

[The Wilderness E11 Transcript]

Jon: We've gone on a long journey through the theme of the wilderness together. The wilderness is a dangerous place that will drive our bodies back into the dust from which we came. We sometimes end up in the wilderness because of our own folly, but other times we're thrust into the wilderness by the corruption of others. Yet however we end up in the wilderness, God is committed to meeting us there. And ultimately, God meets us there through Jesus. And so in a way, all of life this side of new creation is a type of wilderness wandering. We're no longer captives to death, but we're not home yet.

Tim: The Messiah has risen from the dead, the Spirit's been poured out, the new age has arrived, but the wilderness is the in-between phase where we've left slavery and we're not fully in the promised land.

Jon: We can succeed in the wilderness because Jesus and God's Spirit are with us in the wilderness, guiding us and providing for us. And so the Apostle Paul tells us to take this seriously, because the wilderness is no joke, and it can ruin us if we don't stick with Jesus.

Tim: You can ignore the oasis on offer. And if you do that, you will find that the wilderness is going to kill you. It'll destroy you. You're cutting off the branch that is supporting your very life.

Jon: This is sobering. The wilderness can still get us?

Tim: The point is you want the warning to stick. I want to be motivated not to wander in the wilderness needlessly.

Jon: Yet Paul also wants us to consider that even if we fail in the wilderness, Jesus is more powerful.

Tim: Paul has this category that if somebody is going to follow the way of the wilderness and its captain, the adversary, that he's going to follow a path that's probably going to lead to his actual physical death. But his life-being, his spirit, will be rescued. So this is a way to think about: If you're in the Messiah, not even your own self-destructive choices can take you out of his grip.

Jon: Today, we look at the theme of the wilderness in the letters of the Apostle Paul and the letter to the Hebrews. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical Break (2:14—2:20)]

[The Wilderness Pattern in 1 Corinthians 10 (2:20—27:01)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hello, Jon.

Jon: Hello. We are going to try to finish—

[Laughter]

Jon: This theme of the wilderness.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And we have, I imagine, a lot of ground to cover because we're going to look at the theme of the wilderness—

[Laughter]

Jon: In all the letters—

[Laughter]

Jon: In the New Testament and—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Also The Revelation?

Tim: Yeah. It comes up less often than you might think, but when it does come up, it's a big deal.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So Paul mentions Israel's wilderness wanderings in his letters. He alludes to them and uses language from them on a handful of occasions, but there's only once where he really explicitly brings it up—focuses on it, and that's in the letter that we call One Corinthians.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then the letter to the Hebrews has a big focus on it. And actually, what I like is to hold those two together because some points they're making are similar. Other points they're making, if they're not different, they're at least—they have different ways of talking about it, and that's just—it illuminates it. And then the wilderness is brought up two times in The Revelation in a really interesting way. If we can cover all these, I will feel so proud of—

[Laughter]

Tim: Proud of us.

Jon: Well, let's do this then. Let's just jump right in—

Tim: Great.

Jon: And then any sort of recap could come at the very end.

Tim: At the very end. Okay, I like that. I like that. Okay. So let's turn our attention to the wilderness in Paul's letter, One Corinthians, which is not his first letter to them. It's likely his second—

[Laughter]

Tim: Or third.

Jon: Okay—

Tim: Uhm—

Jon: But we call it One Corinthians.

Tim: We call it One Corinthians—chapter 10. So real quick context: This letter is a response to a letter that the Corinthians wrote towards him in response to a first letter that he wrote to them.

Jon: Oh—

[Laughter]

Jon: That's how you know it's not—

Tim: Yep.

Jon: The first letter.

Tim: He wrote them a letter.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: They wrote—had—

Jon: They had questions.

Tim: A response letter with a bunch of questions—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Which is why One Corinthians has a bunch of quotes from the letter they wrote him. And in many of those quotes are embedded quotes from Paul—

[Laughter]

Tim: From the first letter he wrote them.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Quotes of quotes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And a lot of it is—he spent a year and a half in Corinth, we know from Acts, and there was a lot he was able to share with them. But there was a lot left open-ended.

Following Jesus is complicated because life is complicated. Or maybe life—following Jesus is pretty simple, but life is complicated.

[Laughter]

Tim: I can't tell which one. Anyway, one of the issues that was unresolved was—these are mostly non-Israelites, followers of the Israelite Messiah. There are some Israelites in their midst, but most not. And so one un—unresolved thing is one part of Greek and Roman life, like—for Europeans and Americans, think of, like, national holidays—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And how many national holidays are tied to feasts and parties. You travel. You be with family. So like, the Roman Empire had their own traditional calendar.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And every one of these is connected with some sort of deity.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: And so it's very common—like, you know, for today, it'd be like Independence Day. You know, many nations have Independence Day.

[Laughter]

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Or honoring the birth or the death of some famous figure. And so all of this—family coming to town. You go down to the temple shrine to the god or goddess who's connected with that event.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And you have a barbecue—

[Laughter]

Tim: Literally a barbecue.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Somebody brings the animal. It's sacrificed in honor of this deity, but then the meat is shared. You have a meal.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So that's one thing.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Second is these meals were connected with feasting and a lot of wine, and it being the patriarchal culture that it was—this is not like an American July 4th, where the kids are playing badminton in the yard—

[Laughter]

Tim: And—you know, this is—the evening goes on, it's just the men left, and they're really drunk, and sex workers, male and female, being hired to come to these—that's like a normal thing.

Jon: That's how the parties end.

Tim: That's how the parties end.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So if you're raised in that culture and you become compelled by the story of the God of Israel—maybe you're a God-fearer and you're interested, you start attending synagogue gatherings, then some—a guy—a rabbi visits the synagogue talking about Israel's Messiah who's been crucified and raised from the dead and you join the group of people because you're compelled by that story, and there's going to be all kinds of stuff in your life you got to think through. And one of them will be: What about when your uncle invites you to—uhm—a temple for one of these parties next Friday? Do you go?

Jon: Right.

Tim: Do you not go? Because you say, "Paul had been teaching us there is one God—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "A Father of all, and the Lord Jesus, Messiah, his Son. And that's the true God. These idols are wood and stone. And yeah, there's spiritual evil presences, but these

idols are nothing. So I can just go to the shrine and have the meal, and I'll leave early. Yeah, it'll be fine."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Okay. But then other people have a real problem with this, and they write Paul a bunch of questions about it. That's the context.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So Paul's responding to their questions in chapters eight, nine, and 10 of One Corinthians. And we're going to read from One Corinthians 10, but I just want to set up. Chapter eight, he goes on, and he says, "Yeah, you're right. There are many spiritual beings th—so-called gods—"he refers to them—"but for us—"he says in chapter 8—"there is one God, the Father from whom are all things, we are for him, and the one Lord Jesus, Messiah, by whom are all things, we exist through him." And then he says, "Not everybody has that knowledge. And so some of you are accustomed to thinking that idols are really, like—"

Jon: That what's going on in that temple, like, is really a god.

Tim: Yeah. And so if they go eat the barbecue meat that was sacrificed to that God, he said, "Some followers of Jesus who haven't yet attained a certain level of knowledge are actually going to be eating a meal thinking that it's in honor of a god. And that will be bad for them because that's compromising their loyalty to the one God who is the Father and—and the Son."

Jon: Something tricky here, though, because there are spiritual beings.

Tim: There are—

Jon: And there's—

Tim: Spiritual beings.

Jon: And the—

Tim: Yep.

Jon: Spiritual beings are animated through these rituals in a way—like, you know—

Tim: Accessed.

Jon: Accessed.

Tim: Oh, yeah. That—and that's going to be his point in chapter 10.

Jon: And that will be his po—okay.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And so is there something here about like: In reality, the meat that was barbecued to that God—

Tim: That belongs to the one God.

Jon: Yeah. You can actually eat it without participating in the spiritual being thing—

Tim: Yep.

Jon: And just make a connection to the one true God.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: But if you don't know how to do that—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And you think you actually are participating, then in a way you kind of are.

Tim: Right. Yeah.

Jon: Right?

Tim: Yeah. That's right. That's why he talks about your conscience. Somebody's conscience—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Can be defiled because in their eyes: "I really am showing honor to another spiritual being other than the one God, who I follow. But I'm also like—I need to do this thing. My uncle's pressuring me. He's paying for my education."

[Laughter]

Tim: "I should—"you know, I—thi—this is the stuff that would happen.

Jon: Sure.

Tim: Right? So first of all, he says, "Those of you who—you think you could go to an idol temple, like, for the barbecue party, and you're going to leave early, you're not going to sleep with any sex workers, you're not going to get, like, wasted—like, you could do that and you would be fine." But he said, "Your brothers or sisters in the Messiah who see you do that—if they were to go be in that scenario, they're going to drink too much.

They'll probably have sex with a sex worker. And they'll probably think the meat really is offered to a real spiritual being."

Jon: They're—they'll connect to a spiritual being.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And for them, it would ruin their faith. So he says, "It's better that you follow the way of love and that you don't—"

Jon: "Just abstain from it."

Tim: Yeah. "Out of love for your brother or sister."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: An—and then in chapter nine, he offers himself as an example of doing that. And so he gives all these life examples to say, "Listen, I'm an Apostle. I saw Jesus. And there's all kinds of rights and privileges that I could exercise, but I don't."

Jon: Like?

Tim: "I don't allow you Corinthians to pay me as one of your teachers and leaders."

Jon: Okay, but it's common to pay the teacher and leader?

Tim: Yeah, he says, like, all the Apostles, like, earn a living from the congregations they helped start. But he says, "I don't do that." So he gives his life as an example. Then he comes back in chapter 10, and here's where we go.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "Now following up on the—the fact that there are so-called gods and lords—he says, "Listen—"this is chapter 10—"I don't want you to be unaware, my siblings, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and passed through the sea."

Jon: Mmm. Yeah. Okay. What are you talking about?

[Laughter]

Jon: The cloud, the sea—

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah. “Under the cloud,” referring to the glory cloud of God—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That led them through the wilderness, passing through the sea.

Jon: So he’s referring to the Exodus generation?

Tim: Yeah. And he calls them our ancestors, our fathers, which is re—that little—is remarkable.

Jon: Because these are not Israelites.

Tim: No, he’s writing to a mixed community—

Jon: In the—in Corinth.

Tim: Of some Israelites, mostly not—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In a—like, an ancient Greek city in the Roman Empire—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You know—thousands—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of years later.

Jon: So—

Tim: It’s wild.

Jon: So “I want you to consider that you’re part of a family—”

Tim: Yes.

Jon: “That—”

Tim: “If you’re in the Messiah—”

Jon: “If you’re in the Messiah—”

Tim: “You’re in the Messiah’s family, which—”

Jon: “The Messiah’s family—”and this is the story of the Messiah’s family. “They went through the sea—out of Egypt, through the sea, and they were led by a cloud.”

Tim: Yeah. “And all of them were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

Jon: Yeah. That’s an interesting turn of phrase.

Tim: Yeah, so he’s trying to—he’s doing a lot of imaginative work here. He is now referring to an experience in the life of these followers of the Messiah Jesus. “You got baptized into the Messiah. That is an image—”or, “That’s a ritual that itself is built on the symbolism of our ancestors going out of slavery through the waters of death out into—”

Jon: That’s the baptism—

Tim: “Life.”

Jon: Of Moses?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Or the baptism into—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Moses?

Tim: Yeah, so he’s describing the wilderness wanderings and the passage through the sea, but using the explicitly messianic community language—

Jon: Of being—

Tim: From—

Jon: Baptized.

Tim: His time and day. Yeah. So it’s design patterns. Or he’s thinking in terms of—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Narrative analogies and design patterns throughout the biblical story.

Jon: “Our fathers, they passed through the sea. They were baptized into Moses.”

Tim: Into Moses.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In—but he’s using the language because you’re baptized into the Messiah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So he's using explicitly Christian language, but to retell the story—

[Laughter]

Jon: "They did a similar thing, but it was before Jesus."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "They had Moses."

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yep. "They ate the same spiritual food—"

Jon: As?

Tim: "The food of the spirit," which is a—

Jon: The same as what, though?

Tim: The—the manna—

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: The bread.

Jon: They ate—so, this is referring to the sky goo—

Tim: Mhm.

[Laughter]

Jon: From Exodus, the sky bread, but he says "the same."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Meaning—

Tim: Meaning—

Jon: They all ate it together?

Tim: "We—we take the bread and the cup."

Jon: Oh, “the same as us.” So “We—”

Tim: The same as us.

Jon: Okay, so “We eat the bread and cup.”

Tim: “We eat the bread from heaven, too.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: I see.

Tim: Yep. Jesus said, “I’m the bread come down from out of heaven.” That’s in John.

Jon: Okay, so they were eating that.

Tim: Yeah, so you can see he’s really mapping—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The liturgical and communal life—

Jon: I see. “You were baptized. They had their baptism. You eat of the bread of life. They were eating of the bread of life.”

Tim: That’s right.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: “They all drank the same spiritual drink—”so here’s the cup—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “Because they were drinking from a spiritual rock—”

[Laughter]

Tim: “That was following them around, and that rock was the Messiah.”

[Laughter]

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So good.

Jon: Well, there is a story of water coming from a rock.

Tim: Two times.

Jon: Two times. And is—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That what he means is—follows them around?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Because it shows up twice?

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And the rock was Christ.

Tim: Yeah. Exodus 17, Massah and Merivah—there's no water.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: People come to Moses. They grumble.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Are you trying to kill us out here?"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Moses says to God, "These people are about to kill me."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: God says, "Take that staff. Hit the rock."

Jon: And you mentioned back then—we didn't unpack it—but you said, "Isn't it interesting Moses is told to strike the rock and that Yahweh is said to be—"

Tim: Standing on the rock.

Jon: Stand on the rock.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And then you kind of were like, "This is connected to the suffering servant theme of being struck." We didn't follow it, but it seems like that's what he's connecting it—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: To here.

Tim: So that's called Massah and Merivah. Then the Israelites journey on, go to Mount Sinai, leave Mount Sinai—Numbers—then they rebel in the wilderness, wander 40 years in the wilderness. They end up back at Massah and Merivah again. And then there's actually, by the—actually, this is important. It's not at all clear that they're at the same spot as they were in Exodus 17.

Jon: It's just called the same spot?

Tim: It actually seems like they've moved on towards the east side of the Jordan, coming up towards Moab. So it seems like they're actually at a—literally at a different geographical location, but it is called by the same name—

[Laughter]

Tim: As Massah and Merivah, which mean "fight," "quarrel," and "contention." And then there's a rock that Moses was supposed to speak to, but he hit it twice. So what's interesting is in Jewish tradition—we find it today manifested in the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible—

Jon: The Targum?

Tim: Targums—then also in compilations of Jewish Bible interpretation from the Second Temple period and later called the Midrash. The Midrash to Numbers and Exodus all talk about this rock following them.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Like this was a—Paul's working a motif here—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: A well-known motif.

Jon: This was a common way to think about the rock—

Tim: Yep, that's right.

Jon: Following them around?

Tim: Because how did the rock move to a new location?

Jon: I just imagined it was a different rock.

Tim: Right.

Jon: But if it's the same rock, then yeah, it's—it's moving around.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So it's like the rock follows them around.

Jon: But then what Paul is saying is, like, "Hey, we all know in rabbinic tradition the rock followed them around."

Tim: You got it.

Jon: "I'm letting you know that rock was Christ."

Tim: That's right. Totally. And what's interesting is—you know—he's identifying the one who gives them food, for example, in the Exodus and Numbers, is Yahweh. But then now the one giving them food and drink is the Messiah, giving them his body and his blood. So the Messiah is in the Yahweh slot of the one that's the provider of food. So who's that rock? Uhm—there are places in the Torah where Moses calls God the rock.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: There's multiple times where Moses calls God the rock. David often calls God the rock.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So it seems like Paul is also drawing on the divine rock—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Image here. Okay. So—“Man, that’s what happened to them?” Th—his point up to this point with that little rabbit hole about the rock is, like: “Your pattern of life is reliving the pattern of our ancestors and in the wilderness.”

Jon: Yeah, “They did this all in the wilderness.”

Tim: Yeah. “However, remember—”verse five—“that with most of them, God was not pleased.”

[Laughter]

Tim: “In fact, they fell. Their bodies fell in the wilderness.”

Jon: Here it is. The wilderness didn’t make them ready.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah, they were not ready—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: For the garden. They got to eat garden food and drink garden drink, but—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: They weren’t ready. So he’s referring to the rebellions in the wilderness, specifically the ones in Numbers that left a whole generation dead in the wilderness. So his point is here is, “Listen, God rescued them, saved them, provided them all the food—so much generosity. However, there was a point. God’s generosity doesn’t give you a blank check. You can refuse that generosity at a certain point where God will hand you over to the tragic consequences of that.” And he says in verse 6, “These things happened as *tupoi* for us.”

Jon: “A pattern.”

Tim: Yeah. It’s the word “*tupos*,” where we get the word type—where the word typology comes from. It’s the word for pattern. “This is a pattern for us.”

Jon: Translated as “example” in—

Tim: Uh—

Jon: What are you reading? NIV?

Tim: In—New American Standard—

Jon: NAS?

Tim: Translates it as example. “These are examples for us.” And so does the NIV. Wow.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: ESV—King James.

Jon: All of them.

Tim: Examples.

Jon: Examples.

Tim: But it’s the word type. This is a pattern. So God provided for them food. God provides for us. God handed them over to the self-destructive consequences of their choices. “Whoa.”

Jon: Would God do that for us?

Tim: “Wow. God—I guess God could do that for me, too.” “Don’t be idolaters.” It’s the word “worshippers of an idol.” “Don’t give your allegiance to idols. Just as some of them were in the wilderness, it was written—”and then he quotes—actually, what he quotes from is from the golden calf story.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “The people sat down to eat and drink and stood up to play—”which has some sexual overtones even back in Exodus.

Jon: Yeah, we talked about that a long time ago.

Tim: Would definitely have sexual overtones—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: At your uncle’s barbecue at the shrine down the street.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Which is why he says next, “First, don’t worship idols. And second, don’t commit sexual immorality.” Going to idol temples—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Is joined closely with having sex. “So don’t let us commit sexual immorality as some of them did, and 23,000 fell in one day.” Whoa. Now that’s interesting. “Nor let us test the Lord as some of them did and were destroyed by the serpents.” Hmm, this is from Numbers 21. “Nor let us grumble as some of them did and were destroyed by the destroyer.” Seems like he’s referring to the rebellion of the sons of Korah here. So he mentions, like, four moments—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of wilderness rebellion. But the first two are mapped on real closely to the problem at hand. And then he concludes his point—is: “These things happen to them—he says it again—“as a *tupos*, as a pattern, and they were written for our instruction.”

Jon: What’s the word there?

Tim: Uhm—it’s *nouthesian*. It’s one of these varieties of Greek words that reflects the variety of Hebrew words for “*torah*—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And “instruction.” And then look how he describes the Corinthians. He says, “These things happen to them as patterns, and they were written for our instruction. And we are those upon whom the ends of the ages have *katantao*—met together.” The pl—

Jon: The ends of the ages.

Tim: The plural—it’s plural. “Ends—”

Jon: The plural ends of the plural ages?

Tim: “Have met together.”

Jon: What—what does that mean?

Tim: Yeah. I first learned this from New Testament scholar Richard Hays. So the end of the current age is like an end.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But also the end—this i—doesn’t—hmm—the word “end” for us means “completion.”

Jon: S—like the final bit?

Tim: Yeah. But think of—this is—I thin—

Jon: You could think of edges.

Tim: I think reflecting new—“edge.” There you go.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Edge.

Jon: “The edge.”

Tim: The edge. We made a video about this in our Eternal Life video.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: An “age” is a period of time.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But what if you add two ages that overlapped in the same time period?

Jon: And their edges connected.

Tim: Yeah. And Richard Hays, in his—well, he has a commentary on First Corinthians and then he has a book on *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, where he makes this argument that he’s referring to the overlap of the old and the new age in the current moment—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of: The Messiah has risen from the dead, the spirit’s been poured out—

Jon: I see.

Tim: The new age has arrived.

Jon: This is the age of the Spirit being poured out—

Tim: Right. But our bodies are—

Jon: Which is a—

Tim: Still returning to the dust.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So it’s still the old age.

Jon: Okay. So you’re in that age.

Tim: Yeah. Which, in other words, the wilderness.

Jon: In other words, the wilderness.

Tim: The wilderness is the in-between.

Jon: Oh. Where the ends of the ages have come together.

Tim: We're in this in-between phase—

Jon: Whoa.

Tim: Where we've left slavery—

Jon: That's the wilderness.

Tim: But we're not fully in the promised land, secure. We're in this in-between where we have spiritual food and s—Eden food and Eden drink, and our future is secure, but we are still in this in-between space. And he uses wilderness—the biblical metaphor of the wilderness, and then uses this time metaphor of—

[Laughter]

Tim: The edges of the old age and new age meet—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Together. This is such a rad passage.

Jon: Yeah—

Tim: Helping us—

Jon: There's something actually productive, potentially, about being in that stage where we think it's just driving us back to the dust. But then this theme of us talking about: Well, it's a time to get ready.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That we actually—it—p—prepare us for the garden. That's the age to come.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And then we're living in this time of wilderness where the edge of the garden can just sneak up on you.

Tim: Yeah, totally. It's—yeah—

[Laughter]

Tim: How do you say? When you think geographically—if I'm in a desert, I'm not in a garden. If I come across a little garden in the desert, it's a spot.

Jon: Oasis.

Tim: So that's using space. You can't be in two spaces at the same time. I can't be in the garden and in the wilderness at the same time.

Jon: Except—

Tim: Uhm—

Jon: That you kind of can in an oasis.

Tim: An oasis—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Becomes a little garden in a wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So you have spatial or geographic imagery. Then you have time imagery of—normally, the way time works is I'm having one experience—

[Laughter]

Jon: And then the next.

Tim: That comes to an end—

Jon: Sure.

Tim: Then the next experience begins.

Jon: Right.

Tim: What Paul's trying to do is use the oasis in the wilderness as a garden in the wilderness and then use time language.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And his language for that is being in a moment where the ends of the ages have met together.

Jon: Mmm.

[Laughter]

Jon: That's cool.

Tim: Yeah. And that is like a garden in the wilderness, an oasis in a wilderness moment.

Jon: So we live in that time, meaning, when Jesus said, "The Kingdom of the skies is here."

Tim: That's true. But you can reject it.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: I mean—and that doesn't mean it's not here. It's here.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But you can choose to keep living like it's not arrived.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You can ignore the oasis that's on offer. And if you do that, you will find that the wilderness is going to kill you. It'll destroy you. And that's his warning here—is like, "Listen, if you—"

Jon: Ooh.

Tim: "Reject the spiritual food and drink and the eternal life that's on offer—"

Jon: "Then how are you going to experience the garden?"

Tim: Just—"You're cutting off the branch that is supporting your very life." That's the warning element here—is these idols—

Jon: The wilderness can really, truly be the wilderness.

Tim: It's still a real threat, but it's only if you let it.

[Musical Break (26:33—27:01)]

[The Wilderness Warnings in 1 Corinthians 3 and 5 (27:01—37:08)]

Jon: If we connect this back to what we kind of ended last conversation—was: We're not ready for the garden. And it's just this story of the Bible that no matter what, it doesn't seem like we can get ready. But when we're with Jesus in the garden, like, we're ready because he's our leader and he's—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Ready.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And so here it feels like what Paul is saying is, like, "If you go out into the wilderness and then you're like, 'Ah—and I actually don't need to be with Jesus, I could go do my own thing—'"

Tim: Oh, "I could do this on my own." Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jon: "Then suddenly—"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "You're not ready anymore."

Tim: Yeah, you're not ready.

Jon: "The wilderness will just take over."

Tim: That's right. Okay, so then it leaves this question of: Wait, so, like, if you disconnect from Jesus, you're done for? It's like none of it ever happened to you?" Right? It raises that question.

Jon: What do you mean? What question?

Tim: So we ended our last conversation with Jesus providing bread for Israel and the nations—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Israel hasn't been ready up to this point, but if they are with Jesus—

Jon: Mhm. Then they're ready.

Tim: They can hang in the wilderness. What Paul's saying here is, "And that's true."

Jon: Yep.

Tim: "If you're with the new Moses, you can hang in the wilderness, not because you're necessarily ready—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "But because he's ready. And you can now, by his mercy, begin to train yourself to be ready. But man, if you reject—if you want to go on your own—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "You're going to blow it." And then what does it mean that I could become like those who fall dead in the wilderness? What does that mean?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Okay. So he doesn't clarify in First Corinthians 10. He gives us some clues earlier in the letter—what that might mean.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So in First Corinthians five, he is talking about a guy in the church community who is sleeping with his mother-in-law. And most of the people in his house church think it's fine. And he's like, "This is not okay."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "I'm telling you, your Greek and Roman neighbors who don't follow Jesus don't think this is fine." So he says, "You need to shun this guy from your community to shock his conscience to see what he's doing is wrong." And you find out in what we call Two Corinthians that it worked—that the guy was shocked into repentance, and he was restored to the community. But before he knew that would happen, he says this—he says, "I have decided to hand such a one over to the Satan for the destruction of his flesh so that his spirit might be saved—"

Jon: Oh.

Tim: "In the Day of the Lord Jesus."

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah. That's right.

Tim: So you're like: Paul has this category that if somebody is going to follow the way of the wilderness and its captain, the adversary, that he's going to follow a path that's probably going to lead to his actual physical death. And we—we don't know—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: What that means. But his life-being, his spirit, will be rescued. So this is a way to think about: If you're in the Messiah, not even your own self-destructive choices can take you out of his grip.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Isn't that interesting? So Paul also says that in the same letter.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So you can fall in the wilderness, but here's an example of a guy who says, "I'm going to hand this guy over to fall in the wilderness so his spirit can be saved in the Day —"

[Laughter]

Tim: "Of the Lord Jesus." And we don't have a systematic theology from Paul to like—

Jon: "What does he mean?"

Tim: Yeah. But you just got to hold these two passages and work out the difference.

Jon: Yeah. There's hope for him.

Tim: He might ruin his actual physical life so much so that he dies.

Jon: Yeah. This idea of the age to come, where there will be this final resurrection, there will be this new life, this new spirit, this new body—there's this ongoing question of like: Who gets to be part of that?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And it's not tidy here.

Tim: No, in fact—okay, now we're—we're kind of reading backwards through Corinthians.

Jon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tim: Whatever it means that on The Day of our Lord Jesus, you could be rescued, even though you've made some horrible choices in your life, connects back two more chapters to First Corinthians chapter three, where he talks about The Day of our Lord Jesus. And here he's talking about—specifically about leaders, ministry leaders, in the house churches. And he's saying this general principle that if a church leader is building a community on a foundation other than the story and the life and the values of Jesus the Messiah, it's like you are building a house out of wood, hay, and straw. And so he says in First Corinthians 3:13, "Everyone's work will become evident because The Day will show it and it will be revealed with fire. And the fire will—"here's our word for the wilderness—"test the quality of everyone's work. If your work is built on something that remains—and what remains other than Jesus Messiah—if you're building on Jesus Messiah, then you will receive a reward. And if your work is burned up, you'll suffer loss, but he himself will be saved just through the fire."

[Laughter]

Tim: So you got to put all this together—

[Laughter]

Tim: That the wilderness was like a test that purified Israel, and a bunch fell in the wilderness, and that's similar to a guy who's, like, acting so—ooh—detestably that Paul says that guy might fall in the wilderness, but his spirit will be saved. And now here we've got these leaders who might actually spend the whole of their apprenticeship to Jesus leading a group of people down a dead end.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And all that will be burned away on The Day of fire and testing.

Jon: They will be saved through the fire.

Tim: Yeah. All of these three moments in the letter connect.

Jon: Hmm. Yeah.

Tim: Christians have gone different ways in interpreting this. These are the passages that in Catholic tradition are a part of the building out a theology of purgatory—that a disciple of Jesus is held in God's grace.

Jon: Purgatory is being saved through the fire?

Tim: Yeah, but there's a period after death and before the arrival of the Kingdom where you go through a period of fire and testing that removes away these values and loyalties, allegiances, that are actually—

[Laughter]

Tim: Hurting you and separating you from the Kingdom of God.

Jon: Yeah. I always imagined that'd just be really fast. Just, wkhoo.

Tim: And then Protestants have tended towards interpretation that's like: This is a momentary—

Jon: Yeah, this is—

Tim: Final—

Jon: Just that—

Tim: Judgment.

Jon: Final judgment moment.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Just: fire—done. "What do I have left?"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "That's what I have left."

Tim: That's right.

Jon: "Okay."

Tim: So is it long or short?

[Laughter]

Tim: Instantaneous? Is it—

Jon: Interesting.

Tim: And Paul doesn't make that clear.

Jon: Right.

Tim: So Christians have interpreted—filled it out in different ways. But the point is that the wilderness theme is bound up here.

Jon: What's interesting for me here at this moment is we've been asking the question: Am I ready?

Tim: Mhm, yeah.

Jon: Am I ready for the garden? There's going to be a moment when the garden is all that's left, right?

Tim: Yeah—

Jon: That's all—

Tim: Everything's garden.

Jon: Everything's garden.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And so to whatever degree I'm ready, that's the degree I get to be—

Tim: That's good.

Jon: Participating in the garden.

Tim: That's good.

Jon: So if everything I've been building has not helped me be ready, I'm at square one in the garden.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: But if I've been living my life in the garden, building the life of the garden—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And the garden shows up, like, I'm—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: More ready.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Whatever that means.

Tim: Whatever that means. You just summarized the main ideas of C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*. This is exactly—

Jon: Yeah, yeah.

Tim: What he's trying to communicate.

Jon: Right.

Tim: When people—all these people get on a bus—

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: After they've died—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And they go to the new Eden land—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And it shocks everybody—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Because it's too real.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And the people are like thin ghosts, and it hurts to step on the grass—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Because it pokes through you. Heaven's—the new creation's too real.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: We're the shadows.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: And so some people don't want to be there cause it's—

Jon: Too painful.

Tim: Too shocking. And then there's all these case studies and stories about why would somebody want to exist in the shadow lands, in the wilderness. So the point is that the warning has real—it has a bite to it. Like, it's serious.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You don't want to be handed over to the Satan. Y—you don't want to hand yourself over. You don't want to suffer in the wilderness.

Jon: This is instruction for us. This is Torah.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: That y—we can look at those stories of Israel and reflect on: I could waste my life.

Tim: Yes. Yeah.

Jon: Or: I could lead myself into destruction even though I know Jesus.

Tim: Yeah. And God's mercy will always outpace my best efforts to follow him and my worst failures.

Jon: But there's real consequences.

Tim: But that doesn't mean there's no consequences. That's totally right. And holding those two together has just been a long-term tension throughout Christian history—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Because both those themes are in our Bible. And that's also what makes the wilderness motif in the letter to the Hebrews really challenging as well.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So—

Jon: Let's read that.

Tim: Let's turn to that.

[Musical Break (36:42—37:08)]

[More Wilderness Warnings in Hebrews 3-4 (37:08—52:44)]

Tim: So letter to the Hebrews—man, we just don't know—

Jon: We don't know who wrote it?

Tim: Don't know who wrote it.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: To the Hebrews means to—

Jon: The Israelites.

Tim: Messianic Jewish followers of Jesus.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And the assumption of both the writer and the audience is it's people who are steeped in Jewish tradition, liturgy, scriptural thought, and so on. We know from—this is a community that faced actual persecution, imprisonment, seizure of their possessions—so they've likely b—are Jewish people who are already a religious, ethnic minority, cultural minority, in wherever they live, and are probably facing tension with their own Jewish brothers and sisters who disagree with them whether Jesus is the Messiah or not. So he's trying to pull out every rhetorical, persuasive, pastoral move he can to compel them to hang in there, keep following Jesus. So in chapter three, he begins by saying, "Moses is rad."

[Laughter]

Tim: "Moses is awesome. I mean, he was faithful in all God's house as a servant. But the Messiah, I mean, he is even more rad. Moses is rad. Jesus is more rad. Moses was the one through whom the house of God was built—"referring to the tabernacle. So he's using language of a temple, but he's talking—

[Laughter]

Tim: About the tabernacle.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So “Through Moses, a house for God was built. And through the Messiah, a house of God was also built, except that house is people.” He says, “We are his house if we hold fast to our confidence and the boasting of our hope and hold on to the end.”

Jon: That’s how we remain to be God’s temple?

Tim: In the house. Yeah, totally. Got to hold on. So we should hear this warning from the Holy Spirit about holding on. And then it’s—ooh—one of the longest block quotes from the Old Testament in the whole of the New Testament. He quotes essentially the second half of what we call Psalm 95.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But he attributes it to the Holy Spirit speaking to us as a community, which is pretty cool.

Jon: Oh, that’s a cool way to think about what the Bible is.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. The divine word, the word of the Spirit. And the section he begins with is, “Today, if y’all hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts just like they did when they provoked me in the day of trial in the wilderness—the day of testing in the wilderness. That is where your father’s tested—”hmm—hmm—“they tested me with the testing.”

Jon: That’s the Greek?

Tim: Yeah. It’s two synonyms. It’s the two main synonyms for, like, “testing” or “proving.”

Jon: Oh, it’s two different words.

Tim: Yeah. “They tested me by—”

Jon: With a trial—

Tim: “Trying to make me prove.”

Jon: “Th—they tried me with a testing.”

Tim: “Tried me with a trial.” Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. “Even though they saw my works for 40 years. I was giving them manna—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “And water. So I—”this—th—God’s voice here—“I was angry with this generation—said, ‘They’re constantly going astray in their hearts. They don’t know my way.’ So I

swore on oath in my anger, ‘That generation will never enter my rest.’” So Psalm 95 comes along. The first part of the Psalm is—uh—“Hey, let’s praise Yahweh. We are his flock.” Psalm 95—Actually, here, we should just real quick—

Jon: Look at it?

Tim: Psalm 95 is a summons to come sing for joy to the Lord, “to the rock of our rescue.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The rock.

Jon: Right.

Tim: God is the rock. That is connecting to the rock. “Let’s come before his presence with thanksgiving and sing psalms.” This is like, “Come, let’s go to the temple. Let’s go worship the rock of our rescue.” “Yahweh is the great Elohim. He’s a king above all other elohim. In his hands are the deepest places of the Earth and also the mountain peaks—from the bottom of the cosmos to its top. The sea belongs to him, and his hands form the dry land.” S—sea, dry land, depths, and the heights.

Jon: Yeah. “In him, we have life.”

Tim: Mhm. “So let’s worship. Let’s bow down. He is our God. We are the people of his pasture. We are the sheep of his hand.” And then, “Today, if you hear his voice—”and then it’s the section that Hebrews quotes from—“if you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts like we did.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So “God is the creator of the cosmos. We are his sheep.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But the idea is: “Today—today, we are his sheep.” Which also means we must be in a similar kind of wilderness, like, following a shepherd in the wilderness lands. And “today—”what is this today? Somehow, the wilderness wanderings are a message for us to hear his voice today as we follow the shepherd through the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah. As the pattern, as he put it in—

Tim: That’s—ye—tha—

Jon: First Corinthians.

Tim: As Paul put it. Yeah.

Jon: As Paul put it.

Tim: Yeah. So Psalm 95 is already addressing a generation much later—

Jon: Right.

Tim: But trying to get—

Jon: Them to—

Tim: The—

Jon: Think about it—

Tim: Audience to think of themselves—

Jon: For their context.

Tim: Exactly.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So Hebrews—he’s just tapping into what’s already going on—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In Psalm 95. So he says, “My brothers and sisters, you should watch out that there’s not anyone among us with an evil or untrusting heart that’s going to fall away from the living God. We should encourage each other day after day, as long as it’s called ‘today.’” Which I’m pretty sure every day—

[Laughter]

Tim: That I’ve ever woken up—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I called ‘today.’

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: So “today” in the Psalms is sort of like this—the past is past, the future is future.

Jon: It’s the now.

Tim: It’s the only moment you ever have ever in your life—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Today.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So “Encourage each other so that nobody’s heart ever gets hard by the deceptiveness of sin. Listen, we are participants, sharers in th—with the Messiah if we hold fast to our assurance until the end.”

Jon: We are in the wilderness with—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Jesus.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: But we got to stay there.

Tim: That’s right. He’s ready.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And because he’s ready, we can be ready.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But you have to hang with him.

Jon: Meaning, we could avoid the deceitfulness of the snake.

Tim: Yeah, that’s right.

Jon: We can, like, have a heart that listens and is believing and trusting.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: We could be connected to that as long as we are doing it with Jesus.

Tim: That’s right. So he goes on and he starts working through the bits of the Psalm and then matching it to the wilderness stories. So he’s like—he quotes, “Don’t harden your hearts like when they provoked me.” And then he says, “Who are the ones who provoked him? You know, th—w—were the wilderness generation that wandered for 40 years.” So he—he kind of works through the retelling. And then he draws attention. He says, “You know, the children of the Exodus generation—”I’m kind of summarizing—he goes on in Hebrews chapter four—“The children of the Exodus generation got to go into the promised land.” But he says, “Was that the rest?” It’s really interesting.

Jon: Yeah. Because i—the whole big block quote ends with this warning of being able to enter rest.

Tim: Mhm, that's right.

Jon: Which begs the question: What are we talking about?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: What's this rest?

Tim: Yeah. So down in verse eight, he notices something. He says the poem of Psalm 95 leaves open: Well, if that generation didn't get to enter the rest, that means that there is still some rest left that we're looking for.

Jon: You're talking about the Deuteronomy generation?

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: They get into the land, but that's not the true rest.

Tim: Well, it leaves it open.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: If the poet of Psalm 95—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Is saying, "Don't be like this past generation that never got any rest—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The reader of Psalm 95 then wonders, like, "Okay, if I'm not like them, I guess I want to be like the children—"

Jon: Oh.

Tim: "Who got to go into the promised land. But wasn't the promised land the rest?"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Why am I being told—"

Jon: Oh, because I—

Tim: "To listen to God?"

Jon: Because the Psalm 95 person is probably in the land.

Tim: Right. Yes. Okay.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So what Hebrews comes—and he says, “Listen, there still remains a rest—”verse seven—“the poet fixes a certain day, calling it ‘today,’ saying through David after so long, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts.’” And then he says, “If Joshua had given them the real cosmic, ultimate rest—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “The poet wouldn’t speak of a future ‘today.’ So there must remain a Sabbath rest for the people of God that is yet-future for us.” Se—he’s trying to make an argument: We standing here are the audience of Psalm 95. It’s for us. It’s the Holy Spirit—

Jon: The invitation—

Tim: Speaking to us.

Jon: To enter the rest.

Tim: So apparently, Psalm 95 has been able to speak to every single generation up till now when it was written because the new Eden hasn’t fully arrived. And what Joshua led the people into was another *tupos*, a pattern, but it wasn’t the ultimate rest. So—really interesting. So if I am not the wilderness generation, but I’ve yet to go into the ultimate cosmic rest that’s in store—

Jon: Then I am a wilderness generation.

Tim: I am like the generation with Moses, but I’ve got the new—the new Moses.

Jon: The rest to come.

Tim: The rest to come. He calls—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: It the “Sabbath rest that remains.”

Jon: Are we talking about the new age?

Tim: The new—the age to come.

Jon: The age to come.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But Psalm 95 says—

Tim: It just ends on a—the negative.

Jon: Which is?

Tim: “Don’t harden your hearts and don’t be like your fathers who tested me and they did not enter my rest.”

Jon: “They didn’t enter the rest.”

Tim: So the logic is: Well, if they didn’t enter it, and if I have a chance to not be like them, I could enter it.

Jon: I could enter it, but I could not enter it.

Tim: Yeah. I could not. Yeah. He’s bringing the edge of Psalm 95 in. And this is one of about half a dozen passages throughout Hebrews that are called the warning passages.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And it’s a part of his rhetorical—j—but he’s doing what Paul’s doing. But what the author of Hebrews never does is fill out these little asterisks—

[Laughter]

Tim: Of being saved as through the fire.

Jon: I see.

Tim: He doesn’t really ever talk about that.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: He—his rhetorical purpose is really to, kind of, warn, encourage, motivate—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And so he just brings the fire, so to speak.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You could completely miss out on the rest.

Tim: Mhm. Don’t miss out on the rest. Yeah. But the Messiah is ready. Like, he can—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Hang in the wilderness, and you can hang if you remain with him.

Jon: Mhm. And what Paul kind of said in First Corinthians was like, “And if you stop hanging with him, your life can get destroyed, but you could still enter the rest—”

Tim: Won’t be pleasant.

Jon: “But—won’t be pleasant. It’ll be like through the fire.”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “And there will be nothing else that remains except for just—”

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: “Whatever was left of you.”

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: Here, there’s not any of that nuance.

Tim: Nope.

Jon: It’s just—

Tim: Nope. That’s right.

Jon: So you’re not trying to smooth this out—

Tim: Unh-un.

Jon: But I guess that’s my intuition. How do you s—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Blend these two things?

Tim: Well, we are readers of a collection of literature from the Apostles—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of Jesus called the New Testament. So we have an exercise ahead of us that the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews didn’t, which is: We need to synthesize Hebrews and Paul and the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of Peter and of James and of—

[Laughter]

Jon: And the stories of Moses.

Tim: And that's called theology—

[Laughter]

Tim: Bib—biblical theology.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then systematic theology. Biblical theology, we're trying to synthesize within the thought patterns and language of the biblical authors. Systematic is: Okay, now let's take into account other perspectives—

Jon: And questions.

Tim: Other questions, other conceptual tools, or wisdom—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: From later generations, and then synthesize all of that.

Jon: Can I—to add to the synthesis project is this idea of: The rest can actually happen now too.

Tim: Yeah. That's right.

Jon: I can experience the rest before the age to come.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Right? Like, the garden can show up as a feast in the wilderness. I can miss out on that kind of rest all the time.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: In fact, I'm probably doing it right now.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Like, I'm—

Tim: Later in Hebrews, he describes the present experience of Eden in the wilderness. He calls it “being illuminated, having tasted of the gift of heaven,” and “having been made a participator of the Holy Spirit,” and “tasting the good word of God and the power of the age to come.” That's a rad little paragraph.

Jon: “Tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come.”

Tim: Yeah. All this is available right now.

Jon: Ooh.

Tim: Tasting a gift of heaven. That's like eating the sky bread.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Mhm. So that's available right now.

Jon: Yeah. And that is rest. That's 12 baskets full.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Or seven baskets full.

Tim: Yeah, sure.

Jon: That's being satisfied in the wilderness.

Tim: Yeah, that's right.

Jon: Like, that is its own type of rest. It's not the ultimate rest.

Tim: Mhm. That's right.

Jon: But it is rest.

Tim: Yeah. You know, I remember years ago when we made our first videos about the Torah and the Numbers videos, we worked through a version of this same tension—that the rest is on offer. The rest is on offer now on into the future. But our decisions still have real consequences, and you can ruin your life. And God will let you if that's what you consistently choose to do. And what does that mean about my status—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the land of rest? And you get this variety of perspectives that open up a few different logical possibilities, and different Christian groups throughout history have filled out every single logical possibility—

[Laughter]

Tim: And made that their doctrine or—

Jon: Sure.

Tim: I just want to honor that tension in the biblical collection itself.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Cause what the tension does is it motivates you to never get too comfy—

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah, seriously.

Tim: With yourself. But also never get comfy with the wilderness. Like, the wilderness is also not how it's supposed to be.

Jon: But then it also—while you're not getting too comfy, it also takes off the edge a little bit, where it's like, "Hey—"like, "God's grace is going to show up more than your intuitions maybe allow you to imagine."

Tim: Yeah. That's right.

[Musical Break (52:17—52:44)]

[Concluding Thoughts on the Wilderness (52:44—1:00:21)]

Tim: So we didn't get to The Revelation, and that's okay. I'll just say, in Revelation 12—

Jon: You mentioned it in the very first episode, I think.

Tim: Oh yeah, actually, I did.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: We did get there. We got there at the beginning.

Jon: Yeah, although I was not following—

[Laughter]

Jon: At all—

[Laughter]

Jon: And I had a thousand questions.

Tim: Yeah. No, there's a dragon—

[Laughter]

Tim: Trying to eat a woman, a woman's child—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And her and her child are whisked off to safety in the wilderness.

Jon: Okay, so that was a really clear wilderness. And then I think you said that Jerusalem comes down and there's all the springs—there's all the waters. The word wilderness never shows up. But you kind of make a point of like, "And look, there's no wilderness."

Tim: That's right. It's just garden everywhere.

Jon: It's just garden everywhere.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So it's the absence of wilderness—

Tim: The wilderness is no more, and the sea is no more.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The chaotic ocean is no more.

Jon: That's clearly pointed out: The sea is no more.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But we've been talking about these dual ways of thinking about—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The disorder is the sea—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And the wilderness.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay. So that's how Revelation ends.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Tie a bow on that. Great. Uhm—

[Laughter]

Jon: So—

Tim: So here we are.

Jon: Here we are. We're at—

Tim: We're fin—we finished our journey.

Jon: We finished our journey. Is there anything more to say?

Tim: Probably. Whether we should say it, I don't—

[Laughter]

Tim: I don't know. What God desires is there to be a garden and people enjoying the goodness in the garden, sustained by just the infinite overabundance. To enjoy the gift of that kind of overabundance means continuing in a posture of trust in the wisdom and the love and the power and the command—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of the creator. And if I choose to try and create some—carve out some little corner of the cosmos where I think I probably know better, what I will find—

Jon: Is you're a sheep in the wilderness.

Tim: Is I'm cutting myself off from the garden life. And I will be like a dumb sheep wandering out of the garden back into the nothingness from which I came. But God's commitment is to follow his people—keep giving them garden gifts in the wilderness with a promise to restore everything to the garden again. And God journeys with all these people, trying to help them see that the wilderness they're in can shape them and get them ready to trust him in the garden. It never does until God becomes human in the person of Jesus. And then, because he passes the wilderness test, those who are with him can as well, but they have to—

Jon: They have to stay with him.

Tim: They have to stay with him. Like sheep, they got to follow the shepherd. Stick with the shepherd, or else the wilderness will get you. And “or else the wilderness will get you” is what we're feeling in these warnings from Paul and Hebrews—

Jon: What does that mean for the wilderness to get you?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: How big of a consequence is that?

Tim: Yeah, that's right. Well, is there a time or situation where the shepherd won't come looking for me and find me and take me back to the garden? And Paul seems to say, like, the shepherd will come, but man, it might be a painful process. Hebrews just doesn't fill out that option.

[Laughter]

Tim: So the point is you want the warning to stick.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I want to be motivated—I'm saying this personally—I want to be motivated—

[Laughter]

Tim: Not to wander in the wilderness needlessly or to think that, “Well, the shepherd will come find me and—uh—so it’ll be okay. Maybe I’ll just make this little wilderness choice—eat some cactus—”

[Laughter]

Tim: “Be satisfied with cactus—feed somebody else a cactus, even though it’ll hurt them.” Right? We get satisfied. We think the wilderness—like, we can do it. And it ruins us. And—uh—I liked the way you said that line in the previous episode. We somehow just never fully learn the lessons of the wilderness, but there’s one who did on our behalf. And I’m really not ready in and of myself, but he’s ready.

Jon: If I remain in him, I can learn how to have—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: A trusting heart.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: I can learn how to avoid the deception of the snake. I can discern good from bad, and I can find bread in the wilderness—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: If I remain in him.

Tim: Yeah. That’s right. If we hold fast, hold on in the wilderness. The stripping away of the things that we think we need, but actually they’re just thorns and thistles—got to leave them behind. I ca—I can’t really do that on my own, but there’s someone who did it for me. But I got to hang on to that one who did it for me for dear life. And even if I don’t succeed at hanging on all the time, his mercy and his justice will see me through to the end. So Lord, have mercy on us. Have mercy on me, Son of God.

[Musical Break (57:44—57:48)]

Jon: Thanks for following along with this Wilderness series. I've really enjoyed these discussions, and I hope you have as well. We have a few more episodes on the wilderness. Next week, we'll do a hyperlink episode where we'll look at how the wilderness theme appeared in other podcast series that we've done throughout the years. After that, we'll do a question-and-response episode, hearing from you. The podcast episodes are just the beginning of a lot of resources that we create here at BibleProject. Our Wilderness theme video is live. Our animation studio did a beautiful job. We also have a Wilderness guide page that our scholarship team wrote, helping you continue to study this theme on your own or with a group. We also have a group study. It's a seven-session study. They take about 45 minutes. It's a great way for your community to meditate on the theme of the wilderness together. We're always trying to figure out how to do group studies better. So if you go through this group study, we would love to hear your experience. So if you wouldn't mind emailing us how that group study went, that'd be wonderful. And finally, if you're into good old classic reading plans, we've got a Wilderness reading plan on the YouVersion app that you should check out. BibleProject is a crowdfunded nonprofit, and everything that we create is free because of the generous support of thousands of people just like you. Thank you so much for being a part of this with us.

Brandon: Hey, my name is Brandon, and I'm from Lynchburg, Virginia.

Angela: Hi, everyone. My name is Angela, and I'm from Portland, Oregon. I first heard about BibleProject many years ago as part of youth group at my church.

Brandon: I first heard about the BibleProject in youth group, and now I use the BibleProject for getting to know God through the Scriptures.

Angela: I recently have been watching their videos a ton and using the BibleProject just to spread Jesus' love and tell my med school classmates all about Jesus.

Brandon: My favorite thing about the BibleProject is the humility of the team that helps us to know God and his word.

Angela: To make everyone around the world be able to understand Jesus' love for us. We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus.

Brandon: BibleProject is a nonprofit funded by people like me. Find free videos, articles, podcasts, classes, and more—

Angela: On the BibleProject app—

Angela and Brandon: And at BibleProject.com.