy. We got the guy.
John Bytheway:	01:32:53	Ross, what a blessing. We love you. This concludes our final Thoughts to Keep in Mind with the Baron of Ross. With Ross Baron, we love this man. We love his testimony. We love the feelings that we felt as we have spoken one with another concerning the welfare of our souls and of this Old Testament, which we love. Thank you for joining us. Please come back next time for another episode of followHIM.
Hank Smith:	01:33:20	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 , that's 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 Annabelle 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.