



Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their <i>Come, Follow Me</i> study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:11	We love to learn.
John Bytheway:	00:00:11	We love to laugh.
Hank Smith:	00:00:13	We want to learn and laugh with you.
John Bytheway:	00:00:15	As together.
Hank Smith:	00:00:16	We followHIM. Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I am your host. I'm here with my floodingly handsome co-host John Bytheway. I bet you know what we're going to talk about today, John. You are floodingly-
John Bytheway:	00:00:37	Yeah, I have no idea what flooding handsome means. I'll just take the flood part, figure-
Hank Smith:	00:00:41	I think I made that up. So let's jump right into this. We're talking Genesis. We need Bible experts when we talk Genesis, so tell us who we have with us today.
John Bytheway:	00:00:53	We do. We're so excited to have Krystal V. L. Pierce with us, and it's just fun to read our bio. I get all excited because I just love ancient Egypt stuff. Krystal V. L. Pierce was born in Logan, Utah, raised in Taylorsville, Utah. She has also lived in California, Idaho, and then it gets really cool, Egypt and Israel. She received a PhD in Egyptian archeology and Near Eastern languages and cultures from UCLA and an MA and BA in Near Eastern studies from UC Berkeley. She has taught classes on Egyptology and ancient Near Eastern studies at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA and UC Berkeley. She has

participated in archeological excavations and surveys at sites in Egypt and Israel.

- John Bytheway: 00:01:44 She's currently the Head Registrar for the Tel Shimron excavations in the Galilee region of Israel and the Chair of the Archeology of Egypt Session at the American Society of Overseas Research. She and her husband, who is professor George Pierce, have two children and live in Vineyard, Utah. And also, I just want to make sure people know, she just is the co-editor with David Seely of a new book called *Approaching Holiness*, which is a compilation of chapters about Old Testament teachings, which is pretty, pretty brand new, isn't it? And I'm so excited that we have scholars like this that will help us when we want to dive a little deeper. Do you have that book, Krystal? Can you hold it up for us or something?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:02:29 I do. It's right here.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:32 For our visual learners.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:02:35 Here it is.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:37 Wonderful. We're so glad to have you, and I'm so excited to talk about some of this stuff today. Thank you for joining us.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:02:44 Thank you for having me.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:47 I have to say, John, before we start, that I don't know if we've ever had a husband, wife as guests, have we?
- John Bytheway: 00:02:56 I don't think so. And so professor George is coming on later on in the year.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:02 He is slated to join us. So hopefully that will happen so they can be our first ever couple. What's it like having two Bible scholars in the same house?
- John Bytheway: 00:03:15 What's breakfast like? That's crazy.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:03:18 There are pros and cons to it. On the upside, we understand each other's careers and jobs and we go and dig in the summer together. We take the whole family. And on the other hand, that seems to be all we talk about. Every conversation is about archeology or Israel or Egypt or the Book of Mormon.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:44 Well, we are excited to have a Bible scholar with us to talk about two major Bible stories, the flood of Noah and the Tower

of Babel. I've heard you say it. I would normally say Babel. The Tower of Babel. How come we say Babel sometimes?

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:04:02 I'm not actually sure why we say Babel. I think because we say Babylon, and it's also connected to our word babble, this idea of gibberish or speaking like a baby. So I'm not exactly sure why we say Babel.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:18 How do you help your students approach ancient text in an appropriate way? ? Because we want to understand these people on their terms, in their context, but yet we want to apply it to us.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:04:30 It seems like we struggle a lot with just the Old Testament in general. And we seem to want to put it in a separate, different place than, say, the New Testament or the Book of Mormon that God seems angry or it's all about justice and there's not a lot of mercy. One of the first things I tell my students is that the Old Testament fits in perfectly with all of our other scripture. Honestly, and I hope by the end today, that we see that the Old Testament and the Flood narrative and the Tower of Babel narrative are all about mercy. They're all about mercy even though there's a lot of destruction and corruption and sin that's happening at the same time.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:05:12 So I usually tell my students, "Be open-minded when it comes to the Old Testament." A lot of times I think we come in with these preconceived ideas about how God should act or how righteous people should act. And when it doesn't quite match up, then sometimes we struggle. And another part is I say, "We're pretty far separated from the time of the Old Testament. It's a different time, a different place, a different culture, and so it's going to be harder for us to understand it. It's going to be more foreign to us than some of the other books of scripture."
- John Bytheway: 00:05:50 I wish I knew a percentage or I could see a pie chart, but how many in mainstream Christianity would pass off the story of Noah and the Flood as maybe a fable and not really a literal event? And we, from modern scripture, think, "Oh, we think this really happened."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:06:07 It's interesting because I do think that in the past, we've taken a very literal approach to the Bible. And that was considered the only faith-based approach. And now today, we've started to realize that there are many faith-based approaches to the Bible. Just even talking about the Flood, for example, you can believe in a global universal Flood that was a miracle, and that's fine. You can believe that it was more of a regional Flood. So when

they talk about the world or the earth, they're talking about their world, the world that they knew. And there's evidence of flood deposits in Mesopotamia and other places. And that's also a faith-based approach. And this is going back to this idea of being open minded about things. We'll get into this with Genesis 6.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:06:58 It mentions there were giants on the earth, which I think a lot of us would immediately say, "Oh, this is mythological. It can't be true." But if you actually go in and look at what the word means and the context and where else it appears in the Bible, you start to realize, "Oh, there are other interpretations to what a giant actually is." So I love that we can accept different points of view, even though I think we struggle with that. We want a nice tidy package. We want, "This means this and it can mean nothing else." But that's not how scripture works, that's not necessarily how these things work.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:37 No, that's great. I find myself saying a lot to my students, I'm not as smart as you guys, but things like, "Well, one school of thought is this, another school of thought is this. And maybe another school of thought is this." Next topic. "You're not helpful, Brother Bytheway."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:07:55 I do it too. I say, "Okay, my job is to give you all the information, and then your job is to go home and think about it, pray about it, study it, and come up with what works for you and what strengthens your faith. And it might be different than the person sitting next to you because we're all different people, and of course we're going to have different..." And we have to be okay with that. It's okay that we might interpret something differently than the next person.
- John Bytheway: 00:08:21 Krystal, this is the one that gets to me. When students say, "Well, I just don't think the Flood was scientifically possible." And I'll say, "Well, do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus?" "Well, yeah." I'm like, "Okay." Yeah, it's not that the Flood has to be literal, has to be figurative, has to be regional. We're just saying it can be any of those, but don't all of a sudden put boundaries on a God of miracles anyway. Right?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:46 Exactly. And I hate that sometimes science, I feel like it's used as some sort of weapon against religion or religion is used as some sort of weapon against science. And it seems crazy to me because God invented science. He is science. And it's okay that sometimes things don't make sense. People sit down and try to figure out the logistics of the Flood. How much water would be needed and how many animals and how much time and all of

these things? And they say, "The logistics, they don't work out." So it was a miracle? Are we okay that sometimes we can explain it scientifically? That maybe we also don't have a full understanding of science yet? You think about 100 years ago, what they would think of us today, us doing this podcast right now, that's a miracle. That wouldn't be science or technology, for sure.

- John Bytheway: 00:09:43 Yesterday, I'm talking real time on PDay to my daughter in Tahiti real time. When I was in the Philippines, in my own lifetime, a letter took two to get home. And in one generation, this is crazy having her companions peek in, "Hey, how are you guys?" It's just really fun technology.
- Hank Smith: 00:10:09 Yeah. And Krystal, correct me if I'm wrong here, but I don't think the writers, the authors of Genesis had science in mind. "Oh, one day they're going to wonder about these giants and one day they're-"
- John Bytheway: 00:10:21 How this actually happened.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:10:23 Yeah, and that's the thing is like their audience, they only gave enough information that their audience would need and they knew their audience, and if we're talking about the ancient audience. And so they're only going to give bits and pieces. And so they threw out a word giants, their audience immediately knew what that meant. But for us, we're like, "I have no idea." So we actually have to go and research that. One thing I love is even Nephi says his people struggled with understanding the Old Testament and Isaiah, and they were only separated a few hundred years from Isaiah. We're millennia from that. So if they struggled with it, and I love because he actually gives advice, he gives three pieces of advice for understanding the Old Testament better, and so I always share those with my students.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:11:09 Sometimes we start from a place we already know, and that's fine too. You read a story, you pull something out of it. You use the spirit and personal revelation to get a message for yourself, and that's perfect. Sometimes you got to do a little bit more than that. Sometimes you have to research what was the ancient author trying to teach his own people? And that takes a little work. And Nephi says there are three things you can do to better understand the Old Testament, and Isaiah in particular. He says, "The first thing is to study their way of prophesying, their way of worshipping, their way of doing religion, including things like the law of Moses." We are so far removed at this point from the law of Moses, I think it's hard for us to

understand that. I love it. He says, "Understand their things," which I always take to mean their culture, their language, their history. And then the last thing he says is, "Study the regions." Use a map when you're going through the Old Testament."

- Hank Smith: 00:12:11 The geography, yeah.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:12:13 Yeah, geography. And I love that he gives us advice. It's the same advice we can use to learn about ancient people and the context and these important things.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:22 This is exactly why we bring people like you on, Krystal, Bible scholars who can teach us what's the context of this? Who is the ancient audience? How do they use these terms? You can. You can go into the scriptures on your own and get a lot out of it. For me, there's something about worshiping God with all your might, mind and strength. I want to be more competent in scriptural language. I'm going to quote my friend, Anthony Sweat here who quotes M. Russell Ballard. So it's like a quote of a quote.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:57 Tony [Sweat] writes in his book *Seekers Wanted*, "I assume that if you're reading this book, you are academically minded. But to those who may be skeptical about turning to academic scholars for religious learning, I share the following from President M. Russell Ballard. 'Consult the works of recognized, thoughtful, and faithful LDS scholars.'" I think he actually put a picture of Krystal right here. She is a recognized, thoughtful, and faithful LDS scholar. "President Ballard continues, "We should ask those with appropriate academic training, experience, and expertise for help. This is exactly what I do," President Ballard says, "When I need an answer to my own questions that I cannot answer myself. I seek the help from my brother and to the Quorum of the Twelve and from others with expertise."
- John Bytheway: 00:13:47 There's a phrase that goes around a lot that we maybe take too far. "Don't drink downstream from the herd." Get it from its true source. But that doesn't mean we ignore what faithful scholars have said. I can't even tell you how blessed I've been by sitting at Ed Week and listening to people and taking notes as fast as I can about their journey through the scriptures and about insights they can give me. And is that putting the scriptures in the backseat? Of course not. It's helping me understand the scriptures, and I suppose maybe the phrase faithful scholars is helpful there. But I think that's what Tony was saying. I think that's what President Ballard was saying. We've got this Bible Dictionary. Who wrote that? Faithful scholars. These manuals we're using, if it was only the

scriptures, we wouldn't have a manual. But what are these manuals for? To give us insight, backstory, everything that we're talking about today. Is that fair?

Hank Smith: 00:14:43 Yeah. Yeah, I think so. Do you remember Dr. Muhlestein? In our very first episode of the year, he talked about a covenant community. And individually, we can't know everything, but as a community, we can sure know a lot if we'll listen to each other. So anyway, just to shout out to everyone who likes having our expert on. I sure love it. I learn a lot every week.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:15:08 I feel like one of my jobs as somebody who's stuck in the Ancient Near East is to really try and make a connection between today and then. If I can bridge that gap for people who understand today, if I can bridge the gap so that they can connect these people who were real people with real lives and they struggled just like we did, they had questions too, they're trying to raise their families and be good. And if I can connect those two things, then I feel like it can be really, really useful.

Hank Smith: 00:15:37 Yeah. I think so too. Elder Maxwell said, "Find relevancy in antiquity." So we're glad you're here to help us with that today.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:15:45 I think some of our struggles with the Old Testament, I think we get caught up a lot in the what or the how, as opposed to the why things are the way they are. And I think an example of this is sacrifice. Under the law of Moses, they were sacrificing animals. And I think it's difficult for us to connect with that, this idea of this physical, visceral, almost dirty thing that they did, sacrificing these animals to thank God or as a part of repentance or to ask for a blessing. And so sometimes I think we put that away and think, "I just can't understand that." And it's done and it's gone because we know when the Savior came, he said, "You're not going to sacrifice animals anymore." But he said, "You're still going to sacrifice. It's just a new sacrifice now."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:16:34 And now the new sacrifice is this broken heart and contrite spirit. And how we sacrifice might be a little bit different. How they did things under the law of Moses or the Old Testament, but why they did it never changes. That never changes. We still today sacrifice to give thanks to God. We sacrifice for repentance. We sacrifice to get blessings. And so this is another big thing that I try and teach my students. Look for the why. Look for that instead of being caught up on, "Wow, they did things so differently from us. I just can't connect with that." And it's a different way, I think, of looking at things and focusing on something that we can connect with.

- John Bytheway: 00:17:16 Yeah, that's just full circle back to the flood. Stop trying to figure out the particulars of volume of water and when and how much was covered, but why did this happen? What was God teaching?
- Hank Smith: 00:17:27 I've said this to my class, animals are like cash. So it's kind of paying your tithing, but they burn. How would you feel if you just take cash to the Bishop and they just burn it? That's the idea of sacrifice. And at least when we sacrifice, it's going towards, "Well, I'm going to help build this temple or I'm going to help..." And I guess maybe the priest ate some of it. But the idea of, "Here, I'm going to take this valuable thing and we're just going to burn it." But that was part of it.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:17:57 Yeah, and it's great because it was different animals for different people, depending on what they could afford. And even those who couldn't afford an animal could just bring flour. They could bring a cake. And so I love that even with us today, our sacrifices all look different, completely different from each other. And even for them, it was the same. You sacrificed what you could, it still counted. It still was the same. I like that connection too. Let's start with a little bit of background here so we can get some idea of where we're at when we get to Genesis 6. As we go through Genesis, we've already had a few, we'll call them major Falls and survivals and comebacks. So in Genesis 3, we had the Fall of Adam, the Fall of humanity, the Fall of Eve, the Fall of all of us. But they survived and there's a comeback, there's a way to come back from the Fall. It's made very clear. We can overcome spiritual death. We can overcome physical death, and so we can survive that.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:18:58 When we get to Genesis 4, there's kind of the Fall of the family. And what happens with Cain and Abel in this real introduction of real evil and sin, but they survive that. There's a comeback from that. And we've all probably experienced Falls in our family too. And now we get to a different type of Fall. When we get to the flood and we get to the Tower, we get the Fall of society. We get our first real glimpse of widespread corruption and sin and destruction. But we have to remember, that's not what it's all about. What it's about is some people survive this. Noah's family survives this. Jared's family survives this. So how do we, when we experience our Falls, our Floods, our Towers, how do we survive? How do we become Noah and Jared at the end, and not those who are swept away in the Flood or lost their language or were scattered after the tower? And I think that's the point of these two narratives, these two stories.
- Hank Smith: 00:19:59 Society falls, but you don't have to.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:20:01 Yeah, and even when you're surrounded by wickedness and you feel like you're all alone, you can survive, you can make it. And we'll see too that with the help of God, that's how they survive. And we'll talk about this as we go. But with chapter six, we really begin with talking about reasons for the Flood, documenting the advance of sin and the spread of sin. And that's where we're going to start with. Let's just jump right into Genesis 6 here and take a look at verse 2. So verse 1 tells us there are a lot of people on the earth at this point.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:20:41 In verse 2, we see one of the first problems they start to have is that the sons of God start marrying the daughters of men. And this can kind of be confusing. For them, they would've understood exactly what that meant. "Oh, I know what a son of God is or a daughter of men are." But for us, we have to dive a little bit deeper to get an idea of why this was a problem? So if we look up where sons of God appear elsewhere in the Bible, and this is a technique I think anyone can do, look up this phrase, sons of God, see where it appears, and see if it can add to your understanding of this.

John Bytheway: 00:21:19 So it's not just the sons of men who saw the daughters of men. It's the sons of God. You're making a distinction-

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:21:25 Yes, yes. So we have the sons of God and the daughters of men. And so they have this distinction between them. And in Genesis right here, we don't get a lot more information here. We just know it was a problem and it added to the spread of wickedness.

John Bytheway: 00:21:40 I am glad you pointed out the phrase. I went right past it. The sons of God saw the daughters of men.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:21:46 Thank goodness that we have extra scripture. I'm going to call it that, extra scripture. Because we have the Pearl of Great Price, we have the Book of Moses, and this is where we're going to pull in Moses 8. So Moses 8 is basically the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 6. And what I love about the Joseph Smith Translation is sometimes it corrects incorrect information. Sometimes it replaces. Many times, it just adds information. It says, "Okay, here's what we have in the Bible. We're going to clarify a little bit. We're going to add a little bit more." And so if we turn to Moses 8 and we look at verse 13, and we're going to kind of refer to Moses 8 as we go through today.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:22:29 If we take a look at verse 13, we find out that Noah and his sons harken unto the Lord and gave heed and they were called the sons of God. Noah himself was the son of God. Because if we

look up sons of God elsewhere in the Old Testament, sometimes it refers to angels. Sometimes it refers to a specific line of people. But now we find out Noah was a son of God because he listened to God. And if we go back even further in Moses, in Moses 6, the very last verse, we find out Adam was a son of God. And then there is the important part. He says, "Anyone can become a son of God." If you are following God and following the commandments and hearkening, as it says to him, then you're a son of God or a daughter of God, that works too.

- Hank Smith: 00:23:15 So Krystal, this is a definition thing. Because we would say everyone is a son or a daughter of God.
- John Bytheway: 00:23:22 Everyone's a son of God.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:23:22 Yes, yes.
- John Bytheway: 00:23:24 But we're talking about behaving like one, becoming one. Oh, God can make descendants of Abraham out of these stones. And if you're Abraham's seed, you should do the works of Abraham kind of like Jesus said. Right?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:23:37 Yeah, so we're all sons and daughters of God. We are all created by him, and therefore we're his sons and daughters. And this is more of a behavior thing. Are you behaving like a son or daughter of God? And if you are following God and his teachings and commandments and his Son, then you are behaving like a son or daughter of God. And they're saying the problem here is that people who weren't behaving like a son or daughter of God were marrying those who were. And so if we want to try and translate this today's terms, it's not necessarily that we should never interact with anyone outside of our faith. It would be really hard to spread the gospel and gather Israel if that were the case. But it's really a warning that people influence each other. People have an effect on each other. Who you're around, who you speak to, and just a warning that in the same way that righteousness can spread from individual to individual, wickedness can spread too. And so this warning here, this is one of the ways they're showing us that wickedness was spreading during the time of Noah.
- Hank Smith: 00:24:48 It's these men who were supposed to be following God went and got into relationships with women who were not following God.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:24:58 Yeah. And when we look at Moses 8, it becomes even more complicated because it says that the sons of men who were trying to marry the daughters of Noah who were considered righteous and who were considered daughters of God, these sons of men who were not hearkening to God, it says, claimed to be following God, claimed to be sons of God, claimed to be doing the right thing. And this also led to confusion. And not necessarily that if you sin and you'll cause someone else to sin, but if you have incorrect ideas about things and you share them with others, then these things can travel and they can corrupt our view of God, for example, which seems to be a major issue during this time.

Hank Smith: 00:25:42 Yeah, so it looks like verse 13, 14, 15, you would put them into that Genesis 6 between verses 1 and 2.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:25:50 Exactly. Yeah. So in verse 21, we find out that they're calling themselves the son of God, even though we know that they haven't been listening and hearkening to God. And so we get this real mix of people who are wicked are calling themselves righteous and saying, "No, we have the correct ideas," which we see all across scripture. And this is really just a warning of these ideas spread. And so just be careful who you surround yourself with. And I love this. I feel like this is almost like the teenage story with your parents where they say, "Now, are you going to hang out with a good group of friends or not?" It's true. And I think sometimes we forget that as adults that we need to be careful. And this is really just to show us how this wickedness spreads.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:26:35 And we read that the Lord actually tries to curb this. He realizes that the wickedness is becoming so widespread that it's taking over society at this point. And in verse 3, this is his comment on that. "My spirit shall not always strive with man." He says there can be a time where my spirit leaves because of wickedness that you lose my presence. And one thing I love is this word strive here. You might think, "What does that mean?" If you actually look it up in Hebrew, the word here is, "To be strong." And so it's almost this idea of if you lose the Spirit, you are going to lose some strength. You're going to lose some spiritual strength, maybe even some temporal strength. And so one thing he decides to do, if you look, he says, "The days are now going to only be 120 years for man."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:27:27 And so it's almost as if he's trying to curb the wickedness by giving a lifespan reduction here. And if you think about the chapters before this, we get his great-grandfather Methuselah living over 900 years. And the patriarchs do continue to live

longer than 120, but it's almost like the Lord is saying, "You're mortal, you're mortal and you got 120 years or less." And like Alma says, this is your probationary state. This is the time to prove yourself. And you're wasting it with what happens.

- Hank Smith: 00:28:06 That's interesting. So up to this point, and who knows if we're talking literal or figurative, but this idea of you're having a really long time on the earth, but that means evil is a long time on the earth. So we're going to shorten this down a little bit.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:24 Which could be seen as mercy too, to try to give you a better chance by making your lifespan shorter, maybe. But I am fascinated by this idea, what was wrong with them marrying the daughters of men? Because they probably could have been called daughters of God as well and they should have been looking for the daughters of God. Is that what we're saying?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:28:48 Well, it's kind of what we read in Moses. It kind of puts in a little more information. So Noah was considered a son of God because he listened to God, and his daughters were daughters of God because they listened to God. But the problem was they married those who weren't listening to God, the sons of men. And so once they married them, I don't know how you would say this, their behavior changed. They were influenced by them. They were affected by them. And then they changed from daughters of God to daughters of men at that point. So it's just a way of talking about somebody's being, really honestly, righteous or wicked.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:29:24 And it shows it's easy to move back and forth sometimes, depending on who affects you, who influences you. Like I said, in verse 21, it says they called themselves the sons of God, even though they weren't acting like the sons of God. And maybe that's part of how they were able to connect with the daughters of God, say, "No, we're sons of God too. We're doing what we're supposed to." And then eventually everybody, it seems like, except for Noah and some of his family, turn into this, go over to this wickedness. And it's the same with the other side, with Zion. Zion starts with one person and then can spread out from there to an entire community.
- Hank Smith: 00:30:09 And this is an absolutely true principle, Krystal, is we become who we spend time with. We eventually act like them and think like them, and we marinate in our friends. It's pretty obvious to me that my wife keeps me pretty steady because she's steady. So here I am trying to do what's right, and I want to marry someone who is trying to do what's right because then we can both help each other do what's right.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:39 Yeah, and we should make it clear that righteousness isn't equated with membership in the Church. You can be a member of the Church and not necessarily be acting like a son or daughter of God. And so it doesn't mean that you should never affiliate or associate with anyone outside of the Church. Like I said, that would really cause some problems for spreading the gospel. But be careful, be aware of who you're around and surrounded by.

Hank Smith: 00:31:09 John, didn't you give a talk on this once, "The Parable of the Marinade?"

John Bytheway: 00:31:15 I did. I love the idea of you soaking in something, you become that. Elder Bednar talked about pickles and immersing yourself in the gospel and how they made pickle brine and stuff. But I was thinking of Dallyn Bayles, this great singer that we have in the Church who has played Joseph Smith and others in so many of their Church movies. He said his mentor told him, "Regardless of your original intention, you will eventually become what you surround yourself with," which is a good argument for being careful about the influences in your life as we've all been talking about here.

Hank Smith: 00:31:51 And then also Krystal, the other principle I'm seeing here is verse 21, that people might claim to be something they're not. This is Moses 8:21. "We are the sons of God. Have we not done all this?" But they're not repenting. It says in verse 20, Noah is calling on people to repent. "We're doing great. We're eating and drinking, marrying, giving in marriage. We're the sons of God." They hearken not unto the words of Noah. So there's something there about listening to your prophet, your current prophet.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:32:24 Absolutely.

John Bytheway: 00:32:25 Yeah. Well, it happened to Jesus this time. They looked at their genealogy instead of their behavior. And we can claim Abraham as our father, therefore all's well. And Jesus is like, "Eh, if you were the sons of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham." It was an expectation more than just a fact on your pedigree chart.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:32:44 Yeah. And we all have this divine heritage. We're all sons and daughters of God, but are we behaving like sons and daughters of God? I was just going to come back to this idea of the Lord was trying to curb this wickedness, and one of these ways was to limit the lifespan. But it's interesting. So to kind of put this in an Ancient Near Eastern context at this point, we have a lot of

texts that talk about people searching for immortality, people traveling around trying to find a plant or... And you know what? We don't even have to talk about the Ancient Near East specifically here, we could talk about Arthur searching for the Holy Grail or Ponce de Leon searching for the Fountain of Youth. There's this constant, at this point in time in the Ancient Near East, people are trying to find immortality themselves. And so we get this idea of God's saying, "No, this is a mortal life. This is separate and different. This is your time to prove yourself, and immortality comes through other means. Immortality comes through Resurrection."

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:33:46 They're wasting their probationary state and the Lord is saying... You almost get this reference, "Eat, drink, and be merry" thing here. They say, "Well, we've been doing all of these things, searching for immortality in a different way." We have this text about a king named Gilgamesh, and this text goes back to about 2000 BC. He's searching for immortality, travels all over the place trying to find maybe a plant he could eat. We see this connection here with God saying, "You're misunderstanding the point of life. You're misunderstanding that you do have the opportunity to live forever. But a lot of that is based on what you do now and here. And immortality comes through the Savior and Resurrection and repentance and the Atonement, as opposed to something you get in this life through a plant or a cup or a fountain or things like that." So it was an issue. We know it was an issue in the text, not only in Genesis, but in our outside texts as well.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:47 Wow, that's fascinating. Krystal, that's fantastic. And I can see it in myself, I can see it today around me. We're seeking immortality, whatever I can to stay young. We're still doing it today and the answer's still the same. Go to the Lord, go to the Lord for your immortality.
- John Bytheway: 00:35:03 But there's got to be a supplement somewhere we can take that will-
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:08 Well, it's almost like we're not searching for immortality in the sense of going to live with God and the next stage of life and existence, and more of let's prolong this mortality forever. Which when you think about it, you're like, "Would we really want to do that? But that's where these texts and these things are saying let's live forever in this life and not prepare that there's anything in the future."

Hank Smith: 00:35:34 Genesis 6:3, when the Lord says, "And yet his day shall be a hundred and twenty years." He's doing what you said, which is saying, "Look, there's a cap on this."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:44 Yeah, and he says, "You're flesh, you're mortal."

Hank Smith: 00:35:46 It's temporary.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:47 You're mortal. You need to accept that and realize that you need to change the way you're living. And so he tries, and this is a constant, I think, through the Old Testament, he's going to send people like Noah and prophets and others to warn the people to try and prepare them, to tell them to change before the punishment and the consequences and things come. So that's a huge thing. That's the mercy. Destruction never comes without a warning. The Flood, they were warned of the Flood. They knew that it was coming, and yet they didn't prepare. And we'll talk about that. But I definitely want to talk about verse 4, because I've already mentioned the giants here, and this is something that we're reading and we're like, "Okay, I think this makes sense."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:36:30 And then you get to the giants and you think, "What in the world are they talking about giants?" There are so many websites and books you can use to say, "What is this word giant? Where does it come from?" Or, and this is an even better thing to do, look at where else this word appears in the Bible. Where else does this word appear? And what's great is this word also appears in Numbers 13, and there it's used to describe some of the inhabitants of Canaan and that they were giants and we were grasshoppers. To put things in perspective, that they were these huge warriors who could fight and we were tiny little grasshoppers. I love it, that's what it says. And they're scared, they're worried. We're possibly not necessarily talking about giants in the sense we would think of giants, but in the sense of huge, large, heroic warriors like Goliath, for example. A lot of times what we find with these is the people that are fighting against the giants are smaller or seem insignificant or feel not ready or prepared to fight against something like this.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:37:41 And so this is how we interpret these giants here. And in Jewish tradition, this is referring to kings and rulers during this time that they were oppressive kings and rulers. We do find out if we turn to Moses 8:18 that these giants actually tried to kill Noah. So in verse 18, "Giants on the earth, and they sought Noah to take away his life. But the Lord was with Noah and the power of the Lord was upon him." And this is another common theme. Of

course, rulers, kings, those who have power and control, the giants, try to either cast out the prophets or kill the prophets, make them go away because they're not teaching what they want to teach and what they want to support. And we see this happen with Noah too.

- John Bytheway: 00:38:31 I was reading somewhere, what is the Hebrew *nephilim*?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:37 Yeah. So *nephilim*-
- John Bytheway: 00:38:37 Thank you.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:37 That's okay. So im, this I-M.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:46 Yeah, I had the emphasis on the wrong syllable.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:48 No, you're good. You're fine. This kind of helps, I think sometimes, is the IM on the end in Hebrew, it makes something plural typically.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:58 [crosstalk 00:38:58].
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:58 Yeah, yeah, exactly. Or cherubim or something like that. The root word here is to fall. And so it literally means the fallen ones. And I love looking at it in the sense of giants and the higher you are, the harder you fall, the further you fall when you fall. It's this idea that there were these greats who had a ton of power, who had a ton of control, and they're oppressing the people. And so now it's spread just from righteous people turning wicked, now we get the influence of wicked leaders. And this is a big theme in the Book of Mormon as well, that whoever is your leader or your ruler or your king has an effect on the people, whether it's a righteous effect or a wicked effect.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:39:48 And now we find out that these giants, they're trying to kill the prophet. Even though they're giants, they can also be toppled by the grasshoppers. So this is a common message. You think of David and Goliath. Sometimes we feel like a grasshopper and we're fighting against giants and they have the power and the control and maybe the wealth and the status and we feel like we can't. But we read here Noah had the power of God with him. We also can have the power of God with us. David had the power of God with him and was able to fight and beat his giant as well.
- John Bytheway: 00:40:28 So don't read giants like huge people. I was thinking of the phrase that we use, "Oh, these men were titans of industry."

Well, they were the same size as the rest of us, but we call them that. It was kind of a metaphor. These guys were giants in their military influence or power or something like that. Is that fair?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:40:47 Yeah, and strength is too. I think we could talk about physical strength too. Physical prowess, and Goliath is said to be very tall and large, and not necessarily a mythological giant that's 50 feet tall-type of giant.

Hank Smith: 00:41:01 In the story you're referencing in Numbers 13, it's Joshua and Caleb who don't see themselves as grasshoppers because they say, "The Lord is with us. Fear them not. I'm not scared. I'm not scared of these giants. I'm ready to go because I have God with me."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:41:19 Yeah, and so I love this idea that you might feel like a grasshopper, but God can make you a giant, God could make you feel like a giant and be able to fight your battles, whatever those battles are, whatever the giants are. So we've seen how there's widespread wickedness and it's continuing on. And now it's at the top. And of course, the top is having an effect on the people. And Noah, at this point, even though the giants try to kill him and silence him, he continues on. And he warns the people and he preaches to the people, and this doesn't show up in Genesis 6. We actually have to turn to Moses 8 for this information. And so if we look at verse 19 and verse 20 and 21, we find out that the Lord commands Noah to go out and declare the gospel.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:42:08 So Noah calls on the people to repent, but they don't listen. And then we've already talked about verse 21. They give these excuses for why they don't need to repent. This is very common. I love that we actually have this in Moses, that Noah was a prophet who went out and preached repentance. He said, "You're sinning. You have two options. You either stop sinning and you repent and you receive God's mercy, or you keep on sinning and sinning and sinning and there will be consequences. There will be punishment. That's what happens. That's how the law of justice works." And he says, "But you have a choice. You get to choose between the two." And so I love that we actually have this here. Prophets are sent to warn us. We have many examples of prophets in both the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon who appear out of nowhere, give their message, and then disappear or they're killed.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:43:02 And a lot of times it's to warn the people of destruction coming. I think of Lehi, for example, in the Book of Mormon, who tried

to warn Jerusalem about what was going to happen. They throw him out. It's the same with Samuel. We get it with Levi.

Hank Smith: 00:43:15

Abinadi.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:43:16

Abinadi. Yes, absolutely. And we get it here with Noah. He tried to warn the people that destruction was coming. He even warned specifically about the Flood as well. So if we go up to verse 17, he talks about this. He knew. The Lord said, "I will send in the floods." It's pretty specific that Noah actually knew what was going to happen. Sometimes we struggle to connect with these prophets of the Old Testament who come preaching doom and gloom and sin and wickedness and destruction, and we focus on those things. And we think, "Our modern prophets today don't do that. They don't preach doom and gloom and destruction and sin and wickedness." Some of them, I think, might come pretty close. It's not necessarily exactly what they're saying, but why they're saying it. They're meant to warn us. So I like to think of times when President Nelson, for example, tells us to do something, what is he warning us about? What is he preparing us for? And I think one of the greatest, most recent examples of this is several years ago, he started talking about focusing on a home-centered Church.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:44:27

Work on your worship at home. And even to the point where we lose our third hour and we start worshipping at home and this *Come, Follow Me* and doing all of this work. And then not too long after that, we get this pandemic. A lot of us got to the point where we couldn't even go to church. We had church completely at home. And I think those who listened to the prophet and worked on how do I bring the Spirit in my house? How would I study the gospel and the scriptures with my family? How do I focus? We're a little bit better prepared when that hit. And the others who kind of saw, "Oh, I get an extra third hour on Sunday to go home and take a nap or something," maybe were less prepared. Even though he didn't come straight out and say, "The Flood's coming, the pandemic's coming," he prepares us and warns us in other ways. And so we have to listen very carefully, I think, to what they're saying.

Hank Smith: 00:45:26

I would say two things. One, don't be surprised when a prophet tells you to repent. I think that's a theme. Don't be shocked when President Nelson says, "Hey, we're doing a couple things wrong. We should do them better." Well, how dare he? And then second, I remember the October General Conference of 2019, he said, and I don't even know if he knew what he meant, but he said, "In six months, we're going to have a conference again. It will be unlike anything you've ever experienced." And

here we were, six months later, unlike anything we'd ever experienced.

- John Bytheway: 00:46:01 And I think his first "Hope of Israel" talk, "Take a break from social media." And then his last talk was, "If most of the information you get comes from social media, your ability to feel the spirit will be diminished." Those are warnings. Krystal, that's a good point.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:21 We try to compare them one to one, but they're all doing the same thing. They're all trying to prepare us. They're trying to get us through mortality, get us back home, get us back home to Heavenly Father. And so we can pull this out from Noah, we can pull this out from President Nelson. We just have to listen really carefully. And sometimes we look back in hindsight and say, "Wow, that's exactly why he said that." And other times we may not understand for a long time why we're asked to do something. So there's a little bit of faith and trust there I think that's definitely involved. Let's talk about the real reasons for the Flood because when we think of the flood and we think of such widespread destruction and death, it wasn't only people who died. It was the animals and the plants.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:47:04 And that's horrific when you think about it. And I think sometimes we view the Flood sometimes less seriously. And this is why Noah and the Ark is a children's story. We buy the Ark and the animals and Noah and things like that, and we don't tell them the other side. Well, everybody actually dies who's not on the Ark. So sometimes we don't take it seriously. And of course I have Noah's Ark things for my kids. It's something either we don't take seriously or we take it so seriously that we think, "How could a loving Heavenly Father do this? How could a loving Jesus Christ do this?" There's this disconnect and we can't get it. We're going to look at verse 5. So Chapter 6, verse 5 says, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:47:59 That's crazy, that statement right there. We're not just talking about bad behavior and actions. It says every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts. And so we're talking about a change of heart to wickedness, to evil, and that translates, of course, into behaviors and actions.
- John Bytheway: 00:48:17 That's completely possessed.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:48:21 Yeah, getting to this point almost where there's no return. I think of the Book of Mormon too, where at one point he says, "I

see that their time had passed. The grace of God had passed for them," which you would think, "Oh, this would never happen." If you die in your sins in this life, the time's passed for this mortality and now you're going to have to deal with it on the other side. And so we see the wickedness is something more. It's more than just people doing bad things, it's taken over their hearts, their thoughts, their minds, everything. One of the original problems were people marrying and having children and the effect it had on these children. This wickedness, it gets passed down. Yeah, I can't imagine it. I can't imagine growing up in a world like that. I think of Mormon and Moroni and their lives and what they were surrounded by is incredible.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:49:11 But the upside is always that they survived and they stayed faithful. And even though Noah was surrounded by wickedness and the rulers are trying to kill him and he's losing his friends and people like that to wickedness, he still stays faithful. And I think that's what we're meant to take out of the story, not the focus on those who are destroyed, although there's mercy in that too. So we're going to talk about that too. If we jump down to verses 11, 12, and 13, we get some more information about what's going on here. We do read that violence, the earth was filled with violence. The word here in Hebrew, referring to violence, it actually encompasses both a physical violence and a psychological violence as well, physical abuse and psychological abuse. So they not only were sinning and their hearts had been taken over by evil, but they were destroying each other.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:50:06 They were hurting each other. They were killing each other physically, mentally, and emotionally. And we know that when sins are committed that involve other people, those are taken very seriously. And so we find out this is a major problem. It's a huge problem at this time. And it gets to the point where something needs to be done, a change needs to be made. This change, this destruction is incredible. It's huge. It's horrific. What's interesting is if you look at verse 11 and 12, they both use this word corrupt. The earth also was corrupt before God. And the word corrupt here in Hebrew, it's the exact same word as the word translated as destroyed down later in verse 17. And so we have this level of corruption, this level of destructive sin, and the only answer is the same level of destructive punishment. And that's where we're at at this point. And it's interesting that it's the exact same word that's used.

Hank Smith: 00:51:31 It's almost as if they chose this massive destruction.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:51:36 Exactly, exactly.

John Bytheway: 00:51:38 A punishment to match the level of corruption.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:51:41 Exactly. And we know that when we sin, the punishment fits the sin, just like repentance fits the sin. It's not necessarily always going to be the same process or maybe even the same level. And at this point, if you turn it around and think about, "Wow, everyone and everything had to be punished for the sin," that tells you what level of sin we're talking about. Widespread sin and corruption, and it permeated everything. It had reached a critical mass at this point.

Hank Smith: 00:52:13 When you say violence in verse 11, were you talking about the idea of abuse?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:52:21 Murder and killing and every kind of violence. And that's kind of like this word in Hebrew, it covers all violence. Violence against people, violence against animals, physical violence, other types of abuse, everything. It covers everything, all types. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:52:40 That's interesting, because then the Flood covers everything.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:52:43 Yeah, and I think that's the point. Sin had covered everything so that the Flood needed to cover everything. And that's why I think the same word is used. The earth was so corrupt that the only way to fix things was widespread punishment and consequences. But it's not just about justice too.

Hank Smith: 00:53:04 I wonder if there's a wordplay, or am I just seeing something. Moses 8 has Noah saying, "Believe in repent of your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ or the floods will come." So you have two choices. You can be covered in water or you can be covered in water, it just depends on which one, right?

John Bytheway: 00:53:25 And volume.

Hank Smith: 00:53:25 Yeah, which water do you want?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:53:31 He's not the only one that talks about the flood as a baptism too, this shows up in the New Testament. And we'll get to it that the Flood was more than just the law of justice being enacted, that there was a merciful cleansing that was going on as well. If we turn to Moses 8 again, and you already brought this up in verse 23 and 24, he goes out to preach again. He continues preaching. And I love this, that he doesn't just hide out. They've already tried to kill him. He could just go hide out and wait.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:03 He's realized how far it's gotten, maybe he even knows there's nothing he could say or do to change things. He still keeps trying. And at this point, I love that he teaches, like you mentioned, about baptism. What we might consider the basics of the gospel, faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, and going back to these basics, he still tries. He keeps trying, and this is another example of how we're given so many chances before the punishment and the consequences come. We have so many merciful chances to repent and stop what we're doing before justice is enacted.

Hank Smith: 00:54:42 I like that. They sought to take away his life, he continued preaching. And John, you love First Principles. This is a John Bytheway take.

John Bytheway: 00:54:50 Oh, I was just going to say there they are. Verse 24, believe, repent, baptized, Holy Ghost. And if they're really First Principles, then they really are First Principles and they ought to show up and they do.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:55:03 Yeah, and I love it. He goes back to the basics. He says, "Hey, this is still what you need to do." And I love that you connected this baptism and the Flood, and we'll talk about that. And I love that it was connected before that the Flood was representative of God's tears, of him weeping for what had happened. We know, of course, that Enoch saw the flood, he saw the Ark, he saw Noah. He saw all these things and commented on them. But let's get to that. Let's talk a little bit about God's grief here. So if we go back to Genesis 6 and we look at verse 6 and 7, we get some strange language here. It says, "It repented the Lord that he had made and on the earth and it grieved him at his heart."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:55:51 And then it says, "The Lord said I will destroy man for it repenteth me that I've made them." And seeing the word repent with the Lord I think can be a little confusing. Of course, we're not saying he needs to repent or I don't even think we can say that he regretted making humans or that he thought it was a mistake. I don't think this is what this means at all. And we do get a little more information in Moses 8, as well as the Joseph Smith translation of Genesis 8:15. There, it switches it to, "It repenteth Noah that he had created man." And of course, Noah needed to repent. There's something a little bit different going on here, and this word that's translated as repent here, so it's a Hebrew word *nacham*.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:56:41 *Naham* is such a great word because it appears all over the Old Testament. And every time it appears, it's translated in a

different way. So people struggle with its meaning. And actually what's great is this word shows up in the Book of Mormon too as the place where Ishmael was buried on the way to the promised land, he was buried at *Naham*. Half of this word means grieving, sadness, mourning, being in pain. And I think this makes sense that both the Lord and Noah would feel this. They would feel sadness at not only the wickedness, but the Flood as well, that it had come to this, that this widespread punishment was coming. But the other side of *nahum* it's, and this is why people struggle with it because it almost seems like the opposite, it also means to be comforted. It also means to be consoled.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:57:34

It also means to feel content. I think people struggle because they say, "How can you feel sadness and comfort at the same time? How can you be mourning, but also feel consoled?" I think a lot of us have actually felt that. Someone passes away, for example. There's a sadness and grieving and mourning, but there's also this other side of thinking about that's not the end for them. They've moved on to the next thing. They've lived a righteous life or they've been released from the pain or discomfort of this life. And we don't really have a word in English for this, I think, feeling sad but comforted. And that's what this word means. It works in the Book of Mormon too. It's where they buried him. And immediately after that, it says his daughter's mourned for him.

John Bytheway: 00:58:25

I've heard it pronounced "Nayhum", but say it the way that you just said it.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:58:31

So *nahum* is kind of how it's spelled, this is sort of the English version. But in Hebrew it's *nahum*. And it's crazy how it has these meanings. And to me, it's the perfect example of also a balance of justice and mercy, that justice comes just in the same way that because we die of physical death, that's the justice side of the fall. But we also find comfort in death because we know we can overcome it and we can overcome spiritual death and physical death. And I think this is how Noah and the Lord are viewing this. The Flood is justice, but it'll also be mercy as well. And we'll talk about the different ways that it represents mercy.

Hank Smith: 00:59:23

It's interesting to me, Krystal, that it would be translated as repent. Because in our view, repentance is that idea of to be sorry and to be comforted. To be sorrowful for my sins, but comfort through the Atonement of Christ.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:59:40 Yeah, exactly. To feel sadness or grief about it, but hope. Yeah, I think that's the perfect way of looking at it. And I think that's what Noah and the Lord are feeling here. Noah's feeling like, "I'm sad that the Flood has to happen and that this wickedness has happened. But I have hope after the Flood, something even better and more is coming." Which is the same way I think we feel about death too. We're sad people are gone, but we know they're in this new, amazing next phase.

Hank Smith: 01:00:13 I really like this word now. *Nahum*, is that how you'd say it in English? *Nahum*?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:17 Yeah. Yeah, and you can say *nacham* or *nayhum* or anything like that. That's fine too.

John Bytheway: 01:00:23 I like *nahum*. It's like knock 'em over.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:25 *Nahum*.

John Bytheway: 01:00:25 *Nahum*.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:29 Yeah. Sometimes sorrow seems to knock us over, but that's my dad joke for you then.

Hank Smith: 01:00:35 Hey, good. You are [crosstalk 01:00:37]

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:37 Mom joke. We'll go with mom joke.

Hank Smith: 01:00:40 She is an apprentice in the dad jokes. I was thinking of Alma the Elder, when he finds out his son has been struck down. What does it say?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:54 He's actually excited. He's happy.

John Bytheway: 01:00:58 He knew that the veil of unbelief was being taken from his mind or something.

Hank Smith: 01:01:03 "His father rejoiced, for he knew that it was the power of God." Interesting. Mosiah 27:20 Alma the Elder.

John Bytheway: 01:01:13 There's a great Walter Rane painting that shows the four sons of Mosiah carrying Alma. And it's so funny because mom is looking down like, "Oh no," and dad is looking up like, "All right." So you got your *nacham* right there. You got both meanings right there.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:01:29 Yeah. I love it. It was an answer to his prayers. And the angel says, "I've come because your father's been praying. And here I

am." If we want to talk about sometimes hitting rock bottom causes us to start over again and see things again. And at this point, man, society has hit rock bottom and needs a fresh start, needs a cleansing, needs a renewal. One of the major mercies I want to talk about is what happens with Noah and his family. And one of my favorite verses, in fact, I'll just say it's my favorite verse in Genesis chapter 6, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," and it's like mic drop. That's it right there. Noah found grace. Why? Why did he find grace? Why was he able to survive the Flood? And we have so many verses both in Genesis and Moses that talk about how he was just, he did all the Lord commanded him.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:02:25 He hearkened to the Lord. He gave heed to the Lord. He listened and he paid attention and he followed the commandments. And this was the way leading up to it that the Lord said, "We will save Noah and his family and some of the animals." And this is a lot of mercy right here. But my favorite part about this mercy is he doesn't let Noah get off easily. He doesn't just say, "Hey Noah, I'm going to save you from the Flood. I'm either going to remove you and your family from the earth and let you come back or put you in this airtight sealed cave." He's like, "No sorry, you get mercy but you're going to work. You're going to prepare for the Flood. You know it's coming, so I'm going to have you just build this Ark, this enormous Ark, find all of the animals, put them inside and make sure you have enough food in fresh water for a year."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:03:24 We know they were in the Ark for just over a year. He instructs Noah how to prepare. And I love that likening this to ourselves in the way that sometimes mercy is God just pulling us out of a trial, making something go away. But more often, God says, "Here's something you can do to get out of this trial. Here's something you can do to survive the trial." And that's mercy too. Sometimes it's about helping ourselves get through things with the help of God. And I love this happens with Noah too. He doesn't get an easy out here. It's difficult.
- John Bytheway: 01:04:02 Good point. He becomes best friends with the guys at Home Depot for a long time.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:04:08 Yeah, it takes work. It takes work to follow the prophet. It takes work to work through repentance. And grace is always there. It's always there. But we know that we also, many times, need to do some work to make sure things come out right.

Hank Smith: 01:04:26 Can I relate maybe the story of building this Ark, we're going to get to this I'm sure, Krystal, so I'm going to create a home that's safe from wickedness.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:04:36 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 01:04:38 And that's merciful. The Lord has told me, "Hey, President Nelson, create a home that is centered in Christ so you can be safe from this wickedness." Kind of like building an ark, it takes a lot of work to build a home like that.

John Bytheway: 01:04:50 Make a protective structure around you.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:04:54 Yeah, definitely. And it's about other people too. Noah built the Ark not just for himself. He built the Ark for his family and these other animals and everything that came in. So sometimes too, it's about building arks for other people to try to save other people as well. And once again, we talk about this effect we have on each other, whether it's good or bad. For Noah, it was about saving just more than himself. So with the Ark, really what I want to talk about is the main questions I usually get about the building of the Ark and clear up some things. So in verse 14, it says, "Make the ark of gopher wood." And so you always get a lot of questions about this gopher wood. And I think as a kid, I was picturing, "Oh, these are the trees that gopher's gnaw on."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:05:42 Which it's not accurate at all. That's not what gophers do at all. But this word gopher is actually... That's me as a kid, figuring things out, a beaver, gopher, cutting down this wood for the ark. The animals helped build the ark too. So in reality, this wood-

Hank Smith: 01:05:58 The gophers are over there now.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:06:02 But this word gopher is actually just the direct transliteration of the Hebrew word. The Hebrew word is *gopher* or *goper*. And this is the only place it appears in the entire Bible. We throw out gopher wood because we actually have no clue what kind of wood it was. And some people guess cypress or some other forms of wood.

John Bytheway: 01:06:22 Tell our listeners what a transliteration is, because I love that idea.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:06:28 A lot of times, a transliteration occurs when we don't know how to translate the word. The word in Hebrew is gopher. So we just

literally leave it in gopher because we're not what the translation into English should be. We have this in the Book of Mormon too with the cureloms and the cumoms. That's probably the original language there, and among our many translators and compilers and narrators and redactors, someone didn't know what it was and so they left that in there. And this happens a lot in a lot of texts. We come across words we just don't know and we leave it in.

- John Bytheway: 01:07:01 Could we say that deseret is a transliteration and honeybees is the translation of the word?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:07:08 Yes, yes. That would work. Yeah, so is deseret.
- John Bytheway: 01:07:11 I love that. Gopher wood, they just used... That's the sound of it, so we're just sticking it there. Gopher.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:07:19 Yeah, and it was important enough to include it.
- John Bytheway: 01:07:22 Maybe Noah just said, "Hey, just go for some wood over there and-"
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:07:27 Yes.
- John Bytheway: 01:07:29 I think I've reached my limit of dad jokes. Sorry, Hank. That was... Go for some wood.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:07:36 I'm thinking you guys might need to write a dad joke book just on Genesis.
- John Bytheway: 01:07:41 Just today.
- Hank Smith: 01:07:42 Bible.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:07:43 Just so you're ready. Just today. So people can pull this out. It would be a resource for people.
- John Bytheway: 01:07:51 Please join us for Part II of this podcast.



“Noah Found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord”

Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

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

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

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

Can we bend God's will toward our own? Dr. Krystal Pierce shares her expertise about postdiluvian culture and shares insights into the archeology of ziggurat temples, the tower of Babel, the Flood, and the sociality and calling of Noah.

Part 2:

Dr. Kyrstal Pierce returns, and we discuss the wickedness in Noah's day helps us prepare for the Second Coming, the importance of covenants, and how tokens of covenants allow us to remember the Atonement and the Savior.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Welcome to Part I
- 00:53 Introduction of Dr. Krystal Pierce
- 04:18 Instructions on how to study the Old Testament
- 05:50 Literal vs. figurative in the OT
- 12:22 M Russell Ballard and Anthony Sweat quotes regarding the importance of good gospel scholarship
- 18:58 Multiple Falls and the sons of God and daughters of men
- 26:35 Losing the Spirit equates to losing physical and spiritual strength
- 31:09 John's talk "The Parable of the Marinade" and the search for eternal life in history and literature
- 42:08 God sends Noah to tell the people to repent or God will have to stop their great wickedness to save future generations because prophets are sent to warn
- 47:04 The Flood as a children's story when the physical, emotional, and mental abuse happening was horrific
- 54:42 First Principles mentioned in the Flood narrative
- 56:00 The Hebrew word *nahum*
- 1:04:08 Noah built the Ark to protect his family, and prophets instruct us what hard work it takes to build something to protect ours
- 1:05:00 What is gopher wood?
- 1:08:20 End of Part I

Part 2:

- 00:00 Welcome to Part II
- 00:02 Ark measurements and prophets' have their lives at risk to share warning
- 1:54 Windows vs. lighted stones
- 07:13 How do we create a safe home at a time where wickedness is worse than the time of Noah?
- 10:08 Orem Temple and Ark both public symbols of faith
- 14:06 Chiasmus in story of Noah
- 16:20 The Flood can be seen as merciful
- 23:11 Jacob 5 connection to the Noah story and cycles of righteousness
- 26:38 God's covenant with Enoch and Noah
- 31:32 Physical reminders of covenants
- 36:49 Nimrod mentioned in the Bible and the Book of Mormon
- 37:51 God keeps His promises
- 39:57 The Tower of Babel begins with brick technology
- 46:27 Purposes for brick technology and Mesopotamian temples
- 50:42 Building a tower could control god
- 55:45 How did Brother of Jared survive?

- 56:35 Dr. Pierce shares personal story about wanting to attend UCLA for undergrad
- 1:01:50 Brother of Jared exercises faith and has different experience at Tower of Babel
- 1:04:29 Babylon vs Zion (the Abrahamic Covenant)
- 1:07:40 God loves us regardless of our accomplishments
- 1:09:23 Trusting God and Hank shares personal story of his father and brother recently dying
- 1:14:21 Dr. Krystal Pierce shares her experience as a Bible scholar and faithful Latter-day Saint
- 1:21:00 End of Part II
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Biographical Information:



Krystal V. L. Pierce was born in Logan, Utah, and raised in Taylorsville, Utah, but has also lived in California, Idaho, Egypt, and Israel. She received a PhD in Egyptian Archaeology and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures from UCLA and an MA and BA in Near Eastern Studies from UC Berkeley. She has taught classes on Egyptology and ancient Near Eastern studies at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA, and UC Berkeley. She has participated in archaeological excavations and surveys at sites in Egypt (El-Hibeh, E29H1, and Karanis) and Israel (Jaffa and Tel Shimron). She is currently the head registrar for the Tel Shimron Excavations in the Galilee region of Israel and chair of the Archaeology of Egypt session at ASOR. Her most recent publications are the co-edited volumes, *Excavations at the Seila Pyramid and Fag el-Gamous Cemetery* (Brill, 2020) and *Approaching Holiness: Exploring the History and Teachings of the Old Testament* (RSC/Deseret Book 2021). She and her husband, Prof. George Pierce, have two children and live in Vineyard, UT.

Areas of Research:

Ancient Near East: social, religious, and cultural identities, expatriates and refugees, and personhood and gender

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- John Bytheway: 00:00:02 Welcome to Part II of this week's podcast.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:00:07 So another great thing about the Ark, in verse 15, we do get some numbers here, about size here and dimensions. So it talks about cubits, which is not really a measurement we use today. A cubit, even though it kind of changed over time, it was typically equal to a forearm. So from like the tip of your finger to your elbow, that was a cubit. And so it's usually around 18 inches. You can actually kind of figure out how big the Ark was, by kind of just working out how much a cubit is. And so the numbers we get are, it was about 450 feet long, it's huge, 75 feet wide, 46 feet deep. And we're looking at... Actually, the entire sort of volume or span is one-and-a-half football fields. So this was enormous.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:00:54 And you think about Noah building this. Like once again, it wasn't easy. We don't realize how it would've been for Noah and his family, to keep going and to keep trying to do this and to keep building, even with being surrounded by wickedness and how the flood, even for them, would've been very scary, but always having that knowledge that the Lord was going to protect them and prepare them and help them.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:21 And some days you'd have to wonder, "Is it really going to flood?" I can just see so many parallels to our own life of, "Why am I taking all this time and effort to do this, when the sun is shining?"
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:01:33 Exactly. It's hard. Sometimes we don't see the end, or we don't keep the end in sight.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:38 Oh, I wonder if that very conversation was going on, when people were watching him build. As we've kind of seen depicted in movies and stuff, they're all thinking he's foolish building this thing, because it was maybe fair weather.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:01:54 Yeah, and I can't imagine they were trying to kill him, just trying to do this; just trying to build this thing and things get so awful,

so bad, sort of the last chance. Now another really interesting thing, in verse 16, it says that he was told to make a window in the Ark. And the word here used as window is the Hebrew word *tzohar*. And this word actually means something like light. People sort of translate it as, okay so you put a window in, so they would have light. But there's actually a really interesting-

- John Bytheway: 00:02:28 Oh, this is like my favorite footnote ever.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:02:33 I love this one too. And I had never even realized that they had put this in as a footnote here and connected it, and I always share this with my students. So, there's this sort of Jewish rabbinical tradition that, when God created Adam, one of the things he did was he put his light; God's light in a stone, so that Adam would always have the light of God with him. And Adam passed this stone down. He passed it down until it got to Noah. And the tradition goes that Noah used it to light the Ark. And so the *tzohar* was actually this lighted stone that Noah had. And then the tradition continues. He passed it down. It eventually went to Moses, who used it to light the tabernacle, so that there was always this light of God with the prophets and being passed down.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:03:18 Of course, what's incredible about this is when we think of lighted stones, what do we think?
- John Bytheway: 00:03:23 Ether.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:03:24 Brother of Jared, yeah. And when we read about the story of the brother of Jared, and he goes to the Lord and he says, "Are we supposed to travel in darkness? These boats are airtight like the ark." And his boats are compared to the Ark. And brother of Jared even mentions... The Flood is mentioned. And so they're very well aware of what happened before. And it's possible, we don't know for sure of course, that this is kind of where he got this idea of this lighted stone, and the light of God.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:56 And you said this is a Jewish tradition?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:04:01 Yeah, the Rabbis kind of came up with this idea of, "This is what the *tzohar* is," because it doesn't mean window. There's another word for window. And a window in the Ark is mentioned later, but it's a different word. It's interesting here. It's almost like, "Take this, put this in the Ark. It's going to give you light."

- John Bytheway: 00:04:18 But I always love that story. Maybe that's what he did. He wondered what Noah did, and he did a search for the scriptures, perhaps, to find an answer of how he could have light in the barges. I think it's such a fun connection there. So I'm glad you brought that footnote up. It's one of my faves.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:04:35 It's incredible. And, of course the brother of Jared goes up with these stones for the Lord to touch them. And then he comes back down and he has two extra. He has the Urim and Thummim with him. And so there's this whole idea of God giving us stones or different objects to help us in whatever way we need help. Especially in the Old Testament, in the book of Mormon, they have all these objects that represent things, like the Liahona and the Urim and Thummim, and even the sword of Laban represents things, and it appears and it comes out. We seem to be less physically tangibly oriented. Although we do have some things, and we'll talk about the tokens and symbols of the covenant that we have as well. So Noah builds and loads the Ark. And I think the big takeaway with this, and we've already kind of talked about this, is that Noah had to put in some work to prepare for the Flood.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:05:22 And the Lord gave him all of the information, everything he needed, to be ready when the Flood came. And I like that it wasn't just spiritual work; Noah had put in the spiritual work. He was listening to the Lord. He was doing what he was told, but there was also temporal physical work to prepare for the flood that's coming. You can liken this to our own work, to prepare for floods. In what way has the Lord, or the prophet prepared us for upcoming trials in our own life? How do we prepare, both physically and spiritually, so that when the flood comes, we make it through, and we're Noah on the other side? Kind of the greatest part about this is Jesus actually comments on Noah preparing for the Flood, and those who didn't prepare.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:06:13 So if we turn to Luke 17, versus 26 and 27, Jesus actually talks about that, "When the flood came during Noah's time, the people were not prepared. And they were destroyed because of that." He compares this with the end of the world situation, the end of mortality; the Judgment, his return, when he's going to come back. And I love that he compares this to mortality. "Now is the time to prepare for when He's going to come back. Now is the time to prepare for when your mortality is going to end." We see this theme all through Noah. We already talked about lifespans and the search for immortality. And even the Savior brings this out that this is a message of the Flood. Be ready, be

prepared because the floods are coming. Whether it's right now or it's when he comes back again, we need to be prepared.

- John Bytheway: 00:07:13 In the very first paragraph of the *Come, Follow Me Manual*, it says, "Generations of Bible readers have been inspired by this story of Noah and the Flood. But we who live in the latter days, have special reason to pay attention to it. When Jesus Christ taught how we should watch for his Second Coming, he said, 'As it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also, at the coming of the Son of Man.'" That's Joseph Smith-Matthew. That's exactly what you're saying though.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:07:40 Yeah. And it's not only preparing, but I think it's also a reference to the widespread wickedness that was in place around Noah. And once again, this idea of like, how do you make it through that when you're surrounded by this? How do you still prepare? How do you still build an Ark when people are trying to kill you and stop you and hurt you? How do you keep going? How do you survive and prepare?
- Hank Smith: 00:08:04 How do you build a home, how do you build a life? Prepared for the Second Coming in a world that's-
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:10 ... going the way.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:12 ... that doesn't love... Yeah, actions like that?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:15 That's kind of part of what we're supposed to take from these stories. And even though, maybe we don't feel like the world is at that point yet, we're told it will be, and it's getting there. And I also think sometimes people from the past might look at our world today and think we're there when they see what's happening. But because we grew up in this world and we're used to it, we don't see it as well as maybe they do, how widespread wickedness is and the problems that we have today. So, it kind of gives some perspective, I think.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:43 I wanted to mention, it says that he pitched it within and without. Does that mean he sealed it?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:51 Yeah. So this pitch is referring to like bitumen or tar. He made it waterproof, is basically what it's saying.
- John Bytheway: 00:08:58 "Tight like unto a dish."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:09:00 Yeah, exactly. And I love how the Jaredite boats are compared to the Ark.

Hank Smith: 00:09:05 That's interesting to me, just when I think about my own home. I'm going to give my children the tools they need. I'm going to pitch it within, teaching my kids, and then pitch it without, I'm going to create some distance between my home and this world. I'm going to protect it...

John Bytheway: 00:09:21 Good idea.

Hank Smith: 00:09:22 ... from coming in. I'm not just going to protect you from outside influences. I'm going to arm you inside, within and without.

John Bytheway: 00:09:30 We're going to keep our source of light inside; our *tzohar*. Gather around the *tzohar* everybody.

Hank Smith: 00:09:35 Yeah, right.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:09:38 Yeah, I like that. I think it definitely works. The Ark can take on so many different meanings. And also, I think, the Ark in a way, shut out the outside influence. And no matter what people were saying on the outside, Noah was focused on his family and saving his family, and what's on the inside. And it's the same with our houses. Whatever's happening on the outside, if we can keep the inside, like our house, a place of worship, like a temple, the Spirit's there, then it won't matter what's happening on the outside.

Hank Smith: 00:10:07 Krystal, I was also thinking of building a massive structure as kind of like a testimony. It's a very public thing that you're doing, and people are, "What are you doing?" Driving on I-15 lately, we've watched the Orem Temple kind of grow out of the ground there. And to me, it's almost like, "Look at that massive structure that is just bearing testimony to a second coming. The king is going to come." I feel like as I've watched that, as I've driven by watching the Orem Temple go up that it feels almost like a similar Genesis-type moment where, "Wow, look at that. They're really serious about this whole life after death thing, aren't they? And Noah's really serious about this flood coming. He's not joking around. He really believes it."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:10:51 I love that you brought that up. We live not too far from that temple. So, I drive by it every day on the way to BYU. Like you, every time I drive by, I almost kind of stop and pull over, just to see what they've added or what's coming. There's this anticipation of, it's going to be done, and that'll be my temple. I don't know if you guys feel this way, that this sort of my temple-type of thing. And they're building it, and they're building it for me, and for other people too. But the arc, I think, it's a good

parallel. It was built to save people. It was built to save righteous people. That's just the same with temples; righteous people, whether they're still here or they've passed on. So I like those big structures.

- Hank Smith: 00:11:34 When it comes to the Second Coming or when it comes to families being together forever, we definitely put our money where our mouth is. We believe. We're willing to invest heavily into this belief.
- John Bytheway: 00:11:47 I think it was one of the things that was a blessing during the pandemic, when people were a little uncertain about what was next to have President Nelson, keep announcing new temples, just like, "Oh, okay. Yeah. We'll make more."
- Hank Smith: 00:12:02 New arts.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:04 "Just a growing concern." Yeah.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:12:05 Yeah. Even when the temples closed, we were still building new temples.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:10 Building more.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:12:10 So there was a hope. It's almost like this *tzohar* thing. We're sad that those temples are closed and we can't go, but we have hope, because we see they're building more temples. And that must mean we will return to the temple someday; the same thing I think. And we can kind of turn to Chapter 7 now, and talk about the flood. "It rained for forty days and forty nights." We read, as we go through this chapter, "The water covered the mountains." In verse 23, "Every living substance was destroyed." It mentions humans, but we also have animals, creeping things. So this is sometimes a reference to insects, birds, plants, everything. When you think about that, it's sort of devastating. And like I said, it's difficult sometimes to see the mercy in the Flood. Maybe it's easy to see Noah and the mercy given to Noah, which we can talk about here, but we'll also get to the mercy for all of these other things that were destroyed in the flood.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:13:05 So in verse 24, "The waters have prevailed for one hundred and fifty days." So it rained for 40 days. They've been in the Ark just for 150 days, floating on the waters. So it's been almost six months now. And you have to think of how difficult it would've been for Noah and his family, taking care of these animals and everything that they're doing. When we turn to Chapter 8, we

get the middle of the Flood narrative. So we have Chapter 6, 7, 8, and 9. And the end of 7 to the beginning of 8, is the middle of the Flood narrative. It's been six months. We know they're in the Ark for about a year. We're halfway there. And what's great is, we're also in the middle of a chiasmus at this point. And so Chapter 6 through 9, are actually... There's a literary device here that is called chiasmus. And I'm sure you guys know about this, because it appears in scripture all over the place. But let me talk about it a little bit.

- Hank Smith: 00:14:04 For our listeners, let's figure no one knows.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:14:06 So chiasmus is a literary device, and it's basically inverted parallelism, which probably doesn't help describe it very much. But basically, it's named after the letter *chi* or *chai* in the Greek alphabet, which is basically an X. We can talk about it as an X. In the story, it's at the beginning of the story and the end of the story, match up with each other. They have a similar theme. And if we're talking about scriptural verse, it means the first verse and the last verse are very similar. And then the second verse, and the penultimate verse, or the second to last verse, is very similar. And you work your way inside to the center of the chiasmus or the center of the *chi*, the X. And this is a literary device that shows up in Hebrew and Greek and Latin texts all over the place. We even use it today. Martin Luther King, Jr. used it, Abraham Lincoln used it.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:15:01 And the whole point of this device, is it's a mechanism the author uses, to show you the focal central important point of the story. It's to the point that this is the moral of the story. This is what you're supposed to take out of the story. And we get this here. We have a chiasmus from 6 to 9 and part of this, and we get to this point. And the first verse in Chapter 8 says, "God remembered Noah." And this is what we're supposed to focus on. "God remembered Noah, and not only Noah, but every living thing." What he ends up doing is sending a wind to pass over the earth so that the waters subside, and the waters start to go away.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:15:45 And this is the culmination. And I love that. This isn't the end. They still are in there for another six months. And I love that this happens in the middle of the flood, in the middle of the trial, in the middle of this devastating time, it says, "God remembers Noah, and he sends the wind to make the earth start to rise again, out of the waters."
- Hank Smith: 00:16:17 So the author wanted us to focus on this point, God's mercy.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:16:20 For us too, when we're in the middle of our floods and trials, God remembers us. He doesn't just give us a trial and say, "Okay, good luck. We'll see you on the other side if you make it through." He's there the whole time. And he remembers Noah. And one of my favorite parts is, if we do turn back to Moses and look at chapter seven, I love the way Enoch describes this. If we go down to verse 43 in Moses, Chapter 7. Enoch says, "He saw Noah build the arc. And then he says: The Lord smiled upon it, and held it in his own hand." And I love this idea that this huge structure, several football fields long, is still being held by the Lord. Noah and his family and the animals in the Ark, are still being cared for, watched over, remembered.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:17:10 I think sometimes when we're in the middle of a flood or a trial, we might not feel this way. We might not see the Lord's hand or feel the Lord's hand helping us. And I think this is supposed to be the major point, that he's still there. He still cares about Noah. He still cares about us, and he'll never abandon us ever, no matter what's happening or what's going on.
- Hank Smith: 00:17:34 Oftentimes, when we look at death and destruction, we have a different view of it than God does. When these people, animals and all these things die, they don't die to him. They're simply moved to a different location, maybe even a better classroom or a different classroom, where they can learn and be taught. So, the floods came and swallowed up the wicked. That's Moses 7:43, but it's not the idea of God's done with them. In our doctrine, God is just moving them to a different classroom.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:18:05 It's easy to see the mercy with Noah. Well, he survives the flood and he gets to come out. It's harder to see the mercy for those who don't survive the flood. That's something we have to talk about. Because like I said, the Flood narrative is about mercy. But with Noah sending out the dove, and the dove bringing back this olive leaf. And the symbolism there is huge, what the dove symbolizes. Peace, and it can also symbolize the Holy Ghost; you think of the baptism of Jesus. And then the olive tree, and what that symbolizes. The dove brings back a leaf from the olive tree. And the olive tree is symbolic of new life, renewal, starting over again. And this is because olive trees are, like honestly, really hard to kill and cut down. And even if you cut off all the branches and all the branches are destroyed, the roots always survive, and new shoots can grow out of the roots. And this is seen as a symbol of new life, a restart, a refresh; almost a recreation.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:19:08 And then of course we know that they can be grafted as well. And if a tree is dying, a new branch can be grafted in and save the tree as well. So we get to this point where the flood, instead of representing destruction and death, represents a fresh start; a cleansing, a recreation even. What's great about this is six through nine, and this talking about the Flood, really parallels Creation in Genesis 1-3. We get this watery chaos at the beginning. And out of the watery chaos, through the winds, sent from God, the dry land appears. The water recedes and then the people and the animals are brought forth, either through creation or they leave the Ark. And then there's a reference, to a blessing and this sort of commandment, "Go out and multiply and replenish the earth." The same thing that was said to Adam and Eve, was said to the people on the ark, when they left the ark.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:20:07 So it's almost like this renewal, this fresh start, a cleansing has happened. And that's mercy, that even though we sin, we can start over, we can become a new person, every single time we repent. We are given this chance. I love this, because we look at baptism as a cleansing, a new beginning, that we become a new person, a different person. And I love that you brought up 1 Peter, because it's likened to baptism. And it says, "The people were saved by water." And I don't think we would ever consider the Flood, that people were saved by the Flood. But if you look at it as a cleansing and becoming something new and something better, that's kind of our whole point, is every time we repent, when we go through baptism, it's so we can change. And so we can become better and get closer to our Heavenly Father and what he wants us to be.
- John Bytheway: 00:21:04 And then it says, "The like figure." Like that's how we're saved, by water as well. It's a really cool thing in 1 Peter there, if I'm remembering it right.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:21:14 Yeah. And I love that. I love it compared to that. And that's mercy, right there, that we get that chance. And repentance is really victory over chaos. It's victory over sin, victory over corruption. And through repentance, we're cleansed. And like Jesus said, you are born again. You have to be born again and again and again. Alma says, "Born of God," or King Benjamin says, "Become new creatures," however you want to describe it. Every time we repent, we go through a cleansing, and we become someone new. And this is what the flood represents. All of these different ways that we do this.

John Bytheway: 00:21:55 And thank heavens it's possible. That's why I love what you brought up about the word repentance as also being hope. I think of Elder Holland saying that repent is perhaps the most hopeful and encouraging word in the entire Christian vocabulary. That it's not necessarily a scolding word, necessarily. It's a hope that I can repent. Thank heavens I can repent.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:22:18 It's incredible. It's not easy, just like the Flood wasn't easy. But what comes out on the other side can be even better than it ever was.

John Bytheway: 00:22:26 Building arks the size of one and a half football fields is not easy.

Hank Smith: 00:22:34 This reminds me of Krystal, Richard Crookston in our computer support program at BYU. He would just, if I told him, "The earth has gone bad." He said, "Well, have you tried turning it off and on again?" That's kind of what the Lord did here. He's like, "Well, I'll just turn it off and on again and see..."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:22:51 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:22:51 Did that with my laptop this morning.

Hank Smith: 00:22:53 Yeah. You flooded it.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:22:55 Yeah. And I like how you brought up, that it wasn't the end for them. They weren't just destroyed and they're gone forever. Their time and mortality was over. It was time to move on, and now it's a fresh start. And I love that when Noah and his family leave the Ark, the Lord once again is, "Go out and multiply and replenish the earth. We're starting over here again." There's a covenant that's tied to this, that we can talk about too. But I always love to bring up this quote from President John Taylor. He actually describes the Flood. He says, "He destroyed them for their benefit. It was an act of love actually. They got to move on to something else, and now the earth gets to kind of restart again." Although, I think sometimes when we're in the middle of the Flood or have a flood, we don't feel like it's an act of love or mercy at all. It's hard to keep that perspective, definitely. But if we can, the outcome can be much better.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:23:49 It's funny how many times we're given chances to keep trying. And I always think, because of course with the olive tree; the Allegory of the Olive Tree with Jacob 5 and Zenos, and how many chances are the olive trees given to be grafted in or

moved here or done this. And, we need to take those chances. We need to repent when we can.

- John Bytheway: 00:24:06 "What more could I have done for my vineyard?"
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:24:09 Yeah. And at one point he does say, "Well, we're just going to have to burn the entire vineyard down." The helper, kind of represented by the Savior, says, "Well, let's give them one more chance." And because of that, that's the mercy right there, that we are given these chances. What do we do with these chances? Do we work hard and try to overcome these things? When we've hit rock bottom, do we turn to the Savior or do we turn away? That can really change the outcome. And I think this is part of what we're meant to take away from this, if you sinned, you repented, you have a fresh start. Move on, go out and change the world with the new person that you've become, which is what happens after the Flood.
- Hank Smith: 00:24:52 I don't want to give any spoilers here, but it sounds like they don't do incredibly well with their choice; with their start over again.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:24:59 Yeah. Unfortunately, as it goes with these cycles, there are cycles of righteousness and wickedness. And we'll talk about it with the Tower a bit more too, but one of the first things that Noah does when he gets off the Ark; we look at Chapter 8:20-22, is he goes and he builds an altar, and he sacrifices to the Lord. And we already kind of talked about what these sacrifices represent. It's interesting, because when you read commentaries on this, it says, "Oh, it doesn't say what type of sacrifice it was." And I mentioned it could be for sin or blessings or whatever. But we actually get a JST reference here, Genesis 9:4. He adds onto the end of it, the sacrifice was to give thanks unto the Lord, and he rejoiced in his heart.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:25:47 And so what is the first thing Noah does? He doesn't get off the ark and say, "Oh, I'm glad I built this Ark. I'm glad I saved myself and my family and all these animals." He says, "Thank you for saving us." And he gives thanks. I think this is a lesson too. When we come out on the other side and we survive, we realize, we acknowledge the Lord's hand in our survival, in our becoming a new person. So let's turn to Chapter 9 and kind of talk about this covenant, that marks this fresh start that they have for the earth to kind of start over again. There are multiple promises given here. And in Genesis, we only get one, really. So if you look down verse 9, he says, "I'll establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you." And then he goes on to

say, "I will never flood the earth ever again. I will never cut off everyone by waters of the flood or destroy the earth."

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:26:43 And if we just think about Genesis, then that's it. That's the covenant. God promises he will never do this again, and that's it. But what's great is, we have so much more in the JST here. And we get two more promises that come out of this. And what's great is these promises and this covenant is extended, not only to Noah, but everybody that is part of the posterity of Noah. So let's look at this. So if we look at JST 9:15, so we kind of got to look at the footnotes here, he says, "I will establish my covenant with you, which I made unto your father, Enoch, concerning your seed." And then he goes on in 11:3, to talk about, "The remnants of your posterity."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:27:28 So this is going back to Moses 7. But basically it's this covenant that was given with Enoch, that out of Enoch's descendants and out of Noah's descendants, all nations would come from that, from this blessing of going out and multiplying, replenishing the earth. And that was a promise given to Enoch, and given to Noah. And this was part of the covenant. He was promised this, that all of these nations would come from this.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:27:52 And we get one more promise. One more promise, if we keep going in JST 9:21-23, he says, "When men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth." And it's crazy. I don't think we think of this covenant after the flood, as including these extra things, that Noah's posterity would include all the nations, but also this idea that we have this promise that all of Noah's posterity, which, when you think about it is us; we're included in this, that this covenant included, "If we're righteous, Zion will return," and everything that Zion means: peace, and righteousness and a certain lifestyle and a way of living and treating each other, and loving each other. And this is part of this whole covenant. And I love this, that it's so much more than just, "I won't ever flood the earth again." They're these promises that are given to us as well, that you can work, so that Zion will come back, and Zion will be on the earth again.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:55 Nice to have those JST references noted there. I'm looking at actual pages of scripture, 13, three different JST references in the footnotes.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:29:07 Yeah, it's a lot. And I love it's more than this. I think sometimes we struggle finding ourselves in these Old Testament covenants. We say, "Well, what does this have to do with me? This is about Noah and his posterity and the

Flood." But when you read this, this is for everybody. Everybody on the earth that came from Noah and part of his posterity, are given these promises. I always tell my students, "Find yourself in these covenants. Find yourself in the Enoch covenant. Find yourself in the Noah covenant." And then, of course, we have a big one coming up as well in the rest of Genesis. I also like that not only this covenant marked the fresh start. And I think this happens a lot with us too. The baptismal covenant is a fresh start. Repentance covenants are a fresh start. Part of this is, he says, "I'm going to actually give you a token or a symbol of this covenant, so you don't forget it." Because we know I'm major problem is forgetting the Lord, forgetting the covenants.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:05 All through the book of Mormon, we need to remember. Remember, it's so important. And he says, "This is the token I'm going to give you." And he says, "I'm going to set the bow in the cloud." And I love how he says "my bow." And the word here for bow, is actually the same word for like the weapon; a bow. And it's almost like God saying, "I am laying out my weapon. I'm putting my weapon down." Of course, we liken this to the rainbow, of course, and this is the symbol of that covenant.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:33 And so when you see the rainbow, it's not just, "Okay, so it rained, but to remind us that the flood will never come again, and the rains will always stop." But it's also, when you look at that, you should remember, I'm of the posterity of Noah and I can help Zion return. And I love the way it's said in the JST, "When you look up, and you see that rainbow, it should help you to remember that someday, you'll look up, and you'll see Zion returning to earth again." And this promise of, when the savior comes back and the Millennium and the peace and prosperity and everything that will happen with that, should give us hope.
- John Bytheway: 00:31:10 So that word bow, like a bow and arrow, so it's a bow that's. That's cool.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:31:15 Yeah. So it was kind of like this idea of God saying, "I'm putting down my bow, or this destructive rain that came," was more of a cleansing rain. When you see the rainbow, think about these things. You have Noah's posterity, and someday Zion will come again as well.
- Hank Smith: 00:31:33 Yeah, and part of building Zion is laying down your own weapons.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:31:37 Exactly. Because we know Zion was peace; it was peace, and people treated each other with love and kindness and charity. And that's how Zion was built and kept. And it's something to look forward to, getting back to that time, Zion coming back. And I love this token thing. We have so many tokens and symbols too. We kind of talked before about how, in the Old Testament they have so many physical objects. And so for us, of course, baptism is very symbolic of going down in the water and being cleansed, and coming out to the new person. And the token and sort of symbols there, also are tied up in the sacrament. When we take the sacrament, we remember our baptismal covenant. We remember the broken body and the blood. We remember the Atonement in the Crucifixion. It should be the same with our repentance covenants.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:32:29 I think sometimes why we struggle with sinning again, is because sometimes we don't have these tokens. And so I always tell my students, when you go through repentance and you make a covenant with God, "I'm never going to do this again," come up with a token or a symbol of that. Something that will remind you. Whether it's a physical object you put out, so you can see, or it's a note you leave to yourself so that you remember. And a great example of this are the Anti-Nephi-Lehis in the Book of Mormon. So, they go through this repentance of being murderers and being bloodthirsty, and fighting and all these things. And they say, as a token, a symbol of this covenant, we're actually going to take all of our weapons and bury them. And so we can't even see them, we can't even reach them. And I think this token, these symbols, whether it's the rainbow or burying your weapons or whatever you do, can really help us keep these covenants, remember them, and keep going.

Hank Smith: 00:33:31 Have something, a constant reminder.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:33:33 Not a reminder of the sin, but a reminder that you've become a new person and you don't do that anymore.

Hank Smith: 00:33:40 It's got to be one of the major purposes of garments, right?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:33:44 Yes, absolutely. Garments are a part of this. Yeah. And so there are things we do.

John Bytheway: 00:33:50 I think a King Benjamin's phrase is, "To have them always before their eyes," having the commandments always before their eyes. So there's a physical reminder there, like garments, I guess.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:34:02 When we think of the temple or baptism, we do have tokens and covenants. So it can help us to remember. And so we should be doing this with all the covenants that we do, that we are under, and that can help us to remember. I love that this is kind of how the flood narrative ends. There's this covenant they enter into, and they have this rainbow. And this idea of even though you may undergo trials and floods, if you can, first of all, be prepared, it will make it easier. But then also, when you come out, thank God for what he did for you and get this fresh start.

Hank Smith: 00:34:40 And also look forward to the day of Zion, of God coming to be with you.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:34:47 I hope that we can see the flood narrative as a lot of mercy. There's justice there, but there's a lot of mercy and love, and giving us another chance. And there's a really good message there that's not just about corruption and destruction and things like this.

Hank Smith: 00:35:02 So what do they do with this new start over?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:05 They end up developing some problems among their society.

Hank Smith: 00:35:10 Does this sound like human beings? "Oh, it's so wonderful. It's so great. Let's start over."

John Bytheway: 00:35:15 "Can't we just roll the credits now and be done?"

Hank Smith: 00:35:18 "You messed it up again."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:20 I know. It would be nice just to kind of say, "Well, it ends with this covenant and this fresh start. And they take the fresh start and they run with it and..."

Hank Smith: 00:35:28 And they do well.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:29 ... everything's perfect.

John Bytheway: 00:35:31 And they live righteously ever after.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:34 Yeah, the end. Yeah, they have some problems.

Hank Smith: 00:35:37 I've noticed Krystal, the Old Testament is very human.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:41 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:35:43 Where it's like, "Oh good. God is so good," and they messed it up again. And that sounds like my life. "Oh, God is so good," and you messed it up again.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:55 Well, and that's part of why we need these tokens and reminders, is because we forget. We have these miraculous spiritual experiences. And then a year later, we don't remember anymore. As part of our problem, I think, is remembering. One good thing is, when we do get to Chapter 10, this is what we call the Table of Nations. And it just talks about the posterity of Noah and all of the nations that came from Noah. And we got everybody in here. We have Egypt appearing here. So not only peoples, but groups of peoples and places. And what's great about Chapter 10 is, this is the partial fulfillment of the covenant. Noah was promised that all nations would come from his posterity, and then boom, Chapter 10, here are all the nations that came from Noah's posterity; all their known nations in the Ancient Near East.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:36:49 And so, another great thing about Chapter 10:8, it mentions this man named Nimrod. Nimrod actually shows up in the book of Mormon too, among the Jaredites. They go to this valley of Nimrod, and that's one of the places where God actually speaks to the brother of Jared. So I love that we have these connections as well. But that's pretty much the most that can really be said about Chapter 10, is its real purpose is to show the fulfillment of this covenant. It's kind of like a genealogy, but in reality, it's not just talking about people, sometimes it's talking about groups of people or places or regions. And it's really just to show that every known place, and people, that they knew in the Ancient Near East, which of course was limited, came from Noah. All of it came out of this blessing to multiply and replenish the earth. He fulfilled that role. And everybody came from this. Everyone came from this blessing, and although some of these nations, of course, turn a different direction.

Hank Smith: 00:37:50 Yeah, so the author here is sending us a message, "God keeps his promises."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:37:56 Yeah. And it's supposed to show this continuation of the covenant too. So we have this partial fulfillment, but the covenant continues, and it'll continue on and on until Zion comes back, and then it will be fulfilled.

John Bytheway: 00:38:10 It almost looks like a chiasmus too, the first verse of 10, "These are the generations of the sons of Noah after the flood." And

the last verse, "These are the families of the sons of Noah, divided in the earth after the floods." Maybe they're just-

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:23 I love it.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:23 Maybe they're just bookends saying, "Here's what I'm going to give you, here it is, now here's what I just gave you."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:29 Yeah, it's kind of like, "Here's the point, they all came from Noah." And then it ends with, "And that was the point of the flood of Noah"
- John Bytheway: 00:38:32 That was the point.
- Hank Smith: 00:38:38 And they do that. Interestingly, it happens in the Book of Ether as well, where you get this big list in what, Ether 1 or 2. And then it traces it back out for the rest of the book.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:51 Yeah, and it kind of fast forwards through some generations and slows down for the first one and the last one.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:59 In fact, most of Chapter 11 is more about how we get from the tower of Babel and in Noah to Abraham, this incredible covenant that comes with Abraham. And this is all setting us up, that, "Hey, people need covenants. People need to remember their covenants. We have the Flood, we have the Tower, we have covenants." And then we get the huge one, the big one, the Abrahamic Covenant. And it's all setting us up for that. The Tower, especially.
- Hank Smith: 00:39:29 Yeah. So if I'm an ancient Israelite and I'm reading this, Krystal, aren't I, this is why our family exists; this is why we have the covenants we do? This whole story is leading up to the family of Israel.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:39:43 Yeah, exactly. Like I said, this covenant with Enoch and Noah were still under. Of course the Abrahamic Covenant was renewed with Joseph Smith, and this integral is essential to the Restoration and the gathering of Israel. And this is the lead up.
- Hank Smith: 00:39:57 Chapter 11, I laughed when I heard it described, "And humans had new technology, the brick. And with their new technology, they were going to become like God."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:40:14 "Conquer the world."
- Hank Smith: 00:40:14 "They were going to conquer the world."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:40:16 But the tower of the Babel, we only have nine verses in the book of Genesis. And because we only have these nine verses, we kind of have to take a deep dive into the text, and look at what it's saying. What is this meant to teach us? What does the Tower symbolize? How do people, like the Jaredites, who we know were present at the Tower, are able to escape the Tower and keep their faith and move on? And so, we're going to use some other records to help us out here. First of all, of course, in the footnotes, we have some references to the JST, that are going to give us some extra information, as well as the book of Mormon. So the Tower is actually mentioned in several places in the book of Mormon, the book of Omni, Mosiah, Helaman, Ether, many times. And so we can use those interpretations as well, to help us out and really look at why the Jaredites survived this, in the same way that Noah and his family survived, and what it meant for them.

Hank Smith: 00:41:11 So without Joseph Smith, we don't know much about the tower. But with Joseph Smith...

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:41:16 Yeah, exactly.

Hank Smith: 00:41:17 ... Book of Mormon and his JST, we know a lot more.

John Bytheway: 00:41:21 Can you give us the meaning of the word?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:41:23 There are a lot of clever play on words in the scriptures. And the word babel is meant to mean more than one thing. So I love that you guys are pulling out multiple interpretations here. In Hebrew, babel is just the word for Babylon. So it's a reference here, and that's another great thing about the Tower, is we get to tie it to a place, a time, people, archeology. We really get to tie this down. And that's amazing. That enhances, I think, our understanding quite a bit. So it comes from the Akkadian word *babilu*, which means, "Gate of the gods, Gate of the gods or gate to the gods." I want us to keep that in mind as we talk about what the Tower represents, and what the Tower was used for, because it is related to that.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:42:10 And of course the word babel in English, means to kind of speak gibberish baby language. And it works perfectly with the confounding of languages. They weren't able to communicate and understand each other. And it probably sounded like babbling in gibberish, once the languages were confounded. So there's so many; just in this one word babel, we get so much information. We do find out in verse one, it says, "The whole earth was of one language and one speech." And of course the

word used here for earth, in Hebrew is *'erets*. And this can refer to global earth. It can also refer to a region, a land, or a country. You look this up in the KJV, it is used to cover everything. Even soil; even a soil floor in a house is the earth. We use it in a similar way. But we do know there's a group of people, and they all speak the same language, and they're all traveling together.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:43:07

And when we get to verse two, they end up in a place. And it says, very specifically, "They dwell in the land of Shinar." And, what's great about Shinar is, we're fairly confident that this is equated with a place we call Sumer. And Sumer is located in Southern Mesopotamia. And so Mesopotamia is about equal to modern-day Iraq. So the Tigris in the Euphrates, and we have the south and we have the north. And so, this is great because we can put them in a place that we know of today, that we have remains in archeology and texts about. And so we can tie this all together. And these outside texts really give us a lot of information that matches and enhances the biblical text. And so we can tie them with this. Also Babylon, this is the same place Babylon is located.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:43:56

And we kind of talked about the bricks here. This seems a strange thing to include when you only have nine verses. What are we going to build the Tower out of? Let's give an entire verse dedicated to bricks and slime. Because the author chose to leave the sin and at this, it must serve a point. The way they talk about making bricks is that they burn them. And this is a really important characteristic, because in Egypt and Israel, they didn't burn their bricks. They had access to stone. And so for really important buildings, like a tower or a temple or a tomb or a pyramid, they're going to use stone. And for everything else, more domestic things or residential, they use something they call mud bricks. And it's basically mixing mud and clay and straw. You put it in a mold and you leave it out in the sun and it bakes by the sun, and you can build out of that. It's not going to be waterproof. It's not going to be strong, but it gets the job done. And then if it breaks down, you rebuild it.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:44:59

But in Mesopotamia, especially in the southern part, they didn't have a lot of access to stone. So when you needed to build an important building, like a tower or a temple or something like that, you had to do something else, and you couldn't just use mud brick. So they developed this technology in the third and fourth millennium. So we're talking about, like 3,500 BC here, to take the bricks and actually bake them in an oven, put them in a kiln, like we would do with pottery, and harden them, so that

they almost become like stone; as close to stone as they could use.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:45:34 And then they mentioned using the slime for mortar. And this is another reference to this pitch or bitumen, this tar. And this was their way of making it waterproof, just like the Ark was made waterproof. Because stone, if you build an important structure, you're going to want it to be waterproof, and not be able to be destroyed by this, because they're still clay bricks. And so this is important, because it's telling us they're not in Egypt, they're not in Israel, and that whatever they're building, it's a labor intensive process to put this together, to make these bricks and these stones. And so it kind of shows how important this tower was for them. And it gives us more information about the location and the time period. These verses, even though they seem like not important, they're meant to kind of teach us something and connect us. Verse 4 is one of the most important ones here, because it tells us why they built the tower.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:27 They said, "Okay, we're going to build this city and this tower, and these are the reasons." They kind of give three reasons: so that the top can reach into heaven. So it may reach unto heaven. And then second reason, so we can make a name for ourselves. We build this massive structure, people are going to know us. They're going to remember us. And then the third one is, so that we're not scattered, so we can stay together. So there's already this idea that they were afraid of being scattered, of being separated.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:56 Let's talk about the Tower for a minute here. We know we're in Mesopotamia, we know the construction materials, we kind of know the time period. Do we know of towers that reach into heaven in Mesopotamia at this time? And we do. We actually have about 25 examples of enormous towers in Mesopotamia, and these are called ziggurats. And so, we do believe... Most biblical scholars believe that the tower of Babel was a ziggurat. And so let me talk a little bit about what these are. They were made out of these burnt bricks. And so of course that's a good connection. They're basically these towers of narrowing platforms. And so, as an Egyptologist, I think of if you've seen a step pyramid, it's kind of that idea. So a big platform on the bottom and it gets narrower to another platform, and another one and another one, all the way up to the top. And these things could be huge, as big as 300 feet on one side, and as tall as 200 feet up in the air.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:48:03 And what's great is, like I said, we have about 25 examples of these on the ground, that we can look at in Mesopotamia. And we have texts that tell us what they were used for, what they were called. It's great to be able to look at that, and say, "Does this inform or enhance our understanding of the tower in Genesis?" And that's one of the things that archeology and ancient texts can do. They really can give us more information, because we want to know why the tower was a problem? What was the problem with the Tower, so that their languages had to be confounded and they had to be scattered? Because you think of building a tower for God, hey, that's a good thing. But these texts enhance our understanding. And the ziggurats match up just perfectly with some of these things that they say. So, the names of these ziggurats are described as, "Having their head in the heavens high as a mountain, they're head touching heaven." And so there's definitely this idea of this connection between heaven and earth. That was the ziggurat, and that's one of the main purposes.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:49:09 So, let's talk a little bit about what we know about the purpose of ziggurats, and then maybe we can try and match it up or see how it connects with their purpose for building the Tower of Babel. So ziggurats, we know, were dedicated to a deity, usually the patron deity of a city. And the purpose of the ziggurat though, was not a temple. It wasn't a temple where some people went to worship this deity. And we know this because first of all, there was a temple always next to the ziggurat, where people would go and worship. And that was the temple. And ziggurats are never associated with rituals or worship or anything like that.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:49:51 So then it's like, why are they building this? And the craziest thing about these ziggurats is they were solid inside, except for the very top platform. They were completely filled with rubble, and dirt and sand and things like that. And they had this ramp or stairs going up to the top. So we find out in the text, that the reason why they're building these, is first of all, to make it so that God could come down to earth. So if they build it up into heaven and they reach heaven, it makes it possible for God to be able to use the ramp and the staircase, and come down and visit earth, and go to the temple and be worshiped; which already, it's kind of like a misunderstanding of kind of how God works and what he is. We can already see this.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:50:42 The other purpose was to make it so that God would stay on earth, that he wouldn't go back to heaven. And so on the very top of these ziggurats, there was a bedroom, an empty room,

that they built for God. And inside the room was a bed and a table, and the priest would go up and they'd make the bed all nice, and they'd set the table with food and drink. And there was a chair. So their hope was that God would come down. He would live in this tower, so they would reach into heaven, be able to access God, bring him down. They would make a name for themselves, because if God's living in your city, on your ziggurat, then you're going to be famous. This kind of idea, if we can get God to live in our tower, in the ziggurat, then we won't be scattered. We can convince him this is where we need to stay.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:51:32 It's almost like a way of thinking of manipulating God. If we give him this, he owes us not to scatter us. He owes us to favor us and bless us. And so we can see there are a lot of issues with misunderstanding the nature of God. And when we hear things like this, controlling God, manipulating God, forcing him to live in a bedroom on a tower, that sounds insane to us. And so we think, what are we supposed to get from this, almost like this more pagan view of this sort of anthropomorphic humanized view of God? The truth is that when you actually start to look at it and think about it, we do these things just in different ways. We do these things sometimes. We misunderstand, I think, sometimes how God works. We're really getting into theology here. It's difficult.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:52:25 I think sometimes we take for granted our view or our understanding of God, and we just kind of push it aside. And I think this part of the story of the Tower of Babel is that we're meant to go back and think about who he is, what he is, and our relationship with him, and how he treats us, and in a way, how we treat him as well. And how does the Lord respond? So like I said, they build the temple, and he does end up coming down, in verse 5, to see the city and the Tower. And his response is not good. He is not happy with the Tower. And he says, "The people are one, they have one language. And they're beginning to do this. What else can they do?" It's interesting because he says, "They're all together. They're all doing this. What will they do next?" If they think they can control God and manipulate him or force him or do these things, what are they going to do next?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:53:25 We're getting beyond... With the Flood, it was about how people treated each other, and the violence and corruption and sin and wickedness. Now we're getting to completely a corruption of the idea of God and his role, and our role and all of these things. And the solution was to split the people up. Just how, like we had kind of talked about with the Flood narrative,

"Be careful, because wickedness spreads." And I always think of this as it's like we're going to change their language, so they can't really communicate with each other, and then we're going to scatter them. And it's this idea, I always think of like a mob mentality. When you're in this group and it's a mob, sometimes people behave differently than if they were on their own, as an individual. And so it's this idea that, "We will scatter the people, and try and stop this corrupt view."

- Hank Smith: 00:54:21 For their own good.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:22 Yeah, for their own good. Exactly, this corrupt view. Because this path, misunderstanding God, that path leads to theological destruction. It's such a thing we take for granted that I don't even think we think about very much. It can lead to some major problems.
- Hank Smith: 00:54:44 Yeah, and he had promised Noah, "I'm not going to flood the earth again." So he is got to stop...
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:48 Exactly.
- Hank Smith: 00:54:48 This has got to stop before they end up in that exact same position they were in before. So, "We're going to scatter them. We won't flood them. We'll scatter them this time."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:58 And we'll talk about some of these views they had, that were incorrect. And when we get to Jared and the brother of Jared, we realize that they do escape the tower. Their language doesn't get confounded, but they are scattered. They definitely are part of the scattering, but their scattering, of course, leads to a promised land. And their view of God, and the things they say, are incredibly different from what the Tower represents. Some of the things, the way they interact... Because they have these problems: there's no air in their boats, there's no light, even having the language confounded being scattering, and how they respond to those problems is so different from the people here. So what I want to kind of try and do is go through this verse 4 and really talk about what were the problems with the Tower. Why did it lead to such a huge event, to scatter everyone and change their language, and how did the brother of Jared and his family get through this?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:55:56 So, one of the first things they try to do, they say, "We want to reach heaven." And a lot of times, I know we interpret this as us trying to get into heaven, through the improper means. And that's a perfect interpretation. I think the idea of the ziggurat

and what the ziggurat was for, adds to it as well, this idea that we can control God or manipulate him into doing what we want. And like I said, this sounds crazy. You would never say, "Oh yeah, I'm attempting to control God or force him to do what I want." But, I think there are many times in our life, where we think we know what's best for ourselves. We think we know, in a way, more than God. We know that this job is the perfect job for me. And because it's the perfect job for me, God will make sure I get this job. He will make sure it happens. And in reality, that's not quite how it works.

- Hank Smith: 00:56:54 That's not trust. That's not faith.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:56:57 Exactly. When things don't match up, we think, "Well, what happened? I knew this was the thing." And so, I kind of have a story about this, sort of a personal story. When I was applying to school for college, I knew exactly where... And it wasn't even I wanted to go, I needed to go. I was meant to go. And I knew I wanted to do Egyptology. I wanted to stay not too far from home. I wanted to be in a place I was comfortable. And for me, that was UCLA. And that's where I knew I was meant to go. It was my path, and God was on the same page, and he would make sure I got into that school.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:57:33 And we made this decision together, and we planned out my path together. And it's funny because I actually ended up not getting into UCLA. And it was devastating. At times I was angry and frustrated with God. This was our plan. This is what's best for me. This is what I'm meant to do, as opposed to listening to him, and having trust and faith in him, that he sees the big picture. He's got the perspective. It's not about, "I'm going to build the tower so I don't get scattered." It's, "What's best for me? You tell me what's best for me, because you know."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:58:10 In hindsight now, I did end up going to UCLA for grad school. And while I was there, I met my husband, and started a family. I met the people that would eventually sort of lead me to BYU, and my position there. If I had gone there as an undergrad, those people wouldn't have been there at that time. And I think God was saying, "Yeah, you're meant to go there. Just not right now." So sometimes, I think we get frustrated when we think we know exactly what we need, and we think we know more than he does.
- John Bytheway: 00:58:42 Or when we need it.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:58:44 Yeah, exactly, the time.

John Bytheway:	00:58:45	The sequences, yeah.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:58:47	I feel like sometimes this happens too, especially when we feel like we've been really righteous. Like, "I've been really righteous, so I deserve this." And it's hard because they said, "We will build this tower for you. We're doing this great and wonderful thing, so that you won't scatter us. You owe us not to scatter us." And I think we do things like this too. "Well, I've been going to church every Sunday. I've been reading my scriptures. I've been praying. Where are my blessings? Where is my prosperity? Where is this thing that I want?"
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:59:24	And, sometimes it can hurt our faith, when we don't get those things. I think this is one of the things the tower is meant to teach us, that blessings and prosperity aren't necessarily always tied to righteousness, and the things that we actually do. And that sometimes, these are merciful things that are given to us. And so I think the question is, what are our Towers of Babel? Everybody's got different towers they build themselves, that sometimes are based on a misunderstanding of just kind of how life works. And maybe a tower, I know for me, one of my towers is control, wanting to control my life and what happens. And when it doesn't turn out the way I want it, it's a struggle. And like you said, it's more about faith and trust; putting myself in his hands and not thinking I know everything or can control everything. That's a much better outcome, I think, than what the Tower stands for.
Hank Smith:	01:00:25	I see Genesis 11:4, "Let us make a name," almost this idea of, whose kingdom are you trying to build? Are you trying to build-
John Bytheway:	01:00:33	It sounds like a selfish motive.
Hank Smith:	01:00:35	Yeah. Are you trying to build Zion or are you trying to build yourself?
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	01:00:38	Exactly, or who's light are you holding up? Like Jesus says, "I'm the light that you're supposed to hold up." Not necessarily your own. Sometimes, we feel like we might be able to control God or we're afraid to just say, "I'm in your hands. You take over, and I trust you that you know what's best for me. Things will work out." Having that hope, definitely.
Hank Smith:	01:01:00	I've also seen this as like, "I can be above the Flood. I won't have consequences. The problem was last time, it wasn't our wickedness. It's that we had consequences. So let's avoid these consequences by building a tower. God can't flood this tower."

Dr. Krystal Pierce:	01:01:16	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	01:01:17	"Repentance is a last resort. Let's not do that. Let's figure out another way."
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	01:01:22	I think it's a great point, because it's kind of like, "If we build this tower, then God owes us not to punish us, because we've done this great thing." And I think we do this too like, "I've been being so righteous. Where's all my wealth? I built this amazing tower for you, God. Like what am I getting out of this?" And we know that's not how it works. And I think when we realize that, then we won't be as disappointed when these things don't happen or don't come along.
Hank Smith:	01:01:50	It just seems like there's a lot of pride and a lot of, "I'm going to control the situation," versus trust, faith, faith in the covenant.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	01:02:00	I love that we see with the brother of Jared, that he's all about faith. That's his thing. And we see his response. So they find out that they're going to be scattered and their language is going to be confounded. And so it's kind of like, how do they respond to this situation that they have? In Ether, they turn to the Lord and they say, "Please don't confound our language." And that's it. Straightforward request. There's no manipulation. "We're going to build the Tower. We're going to add to it, or we're going to do this or that," there's no like, "We've been righteous, so you owe us not to confound our language." It's just, "Please don't do it. Please let us stay together, so we can communicate with each other."
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	01:02:38	And the Lord says, "Okay." It says, "He had mercy on them and he did this." Then they find out they're going to be scattered. And the response to the scattering is incredible, because they don't go to the Lord and say, "Please, don't scatter us." They say, "Are we going to be scattered? And if so, will you lead us somewhere better?"
John Bytheway:	01:02:56	Yeah, I love that. "Can we go? Maybe it'll be a land of promise. Maybe it'll be awesome."
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	01:03:03	Yeah. And so it shows they have this understanding of God, he's in control. He decides if their language should be confounded, and if it's good for them or not. He decides if they should be scattered, and if it's going to be good for them or not. And the scattering, that's seen as typically a very negative, bad thing. In Ether 1:38, they say, "Maybe the Lord will carry us forth into a land which is choice above all the earth." So they also trust him.

They say, "Even though this might be a bad thing, we are headed, possibly to a better place." And of course, they do end up in promised land, eventually.

Hank Smith: 01:03:37 Well, that's so applicable to our lives, isn't it Krystal? Even though this major difficulty hits, I trust that maybe this will work out better than what I had planned.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:03:47 Yeah. And so that's one of the ways of surviving; surviving the flood. Noah trusted God that he would help him and his family survive. He listened to him and he prepared. And it's the same with the Jaredites. They trusted that even though they would be scattered, they would have to leave the Tower, that there was something better coming; something even better than before. Faith, I think we say, "Oh, it's just such a basic thing." And we think of it as passive. "I have faith," and that's it. Joseph Smith says, "Faith is action. It's the principle of action. Faith should cause you to do things, to show your faith." And I think we see that with Noah, and we see that with the brother of Jared as well.

Hank Smith: 01:04:29 Krystal, doesn't Babylon take this symbolic meaning as like the antithesis to Zion, the enemy of God? Is that kind of where this begins?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:04:39 Yeah, I think so. I think it's all based on starting right now, this misunderstanding of how God works, how he views us, and treats us. It was said here, "The problem was, this will make them theologically destitute." If you can't even have like a correct understanding of God, where do you go from there? That changes everything; everything you believe and do. And so they tried to correct this, but you're right. Eventually, Babylon becomes like this symbol, whether we're actually talking about Babylon, the place, or Babylon as a symbol of something, the idea of something. And the Tower, what does the tower represent? It represents people trying to control things, not trusting in God, not having faith. And Hank, like you brought up, it's pride too. And it's always interesting to me in scripture, the time when people start to fall, is when they're prosperous and blessed. That's the time they start to forget God. That's the time that the pride starts creeping in and causes so many problems prior to sort of the root of all sin; every sin, I think.

Hank Smith: 01:05:45 If you're an ancient Israelite, and you read this, don't you hear now, the world was going bad again? And so, the answer was this family, Abraham and Sarah. That was God's answer for the Tower.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:05:59 Exactly. This new covenant and the story of the ancestors, the patriarchs and the matriarchs are the answer to all of these problems that came beforehand. And I love that this is kind of the buildup. I love President Benson's famous talk on pride, where he says, "Pride is basically competition with God. You are trying to compete with God. 'I know more, I'm better. I'm stronger. I'm more powerful,' which we would never think we could compete with God. We would never say that." But that's what they're kind of saying with building the Tower, or when we say, "I bought this house all by myself, with my hard work," or, "I gained this education or raised this family," and we don't acknowledge that his hand is in everything, everywhere.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:06:44 That's a tower. That's a tower right there. It's kind of this idea of, "We'll build the Tower, so God will love us, so God will favor us, so God will bless us, because we're not good enough. Because there are so many people out there in the world, that he's not paying attention to us, unless we make this massive display." And I think we've all felt this way, sometimes. "Does God care about me individually? Billions of people, billions of prayers. Does he hear my prayer?" And I think this is another tower. Maybe your tower is pride, maybe it's not, maybe it's the opposite. Maybe it's self-doubt and feeling alone and lost.
- Hank Smith: 01:07:26 The Adversary would say that. "You've got to do something bigger than everybody else in order for God to care about you."
- John Bytheway: 01:07:31 Yeah. And it's kind of a misunderstanding of God's nature too, to think, "I've got to win his favor somehow or he won't love me otherwise."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:07:40 This is a huge struggle. This idea that, "Well, I can't build a tower. I'm not going to become the prophet someday. So, why would God care about me or love me?" And like I said, that can be just as destructive as pride, even more so I think. And the Adversary is constantly trying to make us feel like we're nothing, we're worthless. So what's the solution then? Of course the solution to this Tower of Babel that's pride, is acknowledging God, thanking God. Noah gets off the boat and he sacrifices. But what about the self-doubt side? What's the solution to this, to realizing that God loves us?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:08:19 He loves everyone. It's being okay that he loves everyone, but he also loves you individually for who you are, and who you are now. Even if you feel like you're a sinner and you're wicked, he loves you. You don't have to earn his love through building a tower or any of these other things. He loves you as you are. He

knows you individually, and he cares about you. I love this thing that Elder Uchtdorf said, "This is the paradox. Compared to God, we're nothing, yet we are everything to God; everything to him." And if we can realize this, we can knock down some of these towers that we've built for ourselves.

- Hank Smith: 01:08:58 Yeah, it does feel like Ether, Chapter 1, becomes the answer to Genesis 11, where the brother of Jared cries unto the Lord, and the Lord has compassion. That happens in Chapter 1, four or five times. He cries to the Lord, and the Lord has compassion. He cries to the Lord, and the Lord has compassion. That seems to be the answer. Don't build a tower, cry to the Lord, go to the Lord.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:09:23 I love it because the tower really represents people trying to pull God down to them, to their level. But in reality, God is always trying to pull us up. He's always trying to pull us up; up to his level. And sometimes, we fight against it. And if we could just let him pull us up to his level, to understand him and who he is and how much he loves us and why he sent his son and all of these things, then we can be like Noah or the brother of Jared, and make it through and have our faith intact, after all of these things that happen in our lives: floods and scatterings and things like that.
- Hank Smith: 01:10:03 I really like this, because when it comes down to it, Noah, the brother of Jared, this is about trusting God's way instead of trying to force God to do it your way.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:10:15 Absolutely. Listening to him and his prophets too, his speakers on earth. What are they trying to warn us about, prepare us for, and what can we learn from that?
- Hank Smith: 01:10:25 Well, my brother and my father passed away within 90 days of each other. And I remember kind of looking up at heaven, going, "I don't like your way." And for a split second, I thought, "I know better. I know better than this. I could have done this better." But then I thought, "Wait. Trust, faith, trust. Try to believe. Your way is better than my way. I'll do it your way." And that tension between, "Your way sounds hard. Your way is difficult. My way is easy. Let's do it my way." And you're right. There's this, he's pulling me towards him, I'm trying to pull him down to me. Why don't I just let him, "I'll just trust you," I'll just trust him.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:11:11 It's not easy.

- John Bytheway: 01:11:13 The heart of that is understanding God's nature, that he's a loving personal God. And then that works. If he were an impersonal, indifferent God, boy we'd be in trouble. We'd be trying to build towers all over. But if we really think, "Oh, he actually does love us and care for us." Wow, that sure changes everything, doesn't it?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:11:36 I tell my students, faith is a skill. Something you have to work on. You have to actually work on it to become good at it. It's not just something that you're born with and you have it or you don't. You do have to work on it. And if you don't continue to grow it and develop it, it can start to recede and go away. And so it's like Noah preparing for the Flood. It takes a lot of work to build up that faith. We're trying to get to the point where our faith grows, and it's so perfect that we get to return home or we get to see the Savior face-to-face. That's what it's all about. We talk about scatterings and gatherings. Our whole life is a scattering, I feel; scattered from heaven, from the Garden of Eden, and we're all trying to get home to the Promised Land. And how do we do that? How do we get to that point?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:12:22 The reason why we have these narratives here at this point, in Genesis, is to prepare us for what's coming next, to show us that we need covenants, that we need to formalize these agreements with God, and have these tokens. Because, we had the flood narrative and this renewal, and this new covenant with Noah, and now we get this. And of course the Jaredites, once they reach their promised land, they enter into a promised land covenant about serving God and keeping their freedom and keeping the land. But then, of course, after Chapter 11 comes the covenant, this great overarching covenant. And the Flood and the Tower and all these things are meant to prepare us for Abraham and his family and the patriarchs and the matriarchs and this covenant. And to show us that this covenant is integral to everything. Like I said, the Abrahamic Covenant renewed with Joseph Smith, and it is key to the Restoration and to the gathering of Israel. And hopefully, at this point, going through all of this, we're prepared and we're ready to read about that and understand why we need it and how it works.
- Hank Smith: 01:13:35 So an ancient reader is getting this from a different perspective. Well, we've already said it, it's, "Why am I here? Why do I exist? Why am I in the family I'm in?" "Oh, I'm sorry. You're part of a chosen family to bless the earth."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:13:52 I love it. I heard somebody describe a covenant as ways that God reveals himself to us, reveals who he is. And so I love sort

of the answer to what happens at the tower, and this misunderstanding of the nature of God is covenants. This is the way he reveals himself to us in the Old Testament and in the New Testament and in the Book of Mormon. And so, that can help us understand him a lot more.

Hank Smith: 01:14:20 Krystal, this has been fantastic. I feel like I see the Flood and the Tower, just in a new light. Thank you so much for this. I think our listeners would be interested in your journey. Here's a Bible scholar and a faithful believing Latter-day Saint.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:14:39 When I first started studying Egyptology, I knew I wanted to do Egyptology since Fifth Grade. I took a class, this summer school class, and I fell in love with it, this idea of this culture. And they were so unique. And I wanted to know why, and what was so special about these people that they created this civilization. And so, I knew I wanted to study Egyptology. And when I went to Berkeley and I started going into classes, and also at UCLA for grad school, I was given some advice that, knowing that I'm a person of faith and beliefs, to separate out my academic studies from my faith and my beliefs. This was the advice I was given. Keep them separate. And so I thought, "Okay I'm going to try this."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:15:25 Some people liken it to wearing different hats. So when you step into a classroom, and you're going to learn about the ancient Near East, you take off your beliefs, your faith hat, and you put on your Egyptologist hat. And I tried to do this. I tried, and I could not do it. I could not separate these parts of my identity. One of the things I study is people's identity, who they are, or who they think they are. It's the idea of trying to separate parts of myself that I couldn't. I can't take off my beliefs hat. My beliefs are my life. They inform everything I do. Whether I'm studying or at church or whatever I'm doing, my beliefs are my life. And so once I started realizing that... It's pretty much impossible. Now, for other people, this works, and it works for them. And I never would want to say, "Everyone should do this."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:16:17 So let me just say that, but once I realized that I can be a believer and study Egyptology, and that's just fine, and I can be an Egyptologist and be a believer, I felt a freedom I had never felt before. I felt fine reading about Egyptian temples and finding similarities with the temple I had gone to last week. I felt fine with reading about Egyptian thoughts of the afterlife, and connecting them with my own ideas or ideas from the restoration about the afterlife. And I started to realize that

everything that comes from God is typifying Christ, of God, of good things. And I started to realize that that's fine, that I see God everywhere. I let my beliefs inform my studies. I let my studies, on the other hand, inform my beliefs too.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:17:09 And my study of the Ancient Near East and in Egyptology, and I think we've just kind of seen this with talking about these narratives, they have given me an enhanced understanding. Part of this too, I think, is you have to be okay with not knowing things. The more I study, whether it's Theology or Religion or Egyptology, the more I realize I don't know very much. And you kind of have to be okay with it. And you kind of have to be okay with it, sometimes things don't match up perfectly. Sometimes, things don't make sense. And you have to say, "That's all right, because my faith is intact. My faith is sound. And no matter what's thrown at me, that's what matters." Sometimes when I might be struggling with something I heard, or something I read, I always remind myself to not get lost in, what Joseph Smith calls the "appendages of our religion" or other things; or Jacob would say, "looking beyond the mark."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:18:08 I go back to my relationship, what I know for sure about my Savior and Heavenly Father, and how much he loves me and he sent his Son, and that Jesus is the Christ that he went through the Atonement and the Crucifixion, and that's what matters. That's what matters. If I can go back to that, and I can build on that, then I'll never get lost. I never get lost in that way. And I think that's kind of how I do things. I love that I use my studies in the classroom to talk about God, to talk about Egypt. I love that I can talk about archeology, and faith in the exact same sentence. These are things that I love. And I know these things come from God, and that kind of keeps me grounded, I think; and being okay with who I am, that I have all these different parts of my identity, including being a professor, being a mom, being a spouse, trying to balance these things and make sense out of them.

Hank Smith: 01:19:08 Perfect. Krystal, thank you. John, by the way, what a great day. She has flooded us with good information.

John Bytheway: 01:19:20 I'm still, right back to the beginning, I'm going to be chiasmus. There was the fall of Adam and Eve, and then a comeback. I love that. There was the fall of the family Cane and Abel, and then a comeback. There was the fall of a society and then a Flood. This is great stuff. Thank you for showing us that pattern, Krystal. And there's always hope at the end of the pattern, thankfully.

Hank Smith: 01:19:41 We want to thank Dr. Krystal Pierce for being here today. We want to thank all of you for listening. We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and our amazing production crew: Scott Houston, Will Stoughton, Jamie Neilson, Lisa Spice, David Perry, and Kyle Nelson. Thank you all for the hard work that you do. And we hope every one of you listening today will join us next week for our next episode of followHIM.

Hank Smith: 01:20:11

Hank Smith: 01:20:15 Hey, we want to remind everybody that you can find us on social media. Come find us on Facebook and Instagram. We would love it if you would subscribe too and review the podcast, share it with your friends. That would be awesome. Go to followhim.co; follohim.co for any show notes, transcripts, any references you want. If you're feeling up to it, you can read the transcript in French, Portuguese and Spanish. So all of that is available to you absolutely free. Go to followhim.co to find all of that.

Hank Smith: 01:20:45