

Letter of Jude E5

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Jon: Welcome to BibleProject podcast. We're in a short series on the New Testament letter of Jude, or as we've been calling it, the letter of Judah. Judah planned to write a letter to his Jewish Messianic community about their shared salvation in Jesus. But instead, he had to drop everything and write a letter dealing with the crisis happening in the church.

Tim: Jude said, "I've got to put out a fire, because there's these people that have come into the house church communities, and they're going to ruin you, and ruin the integrity of our witness to Jesus, as a community."

Jon: Jude doesn't pull any punches as he warns about these men. Yet he writes about them in a very different way than we might. He quotes stories from the Hebrew Bible that illustrate the deep ancient patterns that these men are participating in. And then he expects us, the reader, to just understand these patterns, because we spent so much time meditating on these very stories.

Tim: He does what Second Temple Jewish Hebrew Bible nerds that follow Jesus would do. They see the world through the patterns, and the characters, and the stories, and the poems in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Jon: Today, we look at how these dangerous men are like three characters in the Bible: Cain—that's the firstborn of Adam—who kills his brother, Abel; Balaam, that's the pagan sorcerer who's hired to curse Israel; and Korah, that's the Levite who leads a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, rejecting God's chosen leaders.

Tim: What links them together is subtle in the Hebrew Bible. These are three stories of people who themselves made bad decisions, but then they bring other people into their deception.

Jon: Jude then uses some stark metaphors to describe the impact these men are having. They're like hidden sea rocks.

Tim: You guys are on the ship called your church, and they're like a rock that's just about to rip a hole in the whole boat and sink your battleship.

Jon: They're like shepherds feeding themselves.

Tim: He's accusing them of being like rebel leaders of Israel. They're there feasting with you but not to honor the Lord Jesus. They're actually there, just feeding themselves.

Jon: And they're like clouds without rain carried along by the wind. They're trees of late autumn without fruit.

Tim: Things that you think should bring fruitfulness—they don't. It's false advertising.

Jon: All of Jude's images assume that you're familiar with how these images work in the Hebrew Bible. But then, just to keep things spicy, Jude throws in a quote from another Second Temple Jewish writing that isn't in the Bible. He quotes from 1 Enoch, a prophecy about God's coming judgment on a cosmic rebellion. Now, if you're unfamiliar with Enoch, that's okay. We'll get into it, and we'll see why Judah is quoting from it.

Tim: Judah is using these cosmic de-creation images to describe these people's lifestyle and the kind of effect they'll have on their church community.

Jon: Today, Tim Mackie and I continue in the letter of Judah, a unique look into how these early Christians read their Bible and how they found wisdom from other Second Temple literature as well. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical Break (3:16–3:17)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hey, Jon Collins. Hello.

Jon: We're working through the letter of Judah, and we've only got a couple more conversations left to land the plane.

Tim: I know.

Jon: And we've got a lot of verses left.

Tim: We do. So, should we just get right to it?

Jon: Let's get right into it.

Tim: Okay, the body of the letter. Jude said, "I wanted to write biblical theology of salvation, and I have got to put out a fire, because there's these people that have come into the house church communities, full of people—you all—that I love." He says, "Beloved ones—and they're going to ruin you and ruin the integrity of our witness to Jesus, as a community. Our way of life that points to our allegiance to Jesus is going to get ruined, compromised, if these people, and how they live, spreads." So, he does what Hebrew Bible nerds would do—Second Temple Jewish Hebrew Bible nerds that follow Jesus. They see the world through the patterns, and the characters, and the stories, and the poems of Hebrew Scriptures. So, he wove together three biblical stories of the rebellion of the spies against Moses and God.

Jon: They're like them.

Tim: They're like them, they're like the rebellious spiritual beings that didn't accept the limits God put on them—also the honor God put on them—to rule over these guys. They wanted more. And they're also like the men of Sodom, who violated, slandered, and tried to abuse spiritual beings. And then, we got into a whole thing about how their contempt and slander for spiritual beings represents a whole set of issues. That was our last conversation. So, after giving those three long examples from the Hebrew Bible, he's going to come and do another round of three short examples from the Hebrew Bible. And then, just like he gave those three long examples and then applied it to these people, he's going to give three short examples and then apply it to these people. And this is how he's going to do it. We're going to look at verses 11 through 13. This is such a fascinating little paragraph. He says, "Woe to them." He's getting Old Testament prophet style, here. "Woe" means bad news for them.

Jon: There's a curse.

Tim: Not a curse. A curse is invoking God to do something to them. Saying "woe to them" is a way of saying, they have a terrible set of consequences in store because of the choices they've been making. Bad news, sad, sad, weep, wail, lament, woe to them.

Jon: Okay. What does it mean to woe?

Tim: Well, literally in Hebrew, it's *hoy*. It's not even a proper word. It's what we call an exclamation.

Jon: Onomatopoeia?

Tim: Yeah. So, what's a word? What's one of those in English?

Jon: Oy. Ugh.

Tim: Oy. Ugh, yeah.

Jon: Ugh to them.

Tim: But woe is also, you're calling to a group of people, and saying, like—I guess we don't, do we have an equivalent of this? What would you say if you saw a car wreck right on the highway, and you're in a car full of people—what sound would come out if you were trying to express your grief and lament and sadness for the series of events that just unfolded?

Jon: Yeah, we would just kind of go, "Oh."

Tim: And then, "woe" also has something the car wreck doesn't, which is a level of, like, guilt or culpability.

Jon: Okay, if you're watching someone harassing people or stealing stuff or just doing something, a whole group of people, and you're reacting to it, there's a sense of condemnation in the reaction.

Tim: Mhm. That's it. Yeah. Woe to them. Yeah.

Jon: Alright.

Tim: Mmm. I should have stacked up a whole bunch of examples, so we could look at some.

Jon: No, that is helpful.

Tim: Woe to them. Because, maybe these three examples that he gives—so, three short Hebrew Bible examples, but each one of them has a long—oh, it's so cool. Anyway, here he goes. "They've traveled on the path of Cain."

Jon: The path of Cain.

Tim: You know, who murdered Abel.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “They’ve given themselves over to the deception of Balaam’s reward.” You know, Balaam, that—

Jon: The sorcerer.

Tim: —Ancient Near Eastern sorcerer.

Jon: Yeah. What was his reward? Are we going to go into these?

Tim: At least briefly. “They’ve been destroyed in the hostile rebellion of Korah.”

Jon: Okay. And these were the priests?

Tim: Mmm, yeah. This is the rebellion that happened right after the rebellion of the leaders and the spies.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. So interesting.

Jon: So, three types of rebellions?

Tim: Okay. So, three Old Testament characters, all who came to a bad end.

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. Did they?

Tim: They did.

Jon: Alright!

Tim: Let’s track it through. So what Judah is doing here is, he’s citing three characters from the Hebrew Scriptures, but what links them together is subtle, very subtle, in the Hebrew Bible, by the authors of the Hebrew Bible. Second Temple Jewish Bible nerds noticed those hyperlinks. And so, they begin to read these three stories in light of each other and begin to import details and ideas from one to fill in gaps in the other.

Jon: Oh, interesting. Okay.

Tim: Super interesting. So, for example, Cain, Genesis 4, God favors his brother over him, his offering, over him.

Jon: Cain is the farmer. Abel is the shepherd. They both bring offerings.

Tim: Cain’s the firstborn. He’s older, and God’s favoring the younger, the offering of the younger, which is an animal offering. And Cain’s bringing his, you know, vegetable

goods, which is a sweet offering. It's cool. And that makes him angry. God says, "Hey listen, be careful with that anger. It's like an animal, crouching, wants to rule you. You can rule it. And there's exaltation for you, too, if you do the right thing." He doesn't do the right thing. He kills his brother.

Jon: It's the opposite of the right thing.

Tim: It's the opposite of the right thing. Now, then, you're just told he's exiled from Eden, and then he finds a wife, and marries, has kids, and builds a city.

Jon: And I just imagine him, living in a ripe old age, in the city he built.

Tim: Yeah. Maybe in remorse or grief over what he had done. "No," say the later Jewish readers of the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Oh. Okay.

Tim: Wisdom of Solomon, second-century Jewish text: "When an unrighteous man"—that is, Cain—"departed from Lady Wisdom, in his anger, he perished, because, in rage, he killed his brother. When the earth was flooded because of him—"

Jon: Oh, wow. He kicked off that whole thing. I guess, in a way.

Tim: Yeah. So this is an author who sees a red thread from Cain's murder of his brother to the Nephilim, spilling the blood of the innocent on the land. And the link between the two is Cain's city that he built. Seven generations down the line, you get Lamech. And I think it's the Wisdom of Solomon, drawing a link between Lamech and the Nephilim. The idea that Lamech is one of these Nephilim, one of these warriors, as a result of intermixing.

Jon: Wait, because when would the flood have happened?

Tim: Ah. The flood would have happened in the lifetime of Noah.

Jon: Which was, then, how many generations down from—

Tim: Oh, yeah, gosh, I mapped this all out, once. I have a little chart that shows the overlapping of all the ages of the—

Jon: I kind of want to see that. We kind of have to keep moving, but let's see a chart.

[Laughter]

Tim: Here we go.

Jon: Alright.

Tim: Wow. Okay, on page 97 of my notes from Adam to Noah class.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But this is about the lineage not through Cain but through Seth. But Cain was Seth's older brother. So, it looks like Seth is dying when Noah's born. So, Seth lived almost right up to the time of Noah. So, Cain's son Lamech would have been born, like, down here. So, he's definitely overlapping with the days of Noah. The point is, is that Lamech, Cain's descendant, in the narrative chronology of the story world, would have been alive in the days of Noah.

Jon: And we don't know when the angels came, like, at what point?

Tim: It just said, "In those days—"

Jon: "In those days."

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. So, what's fascinating is, Lamech is associated with the violence—

Jon: I see.

Tim: —that Genesis 6 is referring to.

Jon: He would have been around during that time.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Lamech is a narrative example. The poem that he sings about, you know, slaughtering a guy who slapped him or wounded his honor is an example of the violence that is corrupting the land that God sees in Genesis 6.

Jon: Okay. Alright. Okay.

Tim: So, what happens, then, is you get Second Temple Jewish texts that then make Cain essentially the godfather of all the violence. What Cain did to Abel is the archetypal—it's opening the floodgates of human violence that leads to the land being soaked with innocent blood. So, I've got quotes here from Josephus, and they insert all kinds of details. Josephus, in his retelling of the Old Testament story, is super fascinating. It's a Jewish author who's writing in Greek. He was trained in Greek rhetoric and literature. And he was a general in the war against Rome, and he seceded. He went over to the side of Rome when his troop got captured. And then—

Jon: He started being a historian for that.

Tim: —he started being a historian, trying to explain Jewish culture to elite Romans. So, he retells all these Hebrew Bible stories, but he was raised on Jewish literature. So, when he retells the story of Cain, he says this: "Cain was not only wicked in other respects but was wholly intent upon getting." So, he talks about how he invented farm tools to get more out of the ground. He traveled through many countries. He built the name of a city called Nod. Then he became a great leader of men into their wicked courses. And he changed the world into cunning and craftiness, which is language from the snake.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So, Cain, in Jewish memory, becomes sort of like the archetype.

Jon: Where would Josephus have gotten all those details? In some other Second Temple literature, maybe?

Tim: Yeah, but also, I think, using the inferences from the narrative itself. So, Cain builds a city.

Jon: Yeah. And in the city, you get the tools of farming and—

Tim: —metallurgy. Yes, exactly. Animal husbandry. Then they produce Lamech, and then Lamech's in the generations of Noah leading up to the flood. So, those textual links, he then imagines the story world behind it. So, the whole point is that Cain was not only a murderer in Second Temple Jewish imagination—

Jon: He kicked off this whole thing.

Tim: Ah. He was both misguided, and he was a misguider of others. Why would Judah pick Cain? Because he killed his brother? Maybe. Because he led others down the path of destruction that he first went down himself? That starts to become more relevant.

Jon: Okay. Yeah. He created the path. It's interesting to think about the path.

Tim: The path of Cain.

Jon: Yeah. It's not just for him. It's like, everyone goes on this path.

Tim: Mhm. You got it. Balaam. Balaam is a pagan sorcerer. The king of Moab sees the Israelites being led by Moses, tromping through his land. He's like, "I've got to curse these people." Like, actually curse them, not just pronounce them—

Jon: Not a woe?

Tim: —like, actually get the powers of the gods to bring disaster on them. So, he hires a pagan sorcerer named Balaam. Ooh. Balaam is a compound word in Semitic, *bala'* 'am, which means to swallow up or devour the people. It'll be relevant in a moment. So, Balaam at first refuses to accept any of the money. And he's like, "I'm not going to come with you." And then the Angel of the Lord appears to him and says, "Go with those guys." And so, Balaam does, and famously, he announces, you know—

Jon: Blessing.

Tim: —blessing instead of curse. So, Balaam goes back, and he doesn't take the money. However, there's this story a couple chapters later, where a whole bunch of leaders from the Midianite clans start to camp next to Israel. And the Israelites see the daughters of the Midianites and start dating them, courting them, getting married, worshiping their gods, and so on. This is called the debacle of Baal Peor, and it leads to idolatry. And the story that's a focus is about a daughter called Kozbi, which means "deception." And she is the daughter of one of the chiefs of Midian. And the Midianites were in on the hiring of Balaam. So, later in Numbers, the Israelites end up in a battle with the kings of Midian. And what you're told in Numbers 31 is, "Oh, hey, dear reader, you should know that in that battle, Balaam was killed by the sword." You're like, "What?"

Jon: Balaam was there.

Tim: Balaam was there at the battle? Like, what's that about?

Jon: Okay. Yeah, because we left him, like, in good standing. Like, he didn't curse them. He blessed them.

Tim: We left Balaam in good standing.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And now, all of a sudden, he's back with the Midianites—

Jon: And he's fighting.

Tim: —and he got killed. And then, you read in Numbers 31 that actually, the whole thing that happened with the Midianite daughters intermarrying, and it led to idolatry, that was all part of the council, the plan.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: It was a scheme.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: All cooked up by Balaam. And you're like, wow.

Jon: We didn't get that story.

Tim: This is a classic Hebrew Bible, where it tells you a bunch of stories, and you're just like, "Okay." And then, it leaves this tiny little comment at the very end of this whole sequence in the book of Numbers that gives you this clue, and you have to go, "What?"

Jon: The council of Balaam.

Tim: You have to go back. So you can just already see, here, this was just an open wide door for later readers—

[Laughter]

Jon: Interpretation.

Tim: —to go back and fill in the gaps. So the conclusion that Jewish readers drew was that Balaam actually went back to go get the money.

[Laughter]

Jon: Balaam was like, “I didn’t mean to do the blessing thing. Like, I was trying to actually cash in. Something came over me. Can we try this again?”

Tim: Yeah. Yep. He went back, and he’s like, “You know that offer I turned down?”

Jon: Yeah. “I’m still on your team. We’ll get them.”

Tim: Yeah. “Let’s go get the Israel—I couldn’t curse them. God wouldn’t let me do that. But what if we—I got an idea.”

Jon: Okay. And then he started scheming about corrupting them through intermarriage —

Tim: Intermarriage, and getting them to worship other gods. So when Josephus, when he retold the story for his Greek and Roman friends, he full-on inserted a speech into the mouth of Balaam and basically says, “Alright, here’s my plan. We need to take care of these Israelites. So go get the handsomest of your daughters, who are eminent with beauty, and send them near the Israelite camp.”

Jon: Okay. This is the scheme.

Tim: This is the scheme, the council of Balaam.

Jon: So Joseph, he knows this tale of the scheme.

Tim: Mhm. You got it. Yep. Yeah. Okay.

Jon: Josephus. Did I say Joseph?

Tim: You did. But that’s alright.

Jon: So Joseph—

Tim: Yeah. Joseph. Josephus is his Greekified name. So the path of Cain, he was himself deceived, made a decision, and then led others along his path.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Balaam is now somebody who himself—right?—was deceived by the reward that he went back to go get. And then—

Jon: But you only know through other Second Temple literature. You only know that detail.

Tim: That's exactly right. It's an inference from the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Yeah. Judah's taken for granted that you know—

Tim: —the later interpretive traditions. Okay. Let's look at the last example, here.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "They are like those destroyed in the hostile rebellion of Korah." In the book of Numbers in the Torah, the rebellion of the spies, the twelve spies, and the leaders that you already linked to that example up above, is matched by the next rebellion story, which is a story about the tribe of the firstborn, Reuben, and then Korah, who is among the group of the older brothers of Moses' dad. The whole story of rebellion of Korah is about a sibling rivalry.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Just like the Cain story.

Jon: Oh, really?

Tim: Yeah. And it's about the elder ones, who are looking at Moses and Aaron, saying, "Who are you guys—"

Jon: "Why are you guys in charge?"

Tim: "—to say you're the mediators between us and the firstborn?"

Jon: "We're the firstborn."

Tim: "We're older than you."

Jon: Oh, wow.

Tim: "Our tribes are older." Dude, the whole story of Korah, this is Numbers chapter 16, it's just hyperlinked like crazy with words and phrases to the Cain story and to the flood story. It's super interesting. But famously, the ground opens up, the ground splits open.

Jon: Yeah. Which is what happens in the flood.

Tim: What happens in the flood, swallows up the people.

Jon: Oh, which is Balaam's name.

Tim: Which is the name of Balaam.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: In other words, in the story of the rebellion of Korah, and then, when the ground opens up and swallows up the people—that phrase that's in the story, "swallows up the people," actually is the same Hebrew words as Balaam's name.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then, this is in Numbers 16, when you go forward from Numbers a few more chapters, and then you meet a guy named, "He swallows up the people." And then you read the story of Balaam.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Yeah. So what's so fascinating is, these are three stories of people who themselves made bad decisions, but then they bring other people into their deception, into their destructive choices.

Jon: Right. Yes.

Tim: So they make bad choices, and they lead other people into destruction, along with them.

Jon: Right. And other people suffer because of them.

Tim: Yes. That's right.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And he's picked three characters, who themselves are already hyperlinked. And their stories are all linked together, in the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Yeah. Wow.

Tim: And he's saying, that's what these people—he's about to say, these people in our church communities? They're just like these three.

Jon: That's what they're doing.

Tim: Yeah. Super interesting. So let me just—I will put my thumb on the observation you just made, though. He's reading it from the Hebrew Scriptures, following hyperlinks and design patterns. And then, Judah is aware of later Second Temple Jewish interpretive ideas and traditions. And he just takes that for granted.

Jon: Yes.

Tim: And I think that's what we're seeing right here too, in the mentioning of Cain, Balaam, and Korah. So they read the Hebrew Bible in light of a wider library of Jewish literature, and it was all aimed at helping you understand the Hebrew Bible—but the view of the Hebrew Bible, that the point of the Hebrew Bible is to encounter God's living voice and wisdom, to help us understand our lives, and our situation, like, what we're facing in our community.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It wasn't sort of like, "Here's the ancient meaning of Scripture. Let's think of a principle that applies to our lives." They didn't see it that way. They were like, "We are living in these stories."

Jon: Ah. Yeah.

Tim: And we read them all as one hyperlink unity. Judah reads his community life and the stuff happening within it as being totally within the same world.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So that he can say, "These guys who are going to ruin our church communities, they are like the descendants of Cain. They are following in Balaam's reward, that kind of thing."

[Musical Break (22:57–23:23)]

Tim: Okay. So then, this paragraph, verses 12 and 13, he says, "These people are like hidden sea rocks, who are feasting together at your love meals, without any respect"—literally, the word "fear." Like, fear of God.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "They are shepherds who are feeding themselves."

Jon: He could have called them wolves.

Tim: Oh, but he didn't, because of the Hebrew Bible text he's quoting.

Jon: Oh, is he quoting a Hebrew Bible text?

Tim: Yeah. Okay. So he's going to give them six descriptions. All of them come from either the Hebrew Bible or the book of Enoch.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But they're all descriptions of these people.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: We just did the first two, which is, they're hidden sea rocks who are feasting together at your love meals. So the love meal is called the *agape* feast. He's referring to their weekly meal together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which was an actual meal. And most likely, because of the John 13 traditions, where Jesus washed their feet, of his disciples, and then said, you know, "What I'm doing for you, you don't understand now, but you will, later. I am loving you and will lay down my life for you, and now, you do the same for each other. Love each other, like I've loved you." So that gave that meal its name.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The love meal. The point is, is that, at our weekly gatherings, to celebrate the risen Lord Jesus, and our, like, family life together, they're right there. And they're like hidden sea rocks. So you guys are on the ship called your church, and you think you're doing fine, but they're like a rock that's just about to rip a hole in the whole boat and sink your battleship.

Jon: If you're not a sailor, if you don't sail, you don't realize how gnarly hidden rock is in the ocean.

Tim: Right. It's just deep enough. You can't fully see it.

Jon: But it will take you down.

Tim: It will rip a hole in your ship. Yeah. Sink you all, and you'll die. That's it. That's the image.

Jon: It will sink you. Yeah.

Tim: And, speaking of feasting together, they are like shepherds who feed themselves. So this is a quotation right from Exodus chapter 34. It's a perfect translation into Greek of Ezekiel 34 verse 2, which accuses the leaders of Israel of being shepherds who feed themselves instead of feeding the sheep and so on. So he's accusing them of being like rebel leaders of Israel, which he's already done by comparing them to Korah and to the rebellion of the spies. They're there feasting with you, but not to honor the Lord Jesus. They're actually there just feeding themselves.

Jon: Should I have a picture of, at these love feasts, like, someone is in need, in that community, that's an opportunity for them to come and rally around that person in need, too.

Tim: Oh, yeah, great. Right. We actually have an example of this, in Paul's Corinthian letters, because he lays into them, in chapters 10 and 11, because the wealthy among that church community could show up early, because they didn't have to work.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: It wasn't a work day. And they would drink most of the wine and eat all the food before the day laborers, people who had to work that day, could come to the feast. And they would come up, and, like, it's all gone. And Paul was just like, "Guys, this is so dishonoring to the one body of Christ, where every member is a king and queen and image of God." So these meals were super important part of the symbolism and participation in the resurrection of Jesus. Yeah, the meal was huge. Really huge. Yeah. So that's one, the first two images.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. Second two images. It's so great. "They're like clouds without rain, carried along by the wind."

Jon: Alright.

Tim: "They're like late autumn trees without fruit, two times dead, and uprooted."

Jon: Alright.

[Laughter]

Tim: So things that you think should bring fruitfulness—they don't.

Jon: So, yeah, if you're a farmer, especially, like, you need the rains to come.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And so, if the clouds are the symbol—

Tim: Dark clouds.

Jon: A dark cloud is a symbol of the rains coming. Oh man, where was I just—dark clouds on the horizon.

Tim: But did it rain?

Jon: Oh, in Hawaii.

Tim: Oh, yeah. And did it rain?

Jon: Oh, yeah. But you see it coming.

Tim: Oh, you see the—

Jon: They're rolling in, and you're like—

Tim: "There it is."

Jon: —"here comes the rain." And how weird would it be for those clouds to come rolling in, and oh, no rain came. What a disappointment.

Tim: Super disappointing. It's a false representation, false advertising. It shows itself to be the real thing; it's not the real thing.

Jon: Oh, okay. And so a tree in late autumn is meant to be blossoming.

Tim: Yeah. Late autumn is a whole harvest of all kinds of fruits, throughout the world, in autumn. So it's like you've been cultivating your fruit orchard all spring and summer. And then, it's late autumn, there's no fruit.

Jon: Hmm. Why is that "twice dead"?

Tim: I know. The “twice dead” is so fascinating. If you look in commentaries, there’s like a zillion different explanations. *Twice dead*. Well, I wonder if it’s a sign of, you know, autumn is also when many trees lose leaves.

Jon: Oh. So they kind of die for the winter.

Tim: Yeah. So I wonder if it’s twice dead in that, not only did it not produce fruit, a sign of being dead in that sense, it’s about to then go through the seasonal death of losing its leaves. You may as well just uproot that thing. It’s as if it has no roots—

Jon: Got it.

Tim: —but even though it’s standing there. So these are two things that look like and are something that should bring benefit. Verse 13: “They’re like wild waves of the sea, splashing up the froth of their own shamefulness, their own shame.”

Jon: Wow.

Tim: “Wandering stars who are being kept for the gloom of darkness, that is the age to come.” Okay.

Jon: The waves of the sea, this is the chaotic ocean. This is the Genesis 1 verse 2—

Tim: Yeah. Actually, speaking, look again at verse 13. What do you see leaping out at you, from Genesis 1 verse 2? Not just the sea, but the darkness: “Now the land was wild and waste, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, chaos waters.”

Jon: Yeah, okay. Yeah.

Tim: They are like anti-creation. They’re anti-creation.

Jon: Splashing up the froth of their own shame. That is—intense image.

Tim: Yeah, okay. So you go to the coast, we live near the Oregon coast. You go on, ooh, on like a winter day, where there’s like these king tides, huge waves, up to, like, where waves hit cliffs. And you get this foam that flies up. It’s just churning, frothy foam. And the wave, the wind, the power drives these huge, like, I don’t—blobs of—it’s, like, gooey, who knows what it is?

Jon: Yeah. The sea foam.

Tim: Fish poop, and dead sea animals, and all disintegrated into this goo that turns into a froth, and then the bubbles float up onto the highway, and it’s wild. Wild waves. There you go. So that’s like shame. And I don’t think shame in terms of, like, the internal

experience; it's, like, shameful acts. It's—you're bringing dishonor on you and your family by acting in this way. But you're proud of it. You're splashing it up. So you're living in a way that's just producing all this overflow of, like, dishonorable, publicly visible behavior. And you're like wandering stars.

Jon: Yeah. These are the Genesis 6 angels.

Tim: Yes. Connecting back to the lights in the sky that are delegated by God to follow his orders to—right?—preserve the order of day and night. But then you get these wandering lights that do their own program, and they wander in a way that's not like the rest. And so, the stars, we call them planets, but they were a symbol of wayward spiritual beings. The wandering light. The wanderers. So what's cool is, these last four images—like clouds without rain, like trees without fruit, like waves of the sea, like the stars of the sky—those four give you all the realms of the biblical cosmos, the sky, the land, the sea, and then back to the sky. Really interesting. Oh, okay. The clouds without rain—that line is Judah's translation into Greek, exactly, of the Hebrew of a biblical proverb, "Like clouds and wind, but there's no rain, so a man who boasts of a deceptive gift, a gift that's no gift."

Jon: A gift that's an illusion. The *sheqer*.

Tim: The *sheqer*. Yeah. So what's so rad is that phrase is coming into Judah's mind, but it's just, it's the line from the proverb. So cool. Also the frothing waves—right?—is Judah's translation into Greek of the Hebrew of Isaiah 57:20: "The wicked are like the waves that churn up grime and mud."

Jon: The wicked are like the churned-up seas, is your translation, there?

Tim: Yeah. The wicked are like the churned-up sea that is not able to be calmed; its waters churn up grime and mud. *Rephesh vatit*.

Jon: And that's the froth of shame.

Tim: The frothing up, the shame. Yeah. Yeah. And then you get the images of the trees without fruit and the wandering stars. And actually also, put the clouds and the waves. He's brought together phrases from the Hebrew Bible, but he's been meditating on the opening literary unit of Enoch. So the first literary unit of Enoch goes from chapters 1 to 5. And here, it's God and an angel putting in front of Enoch, "Here's the way the cosmos is supposed to work. Look at how the works of heaven never alter in their paths, and the luminaries of heaven, the lights, they never transgress their order. So you get the earth filled with water, and clouds, and dew, and rain. The trees come. All the trees have fruit. The sea and the rivers never—so it's like the world of Genesis 1, the seven days.

Jon: How it's supposed to work.

Tim: How it's supposed to work. But then, once the sons of God do their thing—

Jon: And the rebel angels come—

Tim: Rebel angels—

Jon: Sleep with women—

Tim: —Nephilim, the spilling blood on the land, then you get the nightmare version of it.

Jon: Yeah, okay.

Tim: So Enoch, chapter 80, that picture of the world falling apart, is the nightmare inversion of this beautiful, ordered picture from the opening chapters of Enoch, which is all about how, in the days leading up to the flood, after the sons of God had their rebellion, the stars in the sky, because they rebelled, stopped doing what God told them to do, and the whole cosmos began to fall apart. And so you get this really interesting chapter in 1 Enoch, chapter 80, that said, “Man, when evil multiplied on the land before the days of the flood, the rainy seasons grew shorter, the rain was withheld, the fruit of the earth is late and won't grow, the fruit of the trees is withheld, the heads of the stars begin straying from their commands. They change their ways and don't appear at the time God ordered for them to appear.”

Jon: This is the shaking of the cosmos.

Tim: The de-creation. Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: Okay. This was happening before the flood.

Tim: Exactly. This is a way, in this chapter of Enoch, describing when humans are spilling innocent blood on the land, which is at the lead-up to the flood. That's a mirror of rebellion in the stars. And if the lights of heaven are not working, then day and night is not working properly. And so you get crazy storms on the ocean. I think we would call these, like, tidal storms or something.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then—right?—and then all the seasons are going to be off, and the rains won't work right. So it's an ancient way of saying the order of Genesis 1 is all coming undone. And Judah is using those images, these cosmic, de-creation images, to describe what

these people's lifestyle and the kind of effect they'll have on their church community. It's really intense. Right?

Jon: Yeah. It's like the worst name you could call someone. Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. And the reason why this is relevant is, those little phrases in that paragraph that we just read together show that Judah is again meditating on the early chapters of Genesis but that he's also read and studied the book of Enoch and how it has carried forward those ideas. And so, these phrases about the frothing waves and wandering stars—

Jon: —and the tree without fruit.

Tim: —they come from Enoch—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —and Enoch's meditation, that scroll's meditation, on early chapters of Genesis.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's the same principle we've been seeing all throughout. So it should not surprise us, then, that the next thing he does is go on to quote from the scroll of Enoch. So let's take this in, as in our final meditations, here.

Jon: Okay.

[Musical Break (37:13–37:45)]

Tim: Verse 14, he says, “Now, the seventh from Adam—”

Jon: The seventh from Adam is—and that's Lamech.

Tim: Seventh from Adam through Cain—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Is Lamech.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: Seventh from Adam, through Seth, is the opposite of Lamech.

Jon: Well, here he is—Enoch.

Tim: Is Enoch. Yeah.

Jon: That's right.

Tim: So let's pause. Enoch. Let's just talk about Enoch.

Jon: Let's talk about Enoch.

Tim: Well, okay, here's Enoch. Enoch comes in seventh position in this genealogy of Genesis chapter 5. And what you're told is that Enoch walked with *ha'elohim*.

Jon: The Elohim.

Tim: The Elohim. And that phrase, "walked with"—

Jon: —comes from the garden?

Tim: —is the phrase used of what Yahweh came to do for his daily walk-about with Adam and Eve in the garden. And he comes, and he says, "Hey, guys, where are you? Where are you? Come on, it's our daily walk." So to walk with God in the garden is an image of—

Jon: —Heaven and Earth united.

Tim: Yeah. It's an Eden image. And that's what Enoch experienced. You're just like, what?

Jon: Yeah. What was that like?

Tim: What was that all about?

Jon: Yeah. And this would have been the time of Lamech. So this is a guy who's walking around in such corruption, but he has this connection to God that's pure and intimate.

Tim: That's it. Yeah.

Jon: What a dude.

Tim: It helps that his name means “dedicated.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like—

Jon: It’s a good choice.

Tim: Yeah. Khanokh means “the one who is dedicated to.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: He’s dedicated to the elohim. So it says it twice. “Enoch walked with the elohim, and he was no more. He was not, because Elohim took him.”

Jon: And what does that mean?

Tim: What does that mean? What we do know, was that seven generations up the line, when Yahweh Elohim, in Genesis 2, makes the human from the dust of the ground—right?—breathes life into the human, then took, *laqakh*, the human and rested him.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: It’s Noah’s name as a verb. Rested him in the garden, where, then, you would walk about as a human.

Jon: And that’s the same word, to take?

Tim: Yeah. And now, here is a human, walking with God, outside the garden—

Jon: But doing the garden thing.

Tim: —but doing the garden thing, outside the garden. And eventually, Elohim just says, “I’m going to *laqakh* him.” And guess what? Nobody ever saw him again.

Jon: Okay. And then, so—you’re supposed to go, and then plant him in the divine garden.

Tim: He got to experience the union of Heaven and Earth. He was translated into Eden, the Heaven-on-Earth dimension, but without having to die. So that’s the Enoch story. That’s what there is to his story. Second—

Jon: If only someone would write a more thorough story.

Tim: Totally. So what's so interesting is, why I have this spelled out, here: "Enoch walked with the *elohim*." *Elohim*, you may recall, is technically a plural noun. So it can mean *the* spiritual being—that is, the one God of Israel. You could also say *ha'elohim* and mean the spiritual beings.

Jon: Oh, yeah. Wait, is there a singular version of *elohim*? Because—

Tim: Yeah. It's *'el* or *'eloah*.

Jon: Okay, *'eloah*.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: So when God's referred to, the creator God's referred to as *Elohim*, why keep it plural?

Tim: Ah. You can refer to singular things with plural nouns in Hebrew.

Jon: Oh, that's a thing.

Tim: It's often a way of intensifying it. Talking about it as the most intense version of that thing. But it can also, the same *ha'elohim*, the *elohim*, be a way of referring to the spiritual beings.

Jon: Yeah, okay.

Tim: So in other words, this phrase, "Enoch walked with the *elohim*," is capable of two meanings.

Jon: Walking with God, or walking with the angels.

Tim: And the phrase is repeated, identically, twice. So it seems as if Jewish readers took that as the invitation—

Jon: —to see both.

Tim: —to see both. He walked both among the spiritual beings, and he was walking with the chief spiritual being. The reason I say that is because in Second Temple Jewish literature, Enoch was imagined and talked about as somebody who had regular conversations with angels and with God. And if he had regular conversations with angels, that meant that he was shown the secrets of Heaven and Earth. And so, lo and behold, there is a scroll that comes to us from Second Temple Jewish literature that is known as the Enoch scroll. And it's all about how Enoch, in the days before the flood, received a vision, saw all these angels who told him the flood's coming, the world that

God made for order is falling apart. And he's taken up into the heavens. He's given a cosmic tour of all of world history, all of world history to come, of how all the heavens work. And it's a beautiful, hyperlinked—whoever wrote the scroll was a total Tanakh nerd.

Jon: This is known as First Enoch, right?

Tim: It's known as First Enoch, yeah, and it's a big, complex literary work. Fragments of it were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. They loved it.

Jon: Lots of fragments.

Tim: They had many copies of it. It was also really popular in many branches of the early Jesus movement. All the complete manuscripts that we have of it are translations, preserved by Christian scribes, that come from centuries later. So the reason why we have it today, if we hadn't found the Dead Sea Scrolls, is because Christians valued and read it.

Jon: Specifically the Ethiopian Christians?

Tim: Yes. And then, there's one corner of the Ethiopian—I think it's Tewahedo, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, that recognizes it as part of their scriptural collection. But it was disputed in early Christianity. And we have records of its—

Jon: Disputed of its?

Tim: Of its status among Scripture.

Jon: Right. Okay.

Tim: Yeah. It was never considered part of the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Right.

Tim: But it was considered a valuable—even, like, God-given work. But that doesn't mean it was part of the Hebrew Bible, Tanakh. I think what we're seeing in Judah, here, is that he had room for—we've got the Hebrew Bible, and we've got the teachings of the apostles, and we have other literature around it that helps us hear God's wisdom from Scripture, and we have it in our library, and we value it. And it seems like he had that approach with the Testament of Moses, and now, he has it towards Enoch. So here's the quotation from Enoch. It's literally from the opening paragraph of the Enoch scroll. He says, "Look, the Lord is coming with myriads of his holy ones."

Jon: Oh, that's from Deuteronomy.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And Enoch quotes that?

Tim: Enoch quotes the opening of Deuteronomy 33. So again, he's quoting Enoch's quotation of Deuteronomy 33. Now, Deuteronomy 33 was about God coming down on Sinai to give the Torah to his covenant people. This is about Yahweh coming, verse 15, "To bring justice upon everybody, to convict every life-being."

Jon: He's referring to the flood.

Tim: Uhm, in the Enoch scroll, it is referring to the flood. Yeah. But in the Enoch scroll, the flood, which is then the past of the author of the scroll—

Jon: Oh, it's referring to, like, a future—

Tim: —is referring to the Day of the Lord.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In the cosmic—

Jon: When God takes out all the other empires.

Tim: There you go. Yep. Yeah. The past is an image of the future.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: You learn about the future by learning about the past, as described in the Scriptures. So it is going to bring justice and convict everyone for all of their irreverent acts, committed irreverently, for all of the harsh things that irreverent, moral failures speak against him. So God's going to convict and bring justice for everything that people have done and everything that people say, and irreverence—that's our word from a few episodes ago, godless, or ungodly.

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: Anti-divine authority. They live as if there is no God that has authority over them. So that's the quotation from Enoch. It is itself—it's just a little collage of phrases from the Hebrew Bible, not just Deuteronomy 33 but also Isaiah 66: Yahweh's coming with fire, and chariots, and anger, and rebuke to enter into judgment with all flesh. Jeremiah 25: Yahweh's coming with a lawsuit against the nations, entering into judgment with

flesh. Micah chapter 1, Zechariah chapter 14. So whoever wrote Enoch—a Tanakh nerd. And once again, Judah was quoting the Enoch scrolls remix of these hyperlinked judgment passages in the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: How are these hyperlinked? So we got flesh, and lawsuits, and—

Tim: The line in Enoch is, “Behold, he comes with the myriads of his holy ones—”

Jon: That’s Deuteronomy.

Tim: “—to execute judgment on everyone, to destroy all the wicked, to convict all flesh —”

Jon: Oh, there’s the flesh, okay.

Tim: “—for the wicked deeds they’ve done and the proud and harsh words that wicked sinners speak against him.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So every one of those lines has unique vocabulary that comes from one of these passages. And every one of these passages are what are called theophany texts, poetically describing God showing up in power and fire and angels to bring final judgment.

Jon: Okay. Yeah. The flood to come.

Tim: Yeah. So, exactly, the flood to come. So, these people are what Enoch was talking about, but they are also Cain, and Balaam, and Korah. And they’re also—

Jon: It’s still happening.

Tim: It’s all still happening. Yeah. So maybe, let’s pause and take stock. We’ll finish out the letter in the next episode. But what we’re seeing here is a window into early messianic Jewish Christian communities, that they viewed their lives in terms of the Hebrew Scriptures but they read their Hebrew Scriptures with the aid of centuries’ more interpretive traditions and thought that helped them hear God’s wisdom through Scripture. So this use of Enoch in a quote or borrowing from its ideas was not a problem for him. But that doesn’t mean he thought it was a part of the Hebrew Bible, necessarily, but he does seem to assign it a pretty high place in their library.

Jon: Yeah. He quotes from it. And he says, “This has got wisdom for us, now.”

Tim: Yeah. It helps us understand, at present moment, why you should stay away from these people that are trying to come on the Sunday gatherings and eat with you, but they're going to rip holes in our ship, if we are not aware of them. So he follows up the Enoch quote with just this little line here, just applying it to them. So he's saying, what he talks about is their words. He says, "These people are grumbling critics." That's the best I can try and do in English. Grumbling comes from—that word comes from the wilderness narratives.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: All the grumbling Israelites do.

Jon: So they're like—

Tim: He uses that word.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And "critics" is just another word for being, like, a grumpy—

Jon: Like a cynic?

Tim: Yeah. Like, but it's referring to basically, you can't see the good in anything.

Jon: The mocker?

Tim: The mocker. Yes.

Jon: This is the mocker?

Tim: This is the mocker. Yes. Thank you.

Jon: The Psalm 1 mocker.

Tim: Thank you. Yeah. Yep. So they're grumbling critics, because they're walking according to their desire.

Jon: This is the animal instinct desire.

Tim: They actually don't have any principle of justice or goodness that guides them. It's just their appetites, and when their appetites are not being met, then they just criticize everything. "Their mouths speak arrogance, and they"—ooh, this is an interesting little window—"they show astounding favoritism, to gain favor from people." So they—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. You get it. You kind of get the picture here.

Jon: Yeah. They're going to be at your feasts, but they're going to, like, shoulder up with people who can get them what they want. And they're trying to create a culture where they can just live by their own desires, and there's an arrogance to it.

Tim: Yeah, isn't that interesting? Yeah, maybe we're back to that theme from the previous conversation, where they have taken this idea that's true, that if you are associated with Jesus, the risen Messiah, you are elevated with him over Heaven and Earth, to rule and steward the new creation. It's pretty cosmic.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And man, if that goes to your head, and then you, like, distort that new cosmic authority through your own physical appetites, it's a pretty deadly combination.

Jon: Yeah. Like Genesis-flood, cosmos-unraveling kind of gnarly.

Tim: Yeah. But then also, the portrait of even just of Adam and Eve, right? Who, "It looks good to me."

Jon: Kind of naively take, yeah.

Tim: Yeah. "Looks good to me. I want it. God said not. I don't understand why, exactly. It looks fine." So and then I got this voice in my ear telling me it's all going to work out great.

Jon: Right.

Tim: So, why don't I go ahead?

Jon: Or you got these guys in your community. They're like, "Look, this is fine."

Tim: "This is fine. Yeah. We're down for Jesus. We're going to rule Heaven and Earth. So why not drink up, drink a little more, let's celebrate." You know? And it's sort of like any moral convictions you have just become Jell-O when it meets up with a desire.

Jon: Oh, sure.

Tim: And you put a Jesus stamp on that, and say—right?—live that as an example in front of others—

Jon: Put some spiritual authority on that. Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. And you can end up with a pretty—

Jon: Shipwreck a community.

Tim: Yeah. Pretty toxic community. Yeah, man. Religion can be dangerous.

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: Religion can be one of the most dangerous things that can happen, because you can put some sort of divine authority or legitimacy, and truly, just, you're projecting your desires into the sky. And it seems like that's the kind of thing that Judah's like—the risen Jesus, who died for his friends and his enemies, is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, he's called us to love and serve friends and enemies. And that will conflict with your desires and appetites sometimes. Like, that one's the Lord of Heaven and Earth, not your stomach, or your sexual appetite. And if we miss that, you've basically missed the whole thing. You're just on a different team at that point. There's a lot of wisdom here. And we're going to keep going and finish out the letter in the next conversation, shall we?

Jon: Let's do that.

Jon: Thanks for listening to BibleProject podcast. Next week, we finish the letter of Judah by looking at his doxology. It's beautiful, and it's perfectly tailored for what his audience is going through.

Tim: These churches are in danger of falling down because of these people in their midst. But God can protect you and give you strength and ability to withstand this as a community and come out the other side, and so you can stand before God, blameless in the presence of his glory.

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Kristie: Hi, this is Kristie. I'm from Wausau, Wisconsin. I first heard about BibleProject on the YouVersion app.

Jackson: I first heard about BibleProject five years ago. I use BibleProject for the young adults' ministry that I lead in Calgary.

Kristie: I use the BibleProject for all of my devotional readings in the morning.

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Dave: Hi, I'm Dave. I've been working at BibleProject for only six months. I'm a software engineer working on search. When you search BibleProject.com or use search in the app, that's one of the tools I get to help build. My favorite thing about working at BibleProject is getting to see behind the curtain and discovering that this group of people truly practices what they preach from top to bottom. We don't just study the Bible, we live it out in our company practices. There's a whole team of us that help make the podcast happen every week. For a full list of everyone involved in this episode, check out the show credits wherever you stream the podcast and on our app.