

Redemption E7 Transcript

Jon: The Gospel of Luke opens with Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, singing about God's coming redemption. And then we learn of the prophet Anna, who meets Jesus in the temple when he's dedicated as a baby. And then she begins to tell everyone who is looking for the redemption of Israel about Jesus.

Tim: So Luke really wants us to notice that all the people around have this expectation of what the redemption of Israel involves, and a story comes into their head when the word redemption is uttered.

Jon: And that story is how God rescued Israel from Egypt through Moses, in the past. And their hope is that God will raise up a new leader just like Moses to rescue Israel again from their current oppressors, Rome. So to talk about the redemption of Israel is to talk about this coming liberation, a release from the bondage of slavery to Rome.

Tim: A Moses-Exodus-style redemption is what people think Jesus is here to do.

Jon: But Jesus didn't quite confront the leaders of Rome like Moses confronted Pharaoh. In fact, Rome captures Jesus, crucifies, and kills him.

Tim: Crucified Messiah equals no redemption. So this raises the crucial question, then: "Are those poems from chapters one and two—were they just wrong?"

Jon: What Luke wants us to see is that Jesus was not merely about releasing his people from slavery to Rome or Herod. Jesus saw a bigger, badder enemy that he needed to confront, and that is death itself. And so all through his life, Jesus confronted this enemy when he healed people's bodies. And he confronted this enemy when he forgave people's sins.

Tim: He sees the enemy under the names of sin, The Satan, a spirit that affects our bodies so that they die, and the power of darkness. So this becomes Jesus and Luke's redefinition of redemption.

Jon: Today, all the themes of redemption culminate in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical Break (2:11—2:19)]

[Part One (2:19—5:10)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hello, Jon Collins.

Jon: Yes, hello.

Tim: How are you this morning?

Jon: Great.

Tim: Yeah?

Jon: Doing good.

Tim: Good.

Jon: Yeah. I'm excited to get into the New Testament—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: In this theme—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: On redemption.

Tim: Yes. On average, in our theme video conversations, we do about two-thirds to three-quarters Hebrew Bible—

Jon: Mhm.

[Laughter]

Tim: And then one-third, one-quarter New Testament, which reflects the shape of the Christian Bible—

Jon: Right.

Tim: In terms of page count.

[Laughter]

Tim: But, uhm, yes, we're tracing the idea and words of redemption throughout the storyline of the Bible. And we started, one, with just a reflection on: what does this word even mean?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Redeem means to repossess, to reclaim.

Jon: In the Bible.

Tim: In the Bible. Redemption is about releasing something from a state of wrongful or tragic ownership. Something has fallen into the wrong hands, and redemption, both in Hebrew and in Greek, is about the act of reclaiming, repossessing.

Jon: In every example in the Bible, it always has to do with wrongful possession—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: From a wrong state to a good state.

Tim: That's right. Yep.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And in cases where there's nothing of economic value exchanged, the word seems to just have a more general meaning: to release—

Jon: Yeah. To release.

Tim: Or to liberate. And actually, this is really important for how the word gets activated in the Gospel of Luke.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: This is so great. Luke has very clearly opened and closed his account of Jesus with two really beautifully designed introductions and conclusions, two ending pieces. The opening piece is all about the pregnancy and birth stories of Jesus. But what Luke has done is put this birth stories and the pregnancy stories of Jesus and John the Baptizer into parallelism. And the word redemption is strategically introduced. And the word redemption, strategically, is used right in the very end, specifically, with the famous story of Jesus walking with the two on the road to Emmaus.

Jon: Hmm. Okay.

Tim: And then within the gospel itself, redemption vocabulary is not very frequent, but the synonyms of it, linked words that a—connect to the idea, but that aren't the actual word, are just, like, everywhere.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And why he used very clear words for redemption at the beginning and end, but why he used less obviously linked words in the middle, that's the interesting little puzzle about redemption in the Gospel of Luke.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But let's turn our attention to the opening chapter of the Gospel according to Luke.

[Musical Break (5:10—5:40)]

[Part Two (5:40—24:15)]

Tim: Here's a little Bible trivia. Which of the four gospels doesn't open with a story a—that's immediately connected to Jesus?

Jon: Hmm.

[Laughter]

Tim: That's—

Jon: Is it, is it Luke?

[Laughter]

Tim: Sorry. That's s—that was dumb.

Jon: Ah, you know—

[Laughter]

Jon: I love it when you do Bible trivia with me—

[Laughter]

Jon: Because you are like the Bible trivia master.

[Laughter]

Jon: And so it just lights you up.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Well, yeah. Sometimes it's truly trivial.

Jon: Okay.

[Laughter]

Tim: But sometimes—

Jon: Yeah. It's—

Tim: These little facts—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: You're like: "Wow, that's interesting."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah, Matthew opens with a genealogy—

Jon: About Jesus.

Tim: About Jesus Messiah—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: The son of, son of David. John opens up with: "In the beginning was the word —"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like pre-incarnate Jesus.

Jon: Yeah, the gospel I can't think of the very opening right now is Mark.

Tim: Yeah. It's just: "The beginning of the Good News about Jesus the Messiah—"

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "The son of God."

Jon: That's how Mark begins?

Tim: Mhm. Yeah, in the opening sentence.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So Luke has the famous prologue where he first writes, as was commonly—

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: Done in—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like, commissioned works, he writes to his patron, Theophilus, telling him how and why he made the work. That's Luke, verses one through four of chapter one. But the work, proper, begins in Luke chapter one verse five. And we hear that: "In the days of Herod," that is Herod the Great, King of Judea, "there was a priest named *Zecharias* from the division of *Aviyah*. And he had a wife, from the daughters of *Aaron*, named Elizabeth, and they were both righteous in the eyes of God, and blameless, and walked in the commandments of the Lord. But they had no child." And you just start reading, and you're like: "Oh, this is not—"

Jon: "Must be about Zechariah."

Tim: And these are not going to be Jesus' parents.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: This is, like, about some other couple. These are characters who, after chapters one and two, won't appear again—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the rest of the story.

Jon: Right.

Tim: So why are we being set up with an elderly couple who haven't been able to have any children for a long time? There are lots of hyperlinks and narrative analogies to Abraham and Sara, in particular.

Jon: And he's a priest, right? Or is—

Tim: And he's a priest.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. But it's interesting because Zechariah, the man, is the one told about the birth of this forerunner connected to the messenger of Malachi, who will go before the Lord. And he, like, has a really hard time trusting and

believing. In fact, he's—goes mute for a long time as this kind of testing consequence for his lack of faith, and he can't speak again until the child is born.

Jon: Hmm. Oh, his child.

Tim: His child, which is John the Baptizer. Then, you get introduced to Jesus' mom, and she's given him—the same type of message, that like, an astounding pregnancy is going to take place. It's even more astounding because Mary's a virgin. And she is inquisitive, but she trusts, like, immediately. And so there's a contrast between this teenage girl who trusts God and is like: "May it be, according to your word. I'm your servant." That's her response. Whereas Zechariah's response, the priest, is like: "What? No way."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "This is not possible." So the goal of introducing this secondary character is just to provide a contrast to this main character, namely, Jesus' mom, who isn't going to be in the foreground throughout all of Luke's Gospel, but she appears throughout, multiple times. So what's cool is that the Gospel of Luke opens with two chapters that read like a musical. Maybe if you were—heard an oral performance, you would hope that people would break into song. But there's all these poems embedded. And when Zechariah sees that his son, John the Baptizer, is finally born, we're told that he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He prophesied, and he sang this epic poem that is just a collage of hyperlinks from lines from the Psalms and the Prophets. It's really cool. Specifically, it opens with him saying: "May the Lord God of Israel be blessed because he has visited us and he has accomplished redemption for his people."

Jon: Here in Luke 1:68.

Tim: Luke chapter one verse 68, yeah.

Jon: "Blessed be Lord God of Israel."

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: "He has visited us—"

Tim: Yep.

Jon: "And accomplished redemption—"

Tim: "Redemption."

Jon: "For his people."

Tim: “He has accomplished redemption for his people and raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant.” Zechariah knows that Mary is also pregnant—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And that that son is going to inherit the throne of David—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And so on. So he sees the birth of these two boys as linked together. And even though it’s technically the beginning of a redemption, you’re singing a poem about it as if it’s already—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Accomplished.

Jon: And even though it’s his son, John the Baptist, who was born—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: He’s really celebrating Jesus—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Being born, which hasn’t happened yet.

Tim: It hasn’t. It happens right after—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: He sings the song—is then the famous birth story from Luke. They go to Bethlehem. There’s no—

Jon: No room in the inn.

Tim: Space in the guest room—

[Laughter]

Tim: Of the family’s house, and, and the shepherds, and all that. That happens immediately after this.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But he knows that these two pregnancies, and then this birth of his son, and then the birth that's coming—it's like a package deal.

Jon: Yeah. And if you're a priest, and you acknowledge the Torah—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Or—

Tim: And the Prophets.

Jon: Stu—you study the Torah and Prophets—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You know redemption is a key word related to the Exodus.

Tim: That's right. So that was an event in the past when God repossessed his people from wrongful possession of slavery to Pharaoh. And it was all kicked off by the surprise and amazing deliverance of a young boy.

Jon: Hmm, Moses?

Tim: Moses. Yep. So the birth of the deliverer is a key motif on throughout the rest of the Hebrew Bible. So just the birth of the companion figure—

[Laughter]

Tim: To the Messiah opens up the floodgates for Zechariah to be, like: "It's, it's happening. Which I'm just going to describe it—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "As if it has happened."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Which is true because it is happening.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And if it's happening, it's happened.

Jon: That's great. That's a great positive attitude.

Tim: Yeah, t—

[Laughter]

Jon: That's—

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah, yeah. Exactly.

Jon: But what does he think is happening?

Tim: Exactly.

[Laughter]

Tim: Okay. No—let's keep—let's read his description—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In anticipation.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "The Lord God of Israel has visited us. He has accomplished redemption for his people."

Jon: Okay. So stop there.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "Visited us."

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: I mean, he heard from God. Is that what he's referring to?

Tim: Oh, right. I—this word "visiting us" and "visitation" is a key hyperlink—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: To a number of texts in the Torah and Prophets referring to moments when God comes to either hold people accountable for their actions—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Or to bring about the, the restoration. It's connected to the Hebrew verb *paqad*, the time of visitation.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And it's—it actually begins in Exodus. Exodus is the first visitation, which—

Jon: By God?

Tim: Mhm. Yeah, when he comes to see the g—and hear the groaning of his people and raise up a deliverer. That—

Jon: That's a visit.

Tim: That's a visit.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: Okay, so he visited us—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: God's acting with justice and renewal.

Tim: But—so how and when is God going to reclaim Israel? Okay, here's, here's the parallel line. "And he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant."

Jon: Let me see if I can remember. Horn—that's about victory, right?

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: The horn—

Tim: It's the animal horn.

Jon: Animal horn.

Tim: To raise up the horn.

Jon: To raise up the animal horn is like: "I just won in battle."

Tim: Yes. Yeah.

Jon: And salvation is rescue.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: So God has done some sort of act of victory that's rescued—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Us.

Tim: Yeah, like a victorious ox who just gored its rival—

Jon: And then lifted his horn.

Tim: Yeah, and delivered his herd from something. So God redeeming his people is involved with the birth of a royal savior.

Jon: Yeah. The house of David. That's about the, the messianic—

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Savior.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Because then Zechariah says: "This is just as God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets of old, salvation from our enemies and from the hands of all who hate us." I mean, just sounds just like the Psalms that we read—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the last episode.

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: And from Isaiah. “He has shown mercy towards our ancestors. He’s remembered his holy covenant that he swore to Abraham to grant us, that after being rescued from the hands of our enemies, we could worship him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all of our days.” So: “We’re oppressed by foreign nations.”

Jon: Okay. Right now it’s Rome.

Tim: Right now, it’s Rome working through the puppet king Herod—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Who was just named in the introduction to the story. And: “We want to worship God in the temple, free—as a free people.”

Jon: “And we can’t.”

Tim: Yeah. “And the birth of this kid and the birth of Mary, that we’ve heard about, this is it. God’s doing it. He’s doing the thing.”

Jon: So you could import the Moses story now.

Tim: Mhm. Yes.

Jon: And this kid’s going to, like, confront Herod, bring some plagues, like, kick—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Them out, drown them in the sea.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: This is the stuff you would have on your mind.

Tim: That’s the story being activated.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yep. Just, very clearly: “Salvation from our enemies, from those who hate us, so we can worship God without fear.” That describes, also, then, after the Exodus story, the people’s journey through the wilderness—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: To worship God at the mountain. So notice that redemption and rescue, salvation and redemption, are—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Really paired—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Terms here.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: When Jesus is born in the next chapter, is the next time our redemption words occur. And there's these rad scenes where Jesus is born, and then Joseph and Mary bring baby Jesus for his circumcision in Jerusalem. And then as they bring him to the temple to offer these purification offerings that were traditional, there was this guy, Simeon, who was righteous and devout. This is Luke chapter two verse 25. And he was: "Looking for the comfort of Israel." So that's a key hyperlink.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The com—

Jon: Comfort.

Tim: The comfort of Israel comes right from, for us, two conversations ago—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: H—

Jon: In Isaiah?

Tim: How Isaiah 40 opens up.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And again, those were the chapters where the word comfort is a signal for the restoration that God will bring about for Israel on the other side of Babylonian exile, and the return to Jerusalem, where they can rebuild the temple and worship God in freedom. So that's associated with the word comfort in the book of Isaiah. And Simeon, he was looking for that comfort for Israel.

Jon: Is Simeon also a priest?

Tim: Hmm. We're just told he was just a righteous dude.

Jon: Just a righteous dude.

Tim: Yeah. And he hangs out in the temple a lot. The Spirit was on him.

Jon: Oh, he hangs out there. Okay.

Tim: And the Holy Spirit, it actually given him this insight that he would not die before he saw the Messiah.

Jon: Ah, yeah.

Tim: And so he was led by the Spirit's guidance to the temple one day, right when Joseph and Mary happened to bring baby Jesus in. And he saw this kid, and he was just like: "That's it." And he sings this little poem that is just this little collage from the servant poems in Isaiah 40 to 55. So rad. "My eyes have seen your salvation." But remember, salvation was linked to redemption up in Zechariah's song.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: He could have just said: "My eyes have seen your redemption."

Jon: He could have, yeah.

Tim: But: "My eyes have seen your *Yeshua*—"

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Because it's the name—

[Laughter]

Tim: Of the kid. "Your salvation that you've prepared in the presence of all the peoples, a light of apocalypse for the nations, and the glory for your people, Israel." So this is all connected to core themes in Isaiah, the arrival of the servant to renew Israel, create the sparkling, shining city on the hill that is the righteous remnant. And then we hear about this female prophet, Anna, from the tribe of Asher, who was a widow, and she just basically lived at the temple in fasting, and prayer, and worship. And at that same hour, she approached and began to give thanks to God, and to speak about this child to everybody who was waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Jon: The redemption—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Of Jerusalem.

Tim: So Luke really wants us to notice that all the people around have this expectation of what the redemption of Israel involves, and that it's like, it's: "We're looking for the time."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: He really wants us to notice all these other Jewish people—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Who—a story comes into their head when the word redemption is uttered.

Jon: Yeah. And then that this kid, Jesus, is this new Moses character.

Tim: That's right. Yep. Now, let's go now to the end of the work.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And we're going to see an important little addendum. It's a frame that picks up this redemption word again, but with a twist.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So this is after the empty tomb—Mary and the women who were there, and they see the stones rolled away, tomb's empty, these shining, humanoid figures, saying: "Jesus is alive from the dead. Go tell the others." So that scene just happened. And then we're just introduced to this couple walking along a road to Emmaus, which is a town just a few miles south of Jerusalem. And the risen Jesus just starts walking alongside them. And it's an amazing—gosh, it's such an amazing story. We did make a whole scene in our video about, about this.

Jon: In the Luke-Acts series?

Tim: Mhm. In the Luke-Acts series, yeah. And they don't recognize him. And Jesus said to them: "Hey—"

Jon: These are just two disciples of Jesus?

Tim: Mhm. One of them is named Cleopas.

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: Cleopas. And it could be he's walking with a male disciple. It doesn't say. We also know that Cleopas was named as one of the husbands of the named female disciples elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: So it's also likely, I think probable, that this is Cleopas and his wife.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So Jesus says: "Hey, what are you guys talking about as you walk along?"

[Laughter]

Jon: "What's up, guys?"

Tim: And, and they were—

Jon: "What's the word?"

Tim: Yeah, and they were just—they stopped. They were just so sad. And they said: "What are you, the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know what just happened over the weekend?" And he plays dumb, like: "Oh, what things?" "About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a mighty prophet, mighty in word and deed," like a Moses figure, "in the eyes of God and all the people. But the chief priests and our rulers delivered him over to the sentence of death. They crucified him. We were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So let's pause. We're back to what people's expectations were.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And he's linking back to all these redemption hopes from the opening chapters —

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And then saying: "Yeah, it didn't go down like that."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “In fact, people were crushed.” Part of why his disciples were crushed—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: By what happened was it didn’t—

Jon: Right, in the story of Moses—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: He doesn’t, like, confront Pharaoh—

Tim: Right.

Jon: And then get killed.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: That’s not how it goes down.

[Laughter]

Tim: That would actually be a failure to redeem.

[Laughter]

Jon: Moses—if that had happened in the story, then Israel would just have been stuck in slavery in that story.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Moses had to actually get Pharaoh to finally relent. So you would imagine the powers, Rome and the puppet government, would have to like get to a point where they’re like: “Okay—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: ‘You’re in charge. We’ll get out of the way.’ And they didn’t.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: They killed them.

Tim: They didn't. So crucified Messiah equals no redemption. It didn't work.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It didn't stick. So this raises a crucial question then: "In what sense are those poems from chapters one and two—were they just wrong?"

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Or perhaps the way in which God was going to redeem was both in continuity with all those ancient hopes and promises, but also, like, there was a twist. There was a different means of doing it. And this is essentially the burden of what Luke is trying to work out in the, in the heart of his gospel. And he doesn't do it by using the word redemption anymore. He starts activating synonyms or connected words, that's—are like a red thread from the introduction to the conclusion. And to see where he first starts developing it, it's essentially Jesus' first speech, his entry, onto the stage as an adult character, announcing the Good News of the Kingdom of God. It's in Luke chapter four, and it's crucial for understanding this redefinition of redemption. So let's go there.

Jon: Okay.

[Musical Break (23:55—24:15)]

[Part Three (24:15—30:54)]

Tim: So right after Jesus is tested in the wilderness forty days and nights, he goes to Galilee, the region of Galilee, and we're told he starts teaching in their synagogues. Hmm. This is the moment where, in Matthew's version, he inserts the Sermon on the Mount—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Right here.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: He just cracks open and puts in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jon: Puts him on a mountain, has him start teaching.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In Luke's account, Jesus goes to a synagogue, which Matthew told you to, and he goes on a Sabbath, on Shabbat, Friday evening. And he tells us a unique story that's not found in Mark, or John, or Matthew—that the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. It's like he's doing the public reading of Scripture, and he opens to Isaiah 61, where he reads this famous passage: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me—"

Jon: *Meshiakh*?

Tim: Yep. "*Mashakh*'ed me." "To announce the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim or announce release for the captives."

Jon: Oh, what's that word?

Tim: "And recovery of sight to the blind—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "To set free those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Yes. Okay. So release, it's a noun here, *afesis*, which release is the perfect translation. You let something go out of a situation into another situation. And then the verb is *afiemi*, which is the verb "to let go of—"

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Or "release."

Jon: Alright.

Tim: So this word is one of the most common words in the New Testament, and in Luke, for forgiveness, to forgive someone.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: But literally, in Greek, you release someone from their sins.

Jon: Okay. Wait, so in, in this passage, if you had proclaimed forgiveness for prisoners—yeah, that doesn't make as much sense.

Tim: Yeah. So the core idea is you let something go.

Jon: Okay.

Something—

Jon: Then—

Tim: Is in your grip—

Jon: I see.

Tim: Or it's in one circumstance, and it's released and—

Jon: I see.

Tim: Let go.

Jon: And in the context of a relational problem where someone owes you something or they did you wrong—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You can release them of that.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. So release becomes a way of saying: if someone did you wrong, they are in your debt. You ought to possess them or you rightfully possess them, or some part of them, because they did you wrong. And so you can choose to claim what is yours. "You owe me this."

Jon: Which is some sort of justice.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: Recompense.

Tim: Recompense, yeah. Or you can open your hands and say: “I release you from your sins,” and you let them go. That’s one nuance of the word release. But the word’s basic meaning just means release. And very often it’s release from a burden or from bondage. This is the word used and the concept being drawn upon here in Isaiah 61—is about the year of Jubilee. It’s called the year of Release.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The Hebrew word is *deror*, which means to unbind.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Something’s tied up—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And you untie it so it can go free. And the Septuagint translators translated that word with *afesis* and *afiemi*. So here’s why this is important. Back in our second conversation, one of the highest density places of the appearance of the word redemption in the Torah is in the chapter in Leviticus describing the year of Jubilee.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It’s the year of Release when something is released from a state of slavery or debt, and then the family member who goes to repossess it, to release and transfer it back to family ownership—that’s what the word redemption refers to. So this word release is a closely related synonym. It’s a good example of how themes in the Bible come to accumulate many words—

Jon: Right.

Tim: That are attached to the theme.

Jon: Yeah. So the largest theme is something or someone is in a wrongful state of ownership.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And we’re transferring that back to a rightful state—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Of ownership. And to do that is a redemption—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: But when you're doing that, you are often rescuing someone from a bad situation.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: So it's a salvation of sorts.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: And also, when you're doing that, you're releasing them from bondage.

Tim: Yeah, yeah.

Jon: So it's a, it's a release.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And so all of these words and ideas are getting at that—the core idea—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Which is the transfer of, of ownership—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Into its rightful place.

Tim: Yeah. That's right. So redeem is one way to describe a little story that happens. Let's say that you are enslaved, and I come to transfer you, to purchase you, to redeem you. So that's referring to what I do, my activity—

Jon: You're redeeming.

Tim: In getting you out of that situation.

Jon: I'm being redeemed.

Tim: But if you want a word to describe just what you are undergoing—what are you experiencing—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In that moment? Not from—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: My point of view.

Jon: I'm being rescued.

Tim: Then, you call that either salvation—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Which is about going from a dangerous situation to a place of safety, or you can just call it release.

Jon: Hmm. Being release.

Tim: You're, you're bound up in one situation, and you're released.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So this becomes the key word in all of the healing narratives that follow in the Gospel according to Luke. In chapters five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, 11, 12, 13, he's just packed, uhm, these stories about Jesus coming to poor outsiders, people who are vulnerable or on the social margins, and he heals them. He includes them in his disciple community. And this word, *afesis*, release, or the verb, *afiemi*, to release, is just littered throughout these stories, in a really cool way. So let's go to Luke 13 to see how the story works.

[Musical Break (30:38—30:54)]

[Part Four (30:54—50:41)]

Tim: "Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on Shabbat, on the Sabbath, and there was a woman there who for 18 years had a sickness caused by a *pneuma*, a, an invisible, destructive energy-spirit. "She was—"uh, so I'm reading New American Standard—"bent double."

Jon: Hunched over.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah, ESV has “Bent over.” Mhm. So it’s the word *sunkupdo*, *kupdo* means to like stoop down or to kneel. So she’s bent over—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And she cannot straighten herself up.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So what’s interesting is both that it’s, like, a medical condition—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: You know—could—whole variety of things, but also the image of being stooped over, not able to stand up—these are common, even biblical, images of slavery. Carrying a burden, to be bowed low, or laid low is often an image associated with slavery, whereas walking upright is an image of dignity or freedom. So her physical condition is also a image of her social condition. So Jesus sees her, he calls her over, and he says: “Woman, you are released.” Now—“You are freed.” He actually doesn’t use the word *afiemi* here.

Jon: Oh, he doesn’t? Okay.

Tim: He will—

[Laughter]

Tim: But he uses the word, again, another synonym, *apaluo*. But—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: But *luo* is connected to *Lutron*—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Or, uh, *lutrao*—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: For, uh, release. So: “Woman, you are freed I—from your sickness.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So even just right there, sickness is something—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Described here—

Jon: It ens—

Tim: With the language of—

Jon: It enslaves you.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You need to be released from it.

Tim: Imprisoned, enslaved.

Jon: Yeah. It's owning you, and it's not your rightful owner.

Tim: Mhm. Ok—so let's pause. Yeah. So in Jesus' imagination, when he sees somebody who's—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Sick—

Jon: Yeah. They're under the ownership of this realm of death and destruction—is claiming ownership over you.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And you bent over, your body ailing—it's a physical manifestation.

Tim: Yeah. Of a, like, something that's both personal to this woman's body—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But it's also, for him—it's a sign of something cosmic.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the biggest frame of the biblical story, this is Jesus seeing the world in light of the Eden story. We're outside Eden under the oppressive influence of the snake, and —

Jon: Man, that's so, so helpful, because it is hard as a modern person to read stories of spirit possession, and more and more, as I—

[Laughter]

Jon: Go through this world, I'm more open to like: "Yeah, the material world is not all there is. And there's, there's spiritual forces, there's powers, there's things." For some reason, it's connecting in a new way right now for me, to think about this theme of being owned by death.

Tim: Mhm. Yes.

Jon: That we need to be freed from that. And what is that? It's not merely an abstraction. It's not—

Tim: No—

Jon: It's not—

Tim: It's probably the most concrete thing we experience—

[Laughter]

Tim: From the moment we're born—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: We're subject to death—

Jon: Something is—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Grinding us down back to the Earth.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Jesus sees that as being captive.

Tim: Yeah. So this is not Jesus applying metaphorical or spiritual language to a—

Jon: To a disease.

Tim: Literal or physical condition. In the biblical imagination, sickness is a sign of being outside Eden, under the influence and power of death and the snake.

Jon: Wow.

Tim: Mhm. So watch where this goes. So he puts his hands on her. Immediately, she was able to stand upright, and she began giving honor to God. And you're like: "Yeah, that's a, that's a Genesis one situation right there."

[Laughter]

Tim: "Upright—a free, dignified human who can give honor to their creator." But this was on the Sabbath. And so certain synagogue officials get frustrated with Jesus. "Listen, we do our work in six days. Healing can happen on those six days. But Shabbat day is for rest from our work. Jesus answered: 'You hypocrites. Wouldn't any of you, on the Sabbath, untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him to water him if he was thirsty?'"

Jon: That's allowed on Sabbath?

[Laughter]

Tim: That's the assumption here.

[Laughter]

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah, it's like: "You can feed your animals."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “And if you can feed your animals, what about an image of God?” But look at the language he uses. “This woman is a daughter of Abraham, and Satan, the, the *satan*, has bound her—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Literally, “tied her up”—“for 18 years. Shouldn’t she be released from this bond, on the Sabbath day?”

Jon: Hmm. Yeah. If Sabbath day is for anything, it’s for release.

Tim: Yeah, for release. Release from your labor.

Jon: Right.

Tim: And here it’s back to her s—stooping over, the sickness is like a burden, like a slave’s burden. And for 18 years, she’s had to carry it. So sh—it’s fascinating. One, Jesus sees his mission to release people from bondage to a, a much more pervasive and destructive power. So this is a good example—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Where in Jesus’ mind, he’s here to redeem and on a cosmic level, but it does begin to qualify those expectations and hopes.

Jon: Yeah, because if you just look at the outer frames, and you think of Jesus as the Moses figure to redeem Israel and Jerusalem from the new Pharaohs, then Jesus needs to confront the Pharaohs and get them out.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But here it seems like he’s confronting a bigger, badder Pharaoh.

Tim: Yeah, yeah.

Jon: And that’s what his interest really—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Is in.

Tim: The—yeah. The adversary, the enemy—

Jon: That—

Tim: *Ha-sa—ha-satan—*

Jon: *Ha-satan*.

Tim: Means “the one opposed.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The enemy.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. That’s what Zechariah said: “Salvation from our enemies—”

Jon: Ah.

Tim: “So that we can worship God—”

Jon: So who’s your enemy?

Tim: “Without fear.” Mhm. Who’s the enemy? Let’s look at another example, Luke chapter five. It’s another well-known story. “One day, Jesus was teaching, and there were some Bible nerds, Pharisees, and Torah teachers there. And some guys came carrying a friend of theirs who was paralyzed on like a, a platform, a bed. They were trying to get him in front of Jesus, but they couldn’t find a way. So they go up on the roof, and they just start shredding the roof apart—”

[Laughter]

Tim: “To create a hole—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “And lower this guy down.” It’s a famous scene. “Seeing their trust, Jesus said: ‘Friend, your sins are *afiemi*,’” released.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: “Your sins are released for you.” Actually, it’s not present tense. What he says is: “Your sins have been released for you.”

Jon: Huh. And that’s not what they were after.

Tim: Okay. Yeah.

[Laughter]

Tim: So that's interesting.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like, they want this guy to be healed.

Jon: They want this guy to be healed.

Tim: And in Jesus' mind, his healing speaks to a much more cosmic problem.

Jon: Yeah. There's cosmic problem is destroying your body.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: But the reason why we're in this mess is because of our failure—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: To live right by each other and live by God's wisdom.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And it's put us into this state of slavery to death.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: So it's all connected for Jesus.

Tim: Yeah. We know that Jesus doesn't think that people get sick because you've done something wrong.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: In the Gospel of John, Jesus' disciples ask him about the blind man.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like: "Who sinn—like, literally, it's the same word. "Who's sinned? This guy or his parents?" And he's just like: "Neither. The glory of God's about to be revealed. And that's the deeper purpose at work, here." So it's not like—of course, Jesus knows this guy's human—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And that he's blown it, and he hasn't always loved God and loved neighbor. That's—the point is that “your sins” here are a sign of his enslavement, along with the rest of the cosmos, that has a claim on his body right now.

Jon: Now, when you ask a direct question about someone who's blind, you're like: “Who's sinned? Him, or his fa—” and then, Jesus is like: “Well, neither.” I get that. Couldn't you also say: “Hey, Jesus, is sin and death—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “Reigning us because of our moral failures?”

Tim: Sure.

Jon: And I think he could—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Be like: “Yeah.”

Tim: Ye—yes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Right.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And he would say: “And that's just one part of the sticky web that we're all in. And another sign of being caught in that web is our sick and dying bodies.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: But it's all connected to the same web.

Tim: It's all connected. Yes. So that's where he, he takes it. So the Bible nerds say like: “Wh—who can forgive sins except God?” Like: “You can't do that. You're not authorized.” And Jesus, you know, famously says: “Why are you scheming in your hearts? You know, which is easier, to tell this guy his sins have been forgiven, or to say to him, get up and walk?”

[Laughter]

Tim: It's a—it's classic, Jesus-style question.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's obviously easier to say "Your sins are forgiven you." Anybody can go around saying—

[Laughter]

Tim: "Your sins are forgiven," right?

Jon: Re—and real quick, about that. So I can forgive someone's sin against me.

Tim: Yes. Yes.

Jon: So what Jesus is doing—because this guy hasn't sinned against Jesus.

Tim: That's right. Yeah.

Jon: I mean, this guy tore apart someone's roof.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah, he's going to have to—

Jon: So he—he's got a debt—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Of obligation with some other guy.

Tim: Yeah, for—yeah, right.

Jon: So I guess, the thing is, is like, in what sense can a man forgive people's debts to other people?

Tim: That's right.

Jon: And just say: “Hey, don’t worry about it. Don’t worry—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “About your relational debts to other—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “People.”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That’s the problem.

Tim: That’s right.

Jon: Okay. And they’re saying like: “You can’t do that.”

Tim: That’s right.

Jon: “God could do that.”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “God has the right to do that.”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “You don’t have the right to do that.”

Tim: That’s right. “If your dog comes and poops on my lawn—”

[Laughter]

Tim: Uhm—

Jon: That’s—

[Laughter]

Tim: “I have an issue with you. But if my neighbor—

Jon: Such a Portland—

Tim: If my neighbor—

Jon: Moral failure.

Tim: Comes over, and says to my other neighbor whose dog pooped on my lawn, and says: “Hey, it’s okay, you’re forgiven.”

[Laughter]

Tim: And I’m standing there going, like: “What? This doesn’t inv—”

Jon: “No, he’s not.”

Tim: Right? Totally.

[Laughter]

Jon: “Stay out of it.”

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “Clean up this poop.” Yeah.

Tim: That’s right. That’s—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So Jesus is waltzing in just saying, like: “You’re clear.” Right? So then the Pharisees are like: “That’s not how this works.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So then Jesus ups the ante, and he says: “Well, you know, which is easier, to tell this guy he’s right with God or to heal his body?”

Jon: Yeah. Yeah, and another way to say it is like, not only what is easier, but these things are tied together.

Tim: They’re—exactly. Yes.

Jon: Right?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “You don’t think I could do that? Well, I can’t prove I can by just saying I can.”

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: “But let me show you something undeniable.”

Tim: Yeah. That’s right. And then he appeals to Daniel chapter seven. “‘But so that you will know that the son of man has authority on the land to forgive sins,’ he said to the paralyzed man,” you know, uh: “‘Get up, pick up your stretcher, and go home.’ And immediately, he gets up, picks up the stretcher, and goes home—” once again, honoring God, glorifying God, just like the woman. So he’s pulling a line out of Daniel seven, which is the story about God elevating a human figure into the heavens to share in God’s rule, and identity, and authority over the land. And here Jesus is claiming, like: “I’m that one. So if I share in God’s divine identity and authority, then healing this guy and forgiving this guy is just two sides of the same coin.” It’s about restoring people or redeeming them.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Redeeming them.

Jon: Or releasing them.

Tim: Yeah, that’s right. And so he doesn’t name The Satan here, what he names is sin. Now sin’s the culprit. Sin is an issue—

Jon: Ah, yeah.

Tim: Connected to this guy’s—

Jon: Right.

Tim: Sickness or h—right, his bodily illness.

Jon: Sin is crouching at the door.

Tim: Yeah. So we're—yep, we're back there again. So, you know, on the night that Jesus is betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane, and the chief priest and the officers come, and he says: "You know, you could have arrested me all throughout the week leading up to Passover. I've been in the temple every day." But then, he says: "But this hour belongs to you and to the power of darkness." So we're back to like: who's the enemy?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So Luke has profiled that the enemy, from Zechariah's point of view or the couple on the road to Emmaus' point of view, is Herod, or the corrupt priest, or something. But Jesus is working on a more cosmic level, which doesn't mean it doesn't have political implications.

Jon: Right.

Tim: It does. But he sees the enemy as under the names of sin, The Satan, a spirit that affects our bodies so that they die, and the power of darkness. So this becomes, like, Jesus and Luke's redefinition of redemption, which gives birth to a new type of social community, which is what the book of Acts is all about. It's a two-volume work of Luke and Acts.

Jon: What gives birth?

Tim: Hmm. What Jesus is doing is redeeming people. And the people that he redeems—

Jon: Ah.

Tim: Form these communities of his disciples—

Jon: Ah.

Tim: That begin to live in a way that actually does really pose a challenge to the powers that be, but not by pulling the ten plagues on them.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: But by saying: "Hey, you don't know it, Herod," or: "You don't know it, chief priests, but you're actually in league with the powers of darkness, and you need to be liberated from them."

Jon: "And we're going to live as if we're liberated from them, because we are."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And it's going to mean that—there's so many implications—

Tim: There's, there's like a—

[Laughter]

Jon: For that—

Tim: Yeah. You could say—

Jon: Community of followers.

Tim: The rest of the New Testament is just working out the implications—

[Laughter]

Jon: Wow.

Tim: Of—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: What Jesus meant when he said he was here to redeem. Yeah.

Jon: Wow.

Tim: So the fact that we end with the conclusion of Luke with this couple saying: "We thought he was going to redeem Israel," and you, the reader, are like: "Well, I just read the account of Jesus doing what this couple just said he didn't do."

Jon: In all—well, if you caught it, I suppose. You might be thinking the same thing as that couple, in which case—

Tim: Oh—

Jon: It's like an invitation—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: To—

Tim: Yeah, yeah.

Jon: “I need to explore this further.”

Tim: That’s right. Yeah, that’s right. And so Jesus takes them on a Bible study. They go to—so they have a meal, and he takes them through the writings of Moses and the Prophet, and shows them how the Messiah suffering, and then entering into glory, is about this cosmic redemption.

Jon: It was key to this cosmic release.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. So how does some representative leader dying, and then being raised from the dead—how is that an act of cosmic redemption? Luke just tells you the story and names it that. That is the redemption—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Is Jesus doing all these acts of forgiveness, and power, and healing, and then himself—

Jon: Suffering—

Tim: Uhm—

Jon: And dying—

Tim: Suffering and dying, and being raised up in victory over The Satan, and sin, and death. So how exactly is that a definition of redemption?

Jon: And I guess, Jesus explained it during this Bible study.

Tim: Apparently, which is unrecorded here. But the one early follower of Jesus who was connected to these early circles of people who knew, knew Jesus, a guy named Saul of Tarsus, who’s also known on the road as Paul the Apostle—he, more than any of the other earliest followers of Jesus, worked out in his head and developed an elaborate way of talking about, this redefined version of redemption. So it’s really to Paul’s letters that provide this kind of elaboration of this redefinition of redemption that we see at work here in the Gospel of Luke.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So I thought it’d be good to then take a next step and turn to the letters of Paul.

Jon: Let’s do that.

[Musical Break (48:10—48:14)]

Jon: That's it for today's episode. Next week, we look at how the Apostle Paul talks about redemption in his New Testament letters.

Tim: His letters are packed with redemption language. And there's one letter where he really begins to unpack what he means in multiple places. And that's his letter to the churches in Rome.

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