

## Redemption E9 Transcript

[Recap and Setup for Romans 8 (0:00—21:57)]

Jon: A redemption in the Bible is a reclaiming. If something was lost, it has now been found. If something was enslaved, it's now been set free. A redemption is transferring something back to where it belongs. In the Bible, humanity belongs to God and is meant for life, but we've given ourselves over to new masters.

Tim: So humans are enslaved to a pattern of thinking, and behaving, and desiring that's leading them to death.

Jon: In today's episode, we explore this idea deeper in two New Testament passages. The first one is Hebrews chapter two, which marvels at the humility of God, who would suffer with us in order to free us from the grip of death.

Tim: "Through his death, he might disempower the one who has the power of death, that is, the slanderer, the devil, so he could set free those who for all their lives were held in slavery to their fear of death."

Jon: And we begin this episode looking at Romans chapter eight, where we see that all of creation is groaning for its liberation from death. And while this liberation is yet to come, it's also begun.

Tim: We've got new creation inside of us. "In the person of the Spirit, we are groaning too as we eagerly await our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

Jon: Now, the purpose of creation, and the purpose of humanity within creation, is to go on a journey towards union with God. And we can't go on this journey when we're possessed by death. And we're unable to turn back to God. But Jesus can. And so Jesus met us in our slavery and did for us what we cannot do. He looked death in the eyes on our behalf and said: "You have no power over me."

Tim: Jesus' death is the culmination of a loving surrender of a human life that turns back to God. It's the supreme act of love.

Jon: Today, we talk about the suffering of Jesus and His power over death, which is the means by which we can be redeemed. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical Break (2:05—2:09)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hello, Jon—

Jon: Hello.

Tim: Jonathan Collins.

Jon: Oh—

Tim: Full name.

Jon: That is my full name. Here we are.

Tim: Here we are. Yeah. We're having our conversation in the redemption series about biblical passages that involve the word and the idea of redemption.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So we began by introducing these two words—it's two words in the Hebrew Bible that mean "to redeem." We talked about connotations or associations of that word in English, and then what they mean in the Hebrew Bible, which at its core is about the transfer of ownership and possession, where something belongs rightfully to someone, it goes out of their possession—tragedy, unforeseen circumstances, wrongful taking—and—

Jon: What would be a word for that?

Tim: Hmm.

Jon: The transfer out of possession.

Tim: Hmm. Hmm. Well, so there—there's a variety of circumstances. Pharaoh enslaves Israel and cl—

Jon: So it could be slavery.

Tim: Claims them as his own. Yeah, slavery is very common—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Uhm—

Jon: Debt slavery.

Tim: Yep. And then, yeah, you run out of money, so you have to go into debt, and then, within the cultural form that that took in ancient Israel, you become a possession of the one to whom you're indebted. So: debt slavery.

Jon: And then there's examples where you took someone's life, and you don't rightfully own their life.

Tim: That's right. Yep. And so now—

Jon: Th—there needs to be a redemption.

Tim: Yeah, a redemption of the life.

Jon: The blood avenger.

Tim: Yeah, the blood redeemer.

[Laughter]

Jon: Redeemer.

Tim: Yeah. And then maybe land or property can leave the family inheritance and get tragically or wrongfully seized, taken, bought by somebody else. And so the repurchasing of that land, like what Boaz does both for the land of his relative and then also taking on the care of Ruth and Naomi—a—

Jon: I guess the word is, uhm, dispossessed.

Tim: Oh, dispossessed. Yeah, that's it. Yeah, people who rightfully should have a possession are then deprived of that possession, dispossessed. Mhm. And then repossession is what these two words, *ga'al* and *padah*, refer to in the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then the Hebrew word for the item of value that's exchanged to repossess is often—is called the *kopher* in Hebrew.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: All the three of those words got translated into Greek, in the Greek Bible, in, in, Jewish thought, with one main word, which was *l*—*lutron* or *lutrao*, which means “to release by means of—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “A purchase.” Originally, that's what it meant.

Jon: Right.

Tim: But there was all these places in the Hebrew Bible where God can redeem but not have to pay anybody off. God just—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Repossesses because God can. And so that's where, in Greek, the Greek translator started to notice that difference. And so they used Greek words like “rescue,” or “liberate,” or “deliver” to translate these “redeem” concepts, because there was no payment exchanged. So that's the evolution we've been tracing. And then in the New Testament, what we see is people drawing on the whole complex chain of ideas.

Jon: It's a great summary. Kind of leaves last week's discussion though—

Tim: Hmm. Mhm.

Jon: Un-summarized.

[Laughter]

Tim: Oh—

Jon: And a—

Tim: About Paul? Paul—yeah, redemption language in Paul's letters.

Jon: I'd love to hear your, like, quick little summary of that.

Tim: Yeah. So Paul has this shorthand phrase that he uses in many letters, where he'll draw on the idea of redemption and sometimes the language, this idea that Jesus rescued, delivered, and redeemed humanity that was enslaved—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: To the powers of sin and death.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Usually, he doesn't mention the evil one, the Satan, the devil, in that context.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: He does in other contexts—

Jon: Right.

Tim: But not in this redemption-rescue context. So humans are enslaved to a pattern of thinking, and behaving, and desiring that's leading them to death. And Jesus is the one who—God becomes human to enter into that death and become enslaved and die, even though death had no claim upon him.

Jon: Paul considers that a gift.

Tim: He calls it "the grace gift," "the *carus*."

Jon: It's a gift.

Tim: Yeah. It's a gift.

Jon: Is that supposed to, for me, be in the slot of the—

Tim: Oh.

Jon: *Kopher*?

Tim: That's, that's nice. Okay, let's think about that. Back to Romans three that we looked at in the last conversation. "Everyone has sinned and has failed to attain God's honor—the honor that God wants to bestow upon humans. And—"the opposite of that tragedy: "All have the chance to be declared right with God as a gift, by his grace, through the redemption that's in the Messiah Jesus."

Jon: So there, it feels like just the transfer ownership is the gift.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: The gift is: now you get to get your life back.

Tim: “You were on the sin track headed towards death.”

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: “Death owns you.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “But God’s given a gift—a grace gift.”

Jon: The rescue is the gift—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: It feels like.

Tim: Yeah. And that grace gift results in people being declared, not on wrong terms —

Jon: Right.

Tim: With God, but on right terms with God—righteous, j—justified.

Jon: So is the gift the declaration, or is it the gift the transfer, or is it both?

Tim: Well, I guess you could say being declared right or justified is the result.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And he says: “Being declared right with God as a gift by grace—by his grace.”

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: So the “being declared right, even though you are in fact—”

Jon: Not right.

Tim: “On the sin track in the grip of death—”but if you are declared right, it means you’re being put on the life track.

Jon: Yeah. So—

Tim: Uhm—

Jon: Pulling you out of death into life—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That transfer—

Tim: That—so that transfer is then given two little descriptions. One is it's a gift. Second, you're given, like, the means, how that gift was given. How was the gift given? Through the redemption that is in Messiah Jesus. So the redemption is the gift. Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: The transfer of ownership is the gift.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Okay. So this has been great. I think the open loop for me—and may—I don't know if we're going to solve this in this episode or not—is why did Jesus have to go through death to then rescue us?

Tim: Yeah. That's an excellent question. So for Paul, he just puts it, multiple times throughout Romans chapter six—the last line is also a well-known line from Romans. “The wages of sin—the outcome—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like: “If you choose to violate God's wise instruction—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “And do what's good in your own eyes, guess what?”

[Laughter]

Jon: “Death is coming.”

Tim: Yeah. You're—because you're separating yourself from the source of life—

Jon: So you're a sla—

Tim: And the way of life.

Jon: You're a slave to death.

Tim: Yeah. So if you're in the grip of sin, which means a pattern of desiring, valuing, thinking, and behaving in ways that do not lead to life, the logical consequence is death. But the grace gift—and here's these words again—the grace gift of God is life eternal with Messiah Jesus our Lord. So in—

Jon: It's that transfer to life.

Tim: Yeah. So because you—I guess maybe it raises the question: "Why doesn't God just—"uhm—

Jon: "Why don't he pull us out from this side?"

Tim: Yep.

Jon: So like, we're in the grips of death.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Death is pulling us into the ground.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Why doesn't Jesus or God just—

Tim: Oh—

Jon: Pull us up out of death—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: From this side?

Tim: On this side.

Jon: Why do you need to go through death? Why do you need to die with Christ?

Tim: Yeah, yeah.

Jon: Why—

Tim: That's good.

Jon: Why on the other side, it—because on the other side, I get it. "Okay. So if Jesus is going to pull us through on the other side, he needs to go through death too."

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: So that kind of starts to make sense to me in some new way.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: But why?

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Why not pull us through on this side?

Tim: On this side. Okay. Well, in a way, that's what Jesus did for those people that he healed—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: In the Gospel of Luke.

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: Didn't he?

Jon: Okay.

Tim: He said to the paralyzed man—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Your sins are forgiven."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "Get up and walk." So that guy gets up and walks, and his sins are forgiven.

Jon: Yeah, but he's still going to die.

Tim: Exactly.

[Laughter]

Tim: So in a way, he's changed by that encounter. But the actual mode of his physical existence, as like a carbon life form in this reality—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And—right? The mode that reality exists in right now—it's all falling apart.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's all deconstructing and cracking.

Jon: So why doesn't God just fix that on this side?

Tim: Well—

Jon: I guess I mean—an—sorry.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: I think this is a genuine question.

Tim: It's the—one of the most important questions.

[Laughter]

Tim: That's why I'm so glad you're asking it. That you—

Jon: Like you said—I think last week you said something, which was like: "Listen, God doesn't owe death anything."

Tim: That's right.

Jon: "God's over death."

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: And I don't know exactly what that means—

[Laughter]

Jon: But I got to imagine that means, if he wanted to, he would just turn death to life.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Like he has the power to do everything.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So Jesus could have healed that guy. Jesus could have also given that guy l— eternal life. He could have given him a new body right then.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So—

Tim: Yeah. Yep. So what he gave him was a healed body in the midst of the old creation.

Jon: Mhm. What's the—

Tim: The way th—

Tim: Deep biblical logic behind why God doesn't just do that for all of creation? J—

Tim: He has—

Jon: He has.

Tim: In the person of the Messiah.

[Laughter]

Tim: I'm trying to think like—

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: Paul.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Uhm, he has. That's what he has done. And he has done that for Jesus Messiah —

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And then he's passed this new creation presence and power through the person of the Spirit to those who are in the Messiah—Pentecost and the gift of the Spirit. And so all that remains now is what we experience as a long gap—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Between the recreation of the universe in the person of Jesus and the recreation of the universe in what Jesus called in Matthew 19, the *palingenesia*, the rebirthing—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Of all things.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So we experience this long gap, but that's also be—due to the mode of our existence—

Jon: Huh.

Tim: As creatures bound in space and time and in bodies that are in a universe that's dying. So—

Jon: So you're saying my real question is: "Why isn't this going faster?"

Tim: Oh, maybe—yeah. We perceive a gap between the recreation of the universe in the resurrection and in—

[Laughter]

Tim: The dawn of new creation.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: No, not the dawn, the fulfillment of new creation.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Yeah. And that gap's real to our mode of existence.

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: This is where it starts to get cosmic, man, because whatever mode God exists in —

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Which is an incoherent thing to say because if you exist in a mode—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That means there's multiple possible modes in which you could exist.

[Laughter]

Tim: And that kind of reality is only reality for a creature. For God—God just is.  
“Yahweh.”

[Laughter]

Tim: “He is.”

[Laughter]

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: So what we’re talking about is about creation being brought into union with the infinite transcendent life and love of God. And for us—for something that’s not God, that is creation, we have to go on this journey.

Jon: Yeah. You know, that’s—

Tim: Of fulfilment.

Jon: Helpful because I think I always slip back into this frame, which is: God created the world perfect. We screwed it up, and now he’s going to fix it. Verses: God created the world ordered, and good, and full of potential—

Tim: Full of potential.

Jon: But on a—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Journey.

Tim: Yes. That’s right.

Jon: From the very beginning—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: On a journey.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: And it's not that we came in and screwed it up, we just kind of said: "Hey, we're not going to go on this journey with you. We're going to fight against it."

Tim: Yeah. I mean, that's a pretty big screw up.

Jon: It's a pretty big screw up.

[Laughter]

Tim: So—

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, we did screw it up.

Tim: What do you mean when you say: "We didn't screw it up."?

Jon: We didn't—sorry.

Tim: Because we had—

Jon: We didn't take what was perfect and then screw it up.

Tim: Hmm.

Jon: And now God's like: "Well—"

Tim: Right.

Jon: "I got to—"

Tim: Okay.

Jon: "Make it perfect again."

Tim: That's right.

Jon: We took an opportunity, and we botched it.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: And—which is a big screw-up.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. So let's remember—and this is great because we just co-wrote a little 60-second video on the word “perfect—”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: In the New Testament—

Jon: Right.

Tim: Because the word perfect, like in the Sermon on the Mount: “Be perfect like your Heavenly Father is perfect—” is the Greek word “*teleos*,” which means mature or complete at the end of a process.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So: “Become *teleos* the way your Heavenly Father is *teleos*.” But God didn't reach perfection.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: God just is. “He is.” But for anything that's not God, it goes on a journey of becoming *teleos*, which means it's incoherent to say creation began finished.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Because it's—

[Laughter]

Jon: And I guess also incoherent to say God could just snap his fingers and then creation is *teleos*—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: If the journey is the means.

Tim: Yeah, if God were to create *teleos*, he's just—

Jon: Creating himself.

Tim: Looking at God's own self—

[Laughter]

Tim: Saying: "That's pretty sweet." In a way, that's—

Jon: The Trinity.

Tim: Describing—

[Laughter]

Tim: The infinite and eternal community of love that is the Father—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Son, and Spirit.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Just looking at each other going: "You're awesome."

[Laughter]

Tim: "No, you're awesome." "No, you're awesome."

Jon: "Let's do—

Tim: "No, you're awesome."

Jon: "More awesome things."

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah. And then they come up with th—like: “Man, what if we share the awesomeness—”

Jon: Oh.

Tim: “By creating something that is both other than us, but is entirely—”

Jon: “And will come on a journey—”

Tim: “Come on a journey—”

Jon: “To be united with us.”

Tim: “To join in our you’re-awesome-no-you’re-awesome party.” Yeah.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So h—here’s what’s rad, man. What you and I just—that little exercise we just did was what the earliest followers of Jesus—all of this dawned on them as they were working out the implications of the resurrection and Pentecost. And you can see the Apostles doing what you and I just did. But what language is, like, available to us to start talking about something so metaphysical, and transcendent—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And marvelous? So we just used a bunch of metaphors to talk about things inside and outside of time. And—so what the Apostles did was they first started working with all of the language and imagery available to them from the Hebrew Bible. And redemption language was one of the main symbolic storylines available.

Jon: So to create something that has the potential and is good—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But then needs to become complete or *teleos*—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Is a journey.

Tim: Yeah. Or—on—analogous to that, for redemption, is: creation is God’s—

Jon: Yes.

Tim: Possession.

Jon: That’s right. And to belong in that is to be on a progression towards union.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: And so for humanity to then foil this and to say: “We got another plan, and that plan is going to include some violence—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “And oppression—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “And—”

Tim: Which is also to fall into the hands of an even more cosmic rebel.

Jon: Yeah, which in some way is being enslaved to chaos.

Tim: Sin, death—

Jon: Death.

Tim: And the snake.

Jon: The darkness.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So you could say: “Well, God’s powerful over everything. Can he just get rid of the darkness?”

Tim: Mhm. The Apostles are saying: “That’s what God has done.”

Jon: “God has done that.”

Tim: Hmm. And Jesus said: “That’s what God is doing.”

Jon: And we’re invited into it—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But it’s going to continue to be a journey.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The journey hasn’t gone away.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The journey has now just—has a new big pivot point, which is: “Are you going to have some sort of death in which you can be freed from the slavery you’ve found yourself in and come back on the journey with me?” But the journey is still the journey.

Tim: Yeah. The journey is a journey. And for us to trust in the Messiah Jesus means, essentially, to, like, return to reality. To return to—

Jon: Returning to reality is the redemption.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: The reality is the life, the land, the inheritance, the place of freedom—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And we were living under slavery of something else.

Tim: Yeah. Yep. So creation is God’s possession. It became dispossessed, not because God’s not powerful enough, but because God wanted something other than God to exist and to ha—go on its own journey that has its own integrity connected to the will of these creatures that God’s made—like—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I—semi-independent wills. You can go on a journey, and that journey has been pretty darn bumpy.

Jon: I—

Tim: An—

Tim: Know. It’s like: “Thank you, God.” But then also: “What were you thinking?”

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, here, it’s really hard to improve on, you know, one of the best thinkers of the 20th century, who got this, C.S. Lewis—you know, says: “What’s more glorious,” you know: “A rock or a wild stallion.”

[Laughter]

Tim: Right? A rock's pretty glorious, actually.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: But a wild stallion that has this spirit, this independence, and power—but man, when you conform a partnership with it, and the rider to become one with it, and for their wills to unite and go in the same direction together, like, that's way cooler than a rock.

[Laughter]

Tim: So there, the wild stallion is creation and images of God, you know.

Jon: Okay, so with all that in mind—

[Laughter]

Jon: Why did Jesus go through death?

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Why not just pull us into life—

Tim: This is great.

Jon: Instead of through death?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And I think what you said to me was—

[Laughter]

Jon: That won't free us from the bondage of death, ultimately. Like, when Jesus healed people—

Tim: Hmm. Yeah.

Jon: He's doing that, but they're still going to die. And so there is—death still has this grip.

Tim: This is great.

Jon: And to pull us out of the grip of death, there's—something more substantial has to happen.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: Yeah. And—

Tim: Thank you. So good, man. So good. So Romans six was all about: "You need to be redeemed from sin and death—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In terms of being made right with God. But that doesn't yet transform the universe or my body.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So Paul picks up that thread with his next use of redemption in Romans—this is becoming part two on Paul—

[Laughter]

Tim: Which is fun—which is in Romans chapter eight.

[Musical Break 21:30—21:57]

[The Redemption of Creation in Romans 8 (21:57—33:41)]

Tim: Actually, this is fantastic, man. I, I couldn't have planned this better. I thought we were going to talk about Hebrews and Peter, but really, we're—this is Paul part two.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So in Romans eight—oh, it's so hard to know where—

Jon: Where to start?

Tim: Where to start, but, uhm, I'm just going to start with verse 18.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: "I consider that the suffering of this present age, this present time, are not even worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be apocalypsed *eis hēmas*—in us—toward us, because of the anxious longing of creation—"

Jon: Hmm. Creation groaning like slaves.

Tim: Yes. "Is waiting eagerly for the apocalypse of the children of God."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So creation is waiting—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: For something to happen when humans become what God intended them to be. "For you—remember, creation was submitted—subjugated—enslaved to futility." Oh, this is great. "*Mataiotēti*." Uhm, this is, uhm, the Greek translation of the keyword in Ecclesiastes, *hevel*.

Jon: Oh, is it? Okay.

Tim: Yeah. Mr. Vapor got translated in the Septuagint as "futility," "purposelessness."

Jon: Hmm. Creation doesn't have a purpose without humanity—

Tim: Oh—

Jon: Ruling.

Tim: Yeah. The whole purpose is that, that the pinnacle of creation, which is a conscious being with a semi-independent will and desire, would exist apart from God, but then join in union with God. And that's the dream. And instead, it was subjected to futility. So underneath this is—h—he's meditating on the Genesis three through eleven sequence. "But listen, not because creation wanted it, not willingly, but rather, it was because of the one who subjected it in hope." So because God's human partners decided not to partner with God, and under that, that the snake didn't want to partner with God, God handed creation over to this mode of existence that is bound towards death, both as a consequence and also to honor the in—semi-independence of the will of those creatures. "But it was done in hope that creation itself will also be set free—"it's not "redeem," but it is "liberate." "Set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God."

Jon: Hmm. So this is, uhm, creation's redemption.

Tim: Yes. Well—okay. Right. So good.

[Laughter]

Tim: So he doesn't use the word "redemption." He just uses "release" or "liberate."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But—

Jon: But I mean, he's talking—

Tim: It's—

Jon: About—

Tim: It's the idea.

Jon: The transfer from slavery—

Tim: Yeah. That's right.

Jon: Into freedom.

Tim: Yeah, into freedom. That's right.

Jon: I mean, that's redemption.

Tim: Yeah. "We know the whole creation is groaning—"so there's the Exodus motif.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Groaning, suffering in the pains of childbirth." He's picking up the image of childbirth, and that childbirth is this strange threshold of life and death—that somehow, the death of the universe is actually a womb to give birth to the next thing.

[Laughter]

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "And not only that, but we ourselves, who have the S—first fruits of the Spirit —"like, we've got new creation inside of us. "In the person of the spirit, we are groaning, too, as we eagerly await our adoption as sons, the redemption—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "Of our bodies."

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: And so there's the next use of the word redemption after chapter six.

Jon: He—I mean, he is talking about the release of creation from slavery into freedom.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And he's saying this contingent element to that release is that humanity—

Tim: Needs to be redeemed.

Jon: Gets their stuff together.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Learns how to rule—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Because that was the purpose.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: So—

Tim: Yeah. The fate of creation, in biblical thought, is joined with the—

Jon: Fate of humanity.

Tim: Fate of humanity. Mhm.

Jon: And so humanity is groaning, waiting for this new thing to happen.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And you're saying there's kind of like—new creation is in the belly—

Tim: In the bel—

Jon: Of creation—

Tim: Yeah. Yes.

Jon: And—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: There needs to be this birth.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And birth is a very dangerous moment.

Tim: Hmm. Mhm. For women.

Jon: For women.

Tim: Yes, and their bo—their bodies, in particular. Yeah.

Jon: And there's this, kind of, like, death and life happening at the moment of birth.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: It's a process.

Tim: Through danger and death.

Jon: It's through danger and death.

Tim: Not because that's how God wanted it to happen, but because God has granted his images this semi-independence.

Jon: And with that independence, we said: "We're not going to partner with you to rule creation and bring it into f—union with you. We're going to, like, use this as a playground to just—"

Tim: "Do what's good in our eyes."

Jon: "Do what's good in our eyes."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "And it's going to get bloody, and it's going to get nasty." And the biblical portrait of that is being enslaved, now—

Tim: Yeah. Yep.

Jon: To—

Tim: Right.

Jon: Something else.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And we've actually enslaved creation as well.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: It's all tied up together. There's this slavery. God wants to rescue creation and us out of slavery into the new thing. It's bound up together. And it's happening. It's, like, forming in the womb of creation. And then it's also forming in us.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The first fruits—the fruits of the Spirit—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: In us.

Tim: Mhm. So real quick, in that telling, you left out the Jesus part, though.

Jon: Okay—

[Laughter]

Jon: And then the Jesus part.

Tim: So then the Jesus part is: “Okay, well, if that’s what humans are doing to themselves and creation—”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: “Then God, God’s own self, in the person of the Son, becomes one with creation in order to be the one human who doesn’t give in to do what’s good in their eyes, but yet, subjects themselves willingly to the slavery that humans have brought upon themselves and takes it to its bitter end. And in so doing, that blameless life that surrenders to the consequences of human sin is called the redemption—

[Laughter]

Tim: Or the redemption price. But God takes his life up again by raising his Son from the dead, and that becomes the passage through. So the point is about the redemption of our bodies, which, a—it’s a shorthand for resurrection. It’s called the repossessing of the body.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So God’s not over the body. This is not about going to Heaven, some non-material, non-embodied Heaven when you die. This is about God reclaiming what is his, which is creation and humans. But he’s done it by joining, becoming one, with creation, in the person of the Son.

Jon: And the way to redemption is through the death of the body—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Ultimately.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. Which we perceive as an end, but the whole point of the resurrection is death, now, just becomes a stage in the transformation, a metamorphosis, as Paul will call it in First Corinthians 15. It's a rebirth.

Jon: This is cool. My question was—that brought us here: “Why did Jesus have to go into death to offer the Spirit, to become the seed, for us to go through death?” God's powerful—all-powerful. Just give us that. There's this beauty to Jesus suffering with us, but was that just so we could have something to marvel at? I think it's more than that.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: What's kind of the deep biblical logic of: “I'm not going to just give you this gift, I'm going to s—go through death with you.”?

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Maybe, uhm—I'll use a phrase from one of the most important early church theologians, Saint Gregory. Gregory the Great, from the fourth century, played a key role in crafting the language of the Nicene Creed. He had this line that has become treasured throughout history, that I think speaks to what you're saying. And really, it's his summary of the key ideas of the letters to the Hebrews' view of Jesus. Uh, the line is: “Whatever has not been assumed or taken up, cannot be healed.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And what he means by that is you can heal something from the outside, like a snap of the divine fingers. “You're better.” Like what Jesus does for the paralyzed man.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But what really is it going to take for that paralyzed man healed in the Gospels to become a participant in the infinite, unending life of God that never ends?

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: It's not something that God does outside of God's self to others, it's something that God's own self participates in. God assumes into himself the plight of creation. The creator becomes creation to assume it into himself, so that it can be healed by actually becoming one with God's own life. That is God's way of healing it permanently, not just as, like: “Oh, I'll heal you.” But: “How about you come into me?”

The only way for something that is not God to participate in the unending life of God is to join in union, to become one with.

Jon: Yeah. So to go back to the redemption kind of schema, union is—

Tim: Freedom.

Jon: Freedom.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: It's living in ownership of God.

Tim: Yeah. As God's possession. Mhm.

Jon: The alternative is living in possession of sin and death.

Tim: Yeah. As if you are your own possession, or as the snake thinks that creation is its possession.

Jon: And if creation is supposed to go on a journey of union with God, it just fundamentally can't do that—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: In a state—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Where it—now it's enslaved in this kind of anti-love, anti-God—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Place—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That can't now go and become union with God.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And Jesus entering into that is a way of God saying: "While I can't let that be unified with me, I will, in some way, come and unify with it."

Tim: Mhm. Mhm.

Jon: "And by doing that, I'm going to suffer."

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: “But at least then, now—”

Tim: Yes.

Jon: “I can pull this back out into a new starting place, where we can go on this journey, again.”

Tim: Yes. Okay. Without knowing it, I think, in almost the exact terms, you just recited the flow of thought of Hebrews chapter two.

[Laughter]

Jon: Really?

Tim: Yes. Should we just do it?

Jon: Yeah, let’s do it.

Tim: Okay.

[Musical Break 33:32—33:41]

[Jesus’ Identification With Us in Hebrews 2 (33:41—43:56)]

Tim: So Hebrews one just begins: “Man, God’s been talking to his people for a long time, but now, climatically, he has spoken to us in h—the Son—” capital s: “Divine Son of God, who is both the inheritor of all creation, and the one through whom creation was made and exists.” He is the source and the goal of all creation. “He’s the very radiance of God’s glory. He is the exact *charakter*—the representation of the

divine nature. All creation is upheld because of the Son and his power—the word of his power.” He’s saying: “That’s the Jesus that we worship.” That’s the way he begins. “And that risen from the dead Son-of-God-divine-human—angels are pretty cool, but he’s, like, way cooler than the angels.”

Jon: Hmm. Okay.

Tim: Okay. That’s basically chapter one.

Jon: All right.

[Laughter]

Tim: Chapter two, then, he goes on this thought, and he says: “So what’s really interesting is that, well, if the divine human is exalted over angels—”and he starts meditating on Psalm eight—and Psalm eight is, you know: “What is human—”asking God: “What’s human that you think of him, or the son of humanity, that you’re concerned about him? You made him a little lower than the angels, but you have crowned him with glory and honor and made him the ruler over the works of your hands.” And he goes on this meditation. He says: “So if Jesus is the representative, divine human, and he is now ruling over all things, everything under his feet, what was that whole ‘being made a little lower than the angels’ about? If he’s higher than the angels, what—”and then he starts meditating on: “Well, there was this window of time when the Son of God became a mortal human.” And this is how he describes it. He says: “We see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, but he’s now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that, by the gift of God, he might taste death on behalf of everyone. In leading many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists—that he should make the pioneer of their rescue complete through what he suffered.” Then he’ll pick up that line of thought.

Jon: Hold on, the pioneer of their rescue. That’s Jesus. He’s the pioneer?

Tim: Yep. He’s the—

Jon: He’s—

Tim: Th—

Jon: He’s made complete.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Is this the *teleos*?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Exactly. Yeah. Meaning, that in the human life of Jesus, God participated in and experienced what you and I are experiencing right now—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Which is life outside of Eden. And he becomes a human who reaches that complete form of human life through suffering, through surrendering his life as an act of love for others. And then this is how he finishes the thought. He says: “The Son has shared in their humanity so that through his death he might disempower the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil—the slanderer. And so he could set free those who, for all their lives, were held in slavery to their fear of death.” This is, in essence, in, you know, biblical idiom—

[Laughter]

Tim: The same flow of thought that you just offered.

Jon: Mhm. Yeah. My flow of thought was: creation and humanity are now not in union with God.

Tim: Yeah. They’ve seceded.

[Laughter]

Tim: They’ve declared independence.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And so in that way, we’ve been dispossessed.

Tim: Go—yep. That's right.

Jon: And there's this power there of slavery. It's not like we can just be like: "Actually, we don't want to be dispossessed anymore." It's like there's an actual, like—here he calls it "the fear of death."

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: It's something that just keeps us bound there.

Tim: Yeah. Slavery to the fear of death. And that's enslavement to the one who has the power of death. Yeah.

Jon: Who—who's the one who has the power of death?

Tim: The s—the devil is what he says, which means "the slanderer." Mhm.

Jon: Here's the thing. We've just been saying over and over, God could just take it back. He doesn't owe Pharaoh anything.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: He doesn't owe the Satan anything.

Tim: That's right. Yeah.

Jon: He doesn't owe the power of death anything.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Just take us back.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: And here, to do that, he went through death—suffered to set us free.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So I guess I'm still asking, like: "Why?"

Tim: "Why?" Well, even though we say we live in the fear of death, it's actually what we want based—

Jon: We—

Tim: On the—

Jon: Still want it.

Tim: The pattern of human history, and desire, and decision making.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: We want to kill each other. We want to secure our existence.

Jon: We want the slavery.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And the only thing that will change our heart is seeing the beauty of God coming, and suffering with us, and showing us another way.

Tim: Hmm. Not just that we see this model example of what a human life is made for, but that God actually becomes that and is that in a representative way—

Jon: Oh, I see.

Tim: That benefits us, even though I'm not—

Jon: It—

Tim: Like that.

Jon: So it's not like we see it, and we're like: "Okay, I'll model that." It's like we see it, and then we go: "Cool, I'll join that." The only way for me to attain it is to join it.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: So not only can I not have a change of heart, even if I have a change of heart, I can't pull it off.

Tim: That's right. Yes.

Jon: And so Jesus coming—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Is doing both.

Tim: Yeah. So I'm reading a book right now—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's just, kind of—just happened to overlap with my reading plan and this conversation—by Eastern Orthodox theologian Khaled Anatolios, called *Deification*

*Through the Cross: An Eastern Christian Theology of Salvation.* And you just summarized his, kind of, main point—

[Laughter]

Tim: Which is that the means of atonement for human sin, within Eastern Orthodox theology—and then he goes through: half of this is just a biblical theology working through biblical texts—is about, uhm, repentance.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And God becomes the repentant human who repents to God—returns back to God on our behalf.

Jon: In what way was Jesus repentant?

Tim: Oh, for example, like, at his baptism, where he enters into Israel's baptism of repentance. Jesus didn't have anything to repent from—

[Laughter]

Tim: But he shows solidarity and unifies himself with rebellious Israel that needs to go through the waters to be purified and return to God. He takes humanity's or Israel's fate onto itself. He goes into the wilderness and goes through Israel's wilderness testing. But he turns to God in trust and depend—to his Father, i—

Jon: Which is a repentance.

Tim: Instead of away, which is what Israel had done in the wilderness. So there's all these patterns. Actually, here in Hebrews, in chapter ten, he's going to begin quoting from Psalm 40 and working through this, because it's not just that Jesus died, but that—it's that his life and his death was done in accordance to the will of God. He's quoting from Psalm 40, verse seven and eight. The point is that Jesus' death is the culmination of a loving surrender of a human life that turns back to God to enter into union with God. Because God's the only source of infinite life.

Jon: And—okay. And I've heard this said. I've said this before. "Jesus did for us what we can't do—"

Tim: That's right.

Jon: "To be the image of God."

Tim: Yeah. Or in the words of Athanasius, another early fourth-century theologian: "He becomes what we are, so that we can become what he is."

Jon: So to transfer ownership from death to life means we have to willingly decide: "I don't want to be under the power of death."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And that's a repentance—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That we're just incapable of.

Tim: Well—

Jon: Fundamentally incapable of?

Tim: Or it, it seems—I mean, th—throughout Israel's history—

[Laughter]

Tim: Wi—the poi—the point of telling—

Jon: Is—

Tim: Israel's history the way that it's told in the Hebrew Bible, is that, like: "Well, they didn't do it."

Jon: Isn't that what Paul means: "All have sinned, fallen short of—"

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: "The divine glory?"

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, that's—

Jon: Like—

Tim: Right. And this is why—

Jon: We just can't do it.

Tim: In the Prophets, when Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Joel look forward to the renewed Israel that can join an eternal covenant partnership with God, they talk about the renewal of the heart. Or Moses: "So that you—he will circumcise your heart, so that you can return, repent, and love him." So the human h—heart and desire needs become so joined to God's own love and desire that it's like God is doing it for us.

Jon: Jesus is repenting for us.

Tim: Jesus is repenting for us.

Jon: And so it's not now—

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: We need to then repent on our behalf, as much as it—we need to join in on Jesus' repentance.

Tim: Yeah. That's totally right.

Jon: Whoa.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. Mhm.

[Concluding Thoughts (43:56—49:41)]

Jon: Okay. Redeemed by the blood. We've gone out of our way throughout this series to say: "When God redeems something, he doesn't owe anyone anything."

Tim: That's right. That's right. Yeah.

Jon: He's—can just take it.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: But then, can God just take our heart?

Tim: Right. Yeah.

Jon: And so then we're at: "Actually, I guess there is one thing God's decided he's not going to just take."

Tim: Yeah. Which is our—

Jon: Because if he does that—

Tim: Yeah, yeah.

Jon: Then the whole thing, the whole idea of being the image of God—

Tim: Yeah. What wa—

Jon: Ruling—

Tim: What was—

Jon: Over creation—

Tim: The point?

[Laughter]

Jon: It goes away.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So he—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Can let us be enslaved.

Tim: Hmm.

Jon: Or I guess there's one other option, which is to repent for us.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And then to give us a way to join in him.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And to do that was the suffering and death.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And so the redemption, the transferred ownership, was this moment of: “We can’t become one with him—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “So he will then unite with us—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “In our state—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “And do what we can’t do to create a way through so that we can start to unite with him.”

Tim: Hmm. Hmm. That’s how he repossesses.

Jon: And that’s how he repossesses.

Tim: What already ultimately belonged to him, but he granted it, you know, a semi-independence to dispossess itself—and he, yeah, repossesses it by becoming it and returning to God on its behalf.

[Laughter]

Jon: And that’s why you can then talk about the suffering as a type of—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Means of exchange, because it cost him.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. This forces you to reckon with the meta-story of the Bible, and of what you think reality is if you’re a Christian, and who you think God is, and how you think God’s character is displayed in the life, and death, and resurrection of Jesus. Uhm, you know, there—there’s many places where Paul talks about the death of Jesus in the letter to the Romans, which is what this became part—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Part two of—is part two conversation on Romans. But in Romans five, he has a great little formulation that gets to the heart of the matter from a different angle, in which he says: “God demonstrates his love towards us in the fact that while we were —”

Jon: “Still enslaved to sin.”

Tim: “Sinners, the Messiah died for us.”

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Now, he says a lot more before that and after that, but the one word he uses here to distill what God was doing—he doesn’t choose “redeem” in this context. He doesn’t choose “rescue” or “save.” He chooses the word “love.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: It’s the supreme act of love that he would enter into union with his suffering, dying, dispossessed creation, to suffer its fate on its behalf so that he could return it to himself. And this is the, the wonderful mystery of the Good News.

[Laughter]

Tim: It’s Good News.

[Musical Break (47:04—47:08)]

Jon: Thanks for listening to BibleProject podcast. Next week, we’ll finish this series on redemption by looking at how the death of Jesus was a sacrifice that the Passover meal and the Day of Atonement were pointing us towards.

Tim: Sacrifices are only meaningful if they’re joined and offered by someone whose life becomes a mirror of what the sacrifice symbolizes, which is a posture of repentance, and surrender, and of aligning myself with the desire and will of God.

Well, what kind of life did the Messiah lead? It was a life completely aligned with the will of the Father.

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