



“There is a Prophet in Israel”

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 Friday and Saturday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

Are prophets ever popular? Dr. Krystal Pierce returns to explore the spiritual and physical scattering of Israel and the many miracles of Elisha, oracles, and the sons of the prophets.

Part 2:

Dr. Krystal Pierce continues and discusses the translation of Elijah, the danger of rejecting prophets, and whether or not bears attacked a large group of toddlers.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Krystal Pierce
- 01:04 Introduction to Dr. Krystal Pierce
- 03:36 Various names of the books in the Hebrew Bible
- 04:37 Five-minute pitch Judges to Kings
- 09:52 Where Lehi fits in
- 11:07 The scattering of Israel
- 15:33 2 Kings 1
- 22:26 Prophets are not popular
- 25:35 Ahaziah doesn't like Elijah's message
- 28:23 Who do you turn in times of trouble?
- 31:02 Elisha enters the scene and receives Elijah's mantle
- 35:42 What is an oracle?
- 36:35 The sons of the prophets
- 41:18 Elijah's literal mantle and divides the Jordan River
- 46:09 Elisha asks for a double portion from Elijah
- 50:11 Elijah and a chariot of fire
- 55:36 Translated beings
- 1:02:38 A curse on the water
- 1:08:29 End of Part I–Dr. Krystal Pierce

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II– Dr. Krystal Pierce
- 00:10 The prophet is being mocked for his baldness or is he?
- 03:24 What the consequences of accusing Elisha of usurping authority are
- 07:12 The Lord stands by Elisha
- 09:19 The Moabites are defeated
- 15:37 Debt, slavery, and servitude
- 19:49 The Lord always gives an abundance of blessings
- 21:04 Recognizing personal miracles can be challenging
- 23:50 Elisha raises a child from the dead
- 28:59 Elisha makes poisonous food harmless
- 33:37 We can see various aspects of Jehovah in miracles of Elisha
- 34:17 Naaman the Syrian comes to be healed and servant girl has faith
- 39:10 Elisha tells Naaman to wash in the Jordan River
- 46:15 Missionaries can be seen as the “weak things of the world”
- 48:17 Elisha raises an iax head from the river
- 51:54 Elisha shows his servant horses and chariots of fire protect them

- 1:00:39 Pray to have our eyes opened to miracles
- 1:07:14 End of Part II—Dr. Krystal Pierce

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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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Hank Smith:	00:00:01	Welcome to followHIM, a weekly podcast dedicated to helping individuals and families with their Come Follow Me study. I'm Hank Smith.
John Bytheway:	00:00:09	And I'm John Bytheway.
Hank Smith:	00:00:10	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, we follow him.
Hank Smith:	00:00:19	Welcome, my friends, to followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I am your host. I am here with my double portion co-host, John Bytheway. John Bytheway, when I think of you, I think of the term double portion. I have no idea why, other than I've just read 2 Kings, but.
John Bytheway:	00:00:38	I'm twice as insignificant as you think I am.
Hank Smith:	00:00:41	No, but you're doubly important. You're doubly significant. John, we love you. Everyone in this audience loves John Bytheway.
John Bytheway:	00:00:49	Okay. Skip to the next part.
Hank Smith:	00:00:51	Skip to the end. John, like I just said, we're going to be in the book of 2 Kings and we have a returning star. Tell everyone who is joining us today.
John Bytheway:	00:01:04	Yes. I'm so glad we have Dr. Krystal V. L. Pierce back again. She helped us as we were talking about Noah. And just to refresh everyone's memory, she was born in Logan, Utah, raised in Taylorsville, also lived in, I love saying this, California, Idaho, crossed the ocean, 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's taught classes on Egyptology and Ancient Near Eastern studies at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA and UC Berkeley. Krystal and her husband, Professor George Pierce, whom we have also had on the program, have two children and live in Vineyard. And so really happy to have you back and excited that we have you for such great stories in the Old Testament.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:01:55 Yeah. I'm happy to be back. Happy to talk about Elisha.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:58 We love Krystal Pierce on this program. And just so everyone knows who's listening, Krystal Pierce is this sweet and genuine, and brilliant in person as she is on this show. She really is. She's a star in the religion department. Not only is she amazing, but she also warms everybody.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:15 Hank, one of the things that I hear from people that talk about the podcast is, "Oh, I love your guests. I can't believe the variety you have and the different areas that people know about." And I'm like, "I know. Isn't it great that there are so many people with such varied, broad education who are so strong in their testimonies of the gospel and are willing to come on and help us?" So, again, thank you for being here.
- Hank Smith: 00:02:40 Hey, John, speaking of people who listen to the podcast, we got a message from Amy Nye who says she listens to hours of the podcast because she has a lot of gardening and lawn mowing to do. She says, "I listen to, on average, four to six of your podcasts every work day, weather permitting." So, Amy, we just wanted to send our love to you. Thanks for the message. John, four to six episodes a day.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:05 Ooh, I think I need to try to speak better. I don't know if I could listen to me that long, so I'll be quiet today.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:11 So, Krystal, today we're in a book that I don't know if the average Latter-day Saint goes, "You know what? What I was reading the other day was the book of 2 Kings." But yet it's got some fantastic stories, really faith promoting and beautiful. How should we get into this lesson? The specific chapters. John, you're our manual guy.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:33 Right.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:33 Our specific chapters are Chapters 2 Kings-

John Bytheway:	00:03:36	Two through seven.
Hank Smith:	00:03:38	...okay. So, Krystal, how come the Second book of Kings is commonly called the fourth book of Kings?
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:03:43	So we can answer that by turning to the first book of Samuel actually. And if you look at the subtitle, it says the first book of Samuel, otherwise called the first book of the Kings. So First Samuel is officially the first book about the kings. And then second Samuel is the second. And then First Kings becomes the third book about the Kings. And then the fourth book is 2 Kings. So hopefully that makes sense, that First and Second Samuel are those first two books about the Kings of the northern and southern kingdoms.
John Bytheway:	00:04:15	I love it. That's great. The second book of Kings, commonly called the fourth book of Kings.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:04:22	Not confusing at all.
John Bytheway:	00:04:23	Yeah.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:04:23	If we're going to jump into 2 Kings, we should probably just start with the first chapter. That kind of sets us up with what's happening with Elijah and Elisha at this time and really helps us understand the context.
Hank Smith:	00:04:36	Let's say that one of our listeners is pretty new and they don't quite understand how we went from Joshua and Judges to Kings. What happened? Give us the five minute pitch.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:04:49	It's interesting because Elijah and Elisha are meant to remind us of Moses and Joshua, even more than everything that comes in between Joshua and Elijah. We are supposed to hearken back to them. And a lot of the things they do, a lot of the places they go, are meant to show us and we'll see even a reverse conquest in a way. They kind of follow in these footsteps and some of the miracles that they do as well. We're meant to kind of think back way back to the exodus and the conquest and connect them with that time when things were good, right at the beginning, when they were just getting established and trying to do what they're supposed to do and follow the covenant.
Hank Smith:	00:05:36	As I've been following along this year, it seems Moses takes us out of Egypt, Joshua brings us into the promised land. Let's keep the covenant and we're going to be great. This is going to work.

Along the way, we decided, "No, we'd rather have a king." The Lord said, "That's a bad idea." And Israel said.

- John Bytheway: 00:05:54 "The other nations have one. We want one."
- Hank Smith: 00:05:56 "We want to be like everybody else." We had our first three. We had Saul, David and Solomon. I think, John, as we read through those, it seems like we went 0 for three on kings.
- John Bytheway: 00:06:07 Yeah. They could start out good and not end so well.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:12 And I don't want to say they're bad because Brother Goodman was the one saying, "Don't overlook all the good they did because of things that went wrong." But you're right in that all three, things went south towards the end of their reign. Then we split into two.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:06:26 We split and we have the northern kingdom of Israel, based in the capital at Samaria, and then the southern kingdom of Judah, of course, set in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, a lot of the king's names are the same. So we get the same names of kings ruling in the north and the south at the same time. And then replacing each other's. It can get a little bit confusing.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:48 This is called the divided kingdom period.
- John Bytheway: 00:06:52 It's helpful to get some clarification here, right when we start.
- Hank Smith: 00:06:56 So, well, let's do this. We have our two kingdoms and Krystal, you said there's kings in both.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:07:01 Yes.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:02 Kings in the north. Kings in the south.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:07:04 Kings in the north, set at Samaria. When we get into 2 Kings here, we kind of start with a king in this northern area.
- John Bytheway: 00:07:12 Important what you just mentioned. Northern kingdom, southern kingdom. So if memory is serving me, first, when Moses came out, 12 tribes divided up the land among the tribes, generally speaking, and then they became a divided kingdom. Northern kingdom called Israel, political Israel, Samaria as the capital. Southern kingdom, Judah, Jerusalem is the capital, mostly the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:07:35 Tribal areas are pretty complicated, but for the most part, yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:07:40 When we talk about the 10 tribes, we're talking about those in the political Israel. Not house of Israel, but the land called Israel. And that is the northern kingdom. I think that's helpful before we jump into the kings. There are kings in the northern kingdom and kings in the southern kingdom.

Hank Smith: 00:07:57 And these guys that we're talking about today, Elijah and Elisha, they're not kings. They're sent to the kings. Is that right, Krystal?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:05 Yes. Like today, there was more than one prophet, seer and revelator. Because they had such wide areas to cover, many times there would be a prophet in the north and one in the south and sometimes even more than that. There was even what they call the sons of the prophets, this company of the prophets.

John Bytheway: 00:08:24 Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:24 So there were many, many prophets during this time. They were supposed to be the king's advisor, advise the king with representing God and what God would want for both of these kingdoms.

John Bytheway: 00:08:38 And that's how I've always thought of Isaiah, as an advisor to kings. Now that's jumping way ahead, but isn't that kind of Isaiah's role was an advisor to kings?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:48 Yes.

Hank Smith: 00:08:48 According to the redactors, there's not a good king in the north. There's not a single one. They go 0 for 20.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:56 It seems like, even when they mention something good that a king did, they follow up immediately, but they did other bad things. Sometimes we make good decisions. Sometimes we don't. And sometimes people are known for their bad decisions as opposed to their good ones.

Hank Smith: 00:09:13 And the authors also in the southern kingdom, they're pretty good. Some.

John Bytheway: 00:09:18 Of the time. Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:09:19 Yes.

Hank Smith: 00:09:20 We've got our divided kingdoms. We've got them both having different kings. Kings in the north, kings in the south. You've got

prophets coming to both, as you said. What's going to happen? Let's place this where it is in the timeline. We know what's come before. What's going to come after this, Krystal?

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:09:36 So eventually some of these outside kingdoms are going to come in and take over both Israel and Judah and they will lose their kings. A lot of the people will be sent into the exile into different places. Eventually, some of them will return as well.
- Hank Smith: 00:09:52 Yeah. When I teach this in my class, my students are always pretty excited to find out that's exactly where Lehi fits in.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:09:59 Exactly. And so he was contemporary of Jeremiah and some of these other prophets as well. We can also bring in the Jaredites and Mulek and what happens with him surviving and his father being blinded and all of the other sons being killed and taken into captivity. There are some really good connections with the Book of Mormon here.
- John Bytheway: 00:10:18 Yeah. The chapters we're studying today happens when there's still two kingdoms.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:10:22 Yes.
- John Bytheway: 00:10:22 And there's two kings, one in the north, one in the south, and Elijah and Elisha are coming to talk to those kings and let them know what the Lord has to say.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:10:32 Yes, exactly.
- Hank Smith: 00:10:34 So I remember in seminary hearing about the Babylonian captivity. That's what Lehi prophesied of. But what we've just mentioned is, first, there's kind of an Assyrian captivity with those 10 tribes in the northern kingdom. And then what, 120 years later, is the Babylonian captivity. Did I get that right? So that we can kind of think of those two times when they're carried off.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:10:55 Yes, definitely. They sort of overlap in the places where everybody ends up spread out all over the place in Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, the Americas.
- Hank Smith: 00:11:06 A scattering of Israel, right?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:11:07 Yeah. Sometimes people were scattered as sort of a punishment or a consequence, and sometimes people were scattered for protection and to save them. And that's basically the Lehites.

They were scattered to protect themselves. And they identify themselves as part of the exile, as part of the scattering, but that they have this promise that they will be gathered and be able to see the Lord, which happens.

- Hank Smith: 00:11:29 That kind of seems like a lot of the stories we're reading in the Book of Mormon and here is scatter, gather, scatter, gather, scatter, gather. I had to practice saying that a few times to be able to do it, but doesn't it seem like it kind of goes back and forth. And sometimes it's, you lose your testimony, then you lose your real estate. You get scattered brain and then you lose your land. And then how do you get gathered? You get gathered in your testimony and then you get gathered to lands or to stakes of Zion, maybe, in our day.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:11:57 I think that's perfect. This idea of a spiritual scattering and not only losing religion and beliefs, but your identity as part of the house of Israel and who you are as a person. And then the more physical scattering, losing the land of your inheritance. And then when it comes back and the spiritual gathering has to be done first before the physical gathering will happen.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:19 I think Laman and Lemuel ask that to Nephi.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:22 Is this according to things temporal or spiritual? And Nephi is like, "Both."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:12:26 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:30 So the northern kingdom is going to be scattered first, then the southern kingdom and the Lord is sending prophets before this scattering, probably to let them know, one, you're going to get scattered. Or if you don't turn things around, you're going to get scattered. And two, when you do get scattered, just know the Lord hasn't forgotten you.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:12:49 You'll come back. Everyone will have a chance to be gathered eventually. That's what we're working on today. We're still working on gathering everyone.
- John Bytheway: 00:12:57 You know, what's funny, Krystal, is the parts of the Book of Mormon that talk about the gathering are the ones we skip. Second Nephi, Jacob five and the second day of the Savior's visit. Those are the major gathering chapters and everyone's kind of like, "Oh Second Nephi, skip that. Oh, Jacob five, skip that."

Hank Smith: 00:13:13 Sure seems like President Nelson has been emphasizing that gathering, hasn't he?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:13:19 He's definitely, I would say, a prophet of the gathering. And I love that because it comes up so often in the Book of Mormon, like you said. It's easy to tie that in and say, "This is what we're doing. This is our job right now and depending on what tribe you're from, you have different responsibilities in the gathering." The students love figuring out, "Oh, what tribe am I from? What part do I play?" And it's really exciting.

Hank Smith: 00:13:39 I remember it clicking in one day, why is Nephi so obsessed with the scattering and gathering of Israel? He's living it.

John Bytheway: 00:13:46 Right. And I think that it's fun to hear Nephi remind his people who they are. Because I think, when they lost their real estate, they kind of lost part of their identity. And he had to tell them, "Hey, we got a new area code, but we are house of Israel and the promises still apply to us and the obligations still apply to us." And then even when Jesus comes in Third Nephi, "You are my sheep. I have not forgotten you." And that same kind of a thing. You may feel scattered, but I know exactly who you are and where you are and kind of reaffirms their identity for them.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:14:17 And I love that statement that we may not know where everybody's been scattered, but the Lord knows exactly where every single person is. That's why he's the gatherer. He's the one that we're all gathering.

John Bytheway: 00:14:28 He's the good shepherd. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:14:29 Yeah. And Krystal, one other thing. Doesn't the Book of Mormon teach us, like you said, he scattered them not to punish them, but to save them. That's Jacob five. I love this tree. I've got to scatter it in order to save it.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:14:42 Zenos' allegory is very much about how can we keep saving the trees, the trees that are the wild trees and the tame tree. And how can we keep mixing everyone to try and save all of the whole vineyard? That's what we're trying to do.

John Bytheway: 00:14:56 We often talk about a fortunate fall and I like to tell my class, "Maybe we could call this a fortunate scattering because, by scattering the house of Israel, the Lord was starting that blessing all the families of the earth, which is part of the Abrahamic covenant, by scattering them everywhere. We're living in a time where you'd be hard pressed to find anybody

who isn't part of the house of Israel once their patriarchal blessing and go, "Oh, blessings are yours, too."

- Hank Smith: 00:15:22 Exactly. I think this is right on. So we've done a full picture. Let's come back. There's two kingdoms. Northern kingdom, southern kingdom, kings in both. What's going to happen here, Krystal?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:15:33 Well, should we just jump into chapter one?
- John Bytheway: 00:15:35 Yeah.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:15:36 And kind of do our setting here. The very first verse kind of throws out there that this place called Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. And that's all we get for here. So this actually will get picked up again in chapter three and we can actually talk about Moab and why it rebelled and what all of this means. But if we look at verse two, we get to talk about a king named Ahaziah and Ahaziah was one of these kings. He was the eighth king of Israel and based in Samaria, so this northern kingdom that we've been talking about. He was a son of Ahab and Jezebel, so that kind of puts things in context as well. He didn't reign for very long, only a couple of years. And we kind of find out why here because he actually had an accident.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:16:22 And it says in verse two that he fell through a lattice and was hurt. He was hurt enough that he thought he might not survive these injuries. We have found the palace in Samaria, Omari's palace. He was the one who originally built it. It does have a second story. This lattice is probably the same way we would think of a lattice, like a wooden grid to let in light and to provide some shade. So he's fallen through this. He wants to know if he's going to survive. So he decides and, remember, he's the king of Israel here, to turn to this deity named Baal-Zebub, which is quite the name, I think, for a deity here. Baal has come up quite a bit before this. Maybe we feel familiar with him. Of course, this is a title and name of many different gods. And it just means Lord in Ugaritic.
- John Bytheway: 00:17:12 Are you saying the word Baal does, Krystal?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:17:14 Yeah. Baal does. It's fine to say Baal or Baal even. That's totally fine. And we're told this is the God of Ekron. Now Ekron is a Philistine town sort of on the border today, Tel Miqne, the border between Judah and Philistia. So he wants to send messengers to ask Baal-Zebub. There's not a definite consensus on what god this is. Some people think it refers to this other god

in Ugaritic Baal-Zebul. He was a God of the underworld. This is why this title Beelzebub in Greek gets tied to Satan in the New Testament, because he was a God of the underworld. Now, Baal is this storm god. He can control lightning and thunder. And on his staff, he's shown holding a lightning bolt. He's the god of storms and he can control the rain and the wind and all of these sort of natural elements and this is going to be a big thing because, with Elijah especially, he has a lot to do with sort of contending with the followers and worshipers and prophets of Baal.

- Hank Smith: 00:18:23 And that's what we just encountered in the First Kings when we talked about Elijah and the priest of Baal up on top of the mountain. You just said that he contended with them before. And that was that really miraculous one where fire fell and licked up the sacrifice and everything.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:18:37 Ahab and Jezebel, they liked Baal and Asherah a lot. They built altars and they served him and her and had these groves of trees or poles that were dedicated to Asherah. With Elijah, this was one of the main things that he had to deal with and handle was, "How do I turn everybody, including the king and the queen, back to the God of Israel? Because of the effect they have on their own people, how do I turn Israel back to the true God?" And this was an issue of his.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:19:10 We even see this here with Ahaziah. He's turning to this other god and Zebub in Hebrew means fly. So this is where we get the Lord of the Flies, Baal-Zebub. So Lord of the flies. He's sometimes associated with death or disease, where flies might be. So it's possible that's why Ahaziah is... I'm going to turn to this other god, this god that may have to do with helping people overcome diseases or death, as opposed to turning to the God of Israel.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:19:37 So Ahaziah wants to turn to this god. So he decides to send messengers. An angel of the Lord comes to Elijah. Just a little bit about Elijah here. Even though he's first mentioned in First Kings and we get a lot of information about him there, he is called the Tishbite, which usually refers to a place of birth or residence. The issue is we don't really know where Tishbe is. We don't really know exactly where he's from. Probably in the area of modern Jordan.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:20:07 Elijah goes to the messengers and he says, "Okay, so he's the king of Israel. Why is he not going to the God of Israel to ask if he's going to recover from these injuries?" He gives an oracle. He prophesies right then and there that the king is going to die

from these injuries, that he will not survive. The messengers return, never having made it to the prophets of Baal-Zebub, go back and tell the king. The king, of course, is not happy with this and wants to know who was this person who made this horrible oracle about me that I'm going to die. He says, "Well, what did he look like?" And I love it because in verse eight, they tell him, "He's hairy."

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:20:50 That's what they say. They say he was a hairy man. And they talk about what he's wearing this girdle of leather about his loin, so a loin cloth of animal skin. And this seems to be one of Elijah's defining physical features is that he is hairy. He has hair everywhere. Sometimes people debate, "Oh, well maybe it's talking about his cloak." This famous mantle, this cloak that he has. And I'm sure that was hairy, but the way they sort of describe it, his person was hairy as well. And what's funny is the king knows exactly then who it is. He says, "Okay, it's Elijah." And it's great because his description given here of Elijah is similar to one given for John the Baptist. And, of course, they have this connection, right? Being the messenger that comes before the face of the Lord and everything.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:37 Yeah. It looks like that footnote is right there. The Mark 1:6.
- John Bytheway: 00:21:42 Elijah seems to be the Lord's messenger to some pretty rotten kings. I feel bad for him. Every time the Lord calls on him, he's "Hey, you know that really mean king? Yeah. Go give him a message." And Elijah's just got to be thinking, "Okay. Yeah. Who needs friends? Why is it always me?"
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:21:58 And even before this, with Ahab, it's funny, one of my favorite things is Ahab and the kings are having some problems. They want to ask the prophet and Ahab's like, "Well, I know this prophet." And they're talking about Mykea. "And we could ask him what we should do, but I don't really like him because he always says mean things to me. So let's not go talk to him." Because the prophets, they're meant to warn and to help give guidance and things like that. Whether it's positive or negative, they're going to do what the Lord tells them to do.
- Hank Smith: 00:22:26 Do you remember President Nelson at BYU. Prophets are not popular.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:22:31 And it's funny because even Micah later says, "If a prophet is popular, it's probably because they're being paid to say what they're saying."

John Bytheway: 00:22:41 Wow.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:22:41 And he brings it up as an issue, only a hundred years after this. These false prophets, you give them enough money, then they're going to tell you exactly what you want to hear. It's a problem.

Hank Smith: 00:22:52 President Nelson at BYU. September 17, 2019, in which he says, "It is precisely because we do care deeply about all of God's children that we proclaim his truth. We may not always tell people what they want to hear. Prophets are rarely popular, but we will always teach the truth." I think you're right on. We have prophets today who are doing the exact same thing.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:23:19 Yeah. And it's important and it shows that they're just saying what God wants them to say, whether it's positive or negative, and it's up to us to interpret that and internalize it and figure out what we're supposed to learn and do with that.

John Bytheway: 00:23:31 That's a comfort. Why would we want to rely and listen to them if we were unsure whether they were just trying to say what we wanted to hear or not. It would be worthless. You need somebody in your life that will tell it like it is.

Hank Smith: 00:23:45 Wow, John. I've never thought of that, but that's really good. I remember really respecting my high school football coach, Bill Jacobson, because I knew he'd tell me the truth. If I did terrible, he was going to tell me I did terrible. He wasn't going to say, "Well, here's all the reasons it was good." He was like, "No, that was awful. What you just did was awful. Here's how we can improve."

John Bytheway: 00:24:04 We've had our colleague, Brad Wilcox, on here before and almost every book I've written, I've sent to him and he's been so great. He's read it. And I love having Brad. Some people will just, "Oh, that's great." Brad will tell me exactly. And that's why I want his feedback more than anyone else because he'll tell me good, bad, he'll tell me exactly. And he's trustworthy that way. And so maybe that's a good parallel to bring up for the prophets. They're going to tell us like it is, and that's valuable.

Hank Smith: 00:24:33 Yeah. That's not a negative. That's a positive.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:24:36 Sometimes I tell my students, if the prophet or an apostle or somebody says something and you immediately want to sort of balk and say, "Whoa, I don't know about that," then that's a perfect time to stop and think, "Why am I getting a little

defensive or balking at this?" And to really think about it as opposed to, "I agree. I agree. I agree. This is easy. This is easy." Those moments are the moments we really should think about.

- Hank Smith: 00:24:59 Right, Krystal. I would say welcome to the scriptures. If you hear a prophet say something and you're like, "I don't like that," then welcome to the Bible and the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants because that seems to be the case almost every time.
- John Bytheway: 00:25:14 There's an old saying. I think the first time I heard it was attributed to Brigham Young, but I think it's an older saying than that that the gospel is here to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable. Krystal said you can introspect and say, "Now wait a minute. I got to think about this. Do I need to get in line here? Or let me process this because I want to get my heart right with God."
- Hank Smith: 00:25:36 Yeah. And that's really what happens here. Second King's chapter one. Go give him a message. I don't think he's going to like this message, but okay. Who was it that gave that message? It was Elijah.
- John Bytheway: 00:25:47 Don't shoot the messenger.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:25:48 He says, "Hello, this hairy guy and the king knows it's Elijah." So he says, "Well, we need to go take care of this. We're going to go find Elijah." He sends a hundred soldiers to hunt him down. Elijah's on top of a hill, as he usually is on top of mountains and hills and this is where he is, which is perfect, right, because we associate temples and hills and mountains and holy spaces. It's funny because the soldiers call him a man of God. They say, "Hey man of God, come down from the hill."
- John Bytheway: 00:26:18 Come down.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:26:19 And Elijah says, "Well, if I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume the soldiers." And this ends up happening. And this isn't the first time Elijah has called down fire from heaven. It's interesting because we've already talked about how Baal is the god of these natural things, these disasters or things that can happen. In the ancient near east, when they say fire from heaven, they're usually referring to actual lightning bolts.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:26:51 Baal is the one who controls lightning. In this case, it's very clear that Elijah is showing, no, Jehovah is the one who controls the

lightning. It's this fire and the power that comes from fire, which can be both destructive and purifying. Represents the power of God. And this is why Moses interacts with this burning bush and we have some of these other relationships with fire. So this is really definitely meant to show the soldiers and anybody reading that it is Jehovah that controls the fire from heaven and not Baal.

- John Bytheway: 00:27:27 The lesson is clear in verse 16. "Thus saith the Lord, 'For as much as thou has sent messengers to inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, it is not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word. Therefore, thou shalt not come down off that bed, which you are gone up, but shall surely die.'" We're going to make this very clear.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:27:46 He gives the same oracle and the king keeps sending soldiers. Finally, they ask for mercy, but he gives the same oracle. He says, "It hasn't changed." This is true and this is what he wants you to know. And it's interesting because when we talk about Baal and Asherah and Astarite and especially among the judges, this was a huge problem, worshiping these gods. Sometimes we have trouble connecting with this, right? I'm not worshiping Baal and Asherah. This is not an issue for me. A couple weeks ago, George and I are the Sunday school teachers for the oldest group of teenagers in our ward. We just got a new name. Springwater sixth ward.
- Hank Smith: 00:28:20 Hey, shout out to the Springwater sixth ward.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:28:23 Our teenagers, we love you guys. So we talked about this. We said, "Okay, so we're not worshiping Baal and Asherah and our prophets aren't saying don't do this, but what are we worshiping instead?" And they came up with this great list of things that they say people today are focused on. Things they came up with. Phones, money, cars, clothes. They even said celebrities or work. We came up with this great definition of anything that you engage a lot of your time in or a lot of your effort or your money is something that is your Baal, is your Asherah, as opposed to God. Or with Ahaziah, who are you turning to when you're in trouble, when you're worried? What do you turn to? And I love it because we can connect with this. We just do it in a little bit different way,
- Hank Smith: 00:29:12 Krystal, that was so good. Who do you turn to? What do you turn to when you are in trouble? There's your god.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:29:22 There are all kinds of answers to that, but this is meant to show God has the power. He's the one that can help you. He's the one

who knows your story and who you are and everything that you've done. Not these other things. Not the phone or the internet or celebrities. It's the same story for Ahaziah. It's God who has the power.

Hank Smith: 00:29:42 Instagram reels might make you be distracted for a few minutes, but it's not going to bless your life like the Lord can, if you'll just go to him. Imagine if I prayed as much as time as I spent watching Instagram reels. I think I'd be translated.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:29:58 Definitely.

Hank Smith: 00:29:59 All right. So goodbye, Ahaziah.

John Bytheway: 00:30:02 It's sayonara, Ahaziah.

Hank Smith: 00:30:04 Sayonara, Ahaziah.

John Bytheway: 00:30:06 Let's mix as many languages here as we can.

Hank Smith: 00:30:08 I mean, that was a great joke.

John Bytheway: 00:30:08 Sayonara, Ahaziah.

Hank Smith: 00:30:08 Where are we going next?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:08 Okay, so Ahaziah... I don't know. I don't know where we're going.

Hank Smith: 00:30:08 Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:08 But we're going to go there.

Hank Smith: 00:30:24 We're going to... Let's just all go together.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:27 Ahaziah doesn't have a son, so next up on the throne is his little brother Joram, or Jehoram and also a son of Ahaz and Jezebel. And I don't think we've mentioned a time period yet here, so let's definitely mention that, at this point, when Jehoram comes to the throne, we're about in the 840s BC, as this is about where we're at.

Hank Smith: 00:30:49 So that puts us about 120 years away from the first destruction.

John Bytheway: 00:30:53 From the Assyrian captivity. Yeah. Before the prophet Isaiah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:58 Yes, exactly.

Hank Smith: 00:31:00 740. Yeah. So we're still a ways away from that.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:31:02 We can jump into chapter two. So it starts out in chapter two with Elijah going with Elisha. And Elisha's not mentioned beyond First King's 19, when he's first introduced as sort of the next chosen prophet after Elijah. So we can remember who Elisha is, where he came from. So he's called the son of Shaphat of this place called Abel Meholah, which is west of the Jordan, on the bank of the Jordan, probably Tel Abu Sus today. And in the story, if you remember, Elijah's in a cave and he's feeling pretty down about what's been happening with Ahab and Jezebel.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:31:43 And one of the things the Lord tells him is that your apprentice is going to be this man named Elisha. And so he goes out to find him and Elisha is out plowing fields. He's got a lot of yolk of oxen. I think it talks about a dozen yolk of oxen. Elijah cast his mantle on him, sort of designating him as his apprentice, the next prophet. It's interesting because they don't seem to accept Elisha as well as they accepted Elijah. And we'll see this in hints. I sort of want to introduce it now, but we'll see hints of this as we go through.

Hank Smith: 00:32:20 When you say they, you're not talking about the kings, because they didn't like Elijah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:32:26 I think they realize that he was a man of God.

Hank Smith: 00:32:31 Oh, okay.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:32:32 You know? And so they refer to him as a man of God. Sometimes will ask him for help off and on, but you're right. They didn't like him, I think, because of what he, he said to them. But I'm also talking about just the people and we'll talk about the sons of the prophets here in a minute. They also seem to struggle with moving from Elijah to Elisha, that he's the next one and this causes some problems. So we do hear that they're both in a place called Gilgal.

Hank Smith: 00:33:01 That's chapter two, verse one.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:33:03 There are many places called Gilgal, including a beautiful garden in Salt Lake City. This is probably not the Gilgal they're talking about. So the best known one is by Jericho and since they spent a lot of time in this area, that's probably about where they're there. Elijah tells Elisha... It's a tongue twister here to get between these two names. "Stay here, stay in Gilgal. I need to

go to Bethel." And of course Elisha says, "I'm never going to leave you. So we're going to go together."

- Hank Smith: 00:33:35 As the Lord liveth. It's a vow. It's an oath.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:33:38 He vows.
- John Bytheway: 00:33:38 It's three times. Verse two, verse four, verse six. The same thing. And I think it might be nice, Krystal, to talk about what that means. I know Hugh Nibley does. I know we see it in the Book of Mormon. As the Lord liveth. When you say that, what are you saying when you do that?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:33:55 It's a strong vow. This is actually where we get this commandment not to take the Lord's name in vain. Actually originally comes from this. Do not vow on the Lord. Do not use his name if you are not going to keep your promise, if you are not going to keep your vow. Because he's basically saying, "On the life of the Lord, I am vowing to do this." And so that's the strongest thing you can say or do. For a prophet to say it, right, that's serious. It's really serious. And that's why it's interesting that, when he goes to all these places, Elijah keeps telling him to stay. It almost feels like he's trying to get rid of him or something, but.
- Hank Smith: 00:34:37 It reminds me of my high school life.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:34:41 He's like, "Why don't you stay here? I'm going to continue on." But it's interesting because when he gets to Bethel, which it's a religious site, this is a site where they were worshiping, there were these calf shrines. A lot of people in the Old Testament spent time there. The patriarchs, the conquest, the settlement, Samuel, it housed the ark. And so in verse three, we're introduced to this group called the sons of the prophets.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:08 There's a group of them at Bethel. Sometimes this is translated as company of the prophets, sometimes school of the prophets, which should sound a little bit familiar with our church history. So this was a group of people who were being trained for the profession of a seer. They were trained by the main prophet, so Elijah, and there were different groups of these in different cities. They would go through some of the procedures. You see them come up, sometimes they would use them to go and give oracles or receive oracles.
- Hank Smith: 00:35:42 When you say oracle, what do you mean by that?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:45 Like a prophecy.

Hank Smith: 00:35:47 Okay.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:47 Kind of. So usually an oracle would be a king or somebody asks a question like Ahaziah did. "Is this going to happen? Or where should we go? What should I be doing? Is this good or bad?" And then the oracle, then the prophet would answer and he would give a prophecy about that.

Hank Smith: 00:36:03 And the prophecy is called an oracle. Today, we sometimes call the prophets oracles.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:36:09 Yeah. And so it's all connected. They still give oracles, revelations, prophecies. You can kind of use these interchangeably, but the oracle was definitely "I have a question and now I'm going to get it answered" as opposed to just a prophet receiving revelation. And this is kind of the difference between Elijah is he just receives revelation. He doesn't even have to ask a question. He's receiving information from God, but some of these sons of the prophets. So they were called the sons. He was called the father. Sort of this honorific title that he's their leader. And some of the sons, they could perform oracles. They could ask a question and get an answer, but it was Elijah who was the main prophet who would receive this direct information from God.

John Bytheway: 00:36:53 Oh, okay. There is a phrase that I had never really noticed before that has come up in many of the chapters we've covered previously. And that is the sons of Belial talking about those that are wicked and it's kind of fun to see this contrast. Well, here, we've got the sons of the prophets, as opposed to those sons of Belial. I had never noticed that before until this year. Come, follow me, the sons of Belial and how often that kind of came up. Do you think the modern school of the prophets, that name, came from them perusing these books?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:37:23 I think so because sometimes it is translated as school of the prophets and it was a way to go and learn how to receive prophecy. What's interesting is Elisha did not come from the sons of the prophets and the school of the prophets. This seems to kind of cause a problem for him and them accepting him as their new leader, as the new father, as they would refer to it.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:37:50 I think when we go through prophetic succession, so the succession of prophets, sometimes we struggle, too, I think. We have a favorite prophet, maybe from our childhood or while

you're on your mission or something, and you like the way he does things and the way he talks and maybe his background, where he came from and then maybe the new prophet is different. And sometimes I think we also say, "Wow, they do things really different." And sometimes we expect the prophets to be very much the same. And this isn't the case. Even in the Old Testament, these prophets are very different from each other.

Hank Smith: 00:38:28 Wow. You're calling me out a little bit here, Krystal, because I still think of Gordon B. Hinckley. When someone says, "Who's the prophet?" I'm like, "Gordon B Hinckley." And it's not that I don't love President Monson and President Nelson. I do. And I accept them totally as prophets, but you're right. My heart, anyway, is wrapped to President Hinckley. I can see myself here.

John Bytheway: 00:38:50 I'm really grateful for that because it gives us flexibility. I mean, when I was called to be bishop, I thought, "Is there a mold of bishop or can I just be me with that calling?" Do you know what I mean? I struggled with that. And I said to my wife one day, "Well, I guess the Lord called me so I can still be me. Right?" And it doesn't mean I won't repent and strive and everything, but can I still be me or do I have to be different? And I love that we can look and, see, for me, Hank, my mission call was signed by President Kimball. And so I thought of him as the one who called me and I love that each one of them, I've just come to love.

Hank Smith: 00:39:28 My favorite is in fast and testimony meeting when someone says a different prophet. They don't even mean to.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:39:32 And I love it because the prophets, they kind of have things they focus on, that they're known for, like the Book of Mormon or building temples or the gathering. And it's hard for us to shift. It's to shift gears and realize that these prophets, they're different, they're real people who came from different backgrounds and they're going to be told different things by the Lord that they're meant to focus on. And this happens with Elijah and Elisha. And the more we can be ready to accept the next prophet and what he wants us to do, I think the better off we are.

John Bytheway: 00:40:03 I remember when they did, I think it was President Nelson's, was it a birthday celebration? And they had an interview with President Oaks and President Eyring. And one of the things that I thought was so fascinating as a window into President Nelson was they said, "He's a surgeon." In that kind of work, if you have an idea during a surgery, you do it right now. There's a, "Why

not now?" I think, that President Oaks and President Eyring said with President Nelson. There's a, "Why not now? If we're talking about this, why don't we do this right now?" The thought that comes to me with President Nelson is hasten my work.

- Hank Smith: 00:40:39 Let's do it right now.
- John Bytheway: 00:40:40 Yeah. And I think that is, as he's been trained, this is medical. This is urgent. Let's do this right now. I love that we can see those kinds of things you're talking about, those differences, and yet they have the mantle. They are the prophet.
- Hank Smith: 00:40:55 I remember when President Monson stood up for the first time as president of the church and there was something different about him. I don't know what else to call it besides a mantle.
- John Bytheway: 00:41:05 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:05 I felt in my heart and soul, "This is God's prophet right now."
- John Bytheway: 00:41:09 And let's talk about that word because, again, I go back to the first time I heard the word mantle. That meant the fireplace. So what does it mean here?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:41:18 So the mantle is referring to some sort of cloak or robes that they're wearing that we know, for Elijah, were made out of animal skin and probably had fur or hair on it. And that's part of his hairiness feature and it symbolized the prophet and his power, the prophetic power, his relationship with God. And that's why when Elisha was next up, he drops his mantle onto him, his cloak, to say, "The Lord has chosen him." Symbolically.
- John Bytheway: 00:41:49 Wow.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:50 Interesting. So it's very similar to Moses' staff because he's going to use it to divide the water.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:41:55 Yes, exactly. So while he's at Bethel, the sons of the prophets tell Elisha that Elijah is going to be taken by the Lord that day. They're informing him, "This is the last day that you'll have with Elijah." Elisha's response is, "Yeah, I know. I know. That's why I'm trying to stay with him, even though he is moving from city to city to city." Once again, he tells him, "Stay. Stay here. Stay at Bethel. I need to go to Jericho." Elisha again says, "I'm never leaving you."
- Hank Smith: 00:42:27 This is great.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:42:29 They end up going to Jericho. The sons of the prophets at Jericho tell him the same thing. And then Elijah says, "Please stay at Jericho. I need to go to the Jordan." Again, he says, "Well, I'm going to go with you." And instead of kind of looking at this as, wow, Elijah is really trying to lose Elisha here and leave him in all these cities that we'll see, by the time we get to the point of Elijah's exit, that they're actually following the order of the cities of the conquest in reverse.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:43:01 So they do get to the Jordan River. It says 50 sons of the prophets are watching them. Elijah takes the mantle, the cloak, the sign that he's the prophet and wraps it up, hits the waters, divides the Jordan and they're able to cross over on dry ground. And, of course, we immediately think of Moses and Joshua crossing the Red Sea, of course, but also crossing the Jordan River with the ark. We are meant to definitely connect Elijah with Joshua and Moses at this point, especially Moses.

John Bytheway: 00:43:39 This is great.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:43:40 This is definitely the place where we can talk about more of these connections with Moses and Joshua. So he went from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho to crossing the Jordan, which I mentioned is sort of a reverse conquest. We are definitely supposed to connect Elijah with these two. And I think it's not only us. I think the sons of the prophets, who are sitting here watching, are also seeing this and know about this connection.

Hank Smith: 00:44:08 So, Krystal, would it be like we're going from Nauvoo to Independence to Kirtland back to Palmyra. And you're like, "Okay, there's definitely a reverse order to this."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:44:17 Yeah. So it's almost like a reverse pilgrimage. And these sites that were part of the conquest come up quite a bit even after Elijah's gone and Elisha is continuing on.

Hank Smith: 00:44:29 We talked about the conquest with the other Dr. Pierce.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:44:33 We did indeed.

Hank Smith: 00:44:34 You two holding hands in the podcast saying, "Let's."

John Bytheway: 00:44:38 It's like kiasmos or something.

Hank Smith: 00:44:45 Beautiful It's a kiasmos.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:44:45 I hear him saying things, whispering things in my ear right now. I can hear him saying, "Mention this, say this."

John Bytheway: 00:44:54 Oh, the marriage of two Bible scholars. This is so fun. We need to have you on together.

Hank Smith: 00:44:59 Great idea.

John Bytheway: 00:45:00 I want to see that. We need to have them on together.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:45:00 We would do it.

John Bytheway: 00:45:02 And I'm sitting here thinking, "I want to be in the Springwater sixth ward. I want to hear that Sunday school class." So.

Hank Smith: 00:45:08 Right.

John Bytheway: 00:45:09 I may show up one day in disguise. I'll wear my hairy disguise and come in.

Hank Smith: 00:45:15 Will you play this for them? To the 17 and 18 year olds of the Springwater sixth ward, do you realize who your teachers are? Do you realize who you have?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:45:25 Unfortunately, because of this, we get a lot of visitors in our class, like stake presidents and the bishop and everyone. I don't know. It's a lot of pressure. It's a lot of pressure.

Hank Smith: 00:45:37 Sorry, Krystal.

John Bytheway: 00:45:39 We have tickets to see if you can get in. We have a lottery to see if you can come in our class today.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:45:47 It's hard, but those teenagers, they are so smart. I can't believe how much they connect with all of this. When we bring it up, they say, "Ah, okay, so what you're saying, in modern terms, is this." And I'm like, "Yeah."

John Bytheway: 00:46:02 Wow.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:03 Sure.

Hank Smith: 00:46:04 That's a great skill, Krystal. That's a great skill.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:06 So I love it.

John Bytheway: 00:46:07 You've taught them well.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:09 Yeah. So after they cross the Jordan, Elijah asks Elisha, he says, "Oh, what would you like from me before I leave?" Because they all know that he's going to leave soon. And Elisha asks for something really interesting. He says, "I would like a double portion of your spirit. A double portion of thy spirit be upon me." That's in verse nine of chapter two.

Hank Smith: 00:46:31 John, when I made that your adjective today, I thought it was just asking for a double portion of dinner. So sorry about that.

John Bytheway: 00:46:38 I know because that's me when it comes to mashed potatoes. I just like, "Hit me again."

Hank Smith: 00:46:44 So what does he mean by this, Krystal? Like, "I want twice your power?"

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:48 Initially. Traditionally, that's how it was interpreted. That Elisha is saying, "Hey, I want to be twice as good as you are at being prophet." And it's interesting. People kind of bring this up because Elisha ends up performing twice as many miracles as Elijah does. And so people say, "See, this is what it means."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:47:07 But, in reality, what he's really asking for, this double portion thing, should be related to this birthright blessing, the inheritance blessing of the first son, the heir. In ancient Israel, the eldest son would either receive all of the father's wealth and land and house and all of those things or he would receive a double portion and his brothers, his little brothers, would only receive a single portion. And so what Elisha's really asking here is, "I want to be your heir. I want to be your successor." And even though the Lord has already designated him like this, he wants to make it very clear that he is the next prophet. He's going to follow in the footsteps of Elijah and that anybody who's watching or listening should realize this, that he is the successor.

Hank Smith: 00:47:59 Wow. I would never have connected that to the double portion. That's great.

John Bytheway: 00:48:03 Yeah. I think that's where the footnote goes. And that was really helpful this year to learn, well, why was the birthright blessing such a big deal? Well, because you got a double portion, a responsibility to take care of the other members of the family as life continued, as I understood it. So that helps a lot.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:48:20 Yeah. And we see this happen with Joseph. Even though he's one of the youngest sons, he is the first son of the second wife.

And so after Reuben loses the birthright, Joseph gets it and he gets his double portion through his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. We see this all throughout the Old Testament, this idea of the double portion. And this is what Elisha's asking for. The sons of the prophets are there and he wants to make sure that everybody realizes that he's up. He's up next.

Hank Smith: 00:48:50 And then Elijah responds with, "Thou has asked a hard thing."

John Bytheway: 00:48:54 Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:48:56 Yeah. He says, "It's difficult."

Hank Smith: 00:48:58 Yeah. I wonder, Krystal, I used to take that as you've asked to something that's really difficult for the Lord to give. Now I'm seeing it, because of what you told us, "Thou has asked a hard thing", meaning you've just taken on a big responsibility. That's what it feels like almost.

John Bytheway: 00:49:14 That's a good way to look at it. "Okay. If that's what you really want" type of a thing. You know what you're asking for. Be careful what you pray for.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:49:23 And I think Elisha realizes it, too, because once Elijah's gone, he's like, "Oh wait a minute."

John Bytheway: 00:49:30 Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:49:31 "Did I ask for this? Okay. I don't know if I'm ready."

John Bytheway: 00:49:35 What was I thinking?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:49:36 In verse 11, we have one of the greatest exits in the entire Old Testament.

Hank Smith: 00:49:43 Well put. I like that.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:49:46 I like calling it an exit here, but I love it. It says they're walking and talking, these two men, and then appears a chariot of fire. And horses afire, parts them asunder. I can imagine this. They get parted. And Elijah goes up in a whirlwind to heaven. There's so much to unpack here. What's going on with Elijah?

John Bytheway: 00:50:09 This is quite a comprehensive exit here.

Hank Smith: 00:50:11 A chariot of fire, horses of fire. You just told us fire was the presence of God.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:50:17 Yeah, so it's perfect because Elijah has this relationship with fire. And so, of course, this is the way that he's going to go. So in the ancient near east, they did believe that many of the gods actually were driven around by chariots and charioteers, who were their servants. And this was part of their hosts, their heavenly armies. And so that the chariot comes down to pick up Elijah is huge. This chariot had to have come from God. And we actually read in the book of Abraham that God uses wind and fire as a chariot. So they had these concepts, these ideas, that he has control over all aspects of creation. Fire, wind, water, all of these different parts of creation.

Hank Smith: 00:51:04 Wow. It's interesting that we talk about chariots here. This is something from church history that I'm just going to throw in. This is from Lorenzo Dow Young, who is Brigham Young's little brother. He says that when he was younger, he had a dream. And he was super young. Sorry.

John Bytheway: 00:51:24 He had a double portion of young.

Hank Smith: 00:51:27 Yeah, he was younger. He said, "In the dream, the Savior was in a carriage. It was driven by his servant. The carriage stopped near me and the Savior inquired where my brother Brigham was. After informing him, he further inquired about my brothers and our father. After I had answered all his inquiries, he stated that he wanted us all, but especially wanted my brother, Brigham." This was before any of them came in contact with the restoration. Interesting little story. The Savior is in a chariot in the dream of Lorenzo Dow Young. You guys ever heard that? Either of you?

John Bytheway: 00:52:00 I haven't.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:52:00 I haven't heard that. It fits in perfectly with this idea of the Lord is also a divine warrior and protector and will fight for all of us. It's perfect that he rides around in this chariot. I mean, that's what the hosts of heaven sometimes refers to, the armies of angels that are out there. I had never heard that.

John Bytheway: 00:52:21 Because again, as a kid, when I heard the host, "Oh, that's the guy with the towel over his arm who says welcome to Chuck-A-Rama. I'll take you to your table."

Hank Smith: 00:52:30 The host?

John Bytheway: 00:52:31 That is the host.

Hank Smith: 00:52:32 Welcome to the buffet.

John Bytheway: 00:52:33 I remember the aha moment when I learned at some point, probably seminary, no, Lord of host means Lord of armies. Oh. And that's a different kind of host than a Chuck-A-Rama.

Hank Smith: 00:52:47 Krystal, you mentioned this double portion. I really like what you taught us here. I think I've read before that there are seven miracles listed for Elijah and that there are 14 listed for Elisha. Do you think the writer did that on purpose because of this chapter two, verse nine?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:53:05 Yeah, I think so. It's meant to show that he's a double Elijah, in a way, or he is supposed to have this double portion in doing double the miracles. But this number seven has some symbolic meaning. So then the word in Hebrew is shivah. It's almost the exact same word that means completion or fullness or something is finished. It definitely is symbolic. And we'll see that number show up. I mean, it shows up all over the Old Testament. And even in terms of 700 or 70 or 7,000, any form of seven. It usually symbolizes that this is complete, that whatever we're talking about here is done.

Hank Smith: 00:53:47 I want to speak a little Hebrew. Shivah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:53:51 Shivah. I mean, and it's different, of course, depending on what part of Israel and if it's male or female, but for the most part Shivah.

Hank Smith: 00:53:58 Why do languages have to be so hard? Shivah. Okay. Complete or finished.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:05 Full or finished, to be complete, finished, perfected, as opposed to perfect.

John Bytheway: 00:54:11 Flawless. Morally flawless, but instead you're complete.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:16 Yeah. That you've made your complete circle.

Hank Smith: 00:54:18 Jesus might be saying in the Sermon on the Mount, "Be, therefore, Shivah." Complete.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:23 Yes.

Hank Smith: 00:54:26 Shivah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:26 Yes, definitely.

Hank Smith: 00:54:28 What happens to Elisha without Elijah?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:54:32 Okay. So let's look again at verse 11 and we can talk a little bit about what happened to Elijah because we have these horses and the chariots of fire and this whirlwind. It's interesting because this is also the location of Moses's exit, we'll call it. And we know that Moses was translated. So we're near Mount Nebo after crossing the Jordan River. We're told Elijah also was taken to heaven without tasting death. For Moses, we're told that he was buried by the hand of the Lord and they don't know where his tomb is. We have this connection between these two. We call this translation. We know that they were translated. And in the Old Testament, we don't get a lot of information about what that means. What does it mean to be translated and why is someone translated? If we turn to the Book of Mormon, we have three individuals who are translated at the time of the Savior.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:55:36 These are three of his disciples and we get a lot of information about translated beings there. So if we turn to Third Nephi 28, verse eight, we find out that they will never endure the pains of death, that they will continue living until Jesus Christ comes again. And this doesn't necessarily seem to be the case for all translated persons, but for these three disciples, as well as John the beloved, we're told that they will stay until Jesus Christ comes back, so the second coming, and then they will be resurrected. So now we know that because someone is translated does not mean that they've been resurrected yet. But they won't taste death, it says. If we skip down to verses 38 and beyond.

John Bytheway: 00:56:31 We're still in Third Nephi 28.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:56:33 Yeah. We find out that their bodies are changed so that they cannot die. They also cannot feel pain or sorrow, except for the sins of the world, so they have this empathy. Satan has no power to tempt them. The powers of earth cannot hold them. The main purpose is given in verses 26 to 29. And it says that that purpose is so that they can minister to all nations and gather Israel. This is definitely related to the translation of Elijah and Moses, but theirs is a little bit different. There is another purpose that they were translated.

Hank Smith: 00:57:13 Because they're the only two, right, that we know of in the Old Testament that were translated?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:57:18 We have Enoch. We're told Enoch and his whole city is translated. I'm in the Book of Mormon. Alma the Younger,

there's sort of a rumor that he was translated because he's compared to Moses.

John Bytheway: 00:57:30 To Moses. Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:57:30 Just kind of disappearing.

John Bytheway: 00:57:31 Kind of walked off. Well, and I think this is an important point because we don't want people to think translated means resurrected because who was the first fruits. Who was the first to be resurrected? Well, that was Christ.

Hank Smith: 00:57:43 That's Christ. Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:57:44 Yeah. And that's perfect. They couldn't be resurrected yet, but they needed to keep their bodies. For Elijah and Moses, this is because we know that they had to return to do something very specific. Malachi, at the very end of the Old Testament tells us, right, Elijah will come back and turn the hearts of the fathers and the children. Elijah needed to return. He needed to keep his body. We know that he has returned more than once. One of these was on the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John and Moses. And this was to return the keys of the priesthood to the earth.

Hank Smith: 00:58:22 This is beautiful. The Lord sure plans ahead. He's like, "I need those guys to have bodies. So get them up here." If it's the same spot, I am going to go find that spot and see if there's a platform nine and three quarters that I can get through to take that chariot ride. That sounds fun.

John Bytheway: 00:58:39 As long as you are translated correctly.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:58:47 That was perfect.

John Bytheway: 00:58:49 We believe in Hank, as long as he has been translated correctly. He can go to that spot.

Hank Smith: 00:58:58 Oh, why have I never used that joke? I hate it when you tell me jokes and I should have been using for the last 20 years.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:59:02 I'm going to use this.

Hank Smith: 00:59:02 Oh, me too.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:59:04 I'm writing it down.

John Bytheway: 00:59:05 They got an arm coming out the wrong side.

Hank Smith: 00:59:08 Oh shoot. I haven't been translated correctly. My urim where my thummim should be. Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:59:19 George is going to love that.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:59:21 I love the Mount of Transfiguration because then we can talk about the difference between transfiguration and translation, which everybody always gets confused. And this is why Moses ends up with horns in all of the Renaissance.

John Bytheway: 00:59:36 Yeah. They don't know how to portray him.

Hank Smith: 00:59:36 Really?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:59:39 Yeah. So when Moses is transfigured and the light comes off of him and Jerome was translating this, the Latin Vulgate, and he's like, "I don't think it's light. I think it's probably that similar word horns. So when you're transfigured, you grow horns." And so that's why Moses has horns everywhere.

John Bytheway: 00:59:57 That was Saint Jerome that did... I didn't know that.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:59:58 Yeah. It was Jerome who decided, "You know what? It's probably not light. It's probably horns." It's the same word, the word keren.

John Bytheway: 01:00:06 I've seen those statues of Moses with horns. I was showing him in the Holy Land recently. Have you ever seen that? And the funny thing is my dad, he had a number of accidents in the Navy and he got a couple of scars were right there on both sides of his head.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:22 Oh, wow.

John Bytheway: 01:00:23 He joined the church after he got home from World War II. But when he went on a mission after he was married, which is another wonderful story, in New England, people asked him because they thought Mormons had horns. Have you ever heard that? People that thought that?

Hank Smith: 01:00:36 Oh, yeah. I remember.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:37 I've heard that.

John Bytheway: 01:00:38 My dad was like, "Yeah, I had mine removed" and he showed them the scars.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:45 That's perfect.

John Bytheway: 01:00:46 He was translated correctly. He got those so. Okay. I want to ask you one thing that I loved. You said this place where Elijah went up into heaven was near the same place as Moses. Near Nebo. I get that right?

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

Hank Smith: 01:01:05 That's the same place. That's what she said. Because that's why I'm going to go look for platform nine and three quarters.

John Bytheway: 01:01:10 Yeah. Right there.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:01:11 Of course we don't know the exact place.

Hank Smith: 01:01:14 I'm going, Krystal.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:01:15 Right.

Hank Smith: 01:01:15 It's over in Jordan, right?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:01:18 The general area. Yeah. Yeah. So it's another connection with Moses.

John Bytheway: 01:01:23 Yeah. I love that.

Hank Smith: 01:01:24 If you're driving from Petra to Amman, do you get anywhere near it? John, have you ever made a stop there? Nebo?

John Bytheway: 01:01:32 Yes. And isn't there a little map that shows here's where you can see, if you look here, all this.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:01:38 And because Moses doesn't have a tomb, I think there's a pretty big memorial to Moses.

John Bytheway: 01:01:44 Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:01:44 In verses 14 to 18, the sons of the prophet say, "Okay, now Elijah's spirit rests on Elisha." And then immediately say, "Can we go look for Elijah?"

Hank Smith: 01:01:56 Yeah. Where is he?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:01:59 They're still not accepting Elisha. Even though they come out and say this. "Oh, well, now you have the cloak and the mantle." They say, "Well, we're going to still go look for him." And Elisha says, "No, you're not going to find him. The Lord has taken him up." They still say, "No, we're going to go look for him." And they go and look for three days, which is another one of these completion numbers. Then they come back and I love it. Elisha's kind of like, "I told you you weren't going to find him." This is definitely related to some of the issues that Elisha has after this with kind of being in the shadow of Elijah, trying to live up to who he was, what they expect him to be.

Hank Smith: 01:02:35 Wow.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:02:35 Then we get to the water.

John Bytheway: 01:02:38 Okay.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:02:38 In verse 19 of chapter two, the men of Jericho ask Elisha to help them with a problem. And the problem is that there's no water, they say, and the ground is barren. This is definitely a reference, again, back to Joshua. After Joshua conquers Jericho, if you remember, he kind of put this curse on the city. Part of this curse was that the spring, the natural spring that's by Jericho, would not bring forth good, fresh water.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:03:07 And this was part of this curse. There's a history of water problems with this spring. It was causing death in young people and old people, but also infertility. People think it may have come from two things. Either, one, they found these snails there that might have carried these parasites with a blood disease. Other people think there was radioactivity in the rocks, but whatever it was, the water, which when you think of a spring, you think of fresh, good, clean, pure water, was not good.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:03:38 It was poison. People relate this to Joshua kind of cursing the city after the battle of Jericho. Elisha says, "Well, bring me a new..." It says cruise in verse 20. So this is just a dish or a bowl or a flask/ something like that. He says, "Bring salt." And he's going to pour this salt into the spring, which I think we would immediately think, "That does not make the water drinkable."

Hank Smith: 01:04:02 It makes it salty.

John Bytheway: 01:04:03 Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:04:04 It makes it even less drinkable with saltwater. But what's interesting here is salt shows up quite a bit in the Old Testament and the New Testament. And it was very symbolic of covenants.

Hank Smith: 01:04:17 Really.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:04:18 And especially the Mosaic covenant. So in Leviticus, the people are told that when they bring their meat offerings to sacrifice that they needed to be salted. And it was called the salt of the covenant and, as the meat was preserved through the salt, so would Israel be preserved by the Lord. And this was supposed to remind them of how he preserved them through the Exodus and escaping Egypt and getting to the Promised Land. And so there was some belief that this salt, representing the covenant and preservation and purification, that putting it back into the springwater, this salt, that it would purify the water and bring the covenant back and basically remove the curse from Jericho.

John Bytheway: 01:05:09 Wow. And Jesus is going to say, "You are the salt of the earth." Right?

Hank Smith: 01:05:12 Salt of the earth. Yeah. Maybe an extra level.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:05:14 Be the covenant, right? Represent the covenant. Be the salt of the earth. And he mentions, "Don't lose your flavor." Because salt is used for flavor and preservation, but it's all related. It all comes together. And they believed that the good properties of the salt could be transferred into the water and overtake the bad properties of the water.

John Bytheway: 01:05:36 I had a seminary teacher friend who wrote a great youth talk called Light and Salty and talked about those terms that the Lord was trying to have the house of Israel aspire to. To be light and to be salt. And so I like that extra level of meaning when Jesus says, "You're the salt of the earth", to have salt there in verse 20. So thank you for that.

Hank Smith: 01:05:57 Krystal, I'm always looking for ways to apply for our listeners. Would it be okay for me to say that a principle here is healing comes through covenants, through making and keeping covenants. Do you feel like that message is coming through here in this chapter, that if my marriage is struggling or my relationships with my children are struggling or anything else in my life feels barren, it feels poisonous, get to the covenants. Get to those covenants.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:06:27 Yeah, absolutely. And definitely the idea of, if you have broken a covenant, that you can return and you can heal that break. Jericho had been cursed and now Elisha comes and is able to reverse this curse through using this salt that represented the covenant. So for us, too, in the same way that we may be lacking or feeling like something is wrong, then yes, I think turning to covenants, mending covenants and things like that would definitely help.

John Bytheway: 01:06:59 Howard W. Hunter, 1979, he talked about healing the daughter of Jairus. "And these are not just the words of the faith of a father torn with grief, but are a reminder to us that whatever Jesus lays his hands on lives. If he lays his hands on a marriage, it lives. If he is allowed to lay his hands on the family, it lives." Which is one of my favorite statements of President Hunter.

Hank Smith: 01:07:22 And that's got to be through covenants. That's how we allow the Savior to lay his hands on us is if we make and keep covenants.

John Bytheway: 01:07:29 Do you know what I like there, too, is it helps me with my priorities. When there's so many demands on your time in your life to say, "Who have I made covenants with?" That helps me look at my wife, the Lord, who have I made covenants with? And it helps me align my priorities when I have something I want to do.

Hank Smith: 01:07:50 Please join us for part two of this podcast.



John Bytheway:	00:00:02	Welcome to part two of this week's podcast.
Hank Smith:	00:00:07	Krystal, let's move on to the next story here. What happens next?
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:00:10	We just had this huge miracle from Elisha, one of his big ones. This basically heals and saves an entire city, the entire city of Jericho. We kind of get this idea that people who saw this miracle are like, "Okay. He is really the next prophet and he's taking Elijah's place." And then he goes to Bethel. There's a problem in just a few, three verses here. We have almost the exact opposite of what he did at Jericho reversing the curse happen here. So let's talk about it. So he goes to Bethel and it says that there are little children from the city mocking his bald head. Very interesting here. Elisha ends up cursing them in the name of the Lord and then bears come and eat 42 children.
Hank Smith:	00:00:59	This is why you love the Old Testament.
John Bytheway:	00:01:02	You just around every corner, you have no idea what's coming.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:01:08	So there's a lot to unpack here too, even in just these three verses. We can start with the age of the mockers. Let's talk a little bit about that because we're actually given two different descriptions here. So in verse 23, there's a noun and an adjective that's used that typically refers to older children. More like we would say tweens, pre-pubescent children. But then when we get to verse 24, there's a different word that's used here for the ones that the bears end up tearing apart. And the word used here across the Old Testament refers to, at some points, babies, babes in arms, all the way up to later in 2 Kings, 40 year old men.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:01:50	So we're not exactly sure. I know it's translated as little children, but we're not exactly sure the age of the mockers at this point at all. Let's go to the bald head thing. Because it seems a petty thing for Elisha to get so upset about that they end up being

cursed and eaten by bears. But when you hear about Elisha lacking hair, what do you think of? Who is hairy.

- Hank Smith: 00:02:23 Oh, okay. So that's maybe a reference to the hairiness of Elijah.
- John Bytheway: 00:02:26 And you're not like him.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:02:29 Exactly. So they're not commenting necessarily on how we might look down at a lack of hair baldness. They're commenting on his ability as a prophet and as the new prophet. They're saying, "You are no Elijah, you're not even a replacement for Elijah." This is what they're commenting on. His ability to receive revelation and prophecy from God. And Elijah's, his main thing was he was hairy. And this is what they're actually commenting on. And that's why the Lord almost immediately is going to show that Elisha is the prophet and he is just as good as Elijah even if he doesn't have as much hair. They should believe that not only can he bless entire cities like Jericho, but that there will be consequences for sin and for speaking against the prophet and his ability.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:24 That is great. I had never connected him as a successor of Elijah who was called hairy and now Elisha is bald. I have a statement from Brother Fred E. Woods who wrote in BYU studies in the summer of 1992 an article called Elisha and the children. He said, evidence suggests that the mocking youths in the Elisha story were not simply calling him a baldheaded man when they called him, help me out, Krystal, *qereah*. That's maybe the Hebrew for it.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:03:58 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:59 Rather they were speaking to Elisha figuratively. Certainly they were not simply teasing Elisha by calling him baldie as some interpreters have suggested. Instead they were accusing him of being a usurper of authority, an act that warranted serious consequences for speaking evil against the Lord's prophet. As a result, they incurred the vengeance of God who had previously warned, "If you walk contrary to me, I will send wild beast among you, which shall rob you of your children." That's from Leviticus 26:21 and 22. Anyway, I thought that was one way to help try to make sense of it.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:04:35 That fits perfectly with it.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:37 I have one other note here from one commentator who says, if you want to understand a Bible story, pay careful attention to

geography. This story takes place at Bethel. At the time Bethel had become one of two main worship centers for the Northern kingdom, not worship, but rebellious covenant breaking idolatrous worship. Is that the case Krystal?

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:04:57 Yes. Some of these kings, it says they didn't worship Baal anymore, but they still were worshiping false gods at Bethel. And they still believed the calves at Bethel, these golden statues, represented Jehovah and the Lord and they were worshiping these statues. And so it wasn't even necessarily who they were worshiping, but how they were worshiping. And they just could not let go of these idols and this type of worship and Bethel and Dan, where these huge places, where this happened. It's related.
- Hank Smith: 00:05:29 Krystal, I think you've shown us here a good scripture study skill. When you read a story that you're like, "Well that's terrible. And petty and awful." You might not understand, one, the geography. Two, the Hebrew because we have a translation here. So just maybe look a little closer, consult scholars.
- John Bytheway: 00:05:49 And the connection to Elijah. The light went on for me. I'd never thought of that Krystal, but Elijah was hairy, you're bald. And that may be what Fred Wood said about, "You can't be the successor. You don't even look like him."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:06:02 They're saying you're no Elijah. Just like Fred said, they're like, "You didn't come from the company of the prophets, the sons of the prophets. He found you out in a field farming. We don't accept you as a prophet of God." And it's interesting because I think when consequences or punishments come in the form of natural disasters like famine or storms or war, things like that we're okay. But we do forget. And I think you had mentioned that sometimes it's in the form of wild animals, lions, wild beasts, bears. These are just a symbol of the consequences of sin, these bears that come.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:06:40 And now Elisha is shown as a full blown prophet. Not only can he bring blessings and good things like he did with Jericho, but part of the prophet too is also to warn and warn about destruction and what can happen. And I love that he's shown as he can bring life and he can bring death and it's all representative of the Lord and how he works.
- Hank Smith: 00:07:04 So Krystal, I wrote next to this verse, "This is a display of open public rejection of this prophet." Does that fit?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:07:12 Definitely. And we're talking about a big group here. It mentions 42. But I'm guessing it was a group of different ages all come from the city and who knows, maybe even some of the sons of the prophets were there and were mocking him. Showing that they don't accept him as the prophet. And that's why the Lord immediately is like, "We need to show that he is the prophet and I have chosen him."

John Bytheway: 00:07:35 Here's another comment from Craig Keener who's the author of the New King James Version Cultural Background Study Bible. He said the age of the mockers is uncertain. The Hebrew can refer to pre-pubescent children, but can also refer to the younger generation. The same Hebrew word describes Rehoboam's peers in 1 Kings 12:8 as young men and they are over 40. This is probably a group of young teens, but whatever it is, the age is uncertain. And that's helpful to know because if they're below the age of accountability, this doesn't make any sense to us at all.

Hank Smith: 00:08:12 They're like five.

John Bytheway: 00:08:14 Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:16 I know. And it says little children. It doesn't even say children. It says little. So you're saying these toddlers get eaten by a bear. And you're like, what is going on?

John Bytheway: 00:08:25 Now let's have family prayer now. Okay. The missing verse 26 says, "And it came to pass. No one ever commented on his hairless condition for the rest of his life."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08:39 I feel bad for Elisha. He struggles with this. The people accepting him. And even today, I think, if you were to ask someone who their favorite prophet is in the Old Testament, nobody says Elisha. And if they did, you'd probably say, "You mean, Elijah? did you say Elijah?" It seems like we just don't talk about him as much. So the rest of the chapters that we're going to talk about today are a series of miracles that Elisha performed. Some of them huge miracles like we see in chapter three with the Moabite war. And then we'll also get to some more specific miracles that he performed for individuals as well.

Hank Smith: 00:09:17 Okay.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:09:19 So when we get to chapter three, we kind of can return back to chapter one, verse one, where it talks about this war with Moab. In verse one of chapter three, now we're with king

Jehoram. So if you remember Ahaziah died as Elijah prophesied. Jehoshaphat is the king of Judah. And we find out that Jehoram did evil, it says, in the sight of the Lord, but not like his parents, but he also had problems. Now when we get to verses four and five, we're introduced to the king of Moab. His name is Mesha. So Moab is east of The Dead Sea. So Jerusalem is Northwest, Moab is east. And so modern Jordan about today. And we find out that Moab had been a vessel of Israel under King David. He conquered this land. They were paying massive amounts of tribute. In fact, it says in verses four and five, hundreds of thousands of animals were being given in tribute to Israel.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:10:22 But after Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against Israel and this started a war. Now, what's really great about Mesha is we have information about him outside of the Bible actually. We have this inscription of his that we call the Mesha Stele or the Moabite stone. This is a four foot high stone where he talks about being under Israel's control and rebelling against Israel. And it actually celebrates his rebellion. And so it's great that we have here evidence of this outside of the Bible that talks about this rebellion and this war that comes because of it.

Hank Smith: 00:11:03 Krystal, I think many people are surprised when they find out that before King David there's not a lot of evidence for what we read. And that's okay.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:11:12 Yeah. I always want to talk about when we find things like this outside extra biblical information or archeology, that it's not meant to make us more faithful. Because of course, faith doesn't come from provable facts. Faith comes from just belief, believing even though we don't have the facts. So it's very exciting when we find things like this, archeologically that support what the Bible is telling us and what it's saying. So the king of Israel decides, "I'm going to join up with the king of the Southern kingdom, Jehoshaphat, who has one of the greatest names I think among these Kings.

John Bytheway: 00:11:47 Oh, isn't he great?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:11:50 And he says, "Okay, let's go. We're going to go and we're going to go after Moab." And instead of going straight south to get to Moab, we're going to actually go around, completely around The Dead Sea and come up from the south. Because there was another kingdom there that supported Israel and Judah. Now, the problem with this, there aren't a lot of water sources. The army, it says in verses nine through 12, they went seven days without water. And so, Jehoram starts to think, "Well, maybe the Lord is actually punishing us. What do we do?"

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:12:19 Jehoshaphat says, "Well, why don't we ask the prophet of the Lord?" We know that the prophets traveled with the armies. They were there to be a representative of the Lord and help give information and advice. The servant says, "Well, we can ask Elisha." But Elijah was the one who in verse 11, he says poured water on the hands of Elijah. Kind of commenting he was a servant, right? He washed the hands and the feet of Elijah as opposed to, "This is this great prophet who can actually give us information." He comments on him just being, "Well, he was his servant."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:12:57 We see again, this issue of him always being in the shadow of Elijah, always. If we want to take something from this, I think we've all been at positions in our lives where we feel under the shadow of someone else. Or we feel like we're not living up to someone else's expectations. They expected him to be Elijah. He's saying, "I'm my own person. I am my own prophet." And I love the way he responds to Jehoram when he asks him for help. He says, "If you don't believe I'm a prophet, then why are you asking me? Go ask the prophets of Baal and Asherah, the prophets of your parents."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:13:35 To me, this has always been the sign of what do you do when you feel like you have this imposter syndrome or people expect certain things of you and you're not living up to what they think you should do. Elisha stands his ground and he says, "I am representing the Lord and I wouldn't even be here if it weren't for him supporting, especially Jehoshaphat." And that's what he says.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:03 He has some serious confidence. He knows who he is
- John Bytheway: 00:14:05 And notice the oath, "As the Lord of hosts liveth," verse 14.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:14:10 He's telling them, "I am a prophet of the Lord." I think this is something we can take from this. Sometimes it's not up to the opinions of others. In fact, very rarely is it up to the opinions of others. And Elisha says, "I know who I am. I know who I represent. You just are going to have to change your ideas about it." And I love this, that he does this.
- Hank Smith: 00:14:29 So Jehoshaphat believes. It's Jehoram who's like, hmm.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:14:33 Yeah, that kind of goes back to what we talked about at the beginning that the Northern kingdom kings seem to support the prophets a little bit less than the southern kingdom. Elisha goes on to say, "This is what the Lord says. If you dig ditches in this

valley, water will come and your armies that you've been marching around the dead sea without any water, the water will come and will fill this valley, but you won't see any rain." So this is probably a reference to, there are a lot of wadis in this area. So a wadi is a valley that fills up with seasonal runoff water from up above, flash floods, things like that. He's saying, "This water's going to come. Dig ditches so you can capture the water." He says, "Not only that, but the Lord is going to deliver the Moabites to you." This ends up happening after this. At this point, the Moabites are delivered and they're able to take back control of this area. A little bit of accepting Elisha more comes into play because of this and because of what happens here.

- Hank Smith: 00:15:34 Krystal, what's the next miracle you want to look at?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:15:37 So if we turn to chapter four, we find out that one of the wives of the sons of the prophet, so from this group, tells Elisha, her husband is dead and the creditor has come to take away her children as bond men. So we can talk a little bit about debt, slavery, and servitude here. If you did go into debt in ancient Israel and you sold off all your land and your belongings and your wealth, and you had nothing left, you could actually sell yourself or your family members into servitude to pay off the debt. And this happened a lot to farmers because of the fragile nature of farming with good years and bad years and famines and things like that.
- Hank Smith: 00:16:19 Can you go back? You said that you could sell your children, isn't it more that they take your children?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:16:25 Yes. I think it was either you all get put in prison, debt prison, or you could sell your children. There were laws about it.
- Hank Smith: 00:16:35 Sounds like this woman doesn't want this to happen.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:16:38 Yeah. The creditor deserved to be paid back, but also the one who had mortgaged or sold themselves or their family into servitude, there was a time limit, right? They could only serve for so many years and it didn't matter how big the debt was, they were done. But the problem is by that point you had lost everything. And so, a lot of people, it led to a life of servitude. There was no way to come back from that. But if you were able to serve and pay off your debt, it was called redeeming yourself. You were able to redeem yourself from this life of servitude. And this is where we get the concept of the Kinsman Redeemer as well.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:17:16 If you couldn't do it yourself, redeem yourself, a member of your family could come in and pay off your debt, redeem you from your debt. We're definitely meant when this debt slavery issue comes up, to think of the Lord as our Kinsman Redeemer. He's the one who comes in. He redeems us from our sin, from our debt, right? He's the one who paid it off. He saves us. I love this because we're going to see this through every miracle Elisha performs after this. We're meant to see him as a representative, as symbolic of the Savior and what he does for us.

Hank Smith: 00:17:54 Didn't we mention that a little bit with Boaz, the Kinsman Redeemer.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:17:59 It's the same thing. Boaz is able to redeem Ruth and be able to save her from debt and servitude. And so, this is what Elisha's trying to do. So he tells the woman, he says, "What do you have?" And she says, "I just have a little bit of oil." He says, "Go get all the vessels from your neighbors. Start pouring the oil and it'll fill up every single one of those vessels." And she's able to sell the oil to pay off the debts and live on the remainder. And what's perfect about this is the word for oil here is shemen, which is a reference to olive oil specifically. Where we get Gethsemane from, right? The oil press, the olive oil press.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:18:39 And how perfect is it that it's oil? We're meant to think of the Lord and the Atonement. And Gethsemane, it all comes together and he's our kinsman Redeemer. And that he saves us in the same way that Elisha's able to save this woman through oil. And it's this beautiful miracle. And this is to show that the Lord cares about everyone, whole cities, one woman, everybody. The oil, the Atonement, the blood covers everyone.

John Bytheway: 00:19:11 And it's like everything in between. A whole city in one story, a mother and child in another and everything in between. It reminds me of, you've got the Luke account of Christ's birth. You've got the Matthew account from kings to shepherds and everybody in between. It's glad tidings of great joy type of thing.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:19:31 I love this, how he clearly represents the Savior in so many of these. In saving this woman and her children in the same way that we are saved from our debt and servitude to sin and the consequences and punishments.

John Bytheway: 00:19:45 Which we can't pay ourselves. Yeah,

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:19:47 Exactly.

Hank Smith: 00:19:49 If I wanted to see myself in this, I could see myself as this woman saying, "I'm going to lose my family. If I'm not redeemed." And here comes the Savior saying, "I can give you more than enough, as much as you need. I can give you to save you and your family." Oh man. That's great, Krystal.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:20:08 Yeah, I love this. And this continues on in chapter four. Elisha goes to a new place called Shunem and this is in the Galilee. It's actually not too far from the site where I excavate at. So I love talking about Shunem. And I'll be there in two or three days, in fact.

John Bytheway: 00:20:24 Whoa.

Hank Smith: 00:20:25 Yeah. When this comes out, you'll be there.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:20:29 I will be there. So he travels through this area a lot. It's in the Galilee area. And so the woman invites him to her house and she says that he's a holy man. And she says, "Let's make him his own little room because he comes through so often." And Elisha says, "Well, I want to repay you." So he tells this servant, "Ask her what she would like. Does she want a good word with the king or the commander?" And I love her response in verse 13. She says, "No, I kind of just like to stay home. So I'm good."

John Bytheway: 00:21:00 I dwell among my known people. Is that what you mean? Is that's the phrase? Yeah, I'm good. I'm good.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:21:04 She says, "I want to stay here. I want to stay here among my own people. I don't need the king and the commander in these things." His servant Gehazi does tell Elisha, "She doesn't have a child and her husband is old." So we get this idea that they were past the child bearing years. So Elijah says to her, you will have a son in one year. Her response is interesting because she says in verse 16, "Nay, my Lord, thou man of God. Do not lie unto thine handmaid." And it's interesting because she clearly believes...

Hank Smith: 00:21:38 Too good to be true.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:21:39 ... he's a prophet and a man of God yet when it came to this miracle, she struggled believing it was going to happen. And I'm sure she had heard about the oil or Jericho or the Moabite war, but when it came to her own personal miracle, she struggled. And I think sometimes we are so ready to accept others' miracles, big miracles of healing or getting exactly what they need. And sometimes when it comes to us, we're like, "That would never happen to me. I don't have big miracles in my life."

And in reality, it's just, I think, sometimes believing in our own miracles and recognizing our own miracles in our life.

- Hank Smith: 00:22:23 I love that. My friend, Tony Sweat, likes to say faith is when you believe God can help everyone. Hope is when you believe God can help you, when it becomes specific. And I can almost hear this woman saying, "Don't do that to me. Don't give me hope. Don't lie to me because I've been hurt before." This is a very touching story.
- John Bytheway: 00:22:43 Yeah. I think that people might have a problem with, you're saying to the prophet, "Don't lie to me. But I do think it's kind of a, "Oh, I don't even know if I want to entertain that thought because it would hurt so bad if it went the other way."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:22:56 Definitely. And it kind of ends up going the other way for her.
- John Bytheway: 00:22:59 Oh, no.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:23:02 Because she does have the child and as the child's growing, it says, one day the child goes out to the father in the field and says that his head hurts. They bring the child to the mother and then he dies. The child ends up dying, this miracle child. So, of course, she goes looking for Elisha. Of course she finds him on a mountain where Elisha always is, like Elijah. And he's at Mount Carmel. And when she gets there, she grabs his feet, which is a sign of distress. The servant tries to stop her but Elisha says, "It's okay. Let's find out what happened." When we get to verse 28, she says, "Did I desire a son? Did I not say, do not deceive me?" Kind of saying like, "Now it's as if I never even had this miracle child. That he's been taken away from me."
- Hank Smith: 00:23:49 So brutal.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:23:50 It would be hard. This woman definitely went through some things and you see her develop and grow as time goes on, as she has these things happen to her. Elisha says, "We're going to heal this child." Not only heal him, bring him back from the dead. It's an interesting way that he does this. And this is definitely meant to remind us of Elijah also raising a child from the dead. So let's look at these verses because I think sometimes there are a lot of questions about what's going on here.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:24:25 So in verse 34, he goes and he lays upon the child and it says, "Eyes to eyes, hands to hands." And this is something that Elijah does too. Now, they believed in healing touch like we do. If

healing hands on the head and a blessing and consecrated oil, things like this. But for them, you could not only heal through your hands, but you could also heal body part to body part. And so in order to raise this child from the dead, it was a full body healing that needed to take place. And that's why he's eyes to eyes, hands to hands, legs to legs because this child had died. And this was the way of healing the whole body of this child. And that's why he does it in this way and that's why Elijah does it this way as well.

- Hank Smith: 00:25:22 This is one of those times you don't want to be ethnocentric and say, "Other people's cultures are wrong or weird."
- John Bytheway: 00:25:28 Right.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:25:30 We believe in healing through touch too and that's the way the Savior healed. And so for them, it was just, if you needed to heal a head, you could touch the head or do head to head because they believed that this transfer could happen. But if it's a whole body and raising from the dead, they sort of believed that you needed this full sort of healing. And that explains why he does this. And then we read that the child sneezes seven times.
- Hank Smith: 00:25:56 I love this.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:25:58 And this seems like a really specific thing to put in here. What does this mean? So we get the number seven again. So completion. And the word that's translated as sneezed is what we call a hapax. This is the only place in the entire Old Testament where this word shows up. Let me tell you what the word is. The word is Zara.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:15 Zara.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:26:17 People think it's onomatopoeic, right? So it's a noise or a sound or something that the child made. So onomatopoeic, of course, means that the word sounds like what the word is. So it's our word for B, right? Is onomatopoeic because it sounds like the noise a B makes. And so that's why people think he sneezed or he groaned or he yelled. Zara, whatever that is.
- John Bytheway: 00:26:44 Now, my dad might, let's see, Zara. Some people it's achoo.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:48 The King James translators don't know what to do, right Krystal? You got this one time. They're like, "How about sneezed? Sneeze sounds good to me."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:26:56 It's important, it's seven. So he's completely healed.

John Bytheway: 00:26:59 Right.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:26:59 He's completely over whatever it was and he's brought back to life. We can, again, bring the Savior into this, healing, raising from the dead. But not only that, saving us from death, from physical death through resurrection, from spiritual death through the Atonement and our repentance. So we already have the Savior as Kinsman Redeemer through Elisha. Now we get the Savior as literally the Savior saving us from death.

Hank Smith: 00:27:31 It sounds a lot like comparison to Lazarus. "You can't do this. It's way past the time." "No, I can bring him back."

John Bytheway: 00:27:39 He deliberately waits for four days. Yeah.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:27:42 We never should put limits on the Lord, ever. And sometimes when we say, "Oh, this miracle can't happen to me or it's too hard." If we actually step back and think about it, what are we saying? Things are too hard for God? Too hard for the Lord? They never are. And so it's us, right? And it's our faith. And it's our understanding that needs to be worked on. And I think this woman goes through a few things with this child in order to learn that for herself.

John Bytheway: 00:28:11 And it's great she still had the faith to go back to the prophet.

Hank Smith: 00:28:14 Do you think Matthew 8:9 where Matthew hits the Savior's miracles over and over and over and over, do you think he's trying to replicate this?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:28:22 I think he's definitely trying to tie the Savior to the prophets of the Old Testament and to the Jehovah for us and our interpretation, the Jehovah of the Old Testament as well. Absolutely. That he is following all of these prophets, Elijah, Elisha, every single one who performed a miracle. It was a type for the Savior who was going to come. I think so.

John Bytheway: 00:28:46 Well, that's the conventional wisdom as Matthew was writing to the Jews and saying, "Look, this is the one. This is the one that prophecies are talking about."

Hank Smith: 00:28:54 It just feels very Matthew 8:9 to me, this section, like one after another. Here we go.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:29:00 And it's perfect because the next miracles are about feeding people with either not enough food or poisoned food and fixing it. So our next miracles are about food. So Elisha goes back to Gilgal. Again, there's a dearth, a famine in the land. The sons of the prophets are there and Elisha tells his servant to make a stew for them. So he goes out to gather herbs and gourds, it says, for the stew. The men start eating and they say there's death in the pot. And so, this is a reference to there's something poisonous in here. And people have actually researched this and look at this and think that this is a reference to these special type of gourds that they call bitter apples. These are found wild in Israel. They have chemicals in them that burn mucus membranes. So your mouth, your throat, your stomach, your intestine, and it would happen immediately. So they've used the wrong kind of gourd.

John Bytheway: 00:29:57 You think jalapenos are bad.

Hank Smith: 00:30:00 What kind of apple is that?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:02 It's called a bitter apple. When they're not ripe, they look like watermelons, like little round watermelons. So don't eat those. If you're in Israel and you feel like you want to make stew...

John Bytheway: 00:30:14 There's death in this pot. It sounds like it's dad's night to cook.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:17 I love the way they describe it.

Hank Smith: 00:30:19 Yeah. There's death in this pot.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:21 Sounds like something one of the kids would say.

Hank Smith: 00:30:24 I remember one time I scooped my wife's, a big plate of casserole or whatever my wife had made. And I turned and my two-year-old son said, "Dad, you throw up?" And I was like, "No, it's dinner."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:41 He's trying to feed them. And instead there's this poison in here. So he asks them to bring him some flour, some meal. Flour was believed, in the ancient near east, to be able to combat or remove evil and poison and things like this. Many times Elisha is using things that people believed in. And he is showing that every miracle that you're believing, whether it's flour or salt in the water or whatever, this is coming from Jehovah, this is coming from the Lord. Even if you think it's been coming from other gods.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:31:13 And so he uses things they believed would work and he's showing that this comes from the Lord. So he puts the flour in and it overpowers the poison. And he is able to feed this starving group of the sons of the prophets here. And show them that the Lord has the power to also heal people and feed people and save people. It's perfect.

Hank Smith: 00:31:39 I love that. Every other miracle we think is coming from other sources or other places, it's all coming from the same source.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:31:46 Yeah, absolutely. And so I love that he uses some of these objects or things that people believed other gods were performing magic or things with. And he's showing no, it's the Lord who has the power and control over everything. Even using this flour to heal the poison in the pot. So we have another feeding miracle towards the end of chapter four. A man brings Elisha, it says the bread of the first fruits. And so this is the bread made out of the first part of the harvest. It was meant to be dedicated to the sanctuary through the prophet. So he is bringing it to the prophet so he can take it to the sanctuary, it can be offered. Sort of a harvest type festival to give thanks to the Lord.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:32:31 And we read that there are 20 small loaves. These are not the loaves we're thinking of like a French loaf. These are probably rolls, very small, very tiny rolls. He says, "Give it to the people to eat." Because again, they said, there's a famine at this point in time. And the servant says, "How are we going to feed a hundred people with these 20 small rolls of bread?" And Elisha says, "Well, it's going to work because the Lord says, not only will there be enough to feed everyone, but there will be leftovers afterwards." And this ends up coming true. And of course, this can remind us a lot of Jesus feeding the 5,000 with the bread and the fish. And again, is meant us to see Elisha as representative of the Lord of the future and what he would do.

Hank Smith: 00:33:22 There's that great question in John 6:9 when they have the five Barley loaves and the two fishes, "What are they among so many?" Without Jesus, it's a couple of tuna fish sandwiches, but with Jesus, it's more than enough.

John Bytheway: 00:33:35 Yeah, "Bring what you have, I will multiply it."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:33:38 So we've had Kinsman Redeemer with the oil. We've had the Savior with the child being raised from the dead. And now we have the nourisher, the bread of life. So all of these different aspects of Jehovah. And then we can go to chapter five where we have the miracle with Naaman.

Hank Smith: 00:33:58 Naaman. This is where his parents said, "What should we name in?" And then it was they're like, "That's good."

John Bytheway: 00:34:04 That's fine. Well, let's name him Bob." "Nay, man."

Hank Smith: 00:34:10 Nay, man. Nay. Sorry. Okay, Krystal. Thanks for putting up with us.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:34:17 Okay. So Naaman, we hear that he's a Syrian army captain. And so Syria, this is actually Aram where we get Aramea from, from the land of Aram, Damascus. And in Greek, they called it Syria. So it's the same place. And it says he was a great man. The Lord actually used him to deliver Syria, but he has a problem. He's a leper, it says. Now, at this point in time, it's not the same clinical contagious leprosy that we know of today. That doesn't show up until Alexander the great in about 500 years...

John Bytheway: 00:34:47 Interesting.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:34:47 ... after this. Okay.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:34:50 But definitely a horrible skin disease because it's described as having lesions and scales and swelling, weeping, flaking, right? I don't want to lessen what this horrible thing is. And it's some combination or form of psoriasis, eczema, dermatitis, fungal infections, something like this. People who had these skin diseases were seen as outcasts. They were made to quarantine because they saw it as a punishment from God. People definitely wanted to stay away from those who had leprosy. Naaman's wife has this servant and it says she's a captive Israelite, so somebody they had actually captured in war.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:35:28 This servant says to Naaman's wife, "Hey, he should visit the prophet in Samaria because he would cure him." Naaman goes to the Syrian king. He says, "This is what she said." The king says, "Go. We're going to send this letter and we're going to send a ton of money with you." This money. Of course, we read this 10 talents of silver, 6,000 shackles of gold. We have no clue what that means off the bat. But this amount is meant to shock us. This would be almost a billion dollars today, almost a billion. It is definitely meant to show us that the king of Syria and Naaman are serious about paying for this cure that they're going to receive.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:36:14 Sometimes I think we kind of move past this quickly, but I do want to take a moment and talk about who is the one here who

sets the miracle in motion? Who is the one who took the opportunity to bring up this idea of the process?

- John Bytheway: 00:36:30 It's this girl. I love it.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:36:32 Yeah. She's young. She's female. She's a captive. She's a prisoner of war. She's a servant. Yet, she takes this moment to talk about her belief in the prophet and that he can heal this man that she works for. Reminds me a lot of Abish. At the moment she felt like she could do something, she could change something, she does it. To me, it shows that it doesn't matter what's your age, your gender, your status, your wealth, you always can have these opportunities come up where you can share your beliefs or talk about the prophet or say, "You know what, you can be healed from whatever problem you have," whether it's physical or spiritual or any of these things. I love this part of the story that sometimes we kind of skip over quickly.
- John Bytheway: 00:37:21 Yeah, that's a great thing. Verse two, a little maid. Any idea of her age? She a teenager? Any idea?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:37:28 Probably like a teenager is what I'm going to guess. I didn't look at the word in Hebrew, but she was young and she was a servant, even a prisoner of war. And she still took that opportunity to say, "Hey, there's this prophet and he can cure you." You never know the effect you have on others. The influence, anything.
- John Bytheway: 00:37:48 Story pivots on her.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:37:50 Yeah. She's the one who sets it in motion. So Naaman does end up going to the king of Israel, probably Jehoram. He's not named here. He reads this letter from the king of Syria. He tears his robes in response to this letter. And he says, "I can't cure him. I am not God. Now we're going to have a war with Syria because of this." Not even thinking, probably thinking of the prophet. And the tearing robes of course, is this sign of distress. Earlier Elisha to his robes after Elijah was gone. It's distress at anything. Distress because someone's gone and has died, so mourning. Distress because of sin. Sometimes it was part of the process of repentance. And when the king does it, this signals a national crisis and emergency.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:40 And Elisha hears about it and is like, "Why didn't you just send him to me?" And so we still see that there are some issues here with the king and...

Hank Smith: 00:38:50 They don't trust.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:52 ... thinking. Yeah. And trust.

Hank Smith: 00:38:52 They just don't believe.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:55 This issue with faith. And even the king says, "Yeah, Elisha's a prophet," but yet he doesn't turn to him when he needs help and when he knows Elisha could talk to the Lord and receive information,

Hank Smith: 00:39:10 And this is great. When Naaman shows up, Elisha doesn't even come out of the house. He's like, "Yeah, yeah."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:39:15 No. He sends his messenger and he says, "Tell Naaman to wash in the Jordan river seven times." Seven, again, this idea of completion, "and he'll be cured of this skin disease."

John Bytheway: 00:39:27 It's like, "What's his contact info? I'll just text him just go do this."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:39:33 And so I think we can understand why Naaman sort of reacts. He's angry. He's angry at this. Not only would the prophet not come to talk to him, but he thought and he says this, "I thought the prophet would strike his hand over the place and cure it." The prophet would come out and heal his leprosy using his hands. And now he just wants me to go and dip in the Jordan. And he says, I know of better rivers, cleaner, purer, nicer rivers than the Jordan river. I know you guys have been to the Jordan river, probably a few different places.

Hank Smith: 00:40:08 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 00:40:09 Up by Caesarea or Philippi, the headwaters, it's pretty beautiful and clean. But when you're down at the traditional baptismal site, it's pretty muddy, isn't it?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:40:17 Yeah. There are springs, natural springs and rivers in Israel that do have healing properties for skin. Think of the Dead Sea and Dead Sea mud and things like that. And so Naaman's kind of saying, "Well, I can't go dip in a river."

Hank Smith: 00:40:31 That's not amazing.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:40:32 He's saying, "Didn't even tell me to go to the good river." But it's great because the servants turn back to Naaman and say, "Hey, if the prophet had asked you to do something more difficult,

would you do it then?" They say, "He just told you to do something really simple. So why won't you just do it?" So Naaman does end up going and washing in the Jordan and is healed. So it's perfect to see here, he thought it was too easy.

- John Bytheway: 00:40:58 Yeah. Hank, didn't you mention this in a talk about, "I love my friends."
- Hank Smith: 00:41:04 Yes, John. You're so nice to bring it up. I really love this story because when I was out speaking to a group of teenagers, I had them write in their scriptures, "This is what a good friend does. A good friend will stand between you and a terrible choice and will say something." It took some courage for this friend to come up and say, "You're about to make a terrible decision. Do you want to rethink this?" And it changes Naaman's life. If you really love your friends, I think that's what you'll do. Thanks, John.
- John Bytheway: 00:41:39 Yeah. Hank, and I've heard you say, that I also love, is, "Don't mix up your friends with your enemies. That's what they did with Abinadi. That's what Lahonti did with the Amalekiah. A friend will tell you, "Hey, wait a minute," because they have your best interest in mind as this one did. "No, this is good. He gave you something easy, go do it."
- Hank Smith: 00:41:58 You don't have to be condemning, right? A friend doesn't have to come up and say, "Repent, swine." You don't have to do that. But if you see a friend... Naaman's about to make a terrible decision. He's just going to go home.
- John Bytheway: 00:42:10 Well, I love what it says. He turned and went away in a rage. How many times have we gone away in a rage from good advice because it hurt our pride or our sense or something. Hopefully, we turn around and think about it or have a friend that helps us turn around and think about it.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:42:27 This really seems like this servant is just reminding Naaman of his faith. You believed you could be healed. You believed this prophet could heal you, this holy man. So just because he's doing it in a different way than you expected, still believe. Maybe you just have to change your perspective. And I think Naaman either thought the prophet himself was going to come out and do this big healing. Or maybe he thought that he was going to ask him personally to do something very, very difficult. And instead it was simple, "Go wash in the river." And I think at times we do this too. We want things to be complicated and difficult and hard. So many times it's not like that. The Lord

wants us, he's got these simple things he wants us to do. And if we do them, we can be healed.

- Hank Smith: 00:43:14 Krystal, that's so good. Sometimes we sit at general conference and we go, "Okay, President Nelson, what have you got for us?" And he says, "Go to the temple."
- John Bytheway: 00:43:24 Well don't you have something else?
- Hank Smith: 00:43:25 Isn't it bigger? Don't you have something?
- John Bytheway: 00:43:27 Well, and I'm thinking of Jesus. "Peter cast your net on the other side." "Listen, we have toiled all night and caught nothing."
- Hank Smith: 00:43:36 And we have tried that.
- John Bytheway: 00:43:37 And then there's this long pause, "Nevertheless, at the word. Okay, fine." And then it works.
- Hank Smith: 00:43:44 Wow. What a great story.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:43:47 It reminds me a lot too, of the brass serpent with Moses and the children of Israel when the snakes are biting them and the Lord says, "Make this serpent, put it on the pole. All people have to do is look." And Alma and Helaman and others talk about it. A lot of them wouldn't look. They just wouldn't look. And I love the way Alma says when he is teaching the Zoramites. And he says, "If you knew that just looking could save you, wouldn't you break your neck to look so quickly to save yourself?" And instead we want it to be difficult. It's a faith thing here, right? And I love the servant reminds Naaman, "Hey, you believe. You believe in this. So keep believing. Remember you believe and follow through with what the prophet has asked you to do."
- John Bytheway: 00:44:32 Isn't it wonderful here that these pivotal moments in the story are coming from a little maid and some servants saying to the kingly people. Where's the wisdom coming from? It's coming from little maid and from servants right here. I think one of the things I love about these stories is there are a little more focused on miracles than just on words. In the first page of the manual, page 121, it says a prophet's main mission is to teach and testify of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Our record of the Prophet Elisha however, doesn't include much of his teaching or testifying. What the record does include is the miracles Elisha performed. Including raising a child from the dead, feeding a multitude with a small quantity of food, and healing a leper.

John Bytheway: 00:45:17 So while we don't have Elisha's words, bearing witness of Christ, we do have throughout Elisha's ministry, powerful manifestations of the Lord's life-giving, nourishing, and healing power. Such manifestations are more plentiful in our lives than we sometimes realize. To see them we need to seek the miracle Elisha sought when he prayed on behalf of his fearful young servant. "Lord, I pray thee. Open his eyes that he may see." That's actually coming up in the next chapter. But I thought about this. I think it's Matthew four, about verse 23, 28. Where it says Jesus went forth teaching and preaching and healing.

John Bytheway: 00:45:56 And I'm not exactly sure sometimes what the difference between teaching and preaching is, if it's audience size or whatever. But this Elisha, I love that it was kind of leaning towards the last part. There were healings and miracles that people were seeing as he was taking over from Elijah, which makes this just a fun chapter. Because one after another, these kind of amazing things happen.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:21 Yeah. And that Naaman is, oh, he's not an Israelite.

John Bytheway: 00:46:24 Yeah. He's a Syrian.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:46:24 He's from Syria. He's from a completely different place. And so it's this perfect example of the Lord is going to heal and the Atonement covers everyone, no matter where you are, your age, gender, wealth, any of that. And also that the Lord is going to put his message through as many people as possible. A little maid, a servant, a king, a prophet. And it's perfect.

John Bytheway: 00:46:49 And I can even use the Jordan river to wash you.

Hank Smith: 00:46:52 Yeah. I love this. I don't know why, but I'm feeling the power of these young missionaries who send people to a prophet. Who just go out on the streets of Chicago and say, "There's a prophet in Israel. You can go to him and be healed." And then look at verse 15. Naaman says, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." The maid bore her testimony, which led Naaman to getting his own testimony. To the Natalie Bytheways out there, the Juliet Swanson's out there, keep going you wonderful missionaries.

John Bytheway: 00:47:27 And that promise is we're not sending out scholars, we're sending out, what is section 35? "I call upon the weak and simple things of the world to thresh the nations by the power of my spirit. And their arm shall be my arm." And it's this amazing

promise. So I love this. A little maid and some servants pivot the whole chapter.

- Hank Smith: 00:47:49 I can't imagine when Victoria Pierce goes on a mission. She'll be like, "So when I did this dig, here's what I found."
- John Bytheway: 00:47:56 Like, "Wait, what? You did?"
- Hank Smith: 00:48:00 "I was with my parents."
- John Bytheway: 00:48:02 "You know how they are."
- Hank Smith: 00:48:03 "Here's what we did for fun."
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:48:05 Yeah. They like the dig now, but we'll see in a few years how much they want to go and spend their entire summers digging. We'll see.
- Hank Smith: 00:48:14 All right, Krystal. What miracle do you want to do next? Let's not slow down.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:48:17 All right. So when we get to chapter six, we have another miracle at the beginning. And Elisha is with the sons of the prophets. And they tell him that the place... It says, it's translated as where they live is too narrow or small. So they need to go to Jordan, to the forest, cut down some trees and make it bigger. Now this is a good sign because we know the sons of the prophets have been having a hard time accepting Elisha. Now we hear that the place where they're going to listen to him is too small. So he's amassed this group of followers at this point who are accepting him, that they even need to make the place where they go to listen to him, where he teaches them, bigger.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:48:59 And so they go to Jordan and they start cutting down the trees. One of the men loses his ax head, his iron ax head in the water. He says, we do get this comment. He's worried because it was borrowed. And so this iron ax head, he borrowed from someone and probably paid to rent it or something because the iron was very, very valuable and expensive at this point in time. And honestly, I think why we're told it's borrowed is because this loss of an ax head probably would've put this man and his family into debt, incredible amount of debt because of this. And might have led to this eventually debt servitude or slavery.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:49:41 And that's why Elijah does this. Because sometimes I think we look at this as a man lost something and the prophet helps him

find it. But there's a lot more going on here. We are in the Iron Age, but it was very difficult to make iron and it was expensive. Elisha's not just helping someone find a lost thing, but he's saving him and his family probably from this debt. So he asks where it fell. Elisha cuts down a stick, throws it in the water. And the iron ax head comes up floating because of this.

- Hank Smith: 00:50:13 The iron did swim.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:50:15 Yeah. And it's amazing because, once again, Elisha is using different things they believed in. And they believed that properties could be transferred from one thing to another thing. We've already talked about transfer healing. We already talked about the salt curing the poison in the water, the flour curing the poison in the pot. Now we have the properties of this stick flotation properties is transferred to the iron and that's why it floats. This is the way they would've understood it happening. They would've seen this as clearly a sign from God that Elijah was a prophet and that Jehovah was doing this miracle and not some other deity or magic.
- Hank Smith: 00:50:57 Wow. So transferring, what did you call, the properties?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:51:02 Yeah, or the characteristics of...
- Hank Smith: 00:51:04 Characteristics of the stick.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:51:05 Yeah. In the same way of the salt and the water and the flour and the stew. They believe that this is how it would work and it would definitely be a sign that Elisha is a prophet and the Lord has the power to help people and save people.
- Hank Smith: 00:51:22 Man. I am writing so much in my scriptures today. I look like a real scriptioner here.
- John Bytheway: 00:51:27 I know. And I need to go back and write it neater because I'm scribbling too fast to try to get it all.
- Hank Smith: 00:51:32 Now we're getting to the...
- John Bytheway: 00:51:32 ... the biggie.
- Hank Smith: 00:51:32 ... they that be with us. Yeah, the big one.
- John Bytheway: 00:51:32 Everybody's, "And now, the verse you've all been waiting for."
- Hank Smith: 00:51:32 When are they going to get to it?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:51:47 Oh, I know. I love this part. Oh, it's so good. Let's get to our last huge lesson or miracle that Elisha performs in these chapters. We read starting in chapter six, verse eight, that the king of Syria is warring against Israel. Elisha is warning the king of Israel every time the army moves. And I love the king's response is, "We must have a spy because how do they always know where we're going and what we're doing?" And the officers, again, somebody we wouldn't expect to say, "Actually, there's a prophet who's probably telling them where we are." And so the king of Syria wants to seek out Elisha. He says, he's in Dothan. And we know where Dothan is. It's this huge site. It has a teller, a mound, 200 feet tall. So once again, Elisha and Elijah like going up to these tall places. And the horses and the chariots, a whole king's army of Syria comes and surrounds Dothan, surrounds the city. And the servant asks Elisha, "What are we going to do?"

Hank Smith: 00:52:56 Can you imagine coming out that morning? He got up early and he looks up, oh wow. He runs back in, "What are we going to do?"

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:53:05 And I love that Elisha's sleeping, right? He's not too concerned about it.

John Bytheway: 00:53:09 I can sleep when the wind blows.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:53:10 And then he has to be woken up. Elisha says to him, "Don't be afraid." And then we get this amazing verse 16 where Elisha says, "Fear not. For they that be with us are more than they that be with them." The servant doesn't see it. So he prays for the servant to see. The servant's eyes are opened and he sees a mountain full of chariots and horses of fire surrounding Elisha and this area.

Hank Smith: 00:53:43 I like to think that Elijah was there. That's just me though. The horses and chariots of fire, right? Elijah's back.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:53:49 One of those chariots definitely had Elijah on it, for sure. So of course, again, we have the hosts of heaven, the armies of the Lord. We're meant to be reminded that his armies and his support and his angels are way more than any army or enemy or anything that is coming at us. And sometimes we may feel we're surrounded and that there's nothing we can do. And so we need to pray to be able to recognize all of the help and support and love that the Lord gives to us. Now, as our protector, he's going to fight for us. These chariots and horses are meant to show us that the Lord will fight for us. And that he's there for us. This goes right along with all these

characteristics that we've been talking about of the Lord that we see through Elisha.

- Hank Smith: 00:54:41 I can't believe how much when I teach in Matthew 8:9, how much I've been missing that Matthew was borrowing from these stories. He wants his Jewish reader to go, "Wow, this sounds awfully familiar."
- John Bytheway: 00:54:53 I think this is one of those stories that lets us know that we are part of a work. Oh, how did Sheri Dew say it once? That stretches across the street, across the world, and across the veil. And the way that we have articulated the new mission of the church in President Kimball's day, it was proclaim the gospel, perfect the saints, redeem the dead. Now it is, "Live the gospel of Jesus Christ, care for those in need, invite all to come unto Christ and unite families for eternity." And so President Nelson has said, "We're gathering Israel on both sides of the veil." And this sounds just so big, what we're a part of right here. That they that be with us are more than they that be with them.
- John Bytheway: 00:55:43 And I love verse 17, "Open his eyes." So a lot of times, see the scriptures say, "Woe to the blind." And you think, "Well, that's rude." But then it says, "That will not see." It's not the kind of blindness of physical, but they're refusing to see. And I don't think he was a bad person, but Elisha was so excited to say, "Lord, open his eyes that he can see what's going on." All of us, I guess, that's a testimony. Do you know what this big thing is that you're a part of? Hank, you mentioned the June 2018, President Nelson talking, I think you did. The greatest work you could be involved in is the gathering of Israel, right? That's why you were sent to earth. That's why you were sent to earth now. And this gives a real big picture to me. They that be with us are more than they that be with them. So I love this.
- Hank Smith: 00:56:39 Yeah. John, you have a quote on your wall, don't you, from Elder Holland, about your family?
- John Bytheway: 00:56:45 Yeah, I do.
- Hank Smith: 00:56:46 On the other side?
- John Bytheway: 00:56:47 It's right there. Don't underestimate your family on the other side of the veil. Got mom and dad, grandma and grandpa, different periods of their life. And my mom and dad are gone now. They're on the other side and they are also part of this work. I sometimes jokingly say, "My mom and dad are now the

office couple in the hell spirit prison mission." But we have felt their influence and it's exciting.

- Hank Smith: 00:57:23 For any of our listeners who are struggling in any way, I want to encourage you to go read a talk called For Times of Trouble, where Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, way back in, this is 1980 at BYU, it's in the January of 1982 Ensign. There's something about Elder Holland, where he can take a scripture story and make it sing. I'm going to read a pretty long quote here, if you guys don't mind. He's talking about the moment where the servant looks up and the city is surrounded that they're in. And Elder Holland says this, I'm going to read the last couple paragraphs of this talk. "If Elisha was looking for a good time to be depressed, this is it. His only ally is a boy who in modern times might be the President of the local teacher's quorum. It is one prophet and one lad against the world.
- Hank Smith: 00:58:16 And the boy is petrified. He sees enemies everywhere, difficulty, despair, problems, burdens everywhere. He cannot leave. And all he can see is an evil and merciless city. With faltering faith, the boy cries, "How shall we do?" And Elisha's reply? Fear, not for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. In the gospel of Jesus Christ you have help from both sides of the veil, and you must never forget that. When disappointment and discouragement strike, and they will, you must remember, and never forget that if our eyes could be opened, we would see horses and chariots of fire as far as the eye can see riding at reckless speed to come to our protection. They will always be there, these armies of heaven in defense of Abraham's seed."
- Hank Smith: 00:59:14 And Elder Holland goes on, "I close with this promise. Verily, verily I say unto you, you are little children and you have not as yet understood how great blessings the father hath in his own hands and prepared for you. The kingdom is yours. The blessings thereof are yours and the riches of eternity are yours." "Oh yes," Elder Holland says, "we'll find the place, which God, for us, prepared. On the way we'll make the air with music, ring, shout praises to our God and king. Above the rest, these words will tell all is well, all is well." Man, you guys, is that not the pen of heaven right there?
- John Bytheway: 01:00:00 Yeah.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:00:01 Some of this I feel like is we need to pray and ask for our eyes to be open too, in the same way that this servant's eyes are opened. In the same way that the woman with the child, her eyes became opened. And she was a believer. We're not talking about unbeliever. Sometimes we just need that extra push, that

extra little help. Or like Naaman, washing in the river. Just a little reminder, every once in a while, that we're not alone. That the Lord is there and his armies are there and on both sides of the veil and our eyes just need to be opened to these miracles, I think.

- Hank Smith: 01:00:39 Krystal, I'm going to do that. I'm going to add that to my prayers. God open my eyes. Please help me. I want to see. Please open my eyes. I think that's beautiful. And the eyes of those we love. John, what were you going to say?
- John Bytheway: 01:00:55 I have a President John Taylor quotation, August 6th 1882, Journal of Discourses volume 23, page 221.
- Hank Smith: 01:01:05 Thank you for all of that detail.
- John Bytheway: 01:01:06 I love this statement. God lives and his eyes are over us and his angels are around and about us. And they are more interested in us than we are in ourselves, 10,000 times, but we do not know it. And that's just an amazing verse to me that they've always been there and they're 10,000 times more interested in us than we are in ourselves.
- Hank Smith: 01:01:47 Krystal, why don't you take it from there?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:01:52 I love this aspect of the Savior that we get here. If we go back through some of these miracles and we talk about how Elisha represents the Savior, we talked about the Kinsman Redeemer with the oil. Saving us from servitude to sin, saving us from debt. We talked about him as the Savior overpowering death for us. We talked about him feeding and nourishing us. He's the bread of life. But we get here, he's a fighter. He's going to fight for us. He wants us to win in the battle against sin, in the battle against every horrible thing that happens to us. He wants us to win. And all we have to do is ask him for help. Help opening our eyes, realizing our full, true potential. Ask for help, realizing that we're not alone. That there are way more who are helping us than are against us.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:02:51 And every single one of these aspects of the Savior, we see later in the New Testament and in the Book of Mormon, when he teaches the people. He's on our side and he wants us to win and he wants us to go out there and make sure everybody knows it. This is part of the gathering, making sure everybody understands their true identity as children of God and their true potential. And this is part of why I love Elijah and Elisha. Because they're meant to show us this.

Hank Smith:	01:03:22	<p>There's a confidence in 2 Kings 6:16 that can really only come when you know God. You're surrounded, "What are we going to do?" Fear not. Fear not, we're fine. We're okay. I remember when President Hinckley was interviewed by Mike Wallace for 60 minutes. Mike Wallace asked President Monson and President Faust who were his counselors at the time. He said, "How is he so positive? How is he so upbeat?" And President Monson said, "Oh, I think he knows how it all works out." There's a confidence that comes when you know how it's going to work out. Fear not, we're fine. And we want for that for each of our listeners. We want you to have that confidence in the Lord that you can see something as scary as this and say, "Fear not."</p>
John Bytheway:	01:04:17	<p>It'll all work out. In fact, Sheri Dew and her biography of President Hinckley had mentioned that if you're around him, you will hear him say things will work out. And he always had that kind of faith. "The Lord is on our side." I love what you've done here, Krystal. He's a finder, he's a healer, he's a feeder, he's a fighter. With all of these miracles you can put a role to each one of those that is foreshadowing the Savior. Thank you for that.</p>
Hank Smith:	01:04:48	<p>Absolutely. Krystal, this has been fantastic today. If anybody wants to hear about your journey of faith and scholarship, they can go back to your previous episode with us that we did on Noah, earlier this year. And anyone who has not heard that, please take the time and go back and listen to that episode. It was fantastic in every way. Krystal, so to finish this episode, I think our listeners would be interested in your major takeaways from this section. What would you say to our listeners who are like our listener, Amy Ry who are mowing the lawn or doing the gardening? What do you hope they take away from this week's lesson?</p>
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	01:05:24	<p>I especially want to focus on this word, hope, that you said. What do I hope for? I hope that this brings hope to everybody who's listening. I hope that you realize that miracles can be any size, shape, form. And it's just about us recognizing them. From losing an ax head, to being healed from leprosy, to curing the water in the well. That miracles are for entire cities, but also for individuals. And that God cares about every single one of his children. And part of it is opening our eyes, seeing the miracles in our own life. And realizing our true potential and that God loves every single one of us and finding hope in these chapters. I think that's definitely the final takeaway from these chapters.</p>

Hank Smith: 01:06:15 Beautiful, absolutely beautiful. We want to thank Dr. Krystal Pierce for being with us today. She is just brilliant and wonderful. And we've shared her with all of you. Thank you so much for being here, Krystal. It's a joy. It really is.

John Bytheway: 01:06:31 Yeah. What a fun day.

Hank Smith: 01:06:33 We want to thank our executive producers, Steve and Shannon Sorensen, whom we love. And our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And we hope all of you, please come back next week, because we're going to have another episode of followHIM. We have an amazing production crew we want you to know about. David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Nielsen, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, and Ariel Cuadra. Thank you to our amazing production team.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I WANTED THUNDER
BUT GOT A STILL SMALL VOICE INSTEAD?



- Hank Smith: 00:05 Hello, my friends. Welcome to FollowHIM Favorites. We are taking a single question from this week's Come Follow Me lesson and talking about it. John, this week's lesson, we're in the beginning, chapters of second Kings, and there's a story in here about a man named Naaman who expects something huge and gets something quite mundane, something quite boring. Here's my question for you. What do you do when you have big expectations for spiritual experiences for God, for life, you have these big expectations and the answers are really quite what you might call just typical, kind of not what you expected. What do you do when those expectations aren't met?
- John Bytheway: 00:47 Gosh, that's a good question. I think that it was Elder Maxwell that said, "God, doesn't send lightning and thunder when a still small voice will do." type of a thing. And I think sometimes our expectations are that our experiences will be like the scriptures. And I like what somebody said once. I think it was Elder McConkie way back in the day that said, "Some things that happened to these ancients were so miraculous they got written up in the scriptures."
- Hank Smith: 01:13 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 01:14 Which is telling us they weren't typical, they were extreme. They were huge. But for many of us, boy just staying on the covenant path is a great thing and a great accomplishment. And be an example to those around you is a great thing. And it might sound mundane or simple, or those are the answers I always hear. But Heavenly Father needs people who quietly just move forward and live the gospel. And in retrospect, that is a great thing and Naaman was asked, "Go wash in the Jordan." And what was his response? Hank, the Jordan. That's just...
- Hank Smith: 01:50 Yeah, it says Naaman was roth. Here he said, "Behold, I thought that he would come out and call on the name of the Lord and strike his hand and recover the leper." He has this idea in his head of what this is supposed to go like, and it doesn't go like that. But it's nice that he has a good friend who says, "Hey,

listen, if he would've asked you to do some great thing, you would've done it. Why not do this simple thing, then why not give it a try?"

- John Bytheway: 02:17 You're expecting something big and you feel the spirit that says, "Be nicer to your family."
- Hank Smith: 02:23 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 02:23 Oh, but I've heard that before. I don't want to hear that. And I like what you said, Hank about a friend. It's so great to have a friend that would be willing to say something like Naaman said, "Well, if he'd asked you a big thing, you would've done it. He just asked you a small thing, be nice to your family."
- Hank Smith: 02:40 Why don't you maybe give that a try? Why don't you give that small thing a try? John, this discussion is reminding me of when all my friends were getting big mission calls. I had a friend get called to Brazil and another friend get called to Hungary and I'm like, "Wow, where am I going to go?" And I got called to California. That was my second King's 5:11 moment. Namaan was wroth and said, "But I thought, that it would be bigger and more important." And I had the spirit say to me, "Does it matter? How about you go serve that mission call the one that you've been given." And it ended up being a fantastic mission, which I loved and it taught me many things and enabled me to teach the gospel in English, which I... at the time I wouldn't have known, but that's what I was going to be doing for the rest of my life would be teaching the gospel in English.
- John Bytheway: 03:30 In English. Yeah. And I think that a lot of our listeners may have had a modified mission. I wrote a chapter in when it doesn't make sense called Modified Missions. Because, "Well, I was called here, but how come I didn't go there?" And I love what Elder Bednar and I talked about there. The call to serve is the amazing, wonderful big thing. The assigned to labor is a different thing. And some got switched around. Some never got where they were going, but you being in a place where you were called to serve is amazing. What a unique thing that is in this world.
- Hank Smith: 04:07 Yeah. John, I was thinking about, when we kneel down to say prayers, "Lord, what would thou have me do?" And he said, "I would have you go to church, I would have you read your scriptures, I would have you pray-"
- John Bytheway: 04:21 You say your prayers.

Hank Smith: 04:22 I would have you do these things. And we might say, "No, I want to do some great thing. I want to do something big." And I think we can end up like Naaman and being upset that we're being called to do something small and simple, but yet it works. It works. Naaman, it works. You get your prayers answered by doing the very thing that you are angry for getting that answer. Maybe don't be surprised, John, if you get those simple answers.

John Bytheway: 04:54 Yeah. And I think the famous UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden would bring these greatest high school players in the country who came to and got to play for John Wooden at UCLA and get the first lesson he would give them. If I remember right, was how to put on your socks.

Hank Smith: 05:12 He would say, "This is how high the basketball standard is." And he would measure it. And this is how, and these are people who play basketball, their whole lives.

John Bytheway: 05:21 Yeah. And because if you get a blister, you can't play. You're not any good. He would start with these very basic, simple things. And I just think, it sounds simple, harder to do, but just stay on the covenant path and just find ways to hear him every day. And don't worry about the great things. They may come in life, but for right now, stay on the covenant path, learn to hear him. You're what was his three identities? You are a child of God, a child of the covenant and the disciple of Christ.

Hank Smith: 05:54 That's who you are.

John Bytheway: 05:55 Those are great things.

Hank Smith: 05:57 Yeah. And you think about the Savior himself, John, he wasn't a big traveler. He didn't travel across the world that we know of. Never probably traveled more than a couple hundred miles away from home. And yet we want mission calls that are thousands of miles away from home, which Jesus himself served to basically at home mission. And you read what Naaman says here after he does these small and simple things he says, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." I think if you put in the time doing the small little things that the prophet is asking of you, you can come to that same testimony.

John Bytheway: 06:35 Good point.

Hank Smith: 06:36 Hey, we want you to join us on our full podcast. It's called FollowHIM. This week we're interviewing Dr. Krystal Pierce and

you are going to love her. She is delightful and brilliant. Come on over, look up FollowHIM wherever you get your podcast. And then come back next week right here, because we're going to do another FollowHIM Favorite.