

[Advent E1 Transcript]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hello, Jon.

Jon: Today, we're going to do something new.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: We're going to spend four weeks in the words related to the Advent season.

Tim: Exactly. The four words are "hope," "peace," "joy," and "love."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Advent—it's typically four weeks leading up till Christmas, marked by four Sunday worship gatherings. And those are the four Sundays of Advent. And the whole theme is about waiting, developing the virtue of patience and waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise in sending the Messiah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And for us, it's just a chance to dive into four really profound, meaningful biblical—uh—I guess, I won't say words because many of these words actually have multiple Hebrew or Greek words underneath them. So they're kind of like idea—topic studies.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Mhm. Hope, peace, joy, and love.

Jon: And we're going to first look at hope.

Tim: Cool. Okay. It's been a while since I've begun with the Bible trivia question, Jon.

Jon: Ooh.

Tim: If I were to ask you: Who's the first person in the story of the Bible who has to wait? Like, they're waiting for something, and that's, like, a focus of stories. They're waiting.

Jon: First character waiting—

Tim: Waiting.

Jon: For something.

Tim: For some—for God to do something or just waiting. Mhm.

Jon: Okay. Well, let's start with Adam, then.

Tim: Okay. Right. Yeah.

Jon: Is he waiting for anything? I mean, God wants to give him a helper.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: He's got to go into a little sleep.

Tim: Needs that delivering ally. Yeah. But he's not sitting around waiting.

Jon: No, it—well, he's anesthetized.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So that time went fast.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Cain and Abel—there's no waiting. Uh—all right. So when we get to Noah, he's got to build the ark. He's got to wait for the rain. That's right. So there is some, like—rain's not here. We got the boat. So it's Noah.

Tim: That's right. Uh—it is Noah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Ding ding ding—

[Laughter]

Tim: Ding ding ding ding ding. And you're right in that God says, "In 40 days, I'm going to bring rain on the land." But that 40 days isn't really drawn out in the narrative. It's just sort of like, then he builds a boat, and then—then the rain starts.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But the opposite moment, where the period of waiting for the waters to recede—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: To go away—

Jon: That's also a—a 40, right?

Tim: Mhm. Yes. And it's marked by a series of moments in the story where Noah sent out a dove to see whether the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. And the dove couldn't find a resting place for her foot. So she returned to him in the ark, for the waters were still all over. He stretched out his hand, brought her back into the ark, and he waited for seven days. And then he sent out the dove again, and it came back with the little olive leaf—tree leaf—in the mouth. And then he waited for seven more days. He sent out the dove, and it just never came back. And then he gets off the boat. Noah is the first person to wait.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So the word here is *yakhal*. You got to clear your throat in the middle. *Kh. Kh. Yakhal*. This is one of the main Hebrew words that gets translated as hope. But the first time it appears, it very clearly—

Jon: Just means wait.

Tim: Yes. Yeah. It would be weird to say, "And he hoped for another seven days, and then sent out the dove from the ark."

Jon: That does sound weird.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "He hoped for seven days." Yeah.

Tim: So I'm just going to say *yakhal*.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So let's look at some more examples, here.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So there's a story in First Samuel where King Saul is supposed to *yakhal* for the prophet Samuel for seven days, and then Samuel is going to show up and offer a sacrifice, and a whole bunch of stuff supposed to happen. And then during those seven days, the Philistines surround him, and he's freaking out. And he doesn't *yakhal*. He, like, moves too quickly before Samuel shows up. So it's another example just of *yakhal* is—

Jon: It means wait.

Tim: Yeah. And it's also seven days, which is interesting. Okay. But then, here are other examples of *yakhal* or the nouns that come from it. So *tokhelet* is a noun that derives from *yakhal*.

Jon: I don't see that at all—how they are similar.

Tim: Oh.

Jon: *Yakhal*—

Tim: Oh.

Jon: And *tokhelet*?

Tim: Yeah. Well, the *ya* of *yakhal* gets morphed into *O* when you put that *T* on the front.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then you can see the *kh*—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of *yakhal* and *tokhelet*. You see the *kh*, and then the *t* on the end is a little suffix on the end.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So it's in there.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: *Yakhal* is in *tokhelet*.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: It's just a little historical linguistics. Anyway, so there's a noun, and the verb and the noun are used in ways where "waiting" would be a weird translation. Maybe. So here's a rad little riddle of a proverb. Proverbs chapter 13: "*Tokhelet* that is deferred makes the heart sick. But a desire that is fulfilled, mmm, that's a tree of life."

[Laughter]

Tim: This is such a cool little riddle-hyperlink back to the garden of Eden story.

Jon: Mmm, with the tree of life.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: So "Desire fulfilled is a tree of life."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The point of the tree of life is, as you've said many times, to participate in God's—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Life—

Tim: God's own life.

Jon: That never ends.

Tim: Yeah. So the tree of life is like the representation of God meeting us with his own personal life-presence-power. It's like the ultimate fulfillment of every human aspiration and desire.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's the second half.

Jon: That's the second half. So the first half is—

Tim: Is the opposite of that.

Jon: The opposite.

Tim: So you get: *tokhelet* matches desire. You get “deferred” meaning “constantly delayed—” is the opposite of fulfilled.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then a sick heart is the opposite of the tree of life. Isn't that an interesting contrast?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In biblical thought, heart is the center of thinking and desiring and purpose.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So you constantly want something, are planning to get it, strategizing, desiring it, and when the thing that is your *tokhelet* is constantly delayed, it just makes humans fall apart, man.

Jon: Yeah. It makes you feel sick.

Tim: Mhm. *Tokhelet* is like a driver. It's a motivator.

Jon: Mmm. I see. So here, it's not strictly the act of waiting.

Tim: No, it's—it's more, isn't it? Mhm. It's the thing that you're waiting for.

Jon: It's what you're waiting for.

Tim: When you're waiting for a thing and it is constantly forever put off, it just—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Makes the heart sick.

Jon: So it seems like this word *yakhal* is like a type of waiting attached to a hope.

Tim: Attached to a—yeah—a particular—

Jon: An expectation.

Tim: Object. Yes. Yes, exactly. Isn't that interesting? So it can refer to enduring the passage of time, but also included in the meaning of the word is the thing—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That you are waiting for. And we would call that, like, your hope—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Your object of hope.

Jon: I see.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. Let's go to Psalm 33.

Jon: All right.

Tim: There's three appearances of this idea here, starting in verse 16. "A king is not saved by the greatness of an army. A warrior is not delivered by the greatness of strength. A horse is a false hope for victory, nor can it save by the greatness of its power." Typically, we think the bigger army and the bigger tank, that is, the war horse, gives you victory. And that might be true in a relative sense, but it's not always true. And you can't count on it all of the time.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So verse 18: "Look, the eye of Yahweh is on those who fear him, on those who *yakhal* for his loyal love to deliver their soul from death, to keep them alive in a famine."

Jon: Mmm. Okay, so what really does save? Ultimately, what has the power to save and deliver—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And bring hope? It's Yahweh—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: His loyal love, and—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: His ability to deliver from death.

Tim: From death and famine, which is interesting examples—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: Both really important in Genesis as images of the fragile nature of life that we didn't create for ourselves, and we don't really sustain for ourselves.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Lack of life-breath and lack of food—like, we could be there in a heartbeat. So truly, what's most powerful is waiting for Yahweh to fulfill his promises out of loyal love.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Verse 20: "Our soul waits for Yahweh." And this is a different Hebrew word. It's a Hebrew word, *khikah*, which does seem to refer particularly to the passage of time, sitting through a passage of time.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: It's a more neutral word for wait.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: So, "Our soul waits for Yahweh. He is our—"ooh—"our *ezer*." This is what—

Jon: Ah.

Tim: God provides for Adam in the woman.

Jon: The delivering ally.

Tim: Yahweh is for us, as we wait for him. "He is our help and our shield. In him, our heart rejoices. In his holy name, we trust. Let your loyal love—"notice the repetition—"Be on us, oh Yahweh, even as we *yakhal* in you." So we have "Our soul waits for Yahweh," but these two uses of *yakhal*—I mean, we are waiting because you're waiting for Yahweh to do something—rescue you. But there's more here. We're waiting for Yahweh's loyal love. "We're waiting on you, Yahweh."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You could also translate it, “on those who hope for his loyal love.” And it’s hard to tell the difference. So maybe it’s just the invitation for us is to see that in certain acts of waiting where I am really emotionally invested in the outcome—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: We use the word hope, *yakhal*.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So this is one major word for hope, but it’s not the only one.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So this wa—that was part one.

Jon: Part one.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah. This next one’s super interesting.

[Musical Break (10:56—11:26)]

Tim: The next word that’s used—uh—a lot in biblical Hebrew is *qavah*. *Qavah*. So here’s a poem that uses it multiple times. It’ll tell the story. So he says, “Let me—”that is, Isaiah the prophet—“sing a song for my beloved—”that’s God—“about his vineyard.” And as we’re going to find out, the vineyard is the people. So “My beloved had a vineyard on a nice, fertile hill. He dug it, cleared it of all the stones, planted it with choice vines. He even built a watchtower right in the middle. He, like, got a—a pickaxe and hewed out, like, a wine vat in it, you know, to stomp on the grapes. And then he *qavahed* for the garden to yield grapes. But it yielded stinky, wild grapes.”

Jon: Stinky, wild grapes?

Tim: Yeah, *beushim* is the—

[Laughter]

Tim: So—it's so rad. So he put in all this effort—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then he *qavahs*.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And what he *qavahs* is for—

Jon: The harvest.

Tim: The har—yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Like, what he expects is going to happen. And then it—you know, it yields unusable grapes.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Prophet steps in. ““Okay, inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah, why don't you judge between me and my vineyard?”” So now the beloved is talking. The beloved just started talking. ““What more could I have done for my vineyard that I didn't do? Why, when I *qavahed* for it to produce good grapes, did it produce worthless ones?”” So God basically says, “I'm going to destroy the vineyard.” Like, just, full on, “going to remove the hedge, break down its wall, animals are going to trample it, and thorns and briars are going to come up.” And no more rain on that vineyard. The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel. The men of Judah are the plant that he's supposed to delight in. So, he *qavahed* for *mishpat*. But what he got was *mispakh*—”

Jon: Oh.

Tim: “Bloodshed.” It's a little wordplay in Hebrew. “He *qavahed* for *tsedaqah*, but what really comes up out of Jerusalem is *tseaqah*.”

Jon: Oh, wow.

Tim: The innocent crying and distressed because of their oppression. Okay, so here's what's so interesting. This is one of those moments where you just look things up in the Hebrew lexicon and you're just like, “Whoa, serious? That's, like, so cool.” I'm looking at the *Koehler-Baumgartner Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, and here we are. This is *qavah*—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And it's a denominative verb. What this means is, it's a verb that's derived from a noun. So a noun is like the base meaning.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then a verb developed out of it. But the noun's the primary meaning.

Jon: All right.

Tim: So here's what a *qav* is—but this is now looking at the noun. In Isaiah 44, this is describing a guy making an idol statue. And it says, "Let's say you have a woodworker. How's he going to start the process of making an idol?"

Jon: Making an idol?

Tim: "Well, the first thing he's going to do is stretch out a *qav* and then make an outline of it with a marker."

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: "Then he gets a knife, and—uh—he'll make an outline of it with another tool, and make into the image of a human." He—so a *qav* is something you stretch—

Jon: Like a—

Tim: Out, and then you use it as this kind of measure to cut or shape something.

Jon: Okay. So it's like a ruler?

Tim: Ezekiel 47:3: "There was this man who went out to the east with a *qav* in his hand, and he measured—"

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "A thousand cubits."

Jon: Yeah. It's an ancient ruler.

Tim: Wo—this is an ancient ruler, but it was a cord. Like, have you ever gone—seen those super long-distance measuring—like on a soccer field?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And it's like a hundred yards or—

Jon: Right.

Tim: And it's all in a roll?

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: That's a *qav*.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So it's like a cord, a measuring cord. That's what a—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: *Qav* is.

Jon: Got it.

Tim: So in the Hebrew lexicon, it says “denominative,” that is, a verb derived from a noun, “from *qav* with the basic meaning of, ‘to be taut.’”

Jon: Oh, okay. So “fully extended.”

Tim: Yeah. So the case that they're making is that *qavah* refers to the moment when a cord is being pulled tight, and then there's some—

Jon: Tension.

Tim: Yeah, the “tension—”

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Is our English word. And tension refers to when all of the energy of motion—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It can't move—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But there's energy. And so all that energy gets focused on, like, one spot on the cord, and then usually at the weakest spot, it breaks.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But it's referring to the energy focused on that spot in the moment of the tension.

Jon: That's what the verb refers to?

Tim: That's what they're saying the verb—

Jon: So wait, the noun is the cord itself.

Tim: The noun is the cord itself.

Jon: But then the verb—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Is when it's completely—

Tim: You're pulling—

Jon: Extended?

Tim: The cord tight. Yeah. It's a figure of speech—

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: So it doesn't make literal—

Jon: Right.

Tim: Sense.

Jon: Okay. The point of the cord is to pull it tight.

Tim: Yeah, because if it's all loose, then you don't—

Jon: You don't know.

Tim: Get the correct measure.

Jon: I see.

Tim: If you want to measure—

Jon: Ah.

Tim: It correctly, you got to pull it tight.

Jon: That's the purpose of the *qav*, is to be *qaved*?

Tim: Mhm. That's right.

Jon: I see.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: And—

Tim: You—

Jon: So then—

Tim: You lay it down—

Jon: What does it mean for myself—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: To be *qaved*?

Tim: To *qavah*.

Jon: To *qavah*.

Tim: *Qavah*. So I—

Jon: I'm stretched tight.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, I pull tight the cord.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: And that's this—

Jon: And that's—

Tim: Word.

Jon: An idea of anticipating.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. So you *qavah*, you cord.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yah—Yahweh—

Jon: He cord.

Tim: Cor—corded for good grapes. I mean, it's a v—when I learned that, I thought, that's the coolest way to imagine expectation or hope.

Jon: Yeah, it is.

Tim: It's a state of tension.

Jon: To anticipate is to be a cord pulled tight.

Tim: Mhm, yeah.

Jon: That's in—wow, okay. Cool.

Tim: Isn't that a rad image?

Jon: That is rad.

Tim: Okay.

Jon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tim: So here, let's just look at examples now. So Psalm 25: "To you, Yahweh, I lift up my soul. My God, I trust you. Don't let me be put to shame. Don't let my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who *qavah* for you should be put to shame. Those who betray without cause, they should be put to shame. Make me know your ways, Yahweh. Teach me your paths. Cause me to walk in your truth. Teach me. You are the God of my salvation. I *qavah* you," or—

[Laughter]

Tim: "For—for you."

Jon: "I'm stretched tight—"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "For you."

Tim: Yeah. I mean—so what's interesting is when I hear the word tension—we have this English word to describe that tightness of all the energy focused in, but not yet to the breaking point.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Y—that's not a sustainable or desirable place—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: To find yourself in.

Jon: Right.

Tim: It's not pleasant, but it's generative. It's creative.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: It—it—uhm—it—

Jon: It's not pleasant, but it does have energy—

Tim: Yeah. Yes.

Jon: And—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You could use that energy for a good purpose.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So these are the two primary words that get translated as hope in the Hebrew Bible. Waiting and—

Jon: Yeah, being stretched.

Tim: Tense stretching—

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like a cord.

Jon: Hmm. It's interesting, the cord has a purpose, and the purpose cannot be achieved until it's stretched. So embedded in this metaphor is the idea of, in order to—to live into the—your purpose, you need to be stretched.

Tim: Yeah. There was—uhm—an early church bishop and a scholar in the fourth century. He lived in the region of Cappadocia. His name was Gregory of Nyssa. I just discovered his writings a couple of years ago. I can't get enough of this guy. He talks about the experience of new creation as being this paradox, where it's both the fulfillment of every hope that I've ever had of being in a resurrection body in the direct presence of God or with all, like, the redeemed—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Creation. And you're like, "Wow, that's a pretty sweet setup. Surely, that would fulfill all of my hopes." But for God to be God, God is always above and beyond what any creature could ever fully comprehend. Like, the very essence of who God is as someone to know—like, we'll never know the full depth, and beauty, and complexity of God's being. Yet every step forward that we take to grow in our knowledge and union with God will simultaneously satisfy us, but then make us realize there's another horizon —

Jon: Oh.

Tim: In knowing God beyond it. And he thinks of the new creation as just an infini—

Jon: No way.

Tim: An infinity—

Jon: This is a brand new thought for me.

Tim: Yeah, he—

Jon: Wh—

Tim: Calls it—

Jon: What?

Tim: The *Epektasis*, the internal stretching out of—

Jon: What?

Tim: The human soul.

Jon: So this idea—

[Laughter]

Jon: Of actually being fulfilled—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: It's like a past tense. "I've been fulfilled."

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: You're saying, like, every moment where you're like, "I've been that—"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You just realize, "Oh, there's—"

Tim: There's more.

Jon: "There's more."

Tim: There's more. So he—he's not saying—it's a paradox because it's both being—every desire fulfilled—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the new creation, but simultaneously realizing my appetite for desire fulfilled is infinite and can only be matched by an infinite God, which means it's just an eternity of growing into our desires and meeting them, only to see that there's, like, the next horizon.

Jon: Huh. So it's like an infinite stretching.

Tim: Yeah. And he calls it the *Epektasis*. Anyway, this was his kind of unique take.

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: But I think it's a really beautiful way to think about that our capacity for union with God is infinite in a way that corresponds to the infinite fountain of God's life to meet our needs and desires and keep drawing us into himself. And that's—uh—one way to think about hope. It's a generative, creative tension that keeps us exploring and desiring and —

Jon: And finding the thing that we want and then realizing it goes much deeper than we thought—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And there's more.

Tim: Yeah. To be a creature is to *qavah*, to exist in a state of tension, of desiring—

Jon: Because I've thought about this a lot. Like, when you get to eternal life, are we going to be bored?

Tim: Right. Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: Because we've—

Tim: Totally.

Jon: Attained—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: It all.

Tim: This is Gregory of Nyssa's way—he was bothered by that question, too.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: And so the more he thought about the biblical imagery of God's infinity, God's eternity, God as the source of infinite goodness and beauty, that, to be a creature will always be to desire more.

Jon: So this virtue of hope is not just something that we have to put up with until one day things are all fulfilled.

Tim: Yeah. It's like it's a—what do you say—a feature, not a bug.

[Laughter]

Tim: Because that tension that desire creates in us, that hope—uhm—drives us onward looking for more. And then when you find the one who is infinite more-ness, then dude, you've got a sweet existence because God's just like, "Hey—"like—"come over here."

Jon: "I got more."

Tim: "I got this thing for you." C.S. Lewis ends the final book of the Narnia series—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: *The Last Battle*, with that image of the new creation as of them running with Aslan in—over the next hill, and then over the next hill, and it—just further up and further in. And then he says, you know, "The—really, the story just finally reached its beginning." The whole story—you might think it's ending, but actually, it's just an infinitely new story. And he says, "In which each chapter is better than the last." I wonder if there's something about *qavah*, especially *qavah*, the state of tension, that's just built into our nature as creatures. It's a beautiful idea.

Jon: Mmm, it is.

Tim: Yeah.

[Musical Break (23:40—24:10)]

Tim: I think this plays into a conversation you and I have had many times over the years about this difference that I like to make between optimism and hope.

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: And I thi—we're kind of in the same ballpark here, where, you can have a hope built up because you look at a set of circumstances and you're like, "Yeah, I think we're trending in a certain direction here, and it's the one that I like. So I'm hoping for that outcome."

Jon: Okay. You would call that optimism?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In my mind, optimism is about looking at the current trajectory—

Jon: Ah, yes.

Tim: Of events, and seeing like, "I think—"

Jon: All the data is pointing—

Tim: "It's pointing that way."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Versus hope—

Jon: Ah.

Tim: Which I think is something the biblical authors want us to sustain regardless of the circumstances or actually in the face of, like—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The opposite circumstances.

Jon: The giant army.

Tim: Yeah, with Goliath standing in front of you.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And in that case, you're not hoping in the circumstances to go a certain direction. What you're actually hoping for is—is God. This is why these words, *yakhal* and *qavah*, especially when you go to the Psalms—they most consistently just have God as their object, as the thing for which you are longing or waiting, that you *qavah* and that you *yakhal* for. And back to Psalm 33, you have a—a big army, and you have, like, the biggest ancient horse tanks any—of anybody. Don't hope in that. It's a false—ooh, false hope for victory. I forgot to look up—17—oh, *sheqer*.

Jon: Oh, it's a *sheqer*.

Tim: This is from—this is “false.” *Sheqer* means—

Jon: It’s an illusion.

Tim: A false representation—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of something. It’s not really what it is. It’s a trick.

Jon: So then that then raises the question: If there’s something good about anticipating —

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: A thing you desire—

Tim: Yeah. Totally.

Jon: Then is the wisdom in, “Let’s learn to anticipate the right thing and to actually enjoy that”?

Tim: Yeah. It’s teaching us to separate our real hopes from any of the objects or experiences that we tend to put our hope in to fulfill our desires. And like this Proverb, 13:12, it’s telling us that the only thing that can really fulfill our ultimate desires is this gift of participating in the very life presence of God, which, whatever that means, that’s the goal of getting back into Eden, is just unity—union with God. I mean, we just have all these biblical images to talk about it. Yeah.

Jon: So Advent’s about being in that season of feeling stretched? But let’s find meaning in that and let’s enjoy—

Tim: Sitting in tension.

Jon: There’s a purpose for that.

Tim: Yeah. There’s a purpose in that waiting—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In that anticipation. So the first week of Advent is about anticipating, waiting—

Jon: Being stretched.

Tim: Yeah, being stretched—uhm—as we wait for the arrival of God with us—God and human united as one—uh—in the true human, the true King and Messiah. And he’s the one in whom—uh—we can place our hope. Yeah.

Jon: Very cool.

Tim: Hope. “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” There’s much to meditate on there.

[Musical Break (27:41—27:47)]

Tyler: Hey, this is Tyler, and I edit the podcast. We’re going to do something special for the end of these Advent series episodes. We’re going to have some of our own staff members tell us their thoughts on each of these words: hope, peace, joy, and love. And so today, we have someone with us very special coming in from Ohio. Would you like to introduce yourself?

Dylan: Hi, I’m Dylan. I’m from Columbus, Ohio, and I’m a designer for BibleProject.

Tyler: Dylan, thanks so much for joining today, and I’m excited to talk to you.

Dylan: Yeah. Likewise.

Tyler: So hope isn’t just optimism. To be hopeful is actually to choose to live in the tension of this reality that we live in and the reality that we ultimately hope in, which is the restoration of all things. Do you have any reflections on that idea?

Dylan: I think the hope for something that’s tough—you long for it, you hope for it, but you know it’s just going to be a struggle—I think about the Israelites wandering in the desert for 40 years.

Tyler: Yep.

Dylan: There was a percentage of those people who started their life in that place, and they ended their life in that 40-year span. And to try to imagine how easy it would be to be hopeless for that person, and being given provision, but also grumbling, and th—you know, whole dynamic of that. And so it helps me take a breath and calm my head sometimes, and go, “You’re going to be okay.”

Tyler: Yeah. I think that’s a great example of people living in the tension of hope, waiting for their hopes to be realized, but that there are these little things that remind us of God’s goodness along the way. What are some things, Dylan, that give you hope along the way?

Dylan: One of the things that is really helpful for me, especially when I have tension or anxiety, is reminding myself of what is true, and God's past faithfulness motivates us for the future. I have all these distractions, all these reasons why I have anxiety, and I want to move faster and take on more stuff, and somehow that will be the magic answer. And I realized the opposite is actually true.

Tyler: Yeah.

Dylan: But I slow down long enough to go, "Okay, why am I putting energy into all that stuff versus just resting in a God who wants the best for me and has a much longer-term plan that I can't even begin to fathom." What I think about when I'm walking—the immensity of birds that are just in the central Ohio area. If we're willing to slow down and just pay attention to those little things, we get these little glimpses of a maker that delights in what he makes.

Tyler: That's great, Dylan. And I can't help but think of Jesus teaching in the Sermon on the Mount about the birds and that they have what they need. And it also reminds me of God providing for the Israelites' needs in the desert, and that they had to share with each other and constantly remind each other of God's promise to them. And so for one final thought, how significant is it that we should share hope with one another?

Dylan: Yeah. Sharing hope is critical to hope continuing. And that word about tension—

Tyler: Yeah. *Qavah*.

Dylan: Yeah, how there's an energy in that. If we attribute that energy to a maker who loves us, then sharing hope, you know, propagates hope because it's fueled by the energy of the one who gave us hope in the first place.

Tyler: Dylan, thank you so much for talking with us today. I had such a good time. And that's it for today's episode. There is a whole team of us here at the BibleProject that help make the podcast happen every week. For a full list of everyone involved, check out the show credits at the end of the episode wherever you stream your podcast and on our app. See you later, Dylan.

Dylan: Bye, Tyler.

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Ben: Hi, my name is Ben, and I'm from Terre, Indiana.

Christiana: Hi, my name is Christiana, and I'm from Houston, Texas. I first heard about the BibleProject from my husband, and I use the BibleProject for interpreting the Bible and for diving in deeper into Scripture.

Ben: I first heard about the BibleProject when I was wanting to learn about the book of Job and searched for videos on YouTube and the overview video popped up. I use BibleProject to learn about Scripture and help students I serve with learn more about the story of Jesus.

Christiana: My favorite thing about the BibleProject is the animation and how you just feel like you're literally inside the characters.

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