



*“Rend That Veil of Unbelief”*  
**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 Wednesday.

## Podcast Episode Descriptions

### Part 1:

How does the Jaredite journey parallel ours? Dr. Krystal Pierce and Dr. George Pierce explore the Jaredites' experience at the Tower of Babel and the Mesopotamian and Egyptian Symbology as the Jaredites learn to call upon the Lord.

### Part 2:

Dr. Krystal Pierce and Dr. George Pierce continue to examine the Jaredite's journey to the Promised Land, the Promised Land Covenant, and God's relentless pursuit of each of His children.

# Timecodes:

## Part 1:

- 00:00 Part I - Dr. Krystal Pierces and Dr. George Pierce
- 02:55 Bios
- 04:30 *Come, Follow Me Manual* Ether 1-5
- 05:30 Mormon passes the record to Moroni
- 07:37 Moroni explains the Book of Ether
- 10:23 Discussion of translation and the 24 plates
- 14:21 Did Mosiah change governing body due to Jaredite record?
- 15:36 Ether's genealogy and scriptural literacy
- 19:04 The Tower of Babel
- 22:54 Ziggurats and why they build towers
- 26:44 Jaredite understanding of the nature of God
- 28:31 Dr. Krystal Pierce shares a story about trusting God
- 34:03 Pride and the tower
- 38:01 Misunderstanding the power and mercy of God
- 41:51 Why "brother of Jared?"
- 43:24 Mahonri Moricancumer
- 47:25 First crisis-counfounding language
- 50:07 A lack of compassion
- 51:30 Second crisis: scattering of the people
- 54:47 Dr. Joseph Spencer and the 3 Audiences
- 56:51 God is God of the entire world (not just Jews)
- 1:01:40 Ether 1-2 - Bees, fish, birds, and plants
- 1:05:44 Egyptianisms in the Book of Ether
- 1:07:48 - Dr. Krystal Pierce and Dr. George Pierce

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II - Dr. Krystal Pierce and Dr. George Pierce
- 04:28 Chastening is love and "relentless pursuit"
- 07:34 Third crisis - Barges need air and light
- 10:25 Problem-solving as a divine attribute
- 11:59 Lit stone parallel in Noah's Ark
- 13:23 Ether 2:2-5 - Love of God
- 15:26 Ether 2:16-23 - footnotes *zohar*
- 16:27 Ether 2:16 - Barges built to plan
- 21:33 Ether 2:13-22 - 16 stones
- 25:19 God helps us solve problems

- 28:52 Ether 3:19-25 - Preparing the way
- 33:05 Ether 3:9-15 - God as Heavenly Parent
- 35:13 Dr Krystal Pierce shares a story about her brother's death
- 39:46 Ether 5:1-5 - Moroni addresses Joseph Smith
- 44:08 Ether 3:9 - The words of the book are the important part
- 48:55 Dr George Pierce shares his thoughts about the Book of Mormon
- 53:34 Dr. Krystal Pierce shares her testimony of Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon
- 58:18 End of Part 2 - Dr. Krystal Pierce and Dr. George 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.

Dr. George Pierce was born and reared in Okahumpka, Florida. He received a B.A. in History from Clearwater Christian College, an MSc in Archaeological Information Systems the University of York, an MA in Biblical Studies (Archaeology concentration) from Wheaton College, and a PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures from the University of California, Los Angeles. Prior to commencing his doctoral work, Dr. Pierce served as research faculty at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beer Sheva, Israel. Additionally, he is certified in architectural and mechanical drafting from the State of Florida. He has taught courses on ancient Near Eastern civilizations, Jewish history, and Jerusalem the Holy City at UCLA. Dr. Pierce has worked with archaeological excavations in Florida, Scotland, the West Bank, and Israel, including Tell Dothan, Tel Kabri, Ein Gedi, Beersheba, Jaffa, and the Philistine city of *Ashkelon*, in addition to excavating for the Israel Antiquities Authority. He is currently the lead architect and supervisor of the Geographic Information Systems team for the *Tel Shimron Excavations* in the Jezreel Valley, Israel. Dr. Pierce and his wife, Dr. Krystal Pierce, have two children – Victoria and George III.

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Hank Smith:	00:00:04	Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my co-host, the brother of David, John Bytheway. John, we are in The Book of Ether today. First you can tell me about David and then tell me what you're looking forward to in The Book of Ether.
John Bytheway:	00:00:22	David the Elder, he's the eldest of the family of six children that I come from. There's a part of me that's always with David. He's got my left kidney. He won't give it back. No. I've told him if he needs another one, I'm fresh out. That's a good title, I'm the brother of David.
Hank Smith:	00:00:40	Tell me about The Book of Ether.
John Bytheway:	00:00:42	Ether is like a second little mini-Book of Mormon with the same pride cycle that, I'm so glad that Moroni decided to put this in here. Today, I'm just looking forward to this whole process of preparing the barges, I think scholars called it the Bargification. This should be fun.
Hank Smith:	00:01:01	We have a special episode this week, John. We have two doctors with us and they kind of like each other. This is Dr. Krystal Pierce and Dr. George Pierce. Now, before we introduce you both, Krystal and George, tell us what we're looking forward to today, what are we going to walk through?
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:01:21	I'm really excited to talk about the book of Ether. There are some of my favorite things in here. I think I'm most excited to talk about the Tower of Babel, which actually sounds strange to say that, that's one of my favorite things to talk about. I love being able to link it to Genesis and talk about the Jaredites and their experience at the Tower.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:01:42	I am excited to talk about three B's, bricks, bees and boats. That way, all of us, Krystal, John, we've got everything covered. We've got boats for John. We've got bricks for Krystal. We'll talk



		about some bees because they're in there buzzing away doing their thing, so let's just make it alliterative.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:02:02	I want to have the bees.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:02:03	I mean, I'm eager to hear what you have to say about bees, so there we go.
Hank Smith:	00:02:06	I can already tell this is going to be a good time. This is kind of a sequel for you because if we go back to our, I think it was our Old Testament year, didn't you teach the Tower of Babel with us? In fact, you taught me that it's the Tower of Babel, not Babel.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:02:22	Yeah. I'm really excited to tie it back to that because my love of the Tower of Babel, which again sounds really strange to say, began with the Jaredites. That's really where I dove into it and started getting interested in it to really try to understand the Jaredites better and this culture that they're coming from.
Hank Smith:	00:02:41	We'll link Krystal's previous episodes in our show notes, along with George. He's done some episodes with us as well. John, before we move any further, let's introduce these two and why they've come as a pair.
John Bytheway:	00:02:55	This is awesome. Dr. George Pierce, I am so excited to say this Hank, was born and reared in Okahumpka, Florida. A BA in history from Clearwater Christian College, a master's in Archaeological Information Systems from the University of York, an MA in Biblical studies with an archaeology concentration from Wheaton College and a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and cultures from the University of California, Los Angeles, UCLA. Prior to commencing his doctoral work, Dr. Pierce served as research faculty at Ben-Gurion University in the Negev in Beersheba Israel. He's currently the lead architect and supervisor of the Geographic Information Systems team for the Tel Shimron Excavations in the Jezreel Valley.
	00:03:44	And now I'd like to introduce Krystal. Krystal V. L. Pierce was born in Logan, Utah, but has also lived in California, Idaho, Egypt and Israel. She received a Ph.D. in Egyptian Archaeology in near Eastern languages and cultures from UCLA and an MA and BA in near Eastern studies from UC Berkeley. She's currently the head registrar for the Tel Shimron Excavations in the Galilee region of Israel. Krystal and her husband, Professor George Pierce, have two children and live in Vineyard, Utah. Krystal and George, I

suddenly feel very uneducated. And with that I'd like to say, welcome to FollowHIM.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:04:27 Thank you.
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:04:28 Thank you.
- Hank Smith: 00:04:30 I'm going to read from the [Come, Follow Me manual](#), Ether 1-5, "Rend that veil of unbelief." And then I'm interested to see what we're going to be taught today.
- 00:04:40 Here's how it starts. It says, "While it is true that God's ways are higher than ours and we should always submit to his will, he also encourages us to think and act for ourselves. That's one lesson Jared and his brother learned. For example, the idea of traveling to a new land that was choice above all the Earth seemed to start with Jared and the Lord granted the request saying to the brother of Jared, " Thus, I will do unto thee because this long time you have cried unto me." And when the brother of Jared needed light inside the barges that would carry them to their promised land, the Lord asked a question that we usually ask him, "What will ye that I should do?" He wants to hear our thoughts and ideas and he will listen and give confirmation or counsel us otherwise. Sometimes the only thing separating us from the blessings we seek is our own veil of unbelief, and if we can rend that veil, we may be surprised by what the Lord is willing to do for us." Man, I love it.
- 00:05:34 So with that Krystal and George, how do you want to start?
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:05:37 Here in The Book of Mormon, we've obviously been from 1 Nephi all the way through, and then we get the death of Mormon and passing the baton to Moroni. We've been discussing the Nephite civilization and by the time that Moroni is done inviting us to come unto Christ in Chapter 10, we're looking at something that spans from about, rough years here, 600 BC all the way down to about 420 or so, all these books covering about 1,020 years from the time that Lehi and his family leave Jerusalem to the time that Moroni closes out Chapter 10.
- 00:06:09 What's interesting then is that we get this transition from the Nephite civilization back to a Jaredite civilization in The Book of Ether. That's actually going to span from the time of the tower all the way through, including when the Mulekites leave Jerusalem and they're going to be the ones that find the last Jaredite. We're looking at somewhere around 2,000 years or so.

So the rest of The Book of Mormon covers about a thousand, and then Moroni is going to squeeze about 2,000 years into one book with 15 chapters.

- 00:06:39 Moroni, as I said, has inherited the status of record keeper from his father. He's already said his goodbyes in Mormon. We can read that, and he thinks it's done. I always picture that Moroni is like, "Well, I'm still alive, so I guess I might as well communicate something." Right?
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:06:56 Keep going.
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:06:57 He has the record of Ether and the record of the Jaredites, he's going to do his best then to give us what is important. And there are several really great editorial comments from Moroni in the book. Then we can think about the source then of The Book of Ether as Moroni gives it to us.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:07:14 That's a great setup to think about The Book of Mormon as covering about a thousand years, now we're probably going to cover a couple of thousand years. It's nice because right at the beginning in Chapter One Verse One, Moroni tells us what he's doing because he's doing something very different than what he's done before. Now he's going to give an account of those ancient inhabitants who were destroyed by the hand of the Lord upon the face of this north country.
- 00:07:37 It's great because he actually tells us, here's the source of my information about the Jaredites. He says, "I take mine account from the twenty and four plates, which were found by the people of Limhi, which is called The Book of Ether." And then he tells us a little bit further down in Verse Six, "It's called that because it is Ether's record. He's the one that wrote it." So then when you're reading this, you kind of think, "Wait, who are the people of Limhi? How would they find this record that belongs to this entirely other civilization located in a different area?" For that, we have to go back to The Book of Mosiah, then we can set up who the people of Limhi were and how they ended up finding these plates. I actually like to call them some archeologists because they actually ended up coming across this ancient, to them, even, an ancient civilization finding these things and bringing the plates back.
- Hank Smith: 00:08:33 They think they found Zarahemla. They come back to Limhi and say, "Good news and bad news. The Bad news is Zarahemla's been destroyed. We're never getting out of slavery. The good news is, we brought souvenirs. We brought these plates back."

Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:08:49	If you remember, King Limhi is the son of the infamous King Noah. Like you said, right now at this time they're down in the south in the Land of Nephi and they're in bondage to the Lamanites, and King Limhi is trying to figure out how can they escape. So he says, "Okay, I'm going to send this group of people to find Zarahemla." Somehow they completely bypass Zarahemla. I don't think it was an accident, honestly.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:09:11	They missed that exit on the freeway, to be quite honest.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:09:12	They were led to go to this northern land and they find the bones of people and animals and the ruins of buildings. They want to know what happened to this civilization. They bring these plates back hoping that information is found there. Then on the way back, they completely bypass Zarahemla again and get all the way down to the south and show them these plates, these 24 gold plates that they found.
Hank Smith:	00:09:39	And then if I remember right, Ammon, not the son of Mosiah, Ammon, the other Ammon shows up the next day or right there close to it and says, "I'm from Zarahemla." They're like, "No, you're not. We found it. It's been destroyed." And Ammon's got to be thinking, "No, I was there just recently." So now, they're, "Well, what are these plates about?"
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:10:04	Yeah. "Do you know anyone who can translate these plates?" Because of course, this is in a language that's been lost for so long. Ammon's like, "Well, I can't, but I know somebody who can."
Dr. George Pierce:	00:10:13	I know a guy. I know a guy. We get that great discussion from Ammon about what it means to be a seer and a Revelator.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:10:19	Yeah, he defines it.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:10:21	And we have that with King Mosiah.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:10:23	Yeah, so Mosiah is able to translate the record and it says, and this is in Mosiah 28, that he uses the interpreters, the two stones, the Urim and Thummim to be able to do it. I love that we have this long history of the Urim and Thummim being used over and over and over again to help translate this record for us to get it to us.
John Bytheway:	00:10:45	Moroni is abridging the book of Ether, and yet it sounds like they found 24 gold plates and he covers all this history. I've heard people speculate, I just wonder what you guys think,

maybe 24 sets of plates, or maybe they were really huge plates or maybe the language was super efficient or something. Have you ever heard any scholarship on that? Like you said, he shortens this quite a bit, 24 plates, but all we've got is 15 chapters.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:11:16 I always thought of it as 24 sets of plates because we're covering several millennia of history, Ether edits that. So it's interesting to think of how many people these plates and this record goes through to actually get to us because we have the original Jaredite authors. We have Ether who takes it all and edits it, and I'm sure redacts it. "Mosiah gives us a translation," it says. Moroni gives a translation for the gold plates, and then Joseph Smith gives a translation. It's incredible to think how much work and time and effort so many people had to go through to get the record to us. Sometimes we don't necessarily appreciate that. By the time we get to this point in the Book of Mormon, we're like, "I'm almost done. I just got to get through a couple of chapters and I'm going to speed read through this." This is an entire civilization, the rise and the fall. I love this idea of giving it honor and respect to all of these people who gave it to us. What can we learn from them?
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:12:19 I've always thought of it too, as possibly either 24 sets or when we look at historical annals, those tablets tend to be bigger than a standard Mesopotamian tablet. The annals and myths tend to be on bigger tablets, nothing huge, so they're not lugging home like a four by eight sheet of plywood, but they tend to be physically bigger than what we'd normally think about as a plate. It could be that as well. I don't know. I've never really come down on anything, and I'm glad that my salvation doesn't depend on it. That's a good thing, right? As we think about that. Maybe Ether will tell us one day.
- Hank Smith: 00:12:59 I've always found this interesting, and I don't know if it actually says it directly. King Mosiah translates these plates and reads them and then says, "We're doing away with Kings." He says, "Oh, look at King Noah. Oh, my sons don't want to be king, but also I just read this book and I don't think this works out very well, so we're going to get rid of kings." Do you think that's there?
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:13:22 I would hesitate to a correlation equals causation type of a situation, but man, it's really close in time to where King Mosiah, as you said, reads this. I think that's part of the beauty of these records because Krystal's talked about how it's gone from Jaredites to Ether to Mosiah to Moroni to Joseph Smith to us. I think as we read them, we get different lessons depending

on our circumstances, and that's the beauty of scripture to begin with, is the fact that we could all read the same Psalm or the same section of the Doctrine and Covenants. It may mean something to you, Hank, or to you, John, or even to Krystal and myself, it may mean something different to all four of us in this conversation based on where we're at in life. I think later on, and correct me if I'm wrong here, Alma instructs Helaman not to teach out of the gold plates of Ether, "Don't teach the people from this kind of stuff." I like that idea. I mean, it's very close in time.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:14:21 Yeah, I definitely think so. For some reason, every time people reach a promised land or there's a new beginning, they want some sort of king for some reason, this keeps happening. And even with the Jaredites, they're like, "I don't want to be king. I don't want to be king." Finally, they find somebody. Yeah, I like that idea that Mosiah is like, "Maybe this idea of a monarchy is not working so well, we have some patterns here that we need to avoid."
- John Bytheway: 00:14:48 Well, this is speculation too, but King Mosiah just sent four of his princes back to the land of Nephi to be missionaries, so he's like, "Okay, not only have I got nobody to give the kingdom to, but I just read about Kings. Let's try a new form of government-
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:15:03 That's right.
- John Bytheway: 00:15:04 ... let's see, reign of the Judges, I love that."
- Hank Smith: 00:15:07 One thing I think you've both taught us here, just already, is when we read this, the record of the Jaredites taken from the 24 plates found by the people of Limhi in the days of King Mosiah, there's a bit of scriptural literacy here where you can say, "I know that story. I know where these plates are from. I know how I got them, and how Moroni got them." You might read that and go, "Oh, I don't know what that's about," but there's something to be said for knowing this book, knowing the ins and outs, the travels, where we got things.
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:15:36 Absolutely. And I think there's something to be said for it too as it continues on, and I know there's a lot of names here, but starting in Verse Six, Moroni relates then Ether's genealogy, he says, "On this wise do I give the account, he that wrote this record was Ether." And then he talks about, "He's the descendant of Coriantor," and Coriantor is the son of this and the son of... And it goes all the way down to Verse 33, down to Jared.

Dr. George Pierce:	00:16:01	<p>I like your point, Hank, about there's a scriptural literacy involved to be like, "Oh, I know the story and I recognize that, oh, this goes back to the Book of Mormon and how they found it," but Moroni also gives the genealogy and part of that is not only encouraging scripture literacy in terms of Mosiah and finding it, but it's also telling us that Ether's legit because that's what the genealogies convey. We read it and we go, "Man, that's a lot of verses and a lot of names," and we see Lib and Kish and Levi and Kim. The reason why it's there and the reason why any genealogies are there in scripture is because number one, it tells us one, what people could inherit. These are the people who are in this line of inheritance and people who are outside, is inclusive and who's excluded.</p>
	00:16:45	<p>It also talks about legitimacy. So when we see examples in Genesis and Chronicles, it's about, "Here's who's related to who and who's legitimately inheriting property usually," or in certain cases, the kingship. We see in Ezra chapter seven, Ezra gives his genealogy and he traces it back to Aaron, the high priest, which is what then gives his book legitimacy. He is a legitimate high priest, descended from Aaron. Here then Moroni relates Ether's genealogy and says, "This is what gives this book and this record legitimacy because Ether is descended directly from Jared." The ultimate genealogies that we're all familiar with, Matthew 1 and Luke chapter 3, it's about Jesus's genealogy, tracing him in Matthew back to Abraham and being part of that Abrahamic covenant, being a descendant of David. He's the legitimate inheritor of the Kings. We should appreciate what the genealogy is there and what it's doing, so it's making Ether legitimate and his story legitimate.</p>
Hank Smith:	00:17:45	<p>I love that. One thing I've learned in Ether chapter one from our friends over at <a href="#">Scripture Central</a> is that Moroni lists from Ether all the way back to Jared and then over the next 11 chapters he reverses the entire thing and gives him the narrative. John, I'm not a huge fan of Book of Mormon evidence, "Let's look at the evidence," but can you imagine Joseph Smith giving this list of names and then reversing the order one at a time and telling the story all the way from Jared back to Ether?</p>
John Bytheway:	00:18:22	<p>Hank, that was legit.</p>
Dr. George Pierce:	00:18:23	<p>Everyone's like, "That was so legit, I am stunned into silence." I think that's an interesting way to structure it and a good observation in terms of Moroni, and I wonder if for him, it was a checklist. He already had the genealogy. As he goes through, make sure that he tells the story of this person and the story of this person. That's a good way to see it because he's preparing</p>

		the audience for, "These are the stories, these are the people," and he's going to reverse that order as he starts off with Jared in verse 33 and then continues on.
Hank Smith:	00:18:55	Yeah, I'm not going to be the one checking in on him, but someone did the work there and said, "Yeah. He goes all the way in reverse, all the way back to the top of the list."
John Bytheway:	00:19:04	In my own notes, I've got this idea that the first six chapters of Ether speak of only of that first generation of the Jaredites, and then it kind of fast-forwarded seven through 11 of 28 generations, and then Ether 12 through 15 are the last Jaredites, so they spend most of the time on the first Jaredites and the last Jaredites and fast-forward in between. We get most of it first generation, last generation where we get Ether.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:19:35	Well, this takes us to verse 33. Verse 33 is packed with information about the Jaredites. I always think it's good to pause here. This sets up the entire story. This is the foundation of who they are as a people, what ends up happening to them, who Jared is, who his brother is. It mentions three facts in verse 33. "They came from the Great Tower. At the time, the Lord confounded the language of the people and swore in his wrath that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth." We have the tower, we have the language confounding, and we have the scattering. Of course, this takes us to the Tower of Babel. The story of the Tower of Babel is found in Genesis 11. We really don't have very many verses about it in Genesis.
	00:20:26	We are so thankful that we have this extra record. The tower is mentioned several times throughout the Book of Mormon. Every time the Jaredites are mentioned, they mention this tower. The reason why the tower was built is the culture that they're coming from. It really tells us about why they act the way they do. If we can study this tower and figure out what was wrong with it, then we can maybe understand how the Jaredites were able to escape and get to a better place and not have their language confounded and learn some things from them.
Hank Smith:	00:21:00	Yeah. We're going way back here, right, Krystal? Genesis 11.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:21:05	I always like to say this is post-flood, pre-everything else pretty much is where we're at.
Hank Smith:	00:21:13	Yeah. There's still water on the ground when we get back to Genesis 11.



Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:21:18	That's right. The story of Noah and the ark and the flood and everything is still fresh in everybody's minds. I think at this point when we get to talking about the boats and things, we'll see that there are some connections between the building of the ark and the building of the barges by the Jaredites. Like you said, we're going way back. If we're talking about the Tower of Babel, we turn to Genesis 11 and we look at verse four. We're introduced to this... There's a group of people and they say, "Let us build a city and a tower whose top may reach into heaven. Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." This is really all we're told about why they build the tower. They want to reach into heaven, make a name, and not be scattered.
	00:22:05	We have some idea about what this tower was, where it was located, and why they were building it from archeological excavations, and texts that have been found. This can really help us understand a little bit more about how did the Jaredites escape the tower and these things. We get a hint in verse nine. It mentions, "The name of it is called Babel." Of course, Babel is related to Babylon. Babylon is a city, an area in Mesopotamia, which is about equal to modern-day Iraq. Starting around 3000 BC, they started finding these towers that were built during that time, these enormous structures.
Hank Smith:	00:22:54	I am going to bring back something you taught me. It just hit me. John, do you remember? I think it was called Ziggurats.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:23:00	Yes. Ziggurat. Yes. It's Akkadian. So you know Akkadian now.
John Bytheway:	00:23:08	Isn't Babel an Akkadian word too?
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:23:10	Yes. It means gate or door of God, gate to God, door to God. We know these structures. They're these stepped platforms. What's really weird about them is that they're solid inside and some of these are huge, so some of them are up to 300 feet long and 200 feet tall. Why would you spend all that time using baked mud bricks that have to be made by hand to build this structure and then fill it with rubble and sand and bricks and stone except for one little room on the very top? They do have names like that, Gate of God or Leading to God, but we know that they weren't temples for worshiping God, and we know this because of the <a href="#">texts and archeology</a> and because there was a little temple next to these ziggurats where the priests would go and worship God. So then we have this question, "What is the purpose of these towers, these ziggurats?"

- 00:24:07 The texts and archeology, they tell us there are kind of two purposes. The first is to build a stairway or a ramp so that God can come down to earth, which sounds a little silly, that we would need to build some stairway for God to be able to walk down to earth. Why? Why are they trying to bring God down to earth? There's some misunderstanding here of who God is, and the second reason is that little room on top of the ziggurat that was empty, actually they called it the bedroom of God. Their idea was they're going to bring God down and he is going to live in that bedroom permanently, forever, and there was a bed in there and a table and a chair, and they put food in there and drinks and clothing and make it super comfortable, but this idea of, "We're going to convince God to come and live in our tower..." Because we know these ziggurats are spread all through Mesopotamia. There are at least 30 of them.
- 00:25:06 The idea was if you could get God to come and live in your tower, then... This ties back to Genesis 11. You'll be famous. You'll make a name for yourself and you won't be scattered because if God's living in your tower and he's quite comfortable and wanting to stay there, he's not going to make you leave. He's probably going to keep out famine and war. It's crazy, this idea of controlling or manipulating God. It's a misunderstanding of who God is, what he is, what he does, where he can go, who he loves, who he gives blessings to. That's the real problem with the tower. That's why God says, "We need to stop this from happening."
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:25:46 So maybe not so much forcing themselves into heaven, but forcing heaven to come down, reverse the idea. Because we usually think about it, "It's top in the heavens so we can reach up there." So we're like, "Oh, that's the main problem. They're trying to go up." As we look at it, it's a way to force the deity down to their spot through various means as we look at that. This is what we get then, and the problem isn't the fact that people are together and they need to be scattered, and the problem isn't that they have the same language. The problem is fundamentally a misunderstanding of God's nature. The great thing about the Book of Ether is that we see solutions to that in a much more condensed way than what we see in the Old Testament.
- Hank Smith: 00:26:32 Do you think that perhaps in the sections we're reading here, we have the wrong way to connect with God, this tower, and then we have the Brother of Jared who actually does connect with God?

Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:26:44	Yeah. It's fascinating to see the exact things that the tower stands for are the opposite of what Jared and the Brother of Jared and the Jaredites end up doing, and that's why they're able to escape the tower. Sometimes when we think about this, we're like, "I can't control God. I can't manipulate God. I can't bring him down and live in a bedroom," and things like that. In a way, we sometimes limit the divinity of God or misunderstand Heavenly Father's nature and Jesus Christ's nature. We'll share some examples of that, how we might do that, but I like to think of the Tower of Babel because I think of this a lot, as anything that obstructs your view of the Savior or Heavenly Father, anything that gets in the way of your relationship, that's your tower of Babel. If you can figure out what your towers are, and especially using how the Brother of Jared gets away from his tower and incredible things happen to him because of that, there are sort of three main categories that the tower represents a misunderstanding of. The first of these is really is leadership.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:27:56	It's misunderstanding God's leadership. As we really want to think about it, God is our leader. He's our king, and he can rule over humanity according to his will. He also then has all knowledge and understanding then and understands what's best for us. So in terms of something like the tower back in Genesis, we can think that the misunderstanding is that they would build a tower so that God could live there and they could then manipulate him into doing what they want and that's not scattering them.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:28:31	I mentioned figuring out what your towers are. With this first one, misunderstanding leadership and knowledge, this is definitely a tower that I have, this idea of control and trust. So for example, when I was trying to decide where I wanted to go to college, I knew I wanted to do Egyptology, so the study of Ancient Egypt. I knew that from a very young age. Actually, fifth grade is when I decided that's what I wanted to do.
Hank Smith:	00:28:56	Wow. Did you watch Indiana Jones?
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:28:59	I took a summer school class on Ancient Egypt, and I just became obsessed, and then once I figured out you could actually do that and make money, I was like, "Oh, this is good stuff. I'm going to do this." There aren't very many schools where you can get an undergraduate degree in Egyptology. Two of these schools are UCLA and UC Berkeley. So I applied to these two schools, but I knew from the very beginning that UCLA was the right place for me. I knew the area. I was comfortable with Los Angeles. I had a lot of family there, some friends there, so I

decided this was the right place. I prayed about it a lot. I got an answer that UCLA was the right place for me to go. I would receive many blessings and have a good experience there.

00:29:41 Of course, what ends up happening? I didn't get into UCLA. Of course. I remember thinking, "Now, Heavenly Father, we decided on this. We had a plan. We know what's best for me." It was hard for me to try and figure out, "Wait, but I got this answer..." I was so focused on the wrong things and my friend said, "Well, what about UC Berkeley?" And I said, "Well, it's way harder to get in there. I'm not going to get in there if I didn't get into UCLA." And I check and I got into UC Berkeley. I loved my time there. It really has made up a huge part of who I am today. I think Heavenly Father knew if I got into both places, I would have gone to the wrong place first because after I finished at Berkeley and I was ready to go to grad school, I applied to UCLA and got into UCLA and ended up going there. So Heavenly Father was right the entire time I was meant to go to UCLA. And of course, while I was at UCLA, I met this person right here.

Hank Smith: 00:30:50 We'll play some romantic music right now. There we go.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:30:54 Yes, yes. He wasn't a member at the time. Long story short, he joins the church. We end up getting married. We have our daughter there, and if I had gone to UCLA first when I thought I was supposed to go there, our paths might not have crossed in the same way. It forced me to think about... A Tower of Babel of mine is control and trust. Not doubting when Heavenly Father says, "You're meant to do something or you're going to receive blessings from things," to think about his time, might be a little bit different than my time. This is something that has ended up being a really amazing thing. Heavenly Father, of course, was right the entire time. I needed to get on board.

Dr. George Pierce: 00:31:41 So it wasn't my tower of sorts because I went to UCLA as one of the graduate schools that I was accepted to, and I was going because my friend and now colleague and co-author, co-editor was going there and we'd known each other, and so I was going down the road happy as anything. "Yeah, sure. Los Angeles sounds great!

Dr. George Pierce: 00:32:00 Not knowing what was in store and that I would be a convert and that life would end up the way that it did.

Hank Smith: 00:32:10 Krystal and George, this first misunderstanding is the way God works, is that right? The way He works with us, that we're assisting Him, He's not assisting us, right?

Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:32:21	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:32:22	I don't put Him in this box and say, "This is what you're supposed to be."
Dr. George Pierce:	00:32:27	He's the leader, not us.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:32:29	Yeah.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:32:29	And He knows what's best. So it's about trust and faith and trusting that He does know what's best for us, even though sometimes we like to think that we know what's best because we're in the middle of the situation. That's one of the first areas of misunderstanding at the tower. We'll see how the Jaredites deal with that. The second area really deals with the divinity of God, the fact that He's on this higher plane than us. He's on a perfected level higher than humanity. We can all think about He's probably operating in a different plane of physics altogether, although physics was not my strong suit in graduate school.
Hank Smith:	00:33:06	You're so good at physics you became an archeologist, right?
Dr. George Pierce:	00:33:10	That's right, and that's how good at physics I was. But He is divine. He's at a higher level than us. And yet, He cares for us and He loves us. God is both above the system, but yet He's close to us and He cares for all humanity no matter who, what, where, when we are in time and space. For the people of the tower, the real problem is we're going to try to build this tower and we're going to get God on our level, if that makes sense, to get Him to stay near humanity so that He will favor them. And it's kind of the problem that they're having there. We can see how that's even a problem in our time as well.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:33:47	Yeah. It's this idea that God cares about some people more than other people. They're trying to say, "Well, if we build all this stuff, then God's going to love us more."
Dr. George Pierce:	00:33:58	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:33:59	We can put him in our little prison up on top of our tower and keep him there. He's ours.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:34:03	Yeah, exactly. For us today trying to translate this, it could be the tower is pride. I mean, of course, this isn't my tower at all. I've never-

Hank Smith:	00:34:13	Yeah.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:34:13	... had any problems with that.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:34:13	I don't struggle with this either.
Hank Smith:	00:34:14	Right.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:34:16	This idea that everything I have in my life that's great came from myself as opposed to acknowledging that God's given me these blessings, this career, this family, have everything I need. It's interesting because <a href="#">President Benson</a> in his famous talk on pride, he said, "Pride is you're competing with God," basically. We would never want to do that. He is on such a high level, but yet He cares about us too. The tower isn't always pride. Sometimes it can be the opposite of that and thinking God doesn't care about me or He loves somebody else more than me because I have so many hardships or because my life isn't going the way I want it to. And so self-doubt can be just as destructive of a tower as pride can be.
John Bytheway:	00:35:06	One of the things, the Restoration, all these different stories helping us believe in God. But then it becomes this lifelong effort to understand what kind of being God is. Satan will relentlessly try to mess that up. When you work with young people, oh, God's mad at me. God won't forgive me. I messed this up. I feel like, okay, they believed in God, but what kind of being is God? The Restoration was not just, yay, God is real. He's revealed himself again, but then, wow, go through the Doctrine and Covenants. What kind of being is He. That He really does care about us. He really is very forgiving.
	00:35:48	I love all those lessons that come later, not just that there is a God, but what kind of being is he? Just today my son-in-law's brother, who's on a mission in Greece, was going to Mars Hill, Acts chapter 17. And I was trying to send him some stuff about look what Paul is doing there. Paul is telling the Greeks who had such different ideas of Gods and deity, "No, actually, we are His offspring and God is our father. And He is accessible and He's not far from us." He wasn't just telling him that there's a God, but what kind of being is God? I think Satan will relentlessly try to mess that up with us. That's why I love anything that can tell us not just that there is a God, but what kind of being he is.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:36:36	When we have those moments of self-doubt that does God really love me, and I think this may be one of my towers, we're reminded in Isaiah 53, Isaiah tells us that he saw each one of us

individually during his atoning work. Abinadi reminds us in the Book of Mormon that he will see his seed. It reminds me of there's a Christian music song, but it says, "While he was on the cross, I was on His mind." And that's very humbling to think about that. And part of that song talks about the fact that He knew me, and yet, He loved me. For all my imperfections and for everything else that goes on, He still loved me and loved me enough to go sacrifice his life for that. I'm reminded of that quote by [Elder Uchtdorf](#) that this is the paradox of man. Compared to God, man is nothing, yet we are everything to God.

- Hank Smith: 00:37:29 Yeah. We talked about three. We've done one where I misunderstand God's leadership, how He's going to function in my life. And then two, I misunderstand God's love, that I can swing to one side. God loves only me, only my church, right? He only loves me. And then we can swing far to the other side, which George told us, which is God doesn't love me, He loves other people. And all of those are misunderstandings of God.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:37:57 Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 00:37:58 The tower is a representation of these misunderstanding.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:38:01 When we get to the brother of Jared, he's the opposite of these things. That's what we can learn from him is how do we combat these towers in the same way he does? But there is one more misunderstanding, and that's misunderstanding the power of God, the mercy of God.
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:38:17 Looking at this, we can see that, when we think about the power of God, we know that He has the divine power to do anything and everything for humanity. Nothing is out of His reach. We're told several times throughout scripture that nothing is too hard for God. Nothing is impossible. He has unlimited power without any sort of mortal needs. When we look at the tower in its context, what they're trying to do is build a tower so that they can, number one, use God's power to help themselves. We go back to the idea about controlling God. But they're also building the tower in a way to satisfy His needs so that he's obligated to help us. If they can just satisfy the needs, if they can get him a nice, comfy bed, if they can get him something to eat, get some water, some other Babylonian swag, then He's going to be obligated to help them.
- 00:39:11 He has to help them, and then they're able to use His power to help themselves. We have this misunderstanding about God's

power in that sense, which also then translates to our day as well.

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:39:23 We don't ever think of, oh, I'm going to have to give food or whatever. That sounds so pagan to us. Sometimes we too think that there's a trade-off program. If I do this thing for God, then He owes me something back. And yet, it's a misunderstanding of covenants because a covenant is I promise to do this, He promises to do that. But sometimes we have these expectations that, wow, if I'm following the commandments, I get married in the temple, I went on a mission, that my life should be perfect. I shouldn't have any hardships or burdens. And we have these expectations and when our life doesn't go according to that plan, it can be a tower for us. It can obstruct our relationship with Heavenly Father. So how do we understand the difference between I'm doing this and I'm getting blessings versus I'm doing this and God owes me now? It can be hard.
- Hank Smith: 00:40:19 I'm sure your thoughts, John, went to [Elder Christofferson](#). I have a short quote here. "Some misunderstand," Nice that he started that way, "the promises of God to mean that obedience yields specific outcomes on a fixed schedule. You might think if I diligently serve a mission, God will bless me with a happy marriage and children. Or if I refrain from doing schoolwork on Sunday, God will bless me with good grades. Or if I pay tithing, God will bless me with the job I want. If life doesn't fall out precisely this way or according to our expected timetable, we feel betrayed by God. But things are not so mechanical in the divine economy." And then this is what you mentioned, John. "We ought not to think of God's plan as a cosmic vending machine where we select a desired blessing, insert the required good works, and the order is promptly delivered." Is that what they were seeing there?
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:41:17 I think that's what they were expecting there. If we build this tower, we can bring Him down to our level. We know what's best for us. And if we can satisfy His needs, then we can use His power as we see fit because that's their understanding of deity. Then in Genesis, Jehovah has to step in and say, "That's not how this works." And fortunately, we have then in Ether a fairly compact but very instructive here's how you combat the tower both in your own life and how the Jaredites did it in their reality.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:41:51 Before we get to this story, we have to talk a little bit about the brother of Jared. Why does it say, "Brother of Jared?" And why does Jared keep turning to his brother to pray to the Lord? There's some ideas about this. It seems like in their culture right now, Jared is their leader. He's the head of the family. During



this time, they have patriarchs. He's the political leader. And it sounds like the brother of Jared is the more spiritual or the religious leader. It says in verse 34 that he's highly favored of the Lord. It sounds like this is sort of his role in their family and in their position.

00:42:31 But once again, if he's so important, why are we just calling him the brother of Jared? Because we know he had a name and we actually know his full name. This goes back to 1834 in Kirtland. There was a man named [Reynolds Cahoon](#) who had a son. I love the way it's said in the story. "One day, when President Joseph Smith was passing his door, he called the prophet in and asked him to bless and name the baby." I love how casual it is. The prophet's walking by and you say, "Hey, can you come in and name and bless my baby?" So then it says, "Joseph did so and gave the boy the name of Mahonri Moriancumer." I cannot imagine being the parents that child and saying-

John Bytheway: 00:43:22 Could you spell that for us?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:43:24 Can we write that down? Mahonri Moriancumer. Just thinking, "What does that mean?" And then the prophet tells them, "Well, this is the name of the brother of Jared. This is his actual name, Mahonri Moriancumer." I love [this story](#), like I said, because I love doing genealogy and family history. I feel like it's solving ancient mysteries, just like archeology. A couple years ago I was researching my fourth great grandmother, and she had an interesting life. She got married young, had some children, and then her husband died. So she got remarried to a man who had already had children, and he also had been widowed. They both had children, so when they got married, they had this blended family. And I was looking at the first census of this blended family, looking through all the children's names, and I came across the name Mahonri Moriancumer.

00:44:20 So sure enough, I go and I look at the man she married and it's Reynolds Cahoon. I love this story. I like to tell people that I'm actually related through marriage to the brother of Jared. A different brother of Jared, but it's so touching to me to hear that these are real people from the past that we're learning about. Then you think, "Why did Moroni not write Mahonri Moriancumer?" Or whoever this translation the first time is coming through, or Joseph Smith? I actually like to think of it being an Egyptologist and knowing that Moroni is writing in Reformed Egyptian, this version of Egyptian.

00:45:03 I sat down one day and thought, "How would I write Mahonri Moriancumer in Egyptian?" I already knew how to write son of

Jared. It would only take two signs, maybe three signs to be able to spell that out. To write out Mahonri Moriancumer, which would've been written out phonetically, it would've taken at least 11 or 12 signs to write that out. Just in Mormon nine, Moroni told us, "We're writing in Egyptian to save space. Otherwise, we would've written in Hebrew." And so sometimes I like to think that Moroni's, this is the way that we're going to save space because I'm going to be writing Mahonri Moriancumer over and over and over again. We'll write brother of Jared.

Hank Smith:	00:45:49	Brother of Jared.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:45:51	A couple of hieroglyphs and we'll save some space here.
Hank Smith:	00:45:57	That's so great. Almost like, you got to forgive me here, I'm going to save myself a couple thousand hours of time if I just write brother of Jared. That's so great.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:46:09	He was just trying to avoid some carpal tunnel.
Hank Smith:	00:46:11	Yeah.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:46:12	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:46:12	Mahonri Moriancumer.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	00:46:13	It's such a great name. And oh, I just love that he's one of my ancestors. This is how we get, we know the brother of Jared's name. This brings us to their first crisis. They have a huge crisis, this idea of the confounding of language. As we see the different crises that they keep running into, we'll see that the way they respond to each crisis, the confounding of language, the scattering of people, the problem with the boats, the brother of Jared shows this understanding that's opposite of the tower.
Dr. George Pierce:	00:46:47	We see in verse 34 the brother of Jared being a large and mighty man, a man highly favored of the Lord. "Jared, his brother, said unto him, 'Cry unto the Lord that He will not confound us that we may not understand our words.' It came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord and the Lord had compassion upon Jared. Therefore, He did not confound the language of Jared, and Jared and his brother were not confounded." We see later on they cried about those who were their friends that their language would not be confounded. In verse 37, "It came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto

the Lord and the Lord had compassion," and that's a word we should sort of note again, "had compassion upon their friends and their families also. They were not confounded."

00:47:25 The first crisis that they really had to deal with is a confounding of language thing. And so how do they respond? And the response is very interesting because when we think about their understanding, or at least the brother of Jared and Jared's understanding of God and how that counters what we see at the tower, their response simply was to ask God for help. They ask God not to confound their language. No, it doesn't have any sort of, there's no manipulation, there's no sacrifice. There's no we'll pay the extra tithing or we'll go on a mission or we'll do anything you'll say. It's just a straightforward request. Please don't confound our language. And then it gets

Dr. George Pierce: 00:48:00 And then it gets added onto a cell phone plan. It's like a friends and family, not confounding language plan. They add that on. It shows that they understand the nature of God in terms of his leadership, the fact that God can choose whether or not to confound their language and he knows what's best for them. Maybe what's best for them is to confound their language, but they're asking him, in a very simple request, not to do it. They trust in his leadership. We also see there's a good acknowledgement of his divinity, the fact that he has divine compassion for them, and we see that then reflected twice in the text. It talks about how God, the Lord had compassion on them, so they understand his love and his divinity, and they also obviously understand his power, that he has the power not to confound them.

00:48:41 The results we get is obvious. The Lord doesn't confound their language between the family members, between their friends and family. When we think about, "Okay, so what do we get out of that?" We're not building a tower. I haven't seen John making any mud bricks in the background while we've been talking, just in case. I don't know. Maybe he is. I don't know. I don't know what he's doing, right? They're all back there.

Hank Smith: 00:49:02 They're in the kiln.

Dr. George Pierce: 00:49:03 Yeah. Sorry. They're being fired right now as we speak. No, we're not physically building a tower, and we're not in danger of the Lord stepping into Provo or anywhere where we're at, and then our wards and stakes and all of a sudden confounding our languages. The application for us is to take a page from the brother of Jared. Sometimes we just need to ask a simple

request. This is what we'd like, with the understanding that God knows what's best for us.

00:49:35 We know the Savior loves us. We have to trust him and that he's going to advocate for what's best for us, because he's been here and he's experienced mortality, and he knows what it's like to have these requests. Even though he never went to grad school, he knows what it's like to have that experience of anxiety and applying for it. He knows each one of these responses is going to be different that we'll see from the Jaredites, but we'll see how they grow in faith. The first step, then, is to have the faith that God is going to answer their prayer and to trust that he's going to do what's best for them.

Hank Smith: 00:50:07 I see a bit of a pattern here. Verse 34 through 40, there's often, "Cry unto the Lord. I'll cry unto the Lord, and the Lord has compassion." It happens again, verse 36, "Cry unto the Lord." Verse 37, "The Lord had compassion." Over to verse 39, "Cry unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion." Well, Moroni, I think you want me to see that if I cry unto the Lord, he's going to have compassion. George, you said, let's take note of that word, compassion. That seems to be the opposite of what you told us about the tower. I don't see a compassionate God in the building of the tower that you talked to us about.

Dr. George Pierce: 00:50:45 When we think about the building of the tower and their concept of God, what we get is God in a box, God on their terms. That compassion, then, is missing, because they want to use him for their own benefits, and that's the reason why these various cities in Mesopotamia had these ziggurats and these towers, is because they had their local deities, and they wanted their city to be the most important one. They wanted their deity to smite the other cities and the other deities. The compassion isn't there in their sort of understanding of God. I think what Moroni is trying to tell us as well is, "Hey guys, get on board with a right understanding of God," and one of those fundamental things that he has is compassion.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:51:30 All right? We talked about the first crisis, the confounding of language, and how they respond is just to ask God not to confound their language, and he has compassion on them for that. Now, their second crisis, they respond differently, and I think they respond in a way that shows they're growing even more in their understanding of God. The second crisis is the scattering of people. Now, they could go to God and say, "Please don't scatter us. We want to stay in our home. We want to stay all together," but instead, if you look at verse 38, Jared spake again unto his brother, saying, "Go and inquire of the

Lord whether he will drive us out of the land," so instead of saying, "Please don't drive us out of the land," they say, "Will we be driven out of the land?" Then, he follows up and he says, "And if he will drive us out of the land, cry into him whither we shall go."

00:52:23 So he says, "If we are going to be scattered and have to go through this hardship, help us to know where to go." It's incredible the way that Jared follows this up even more with his understanding of God because he says, "Who knoweth, but the Lord, will carry us forth into a land which is choice above all the earth." So he says, "First of all, are we going to be scattered? If we are, help us know where to go, because we believe you could take us to a much better place than we are now?" And it's this idea of, "Are we going to have this burden? Yes. Okay. If we're going to have this burden, we trust that you will help us get through it. We're going to get through this hardship, because we trust you and we love you."

00:53:11 Then, Jared ends with saying, "Let us be faithful so that we can get this inheritance." I love how this shows a growth from, "Please take the burden away," to, "Help us survive the burden. In fact, help us thrive through the burden with the hope there's something better on the other side, because we know sometimes those burdens, those hardships aren't taken away for us, and we're praying, help us get through it. Help us have trust and faith and hope that we also will come out on the other side in a promised land or a better place, because we trust God, because we trust in his leadership to guide us. We trust in his divinity and love, that he cares about us, and we trust in his power that he is going to help us in any way that we need."

Hank Smith: 00:54:03 I love that. That's verse 38. Wow, Krystal. That was wonderful.

John Bytheway: 00:54:08 Do you know what I love about, "Let us be Faithful, faithful unto the Lord"? The first principle of the gospel is not faith in what we want or faith in the way we want things to turn out, but faith in the Lord, just as you taught us, Krystal, that he's got a micro plan within the macro plan of salvation. That's an Elder Maxwell's statement. He's going to order all things for our good, to use a Doctrine and Covenants phrase. I'm so glad you pointed out, let us be faithful unto the Lord. It's not the vending machine, "If we do this, he'll do that." It's let's, "Believe and have faith in him that he is a compassionate God and he's going to guide us where he wants in a compassionate way."

Hank Smith: 00:54:47 I have a question for all three of you. Our friend at BYU, [Joe Spencer](#), who's been on the podcast, talks about how Moroni,

as he's taken over the plates, realizes that the Book of Mormon is for, John, help me with the title page. It's to the remnant of this people.

John Bytheway: 00:55:08 Three audiences.

Hank Smith: 00:55:09 But it's also to the Gentiles. Is that right, from the title page?

John Bytheway: 00:55:14 The Jews and the Gentiles, yeah. Three audiences.

Hank Smith: 00:55:18 If you read through the Book of Mormon, you realize pretty quickly that, for the Book of Mormon to go to who it needs to go to, it's got to go through the Gentiles. That's Nephi's vision. The book is given to the Gentiles. What Joe said is look at the book of Ether from that lens, as in this is not an Israelite. This is before Abraham. Here is God, working with non-Israel. He's opening himself up to that. Perhaps, I think what Joe said, and I'd love for you all to comment on this, that this book is not just a summary of the Book of Mormon.

00:55:56 It is that, that John talked about, but it also is a message to Gentiles, of how God can work with you and I, because we're the Gentiles he has in mind, at least from my understanding. When Nephi sees us, he thinks we're Gentiles, which I'm like, "Hey, I'm not a Gentile," but he sees us getting the book, and he says, "The book is with the Gentiles." They take it to the Jews, and they take it to the remnant of this people. What do you think about that, this Gentile book in the middle of this Israelite book or right here at the end?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:56:27 I think it's great, because in just a few chapters, Moroni actually says, "Oh, ye Gentiles, here's the point of me telling you this." It's like he's setting up these Jaredites, and then he jumps. I love when he jumps in and he says, "Oh. By the way, Gentiles, this is actually about you too, and this is meant to teach you something, and I'm setting it up so that you can understand it for yourselves too."

Dr. George Pierce: 00:56:51 I think it's good, because it shows that, even though we think about God's real covenant relationship with the House of Israel and everything, time and again in scripture, he's shown that he's the God of all humanity. When we think about the book of Jonah, the point of the book of Jonah is that he cares about Israel's archenemies, the Assyrians, just as much as he cares about Israel, and he wants to be compassionate to them. In fact, when we look at something, and I saw this the other day, the tail end of Isaiah, chapter 19, it's this chapter about this burden

of Egypt and his judgment on Egypt, but he has this flip at the end of it, in which he says that one day there's going to be this highway, if you will, or exchange between Egypt and Assyria, and between Assyria and Egypt.

00:57:36 He says in verse 24 of Isaiah 19, "In that day, shall Israel be the third with Egypt and Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.'" Even then, in the days of Isaiah, he's trying to teach them the people that you may not like, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, other people, the Gentiles, guess what? They're just as important in the plan of salvation and just as important to me as anybody else. I like the fact that Krystal brought up. Moroni says, "Hey, Gentiles. This is for you," right? And we have this book by Gentiles here at the tail end of the Book of Mormon to reinforce some of these teachings. I think it's great that it happens to people who are not from the house of Israel, because there is no House of Israel yet as we look at Jared and his brother, which I think is a great thing, but I think that's part of God's love for all humanity.

Hank Smith: 00:58:32 Yeah. Kind of the point. I would add that if you read the Savior's message of his second day, it's, "Gentiles, you can be part of this work. Gentiles, if you'll repent, you can be part of this work," and I wonder if Moroni is reading the words of Christ in that second day, what? 3 Nephi 20, 21, 22, 23, saying, "I've got to speak to these Gentiles to teach them how they can come to the Lord." Joseph Smith does kind of the same thing. Here's all these people around him, teaching him creed's about God, and he decides, as a Gentile, he's going to go cry to the Lord, and the Lord has compassion on him.

John Bytheway: 00:59:15 Hank, you changed my life. Anyway, I'm actually part Egyptian, because I descended from Joseph, and Joseph married an Egyptian.

Hank Smith: 00:59:27 Yeah. When you fly into Egypt, you're like, "Do you know who I am?"

John Bytheway: 00:59:34 Right off the plane, "I look handsome. I look smart. You recognize me?"

Hank Smith: 00:59:42 Please do that. You guys go to Egypt more than us. Will you please get off the plane and sing?

John Bytheway:	00:59:46	And start dancing with a coat? Yeah. I love the last line in Ether chapter one, "And thus I will do unto thee, because this long time ye have cried unto me." I don't want to read that and say, "Oh, therefore, if you pray for a long time, you get stuff," because that sounds transactional. I love what you said about the leadership of God. It's this idea that this long time you've learned about my compassion, you've learned, you can have faith in me. Maybe that's more what it means. We all know James 1:5. James 4:2 says, "Ye have not because ye ask not." What do you think that means, this, "I will do because this long time you've cried unto me"?
Hank Smith:	01:00:28	Yeah. I wonder if it's the idea of staying power. You didn't ask once or twice. You stayed with it.
John Bytheway:	01:00:34	Or you're relying on me.
Dr. George Pierce:	01:00:36	Sometimes it's not just like a one-off, so we've seen that they ask simple requests and trust that he knows what's best. We've seen that they ask to survive and thrive in a situation with hope for the future, but I don't think it's just a one-off like, "Well, I prayed once, and that's that," and "Well, done and dusted. The Lord knows what's best for me, so now I'm just going to continue on." It's a continual type of action. It's a fervent prayer, and though we know from scripture that that's effectual, very much.
Hank Smith:	01:01:06	I'll just never forget verse 38, "If I have to go through this trial, please, what do we do to get through it?" instead of, "Please no, please no, please no." So many of our listeners will appreciate verse 38. Instead of, "Why me?" Jared says, "Ask the Lord what we're supposed to do when this trial comes," and that is beautiful.
Hank Smith:	01:01:40	Krystal, George, you have walked us through chapter one, and I have notes up and down here. I'm so excited to take a look at chapter two and chapter three. Let's keep going.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	01:01:45	Chapter two, they start preparing for the big journey. Part of this is gathering different supplies and resources to take with them. When we look at verses two and three, we see that they're taking some interesting things on these boats. In verse two, it talks about they're catching fowl. So they're taking live birds with them in these vessels, in these boats. They're taking fish, but live fish, so they're actually, it says they're making a vessel for the fish, an aquarium or a fish tank to take these live fish with them. They're also bringing live bees in these boats, in these confined spaces, and seeds of every kind. Now, the first



time I read this, I thought, "Oh, this makes a hundred percent sense to me." Now, I remember my students asking, "But why are they taking these things?" These are the foundations of life in the ancient Near East.

01:02:40 These things, especially the birds, the fish, and the bees, are what they got everything from. If you think about seeds, of course, plants, everything that comes from plants, food and clothing, and architecture. Think about birds, meat, the eggs, the feathers, the bones. They were using every single part of those animals. Fish as well, the meat, the oil, fish oil, bones. These three things were so incredibly important to the people in the ancient Near East. For the Egyptians, for example, they would put in their tombs what they wanted to take to the afterlife. These three things are in every tomb in Egypt; we even have a name for them. We call them fishing and fowling scenes, because if you went to the afterlife, what did you want to take? You wanted to take birds, you wanted to take fish, you wanted to take plants, and then you would have a great afterlife.

01:03:35 I love the idea that the Jaredites, they fit perfectly into the ancient Near East. What are they going to take? What do they want to start? I mean, they're basically starting life over again. They're going to take what they know is the foundation of life, and then we get the bees. Then we have the bees, which is fascinating. Of course, the most important role of bees is pollination; if they're bringing these seeds and things, and these bees... But also they use bees, the honey and the wax for food, to make tablets to write on, cosmetics, adhesive, medicine, waterproofing, paint. They were using bees and beeswax for so many different things. Now, it's great because Moroni tells us; he gives us a little bit of a glimpse into their language. He says they carried with them deseret. He gives us this word, and he says, "This means honeybee."

01:04:23 Some people have tied this to the Egyptian word deshret. This word in Egypt, it refers to several different things, but a specific part of Egypt symbolized by a certain crown and symbolized by a bee; the word deshret is related to this. The Lower Egypt, the crown that goes with it, that's called the deshret, has a stinger on it and also has a proboscis, which is that little straw to get the nectar out of the plants. We know at this period of time, people in Mesopotamia were not keeping bees. They weren't beekeepers, but the people in Egypt were. I love this idea that the Jaredites came into contact with the Egyptians, got beekeeping technology from them, and maybe even borrowed a word from Egyptian to talk about what they were doing with these bees and this idea of deseret and deshret so that they

could take these because they knew the importance of bees. Even if, at that point, they weren't keeping them themselves. It fits so perfectly into the ancient Near East.

Hank Smith: 01:05:31 Krystal. That's kind of a combining of your two worlds, your love for Egyptian stuff, and then here you love the Book of Mormon, and when I bet those two slined together in Ether chapter two, tell me how you felt when you're, "Wow, this all fits."

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:05:44 It's funny because I'm reading this, and I'm like, "Yeah, makes sense, makes sense, makes sense." And it's not until I'm trying to teach it to somebody else, and they go, "Well, that makes no sense at all," and I say, "Oh, okay, well, let's step back. And why does it make sense to me?" So then I get super excited. I find Egyptianisms all through the Book of Mormon and these stories because it being written in Reformed Egyptian. I love it. I get so excited.

Hank Smith: That's cool.

John Bytheway: I wanted to ask you, because I've heard the word there, deseret, why didn't he just say honeybee? He didn't say that for the fish. He just said fish or fowls, but with deseret, he says the word, and I've heard this is arguably the oldest word in the entire book because it's not a translation. It is the actual sound of whatever they said when they meant honeybee.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 01:06:38 I think it makes sense. Possibly he includes this word because it may have been borrowed from another language. That's why all of a sudden he's going to say, "Oh, by the way, deseret," maybe they borrowed it from Egyptian, "Here, I'm going to tell you what it means." Because it is a different type of word. The word for bee in Egyptian is just bee, because it's onomatopoeic. It's the sound that they make. Like in English, it's bee bee. I like this idea that they took the crown and Lower Egypt and all of these things that represent the bee and said, "You know what? This is the word we're going to borrow." Lower Egypt is called the land of the bee. Its sign is the bee, and then this crown that I've been talking about, the crown of Lower Egypt, looks like a bee. It's interesting connection.

Hank Smith: 01:07:30 Thanks for showing us that, Krystal. It's really cool how those two worlds came together there.



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Krystal and George Pierce, The Book of Ether, chapters 1-5.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 00:08 They have gathered all of these things together. They're on their way to the Promised Land, of course on the way they enter into what we call a Promised Land Covenant. This fits in with other versions of Promised Land Covenants that we've already seen.
- Dr. George Pierce: 00:24 We can think of a [covenant](#) as a solemn two-way promise. As we see it in scripture, we have one party promising they're going to do something, and then God promising that he's going to do something. Think about Abraham. So Abraham and his family, their part of it is to have Jehovah as their God to follow Jehovah's commandments and walk before him. God's part of that is to give them property, so the Promised Land to give them posterity to make sure they're going to have children, prosperity, to bless them and bless those who bless them. We see in the Book of Abraham, part of Abraham's Covenant is that he's going to have the priesthood reside in his lineage as well. And of course the Mosaic law, it's a covenant between Israel and God as Moses restates it in Deuteronomy; it's about when you get into this land, then you should follow God's commandments so that you can prosper and that you don't forget God, and if you do, then the danger is that you'll be removed from the land.
- 01:20 We see the same thing happening in chapter 2 as the Jaredites are moving. It says in verse 7, "And the Lord would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness, but he would that they should come forth even unto the land of promise, which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people. And he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whosoever should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fullness of his wrath should come upon them." Serve God and prosper in the land; don't serve God and

get swept off. Does it sound familiar? Absolutely. We see it throughout the Book of Mormon. If we go back to 2 Nephi 1.

02:03      Lehi talks about, "That we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands," so there's our phrase again. "The Lord hath covenanted this land unto me and to my children forever, and," this is important, "also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord. And he has said that as much as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land; but as much as ye will not keep my commandments, ye shall be cut off from my presence.

02:28      We see that throughout the Book of Mormon. This covenant gets reiterated. Nephi talks about it, Lehi talks about it, Jarom talks about it, Ammoron talks about it, King Benjamin talks about it, Alma the Elder and Alma the Younger both talk about it. Mormon talks about it, and then Moroni is going to talk about it right here in this chapter as well when he inserts his editorial.

Dr. Krystal Pierce:      02:47      Yeah, it's great because he sets up this Jaredite covenant, which predates the Lehi covenant of the promised land. I love it. He jumps in verse 11, and he says, "And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles." He says, Guess what? You are also under a promised land covenant just like the Lehites, just like the Jaredites. In verse 12, he says, "This is a choice land," using the same words, "Whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage and from captivity, if they serve Jesus Christ." He says, "Hey, Gentiles," and like we had talked about before, this is a Gentile book here. He's saying, "You see that there's a Jaredite covenant; you see there's a Nephite covenant. You are also part of this promised land covenant." We know what happens to the Jaredites. Spoiler alert, they don't keep the covenant in the end; they lose the land, the Lehites, the Lamanites, the Nephites.

03:49      They don't keep the covenant; they lose the land. Moroni is saying, "You do not want to be the third group of people to lose the land because you break the covenant. I'm telling you these things because I want you to learn from them, and I want you to change what you're doing so that you don't end up in the same way they do." I love how Lehi says, "Anyone who's brought to this land is under this covenant." And then he says, "Guess what? Everybody who's brought to this land is under this covenant." It's important that we recognize that and we learn from the Jaredites and the Lehites about that.

Dr. George Pierce:	04:28	That ends in them destroying each other, and that could easily happen to us. I want to look at verses seven and 14. The Lord says, "All right, we're going to build these barges. We're going to cross some waters, then when you get across those waters, you're going to get to another big set of waters. Don't stop. I want you to keep going to the promised land." That's in verse seven. Then you come down to verse 13. They came across, they got to the sea, and they stopped for four years. This is the one thing; he said, "Whatever you do, don't do this," and then that's the one thing they do. He doesn't pray for four years; apparently, whatever he did, he didn't call upon the name of the Lord, and so he and the Lord have a talk. When you say that in verse 14, I found that fascinating that the Lord says, "Okay, this one thing, just don't do this one thing." That's the one thing they did. It reminds me of Elder Holland and John; you can help me out. All God has to work with is...
John Bytheway:	05:26	Is imperfect people. That must be terribly frustrating to him but he deals with it, and so should we.
Hank Smith:	05:32	It just seems like a parent to a child.
John Bytheway:	05:36	"You had one job."
Hank Smith:	05:37	Yeah, don't stop.
Dr. George Pierce:	05:41	The one thing they weren't supposed to do, they did, and it ended up then in a pause for four years, four years of stopping, and what are they going to do? They're going to plant crops. They're going to get into this routine of daily life, and if they would've kept going, they wouldn't have had the pause, and we wouldn't have had that chat between the Lord and the brother of Jared for three hours out of the cloud chat. That chat.
Hank Smith:	06:06	He chastened him. I wonder what that looks like where the Lord says, "Can I talk to you?"
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	06:12	It's interesting how he brings up the covenant in these following verses. He says, "Remember, I'm going to take you to this land, and you promised that you were going to do these things; you forgot." A couple of the problems they had got through them through praying, through crying out to the Lord. Now he's telling them, "Never stop; if you stop praying, this is the way that we're communicating, and if you want to make it to the promised land and be successful, you got to keep doing that."

Hank Smith:	06:43	That's interesting. You forgot to do the one thing that you learned from chapter one.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	06:48	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	06:49	A God who chastens is a God who cares. He doesn't walk away and say, "Oh, fine, forget it."
Dr. George Pierce:	06:54	Those whom He loveth, he chasteneth.
Hank Smith:	06:56	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	06:57	Yeah. That's a God who cares and is coming after him, and that's one of the greatest impressions I had during our whole Old Testament year, was this is a God who is relentlessly coming after us and trying to get us home again.
Hank Smith:	07:10	One thing I find interesting about human nature is he forgot to cry unto the Lord that he knows that it works, but he still didn't do it, and that just seems so human that, "I know this works. I know prayer works. I've had experiences where prayer works, and yet I didn't pray for quite a while because I remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord." I like the humanness of chapter two.
Dr. George Pierce:	07:34	We talked about the fact that they have a crisis in the confounding of language. They have a crisis in where they're going to live. The third crisis that we identify within these chapters is the crisis that the brother of Jared then brings up when the Lord talks to him about building the barges; he brings this up in verse 19, he says, "And behold, O Lord, in them there is no light; whither shall we steer? And also we shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe; save it is the air which is in them; therefore we shall perish." This is the crisis. How are we going to have air to breathe? How are we going to see anything? What's going on here? To go back to our conversation, the brother of Jared forgetting to cry unto the Lord; maybe in that four years they didn't have what they consider to be a crisis, which that's a real lesson.
	08:23	If he's only crying to the Lord when there's a crisis and not when things are normal and mundane during those four years, then that's a problem. That's something that the Lord would need to chasten him about. As we can recognize that chastening that's related to compassion, it goes back to Ether chapter one, the Lord having compassion on them. We have this crisis. How are we going to breathe, and how are we going to see anything? It's

valid. In verse 20, "The Lord said unto the brother of Jared: Behold, thou shalt make a hole in the top and also in the bottom; and when thou shalt suffer for air, thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air. And if it be so that the water come in upon thee, behold, ye shall stop the hole, that ye may not perish in the flood. The Lord gives him the answer, so I have students that are like, "Well, is it for them to be able to turn over and over in the sea?" And I say, "Would you really want a barge full of bees turning over and over and over on you?"

- 09:12      Probably not. I'm not sure what the birds are doing at that point and the aquarium, so it's not like that picture that we get from the cartoons or something else in our minds. It's simply a matter of physics. Pop the top, get air, close the top, pop the bottom, get rid of your refuse, and it works. They're not from a maritime culture, so they're like, "Okay, that makes sense," but what's really great is when we get to the light, he cried again to the Lord, saying in verse 22, "Behold, O Lord, wilt thou suffer that we shall cross this great water in darkness?" And this is where we get then the Lord says to him in verse 23, "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels? For behold, ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you." That would also be dangerous, by the way, "For ye shall not go by the light of fire."
- 09:59      And we get this at the end of verse 25, "Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths of the sea?" For the first part of the crisis about air, the Lord's like, "Okay, here's the solution," and in the second part the Lord says, "Okay, what do you want me to do?" It's for them to figure out. When we think about their responses to these crises, we talked about the first one being they simply just ask and they have to trust that God knows what's best for them.
- 10:25      A second possible response is that they ask then if it's not going to go away to be able to survive and thrive with a hope for a better future, and then in this response we see them basically asking God for instructions. And God is then going to flip the script and ask them what do they think is best. [Elder Holland](#) had this quote in his book, Christ and the New Covenant. He said, "Clearly the brother of Jared was being tested. God had done his part. Unique, resolutely seaworthy ships for crossing the ocean had been provided. The brilliant engineering had been done. The hard part of the construction project was over. Now the Lord wanted to know what the brother of Jared would do about incidentals."

Dr. Krystal Pierce:	11:06	When we think of problem-solving, that is a divine attribute to try to be able to solve your own problem with the help of the Lord. I love how he says, "You're going to come up with an idea. You're going to come back to me, then I'm going to help you out because you understand me. You know what I am capable of. You know that I will help you." The brother of Jared comes up with a plan, and this is in chapter three. His plan is to melt out of a rock 16 small stones. This is great because it doesn't say the Lord teaches him how or anything, and we do know that they were making a form of glass in Mesopotamia at this time, so this is not out of the ordinary to take crushed quartz and sand and mix it with things to make this. So he knew how to do that, and then he asked the Lord to touch the stones to put light in them, and then you have to think, "How in the world did he come up with that idea?"
	11:59	There is a <a href="#">related story</a> that has to do with Noah's Ark and the way Noah's Ark was lit. That might be where the brother of Jared got this idea. There is a Jewish legend that when God created light, he put it in a stone; he gave it to Adam when Adam had to leave his presence so he would always have the light of God with him in this stone, and Adam passed it down from prophet to prophet to prophet until it got to Noah. Noah used it to light the Ark. Part of this idea comes from the word that in the King James version of the Bible that's used as a window where it says, "He put a window in the Ark." The Hebrew word is tsohar, which just means light. It doesn't mean window.
	12:46	Some people think that this stone was used by Noah, and eventually, the legend goes, it was passed down to Moses, who used it in the tabernacle. Perhaps because this is just after the flood, the story of the Tower of Babel, that the brother of Jared understood that God could put light in a stone to help his prophets, to help his people, but what's great about this is before he asks the Lord to touch the stones, he gives this amazing testimony about his knowledge of the leadership, divinity, and power of God.
	13:23	In verse two, he acknowledges, "We are weak. You are holy and dwellest in the heavens." Right? Talking about the divinity of God. "I understand you're way up here and you're perfect and we're way down here and we're imperfect, but you love us and you never give up on us," and I think that's part of the chastening. He's never going to stop trying to get us to be like him. In verse three, he says, "You have been merciful to us. You have been turning away your anger; you have been guiding us and leading us this entire time."



	14:01	Verses four and five. He says, "I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; touch these stones." Verse five, "We know that thou art able to show forth great power." He testifies that he knows that the Lord has the power to help them and the love and mercy, and compassion to help them as well. His entire plan is based on his knowledge of the leadership divinity and power, which is the opposite of the tower and what the tower stood for, and it's beautiful that he testifies of this.
John Bytheway:	14:42	One time I was speaking somewhere with my laptop and a PowerPoint, and my laptop, in the middle of my talk, decided to do an update. Then I knew what the Lord meant when he said, "You can't have windows." Oh, okay, so get a MacBook Pro, but the thing that you just said that I thought is so cool is footnote 23A.
Dr. George Pierce:	15:16	No. It was good. That was good. You can't have windows.
John Bytheway:	15:18	Thanks for laughing at my joke, guys. You cannot have windows, for behold, they will crash in the middle of your fireside.
	15:26	So Ether 2:23, "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels? For behold, ye cannot have windows." Footnote 23A takes you to Genesis 6:16, where, as you just said, is the story of Noah. I want to tell you the footnote on Genesis 6:16 because this is so cool on the word windows, so footnote 16A says, "Hebrew, tsohar. And then this line, some rabbis believed it was a precious stone that shone in the ark." He perhaps went to the scriptures, another story, to get an idea of what to do to get light. I also love the idea of the Lord touches things and fills them with light. I remember hearing somebody speak at a marriage seminar and saying, "We should do what the brother Jared did. Ask the Lord to reach down to touch our marriages and fill them with light." I thought that was a beautiful metaphor.
Hank Smith:	16:27	I just love Ether chapter two. Like you said, Krystal, you could spend a lot of time here. I've noticed in verse 16 he's like, "I built the barges according to the instructions of the Lord."
John Bytheway:	16:38	I did what you said.
Hank Smith:	16:40	I did what you said, and there's some serious problems.
John Bytheway:	16:47	I don't mean to be critical. There's some design flaws in here.

Dr. Krystal Pierce:	16:52	Yeah, were the plans complete or not?
Hank Smith:	16:55	<p>Yeah. He says, "Lord, we don't have light; we can't steer, and I guess we could do both of those, but we can't breathe." And I like what you both said there that the Lord says, "All right, here's some specific things you could do that's for the air. Steering, I don't even want you to worry about it. I will bring you out of the depths, and then what you both said, What do you want to do?" To me there's so much we can learn there. Sometimes we want the Lord to tell us what to do. I know my young adult students do, "Lord, tell me what career you want me to have. Tell me who to marry. Tell me how many children to have. Tell me what to do." And sometimes the Lord tells us, "Here's what you need to do about the air issue." Sometimes he says, "Don't worry about it, I'll take care of it," but I think oftentimes the Lord says, "What do you want do? Bring me an idea. I can make that work."</p>
John Bytheway:	17:53	<p>Mahonri could have said, "Listen, one day you're going to have this verse that says, if any of you lack wisdom, ask of God, and I just did and you said, go figure it out."</p>
Hank Smith:	18:03	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	18:05	<p>And this to me sounds very section nine: "Go study it out in your mind and come up with something, and then ask me what I think." I love that idea of you doing the work. Our friend <a href="#">Tyler Griffin</a>, he wrote a book called When Heaven Feels Distant, and he said, "This story shows a pattern of three different types of answers we can receive when trying to solve problems."</p> <p>Number one, exact instructions. Okay, that's for air. Number two, activation of agency. Okay, what do you want me to do? That's for light, and then what you just said, Hank, the steering part, I got this. I'll take care of that. Tyler said, "Answers from the Lord do not always fit neatly into one of these categories, but these variations can help us make better sense of our own situations. At first thought, we may prefer most of our answers to fall under the don't worry about it, I'll take care of it category."</p>
	18:56	<p>"However, this type of interaction is best for small children." Okay, but I like that. "Adults grow less when God takes care of everything without any effort on their part. The next instinctive preference might be step-by-step instructions for how to solve our problems. If that were always the case, however, life would begin to feel so prescriptive it could lose much of its interest and significance. Thus, our Heavenly Father often answers us</p>

with, "What would you like me to do about that?" I had never seen that before until I heard Tyler talk about-

Hank Smith: 19:33 Those three answers.

John Bytheway: 19:33 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 19:33 Yeah.

John Bytheway: 19:35 And how sometimes we prefer a different method than what the Lord gives us for our own growth.

Hank Smith: 19:42 Yeah. Don't you all think though that the Lord is almost saying, "You're the child of a creator. Create."

John Bytheway: 19:49 Go figure it out.

Hank Smith: 19:50 Let's do something. Yeah, go figure it out. Bring me an idea, and then the best part is, to me, he brings him his idea, and he says, "I can make that work. Bring me this idea. I can make it work." I do that with my lessons as a gospel teacher. I create it, and I'm like, "Lord, light this up because it's not very good. Do something." And then students will come up after class, "Oh, Brother Smith, that was so good that really..." And I'm going, "Thank you, Lord."

20:22 He touched it, and he made it work. This is such an encouraging idea. Don't you think I'm not paralyzed with, "What does the Lord want me to do? Tell me what to do." It's I'm going to get going. I'm going to start moving forward and say, "Lord, can you light this up for me?" There's better ideas out there, I'm sure, but the Lord says, "I can do that. Yeah, let's make that work." Do you think the Lord right back in verse 16 gave him bad boat instructions on purpose? Because he knows the brother of Jared struggles to come back. He said, "Here's these boat plans," and then he waits for him.

John Bytheway: 20:59 Yeah, you're not going to stop praying this time.

Hank Smith: 21:02 He comes back, and he's like, "Oh, yeah. I think there's been a mistake, right? The bad boat plans." You both look what the Lord has in mind. He has much more in mind than boats.

Dr. George Pierce: 21:13 Yes.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 21:14 Yeah.

Hank Smith:	21:15	He wants him to come back so he can say, "What do you think we should do?" And then this vision, this beautiful vision, opens up. I just wonder sometimes we do exactly what the Lord wants us to do and we think, "This isn't working."
John Bytheway:	21:29	And the Lord says, "What did you learn? What did you learn?"
Hank Smith:	21:31	Keep coming back, keep coming back.
Dr. George Pierce:	21:33	Part of that growth we see in his response to the crisis, and it's partly for us too: ask God for instructions, but then go problem solve and take action. That's part of it. God knows that he's growing. "Come back to me, grow some more. Come back to me, grow some more." Then when the brother of Jared comes back to him and says, "Hey, I got 16 small stones." And I know, as he says in verse five, "I know that you can light them up because I know that you have all power." And he uses that word power twice there: "You have all power, and you can do whatever you want for the benefit of man, and we know that you can do this and you can show forth great power, which looks small, but you light them up." That's like, "Oh, he's really grown." Right?
	22:15	He really understands what's going on here because we see the result of that in chapter three, honestly, verse six. "And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, acknowledging God's power, Behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger. The veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear."
	22:38	What do we get? We get when he has a right understanding of God's leadership, of his divinity, and his power. He follows the instructions, he goes forth, he seeks an answer, he problem solves and he comes back to the Lord. Having grown that far in faith that when the Lord does reach out his finger to touch those stones, the brother Jared sees it, and in fact, as we know from the rest of the chapter, he is ushered straight through the veil, and the Lord even says, "Because thou knowest these things," in verse 13, "You are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you."
	23:11	The brother of Jared with the right view of the nature of God in contrast to what's going on at the tower is able to see the pre-mortal form of Christ. The Lord says, "I can't even keep you out

of the veil. This is how far you've grown." Right? The Lord says to him, "Never have I shown myself like this to anybody." And we know that the Lord has shown himself to people before this. We see it in scripture, in Genesis and Moses, and Section 107 talks about this, but [Elder Holland](#) again comes through and says, "It's about showing himself in this manner without my volition, solely by the faith of the beholder."

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|---------------------|-------|---|
| Hank Smith:         | 23:49 | I love the pep talk he gives the Lord in verse five, "Lord, you can do this."   |
| John Bytheway:      | 23:55 | "You've got this, Lord."  |
| Hank Smith:         | 23:57 | As if the Lord is going, "Well, I didn't think I could, but thank you for that." I tell my students at BYU that they can go to the Lord and say, "Lord, help me get married; you can do this. I believe. Even you can get me married."  |
| Dr. George Pierce:  | 24:15 | As long as they have the faith of the brother of Jared, then yes, the Lord will do that.  |
| John Bytheway:      | 24:19 | That was one of my trials. I was 33 years old when I got married. When the Lord answers these prayers in different ways, there was a lifeline verse for me during those years. It's really easy to remember. Can you guys remember 11111? Okay, good, so that's section 111, verse 11, "Be as wise as serpents and yet without sin," and this sounds kind of like a I'll take care of it thing. This is the Lord talking, "I will order all things for your good as fast as ye are able to receive them." And Krystal, that's your story at school: "I've got this; I will order things for your good, and I will judge when you are able to receive them." That was a lifeline for me. I love that verse. That's the leadership of God that you taught us, George. "He's got it, and he'll order all things for your good because he's a compassionate, loving God." Anyway, I had to throw that in because of what you just said, Hank. |
| Dr. Krystal Pierce: | 25:19 | I love that he wants us to figure out things for ourselves sometimes. Clearly he thought the brother of Jared was at this point where, "Hey, you can do this. You can figure this out." That steps up from the very beginning where they just say, "Please don't confound our language; please take this burden away." Now all of a sudden to the point where he's like, "You're going to figure out..." and like I said, problem solving is a godly attribute. God's trying to teach us how to be like him. In order to do that, he says, "Okay, here's a problem. I want you to try to solve it with my help, of course, always coming back." He says, "I know you can do it; I believe in you. You can figure it out."   |

Hank Smith:	25:58	Krystal, what you said about problem solving, <a href="#">President Monson</a> , I just love this: "God left the world unfinished for us to work our skill upon. He left the electricity in the clouds, the oil in the earth. He left the rivers unbridged, the forest unfelled, the city's unbuilt. God gives to men and women the challenge of raw materials, not the ease of finished things. He leaves the pictures unpainted, the music unsung, the problems unsolved that we might know the joy and glory of creation."
	26:31	That to me is Ether two and three. "You can do this." And George, I love what you said. As we look through Ether 1-5, we see spiritual growth, line at a time. And pretty soon he's having this spectacular vision. Do any of you see, and this isn't something we need to go into detail about; I see a bit of an endowment ritual here. He sees the finger of the Lord; he sees the hand of the Lord. They have this little interview, and the Lord says, "Do you believe? Yeah, you believe. Do you want to come into my presence? Yes. I wanted to come into your presence. You're redeemed from the fall. You're brought back into my presence." When I go through an endowment session at the temple, sometimes the thoughts of the brother of Jared come up.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	27:16	Yeah, I like that idea. He's basically, however you want to look at it, either pulled through the veil or bursts through; as <a href="#">Elder Holland</a> says, "thrusts through the veil." I really like that; I never thought about it that way. This is the point we're all trying to get at. We're all trying to get to this point where we're able to come through the veil. Either we're being ushered in or we're going through ourselves, or maybe it's a little bit of both.
Hank Smith:	27:43	I have the same book that you all do from <a href="#">Elder Holland</a> , Christ and the New Covenant. I have this written in Ether: "Once and for all, it was declared that ordinary people with ordinary challenges can rend the veil of unbelief and enter the realms of eternity." Man, this story is so beautiful that this normal human person, can grow like you've said, George, and have the most beautiful spiritual experiences. And that gives, I think, hope to everybody listening that we all have made mistakes. We've all forgot to pray for four years or whatever that looks like in our own life, and the Lord says, "Don't give up. Don't give up. You're going to make it; keep at it." And then this incredible vision, this incredible blessing.
John Bytheway:	28:29	What did we just learn about what God is like? That's what I love. It's not just that he's real, but what's he like?

Hank Smith:	28:35	George and Krystal, that setup has really helped me. What you told us about the tower and how the opposite is playing out through these opening chapters.
John Bytheway:	28:44	Yeah. Look how he just got brought back into the presence of God.
Hank Smith:	28:48	Which is what the tower wanted, right? They wanted the presence of God.
Dr. George Pierce:	28:52	As we see, it's not through the means that they were thinking. It's not about building a structure or a ladder; it's not about providing for his needs; it's not about containing him in a box. But the brother of Jared knows, that's an accurate verb there because Moroni uses that term when he talks about this in chapter three in verse 19, "Because of the knowledge of this man, he could not be kept from beholding within the veil." The brother of Jared knows specifically God's leadership. He knows God's divinity and love. He knows God's power.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	29:29	That's what we're all trying to do. We're trying to get back to the presence of God because of the fall; we're out of the presence. We're trying to get back to the presence. And this is teaching us; this is one of the ways how you can prepare yourself to go back to the presence of God is understand who he is, what he is, why he does the things he does, and to become more like him. Clearly, the brother of Jared was prepared. This is a way we can get prepared.
	29:53	I also love what happens next. I mean, you think, "Okay, he sees the finger that's incredible, mind-blowing, and then he gets to see the whole form of the Savior." That's incredible and mind-blowing, but it doesn't stop there. It actually gets to the point where in verse 25, "The Lord shows the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, all that would be, and he withheld them not from his sight even until the ends of the earth." Says, "You can no longer be kept within the veil; you're going to see everything. Everything that ever has been, will be, is now, people, places, things, events, everything." Just a little while ago we were talking about the brother of Jared being chastised for not praying, and now all of a sudden we see this growth. It's so incredible.
Hank Smith:	30:45	So encouraging.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	30:46	Yeah. How far he comes in just a few pages for us. For him a bit longer.

Hank Smith:	30:52	Yeah.
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	30:54	Maybe the Jaredites here, this is a little bit of course of a hint of how Jehovah really works, that really it was always meant to be for everybody. Everybody's meant to go back into the presence of the Lord, no matter who they are.
John Bytheway:	31:08	I love how the Lord over delivers; the brother of Jared just saw all the inhabitants of the earth, which had been and also which would be, and all I wanted to know is what to do for light. He gets all of that. It reminds me of Joseph Smith. I just wanted to know what church to join. Holy cow. Look what has happened since then. A teenage boy says a prayer, and we are all sitting here today talking to each other. The Lord over delivers.
Hank Smith:	31:38	What did he say? Many other things he said unto me, which I cannot write at this time. It just kept going. It's almost as if you ask the Lord for a spoon and he gives you the whole house. "Wow, thank you." I like that. Talk to me about this principle. He gave him boat plans that didn't really work, but he went back to him. Had he never gone back, had he said, "See, I told you this whole God thing doesn't work," but he says, "I got these plans from the Lord; I'm going to go back." I think there's a lot of people in a position like that. "I did what the Lord asked me to do. I lived the way the Lord asked me to live, and still this thing, this problem, this massive thing happened."
	32:27	Maybe you decide; I'm going back to the Lord and to ask him questions. John, we get letters from wonderful people who say, "Living the way I'd hoped the Lord wants me to live, and this tragic thing happened. What does that mean?" We all have those Ether 2 moments where we decide, "Am I going to go back to the Lord? This didn't seem to work." I'm going to go back to the Lord and like you said, George, "I have more for you. Come back." Can I ask you both a question, as you've read through this, why does the Lord ask so many questions?
	33:05	He knows the answer to these things yet, Verse 23, "What do you think I should do?" Verse 25 of this chapter two, "What do you want me to prepare?" And then he comes over to chapter three, verse seven, "Why did you fall down?" Chapter nine, "Did you see more than my hand?" Verse 11, "Will you believe what I shall speak?" Verse 15, "Do you see that you're created in my own image?" Question after question after question, the Lord asks the brother of Jared. Which is fascinating to me because usually we think the questions go in one direction. The questions go from me to God, and instead God is turning around saying, "Let me ask some questions this time." Any



thoughts on why the Lord asks questions that he already knows the answer to?

- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 33:50 I think he wants us to figure it out for ourselves. I feel like this is exactly the way the Savior taught. When somebody would come to him with a question, he would respond with a question. Somebody would ask him about, "Who is my neighbor?" And he says, "Well, who do you think your neighbor is?"
- Hank Smith: 34:06 Yeah.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 34:06 This is a way that he's teaching us. Because he knows what we know, he already knows that. But do we know what we know? Sometimes he's pulling it out of us. "You know how to solve this problem. You know the answer to this question already. And if you can figure it out for yourself, then you're going to grow and realize that you're capable of doing so many more things than you think you are."
- Dr. George Pierce: 34:33 It's this glimpse that we get into God as a heavenly parent. As earthly parents, we kind of see that same sort of pattern, but it really drives the message home. It's for you to answer to me so that you know that you know you're going to grow through this.
- John Bytheway: 34:49 The angel that visits Nephi, is it 13 different look statements in 1 Nephi 11? I think. "Look, what do you see? Okay, now what do you see? Look, what do you think that is?" It helps Nephi put it all together in maybe the same sort of way instead of, "Okay, I'm going to show you a bunch of stuff. Pay attention, take notes." Instead, "It's look; what do you see?"
- Hank Smith: 35:10 I really like that.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 35:13 It reminds me of a few months ago, my brother passed away very unexpectedly. Other people had passed away in my life, my grandparents and others, and I had always felt prepared, even though you never are fully prepared, but this was the first time ever in my life I felt unprepared for the passing of someone so close to me. It brought me to the point where I had to really think about: do I believe in the Resurrection? And I don't know why before this I had always just been like, "Of course I believe in the Resurrection. Of course I'm going to see my grandparents again." But with my brother, who is only a few years older than I am, I thought, this is real. It really made me have to turn to the Lord and say, "Why did this happen? Do I believe I will see him again? Do I believe I have something to look forward to in the future?"

	36:16	And I remember throughout this process consistently having to go back to him. Even when I get to the point where I'm like, "I figured this out. Of course I'm going to see him again." Because of the Savior and then falling back into that deep dark again thinking about, "But why is he gone now?" That was something that I really had to go back and forth and back and forth and back and forth again, and it really made me realize I have some work to do in fully understanding, seeing our loved ones again, and that I want to be prepared and ready to see him again and how much I love and miss him, and even though he's not here physically, he's always around me spiritually. For me, this is something that I'm still working through and still trying to figure out.
Hank Smith:	37:04	It sounds like Ether 2:24, "You will be in the midst of the sea. Mountain waves shall dash upon you, but I will bring you up again out of the depths of the sea." You see that again in chapter six, up and down. Thank you for that, Krystal.
John Bytheway:	37:22	I remember <a href="#">S. Michael Wilcox</a> talking about the fact that the one thing that he wanted us to know about the barges is that they were tight like unto a dish. It's okay if you go down in the depths because you're watertight, and I'll bring you out again.
Hank Smith:	37:40	As we move forward into chapters four and five, this is one of the biggest letdowns where Moroni says, "All right, I wrote down the entire vision of the brother of Jared," and you're thinking, "All right, here it comes." He says, "The Lord told me, write it all down and seal it shut." Oh. What are you thinking here as you looked up chapters four and five?
Dr. Krystal Pierce:	38:03	Well, it's interesting because, of course, I love bringing in Isaiah here, Isaiah 29:11, where he prophesies about this. He says, "The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed." Very succinctly, he says, "Well, how do you describe what the brother of Jared saw? All." The vision of all he says, "But it's sealed." It kind of begs the question of why have him write it down if it's not helping us in any way because it's sealed, so will it ever be unsealed?
Dr. George Pierce:	38:34	So Joseph gets the plates, and there's a portion that's sealed. "And why is it sealed? Are we ready for it?" And that's a question in and of itself. Are we ready for a vision of everything of the past, present, and future? I don't know, but the Lord tells us about those things. So even if we don't know what's actually in the sealed portion as Moroni has been commanded in chapter four, to write it down and seal it up, verse six, "The Lord said unto me," to Moroni, "They shall not go forth unto the

Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity and become clean before the Lord. In that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw."

39:14 Will we ever get the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon? I don't know, but what he's talking about is revelation. He even goes on to say, "Even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are." We have the encouragement that we may not know what's in the sealed portion that Moroni writes down in the Book of Mormon, but we can be privileged to having that revelation through Jesus Christ by exercising faith.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 39:46 Yeah, and bringing in Isaiah again this line upon line precept. Yeah, someday you will have these revelations, but for now you're getting piece by piece by piece as you're ready to hear it and receive it. That takes us to chapter five, where Moroni, I love when he steps in again, he says, "Now I, Moroni. I've written these words according to my memory; I've told you the things which I've sealed up; therefore, touch them not in order that you may translate." Then you have to pause and say, "Wait, who's he talking to? Who's he talking to here?" He's talking to Joseph Smith; he's talking to the translator, and I can't imagine being the prophet and translating along, and then all of a sudden, "Whoa, this is directed to me. This is about that huge sealed portion; it's the brother of Jared's vision. I'm not supposed to translate it. I'm not even supposed to touch it at this point."

40:39 Maybe it would be exciting that he's addressing him. Maybe a little disappointing that he doesn't get to unseal it, but then in the very next verse he says, "And behold, ye may be privileged that ye may show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work." And that was probably massive to Joseph. He finally now gets to show the plates to in verse four, it talks about three witnesses, and that would've been incredible to hear that. That he gets to share what he's been experiencing with others.

Hank Smith: 41:18 I know you both teach in ancient scripture at BYU, but I'm guessing you know a little church history. Who are these three? What are their stories?

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 41:26 In Joseph Smith [history](#), it tells us that the three witnesses are Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. They were

all able to witness the gold plates. Now, what's interesting about these three is we do know that all of them at some point either left the church or were excommunicated or had problems with Joseph or other parts of the church, but none of them ever denied seeing the gold plates or ever went back on their testimony of the Book of Mormon, no matter what happened in their lives. That's incredible because this is meant to be a testimony of the Book of Mormon and the gold plates. No matter what happened to these three, that was always clearly a part of who they were.

- John Bytheway: 42:14 Yeah, we've been talking about we're all imperfect folks, and even the three witnesses were imperfect folks. Sometimes we dwell too much on Martin Harris losing the [116 pages](#), and that's before he was even baptized. Well, do we believe in baptism for the remission of sins?
- Hank Smith: 42:31 For the remission.
- John Bytheway: 42:33 I just have a soft spot for Martin Harris when I study church history.
- Hank Smith: 42:36 Yeah.
- Dr. Krystal Pierce: 42:36 So does [President Oaks](#), I think.
- Hank Smith: 42:41 Yeah, President Dallin Harris Oaks, yeah, he probably... For these three and their families, their time away from the church is difficult, and Oliver comes back to the church. Martin comes back to the church, but David Whitmer never does. He and Joseph Smith had a serious, serious falling out, and we'll talk about that more next year, but let's push that aside, that difficult consequences for them and their families, and just acknowledge that the three witnesses leaving the church is the best thing that could have happened for the Book of Mormon.
- 43:11 Now, they have every reason to throw the light on this big charade. They can say, "Look, he's lying the whole time. I'm not even a part of the group anymore. In fact, they've kicked me out." That's kind of what happened to the Whitmers from Farr West. Through the rest of their lives, they testified of seeing the angel and seeing the plates. As I talk about the Book of Mormon, as I teach the Book of Mormon, students will say, "Why are we so limited on who can see the plates?" Because that seems like such an easy way to show people, "This is true. Here, take a look. Take a look for yourself." Why is he limited to these three and then to the eight witnesses later?

Dr. Krystal Pierce:	43:57	For me, it ties a lot back to faith. Faith is not knowing everything perfectly. If everybody was able to see the plates, where's the faith?
John Bytheway:	44:08	I like in Ether 3:9 where, "And the Lord said unto him: Because of thy faith thou hast seen." I love sequences. Look at what has to happen first before you see; just like you said, Krystal, it's not, "I'll show you the plates so that you will believe. Oh, no, that's not the order of things." Because of your faith, you will see. It's going to require all of us to have faith without seeing them, but my goodness, read the book. Read the book, and you'll be going, "Whoa."
Hank Smith:	44:41	That's an interesting idea, John, because Jesus didn't show his resurrected body to everyone. He wasn't walking the streets of Jerusalem. It was a limited group of people who saw that, and then they go testify to others. It seems like the plates are very similar.
Dr. George Pierce:	44:57	To tie all the threads together, they needed to have faith in order to even have Joseph inquire of the Lord, as he says in Joseph Smith history, to know if they might not obtain the privilege of being these witnesses. So they had to have that faith before they were shown, but I also think it goes to the knowledge of the Lord, in which he perfectly knows what people are going to do. He's not going to impinge on our agency, but he knows that Oliver's going to have problems with Joseph. He knows that Martin Harris is going to have problems with Joseph. He knows that David Whitmer is going to have problems with Joseph. Maybe in the Lord's omnipotence, these three are the witnesses; these three are the ones who end up leaving the church, two of whom end up getting rebaptized; none of the three of them, as we talked about President Oaks, would say this too yet to the end of their lives; not one of these witnesses deviated from his published testimony or said anything that cast shadow on its truthfulness.
Hank Smith:	45:54	I think that's great. I go back to our discussion, John, 2 Nephi 27, "The difference between the book and the words of the book." Do you remember that?
John Bytheway:	46:02	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	46:03	The Lord says, "The book isn't the important part; it's the words of the book." Sometimes we want evidence before we'll move forward, and the Lord says, "That's not how I work." The Lord doesn't want convinced people; we could put the plates in the Church History Museum, everyone comes over, we have Krystal

go read them, says, "Yep, this is Egyptian. Yep, this is what it says," and everybody's convinced. But that's not what the Lord wants. I think his end goal is converted people. The plates may convince you, but it seems that the text converts you. If the Lord really wants us to be like the brother of Jared, a Gentile like unto the brother of Jared, this was all about faith and growth. Faith and growth. Now enter into my present. So doesn't that seem very similar that the Lord says, "No, no, no, no, no. You want it backwards; you want evidence, so you move forward. I want you to move forward so I can give you these spiritual experiences."

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| Dr. Krystal Pierce: | 47:04 | Maybe if you saw the plates, then you would think you were done, and that's it. You saw them; they must be real. That's great. Maybe you wouldn't read. Like you were saying, focus on the important part, the actual translation or what the plates say. I do really like that idea. This makes you go further. It really pushes you to take that extra step to know, "What's on the plates? What do they say?"   |
| Hank Smith:         | 47:29 | Seeing the plates would be a miraculous experience, but I don't know honestly if it would be greater than the experiences I've had reading. This year, the aha moments we have had just in this little podcast and then my own personal reading in my own study from my classes, the clarity that comes while you're reading the moments of, "Wow," I just don't know if the plates could do that, could give you those moments that you can have while you study. Just with the Pierces, what they've walked us through here, I've had moments of, "Oh," and that to me is better. I don't know, seeing the plates would be amazing, but I don't know if it would be like what we've experienced. |
| John Bytheway:      | 48:11 | Laman and Lemuel wanted to see things, and when they did, when they actually saw, they said, "I don't know how you did that; those are cunning arts. You've deceived our eyes." They literally said, "You've deceived our eyes. We don't believe our own eyes." And maybe that's what would happen. You work some mystery and deceived our eyes. When you look at the content, you think, "Where did this come from? That has such power to move so many people to do amazing things." Like George, who is a convert to the church. Having you sit here with your background and your knowledge and showing us things in the book.   |
| Hank Smith:         | 48:55 | So let's talk about this just a little bit: George and Krystal, the text; that's where the power is, the Holy Ghost that comes through the text. I think <a href="#">Joseph Fielding Smith</a> said that "The Holy Ghost can weave the truth throughout the fibers and   |

sinews of the body." Now that, that's a different experience. Seeing the plates, I don't think could do that. Tell our listeners, I think they'd be interested in not just these five chapters, but what's your experience with this book? Try to put it into words. I know that's difficult to do, but try to put into words how you feel about the book. The whole thing.

Dr. George Pierce: 49:32

My experience with the book and with the text itself, as I started to look at it, I approached things like I normally do academically. I had to look at things and say, "Oh, yeah, this matches up with what I know." Sort of an ancient near Eastern setting, and these things have parallels, whether it's Mesopotamia or Egypt or when Nephi's talking about coming out of Judah, and I go, "Oh, yeah, this makes sense." Then the further I get into it, the more I look, and I saw, "Oh, this is how people act anthropologically, it doesn't matter if it's ancient near East or not. This is how people act in general in societies." Sort of like lining up. Honestly, I think the heavens open more by looking at this text, and every time I see it, including preparing for this podcast, there are moments in which, like I said, the heavens open and you get this sort of spirit.

50:32

You go, "Oh, that just makes sense. And I know this from my background I understand this part of the Old or New Testament, or I understand this thing from anthropology, or I understand this thing from archaeology, or I understand this bit of language." Opening up, wave upon wave of like, "This makes sense, this makes sense, this makes sense." And academically for me, and this is part of my testimony, it had to make sense here before it could make sense here. That was part of the great thing for me about reading it when I got baptized; I'd only read up to Helaman chapter 12. Since then, I've read the rest of it, the good parts 3 Nephi 11, but even reading up to that, it made sense, and it made sense in my mind of the truthfulness of the message, and the message was our need for Jesus Christ. And since then I see little bits like when you have two cities in the Nephite controlled areas, in the war chapters, and they're competing and they're both technically described as port cities.

51:31

That's part of [my dissertation](#) is about competition between ports and how that works, "This is all in the Book of Mormon, and this makes sense." Joseph isn't inventing this wholesale; this is how people behave. I see things like when society collapses in 3 Nephi and they go back to chiefdoms or little bands of people, and when we study societies, we see this is what happens, "Joseph would've had no idea about this." So to me, it testified of this realness to the book that made sense in my head, and then it took me when I visited Krystal, when we

first started dating, her parents took me to Temple Square, and we went to the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, and at the time they were showing the Prophet of the Restoration.

52:22 And this, by the way, is months before [Elder Holland's](#) famous conference talk, and you'll recognize this as soon as I say it, but I watched that film, and Hank, you and I have been there together when he is hauled out in the middle of the night in the John Johnson Farm in Hiram, Ohio, and he's tarred and feathered, and then the next day he continues to preach.

52:44 It struck me when I watched that film, and I said, "Why would you ever go through all that if none of this were true?" And that's when it finally made sense in my heart, right? That's when the text in the book finally made sense in my heart is I said, "Why would you ever do this? If it weren't true, you wouldn't bother." That's part of the beauty of the text for me is that it all makes sense academically, archaeologically, anthropologically, sociologically, linguistically, and then it makes sense spiritually that it is truth. And even without the plates, because I think I myself would be disappointed if I saw the plates. I'd be like, "Oh, really?" Because that's how I felt when I saw Stonehenge, by the way, no offense. I still have the moments of heaven opening, receiving revelation, and learning who Jesus is and learning who I am in comparison to him and who I can be as he tries to help me out on this covenant path.

Dr. Krystal Pierce: 53:34 I love it because when we first became friends, we had decided that we were from these two different faiths, and we wouldn't try to convert each other, but we could talk openly about our beliefs. I wanted to learn more about Baptists. He wanted to learn more about Latter-day Saints. Because of that, it opened this way of us being able to talk about everything, and I do remember he used to dig in Israel and I used to dig in Egypt, and so we'd separate, and I remember coming back from Egypt one year, and he said to me, "I read the Book of Mormon." Out of nowhere, I mean, it shocked me, and I remember I said, "Why? Why?"

54:13 Because it was so shocking to me. I loved it because one of the first things he said to me is, "I didn't find anything in there that contradicted what it says in the Bible." And he said, "I believe in the Bible, and I believe what the Bible teaches about Jehovah and about Jesus Christ, and the Book of Mormon is a testament of that, and the Bible is a testament, you know the Book of Mormon." And I remember that. I thought, "Wow, this is coming from somebody who really knows the Bible." But that actually strengthened my faith to actually hear him say that. I



love that that's how he describes what the book means to him. Even after all this time.

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| Hank Smith:         | 54:49 | I have noticed as we've been studying it this year, John, that I can see why Alma says, "O that I were an angel." I would just beg everyone, "Just read it; forget about what you think you know about it. Just read it. Just read it. You'll see what we see."   |
| John Bytheway:      | 55:08 | When we first started, we were talking about the Tower of Babel, and I don't know how true this is in mainstream Christianity, but I think there's a lot of stories that people think are fables that, "Well, there was no real garden of Eden." It's fun to see the Book of Mormon is testifying of the Bible when it uses stories like Noah in the Book of Ether talks about; their barges were like Noah and the Tower of Babel, and I love that the Book of Mormon is saying, "Actually, that Bible is true." |
| Dr. Krystal Pierce: | 55:39 | This goes back to the idea of the tower. We talked about how the people were trying to bring God down when in reality God's always trying to pull us up. He's constantly trying to pull us up, whether we want to talk about his level of divinity or pull us out of the deep, the dark, the places where we're at, and we just have to let him. If we open up and we let him do that, then we can do amazing, incredible things like the brother of Jared did.   |
| Hank Smith:         | 56:08 | John, what a great day. I have nowhere else to write in the Book of Ether. I'm like running off the side of the page.   |
| John Bytheway:      | 56:18 | Yeah, you too can rend the veil. I love it.   |
| Hank Smith:         | 56:22 | Thanks both of you. Doctors Pierce squared. Well, we want to thank Dr. Krystal Pierce, Dr. George Pierce for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and every episode we remember our founder. He would've loved this, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We have more lessons in the Book of Ether on followHIM.   |
|                     | 56:50 | Today's transcripts, show notes, and additional references are available on our website, <a href="http://followhim.co">followhim.co</a> . And you can watch the podcast on YouTube with additional videos on Facebook and Instagram. All of this is absolutely free, so be sure to share with your family and friends to reach those who are searching for help with their Come, Follow Me study. Please subscribe, rate, review, or comment on the podcast, which makes the podcast easier to find. Thank you.   |

57:17

We want to thank our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra and Annabelle Sorensen.

## BRING A SOLUTION



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| Hank Smith:    | 00:02 | Hello, welcome to followHIM Favorites. This is where John and I share a single story to go with each week's Come, Follow Me lesson. John, we're in Ether 1-5. You've told me you have a story that fits with this lesson.   |
| John Bytheway: | 00:16 | It's such a fun story. It's so interesting, the way the Lord talks to the brother of Jared. He says, I've heard you say it this way. "We can't see, we can't breathe, we can't steer."  |
| Hank Smith:    | 00:28 | Those aren't the best boats.  |
| John Bytheway: | 00:29 | Yeah. This design isn't working for us. We have these needs, like oxygen. When the Lord, asks him what to do for air, Lord tells him exactly. When the brother of Jared says, what I would do for light, the Lord says, "What do you recommend? What would ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?" Ether 2:23. Well, this reminds me of a story. When I was a missionary in the Philippines, I was with Elder Phil Broderick from Orem, Utah. Great guy. I at that time was in a mission office and I wanted to tell my beloved mission president, President Menlo Smith, "Hey, something just happened here, here, here." He just looked at me and said, "By the way, never come to your boss with a problem. Always come with a recommendation." And then he said, "Go get Elder Broderick." So I got Elder Broderick and he sat us down and he said, "I want to teach you something." |
|                | 01:17 | President Smith was all about a real leader trains leaders when he leads, he would say. He said, "I want to show you something. I call it the five levels of delegation. Level one, seek problems, solve it, keep it to yourself." He said, "You're not there yet. Level two, seek problems, solve them, report back. You're not there yet. I don't want you to do that." He said, "I want you at level three, seek problems, study it out in your mind, recommend a solution. What you just did was level four, come and tell me about the problem and say, 'What do we do?'" And he said, "Well, maybe there's a fifth level where I find out about   |

the problem and come to you. I want you never to come in here with a problem, always to come with a recommendation."

01:59 And that was life-changing for me. I used that when I was a bishop at the Ward Council. Don't dump the problem on the bishop. Dump the recommendation on the bishop. Tell me what you thought about and wrestled with and everything else. I used that when I was in continuing education at BYU. The thing that was amazing about that, Hank, is something happened after President Smith went to Singapore. You go way back in your mind, Hank, before cell phones. Can you do that for me?

Hank Smith: 02:26 Yeah. The phone was attached to the house. I remember.

John Bytheway: 02:28 Yeah. We didn't have a way to get in touch with President Smith, and something came up in the mission. My memory was, it was the Manila MTC wanted to change the date they were sending up missionaries. The way communication was there, we communicated with, it was almost like telegraph. They called it RCPI, Radio Communication of the Philippine Islands. It was these little guys on scooters would bring around little notes.

Hank Smith: 02:53 Really? Okay.

John Bytheway: 02:54 Yeah. It would've been terrible. We couldn't change the date. I remember sitting at my desk like this, Hank, going, "What would president do? What would president do? What would president do?" He had trained us to think, what would president do? I came up with something. I called the Manila MTC, convinced the mission president there, and I was so grateful for that experience. Now, the best part of the story, Hank, is one night, President Smith was telling us that he was not a member. He married a less active member. She had a Book of Mormon. He read the Book of Mormon, and the story that touched him was the way that God dealt with the brother of Jared because it matched the way he worked with people. And 10 years later, he was my mission president. I think this really stood out to him, what that I should do that you may have light in your vessels? Because that was one of his levels of delegation. I've used it ever since.

Hank Smith: 03:54 Wow. That's awesome. This was a while ago.

John Bytheway: 03:57 This is the '80s. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 03:59 This is the '80s, and you still remember in that kind of detail.

John Bytheway:	04:03	Because I used it as a bishop all the time because if everybody, instead of just handing problems to someone, how does the Lord do it? And how does Section 9 tell us? You go study it out in your mind and you wrestle with it because that's how you'll grow.
Hank Smith:	04:16	That's fantastic. Fantastic, John. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcasts. We're with a couple of doctors this week. We're with Dr. Krystal Pierce and Dr. George Pierce. We have a really fun time in these chapters, so we hope you'll join us there. Then come back next week, we'll do another followHIM Favorites.