

[The Wilderness E12 Transcript]

Michelle: Hello, hello! Welcome to the hyperlink episode for The Wilderness. In every theme study, we isolate a biblical topic and then trace its appearance throughout the biblical story. But it's important to remember that these themes all interact with each other, harmonizing and playing off one another throughout the story of the Bible like a beautifully composed piece of music. Today, we're going to listen to clips from previous studies where the theme of the wilderness jumps out at us. The wilderness is a harsh and barren place where biblical characters end up either due to their own foolish choices or the choices of others. But God consistently meets people in the wilderness, provides for their needs, and uses this environment to form them into people who can trust him and learn to listen to his voice moving forward. How did Moses fail his test in the wilderness? How did Jesus succeed in the wilderness? And how does the wilderness lead us all into final Sabbath rest? That's today on the show. I'm your host, Michelle Jones. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Transition (1:15—1:25)]

Michelle: Let's start with a clip from a podcast episode back when we were exploring the scroll of Numbers. This is the story of Moses failing his test in the wilderness when he strikes a rock. Now this is a strange and cryptic story, but we'll see that it's the story that helps us meditate on how important it is to listen to and obey the word of God while you're in the wilderness, even when you're scared or thirsty or just plain fed up, because God's words are life. We'll also see that this story points us to Jesus. Where Moses failed to be fully in union with God's voice in the wilderness, Jesus succeeds. Jesus is the one who can lead us through the wilderness and teach us how to live by God's life-giving words. This clip comes from the episode titled, "Why Couldn't Moses Enter the Promised Land?" Here's Jon and Tim.

[Transition (2:20—2:22)]

Tim: Numbers chapter 20: "The sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month and the people stayed at Kadesh. And—"then this

line—“there was no water for the congregation. And the people contended with Moses, saying, ‘If only we had died when our brothers died before the Lord. Why have you brought us out into the wilderness and our animals to die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this wretched place? There’s no grain or figs or vines or pomegranates here, and there’s no water.’” So this is almost identical to how the story of Israel confronting Moses about no water in the wilderness back in Exodus 17. So Moses and Aaron’s response is to come in from the presence of the assembly. They go to the door of the tent of meeting. Great idea. They fall on their faces.

Jon: The door would be—would this be right in front of the holy place?

Tim: Correct. Yeah. This would be walking in front of the altar—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: That is outside the tent, and they would be walking and kneeling down in front of the first doorway into the holy place of the tent. Yep. “And the glory of Yahweh appeared to them—”in some form—we’re not told—either fire or cloud. “And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Take that rod.’” ““You—”singular—“take the rod, and you and your brother, Aaron, assemble all the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes so that it may give its water. This is how you will bring forth water for them out of the rock and then let the congregation and their beasts drink.” So—pretty clear instruction. ““Speak to the rock.”” Which is kind of a fascinating little scene to imagine. Like, what’s he supposed to say?

Jon: ““Take your rod—””

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: ““And speak to the rock.””

Tim: Okay, now the parallel story in Exodus 17 began with the congregation of the sons of Israel camping at the wilderness of Sin. The people quarreled with Moses. They’re thirsty for water. “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to kill us?” What God said to Moses in Exodus 17 was, “Take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile. Go. I will stand before you on the rock at Horeb, and you will strike the rock, and water will come out, and the people can drink.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So there, Moses takes the staff, and he strikes the rock. And that’s how the imagery works. Here in Numbers 20, you can see the parallelism where God says, “Take that rod,” but then there’s a twist, which is “Talk to the rock.”

[Laughter]

Tim: Which both sounds odd—

[Laughter]

Tim: Uh—and is a kind of a surprise because you're like, "Oh, last time—why—what do you need the rod for?"

Jon: Yeah, "What do you need the rod for? And last time you actually used the rod. So —"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "You want to take the rod—"

Tim: Totally.

Jon: "But you're going to speak to the rock."

Tim: Yep. So this is—this is Moses' test. Will he do what God says the way that God says it, even if at this moment it seems rather counterintuitive? I think that's what's going on here. "So Moses took the rod"—this is verse nine—"from before the Lord, just as the Lord commanded him." So notice how it's drawing attention to: Moses did what God commanded in taking the rod. And you're like, "Okay, good. So far, so good." "Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly in front of the rock." Okay, sweet. That's exactly what God said to do. "Then Moses said to them, 'Listen, you rebels, are we supposed to bring out water for you from this rock?' Then Moses lifted up his hand and he struck the rock two times with his rod and water came out abundantly and the congregation and their beasts drank." Okay. So before we go further, you tell me what you're noticing. And no observation is too simple. This is—

[Laughter]

Jon: Okay, so he strikes the rock like he did in Exodus, but this time he wasn't told to strike the rock. He was told to speak to the rock.

Tim: But he does speak, doesn't he?

Jon: But he doesn't speak to the rock.

Tim: He doesn't speak to the rock.

Jon: He speaks to his people—

[Laughter]

Jon: And he's kind of b—

[Laughter]

Jon: He's—he's bummed on them.

Tim: Yeah. So you speak to the people and, you know, he insults them—"You rebels—but I—you know, they kind of had it coming.

[Laughter]

Tim: "Listen now, you rebels—"and then notice this—"shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" So who's that we?

Jon: Is he just referring to himself and Aaron?

Tim: On one level, yep. That seems to be the most natural reading because he doesn't mention Yahweh. He doesn't mention God, you know—"Are we with the help and power of God going to bring forth water?" So this line is really interesting, and it might seem minute to us, but this is not what God told him to do. He's not doing what God told him to do. He doesn't speak to the rock. He speaks to the people. And he hits the rock. So on multiple counts, he's not doing it. And this is just after the narrator highlighted the two things that he did do that is exactly what God told him to do. So God said, "Take the rod. Gather the people. Speak to the rock." So Moses takes the rod. He gathers the people. Do—do you see how it—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's designed here to build it up? And then he speaks not to the rock, to the people. So it has the one-two-three punch that highlights: He doesn't do what God says.

Jon: Now, you could kind of forgive him for—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Getting confused. I mean, last time this happened, he was told to strike the rock.

Tim: Ye—totally. Yeah.

Jon: And God said, "Bring the rod." I can imagine, like—I'm, like, sitting there, I'm Moses, and I'm like, "Well, I got the rod."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "Last time I struck the rock."

Tim: Yeah, totally.

Jon: "So I'm going to strike the rock."

Tim: Yeah, that's right.

Jon: What's the big deal?

Tim: Yep. Totally. And so I think what—the clues that the author gives is that by comparing it to the earlier Exodus 17 story, what we're highlighting is that the command that God gave in this instance was different. And we're not told why. But God didn't tell Moses to do what he did in Exodus 17. He gave him a new set of instructions for this moment. And Moses—he doesn't do what God says. So I think we're back to this theme in the melody, all the way back to Genesis one, where God's word is life. God's word is the way to life.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's what God speaking 10 times in creation is all about—is—God's word is what sustains and generates life out of non-life. And then in the Eden story, following the word of God is what allows God's partners to continue enjoying the gift of abundant Eden life. So that true life is still a gift from God's word in the Eden story. So that sets up this motif. And so the idea of people doing what God says exactly, and it leads to life—that's a major theme in the flood story when God gives Noah all the commands about how to build the—the Eden box. And it's been a major theme here in Numbers, where God said, "Hey, don't be afraid. Go into the land. I'm going to deliver the giants into your hand." And the people don't trust. In fact, God's accusation against the people back in the rebellion of the spies is exactly the same thing of what God says to Moses here. "You didn't trust me, and you didn't treat me as the holy one in the eyes of the people."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Moses is now being given the same consequence that the people got because of the rebellion of the spies. And for the same reason: “You failed to trust me. You didn’t treat me as holy.” So I—I’m with you in terms of—for many years, I had the same reaction of like: What’s the big deal?

[Laughter]

Tim: But the design of this story—the two parallel stories that are hyperlinked—are meant to slowly help us focus on the moment that Moses did the opposite of what God told him to do. And you remember how we kind of had this feeling back in Leviticus when the sons of Aaron take the incense, you know, and waltz into the tent like it’s theirs to waltz into? And—and the narrator said, “They did what Yahweh had not commanded them to do.” And these are the people selected out of the tribe of Levi, who were selected out of the Israelites to be the image-of-God representatives on behalf of all the people. So the stakes are higher. The closer you operate to the tent, the stakes are higher. And so there’s a severe—uhm—consequence for Moses and Aaron because of the position that God has elevated them to. And so I think those are all factors that are really there in the text that are highlighting why Moses gets this severe consequence. Moses is like the best person we’ve had in the story so far. He’s not perfect, but he’s—he’s the only character who’s ascended to Heaven in the biblical story—oh, except Enoch back in Genesis.

Jon: Yeah. Him and God are like—

Tim: They’re tight.

Jon: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Jon: His right arm is God’s right arm.

Tim: Yeah. So the fact that now Moses is excluded from entry into the Eden land—it’s a huge blow, man. This is like—major downer moment in the story.

Jon: Yes. Okay, I get it. Like, he didn’t do exactly what God said. But it’s such a small detail.

Tim: Yeah, totally.

Jon: And it's not like God was like, "Hey, Moses, don't—don't murder. And he's like, "Oops, I killed someone."

Tim: Yeah. Though—though he did—he did murder somebody—

[Laughter]

Tim: Back in Exodus.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You know, something of, like, much consequence—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That's going to, like—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Have ripple effects throughout the community or something. It was just a small detail of, like, how God wanted to perform this—this miracle.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: Why such a hu—I mean, Moses being disqualified from going to the promised land is a big deal. And it's such a small detail. Are we supposed to learn or think and meditate on that?

Tim: I—I think so. Yeah. Yeah, and I don't think the takeaway that we should have primarily is, "Oh man, like, I'm walking on eggshells with God at all times every day."

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I don't think that's the takeaway.

Jon: Why not? It kind of feels that way a little bit.

Tim: I—totally. And I can understand why. And why would I say I don't think that's the takeaway? Moses is not an average person. This whole story is about God selecting a special partner out of the many and then giving more—first of all, more generous abundance to them and also more instruction, more clarity, about God's purpose and will and desire.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And so to those to whom—jeez, this is—what is i—Spiderman.

[Laughter]

Tim: It's the, you know, to those—what is it? With great power—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Comes great responsibility. I can't believe I'm quoting a Marvel movie at this point in our conversation. But that is naming a dynamic at work in the story. And so what the narrative is doing is it's saying: God selects humans—gives them an instruction. They don't do it. And they bring death on themselves instead of life and blessing, which was what was on offer. And then the next generation steps up to the plate, and it—right—the biblical story just keeps repeating. So God selects a whole family, and then God selects one tribe out of that family. Then God selects one clan out of that tribe, and it's Moses and Aaron. And they have received more instruction and logged more time with Yahweh face to face, especially Moses, than anybody. And I—I think that's what we're meant to feel. And, you know, Moses didn't just mistake—I mean, what he s—h—when he gives his speech—when God told him to speak and he does speak, but he doesn't speak to the rock, he speaks to the people. And, you know, he's mad at them—“You rebels—”and he says, “Shall we bring forth water for you out of the rock?” That's interesting, you know? And this is actually not the first time Moses has showed displeasure and anger about the role God gave him to be the leader of the people. It—we didn't talk about this story—uh—in the podcast conversations, but back in Numbers 11, he actually asked God to kill him. “I would rather die than have to lead these people anymore.”

Jon: He's getting a little cantankerous.

Tim: He—totally. So that's at the beginning of their wilderness wanderings, and here we're at the end. So Moses is also depicted as, like, a character on the edge along with the people from the beginning to the end of the—the wilderness narratives. And then I—I think we're back to the first point, having gone through that—or the first angle, which is: To those whom God invests high degrees of power, influence, ability to represent

him, God asks for a high degree of adherence to the divine will and instruction. And—because what God is after is a human partner whose heart and desire and will is the same as the divine will—right—a—a human partner for whom God’s will and their will are—are the same thing. And so now I’m thinking forward to depictions of the ideal servant, you know, like in the book of Isaiah, and there’s a big emphasis on how the coming king from the line of David, and that suffering servant, will love to do God’s will, and God’s will is their pleasure. And so this is a big meta-theme throughout the melody cycling through the Hebrew Bible. And so the fact that Moses has been so in sync with God’s will through Exodus and Leviticus—and then here in Numbers, it starts to crack—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And Moses begins to gripe about God’s will. And then here he just straight up doesn’t do what God told him to do.

Jon: So—so you’re saying if you take all that into account, like his grumbling before, you read this and you think: He didn’t make a mistake. He knew what he was supposed to do, and he decided not to do it. It was an act of rebellion. “I’m going to do this my own way.”

Tim: Yeah. What God says—“You didn’t have faith in me, and you didn’t treat me as the holy one in front of the people of Israel.” Those are the two things that God says.

Jon: Yeah. He doesn’t say like, “Hey, you forgot a step.” “You did this on purpose.”

Tim: Yes. Yeah. That’s right. Yeah, so the last thing about why I don’t think the takeaway from the story is: We’re walking on eggshells—the story of Israel selected out from among the nations and the story of the Torah and the Prophets is all about how even when God selects a special one out—he gives them more instruction, more revelation, more proximity to the divine presence than anybody else, and—even they keep repeating the failed choices of Adam and Eve in every generation leading to death. So the whole story is leading you to this crisis of, like, “Dude, where’s a human partner that will do God’s will that leads to abundant life for themselves and for the many?” And so that is the vocation that falls upon the expected, coming royal servant—royal priest—that is portrayed in the Prophets. And that is exactly how Jesus presents himself and is presented in the gospels—as Israel’s representative and humanity’s representative. And this is really highlighted in the Gospel of John, where Jesus talks about how he’s come to do the will of the Father. And: “The Father has given everything into my hand.” And: “I do my Father’s work.” “What my Father wants to do, that’s what I do.” That’s a big theme in John. And he’s tapping into this right here. Adherence to the divine will leads to true life even when it looks like death.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So that's where this theme is going. And so I think where we should walk away from this story is to say, "Man, what we need is a human partner for God who will do the divine will that leads to life for the many, because if we don't have that mediator, even Moses can't rescue us, much less ourselves." That's what I think it means to read this in light of the—kind of the messianic trajectory of the Hebrew Bible.

[Transition (19:23—19:26)]

Michelle: Thanks, Jon and Tim. I love the reminder that even in times of hardship and uncertainty, faith and patience, trusting in God's Word, are essential to existing in the wilderness. We'll explore this idea further in our next clip, specifically looking at Jesus being tested in the wilderness, meditating on a very short passage in Mark. This is right after Jesus' baptism, where Mark chapter one, verses 12 and 13 read, "At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him." What we're about to see is that there is a world of biblical hyperlinks in these few short lines that help us see Jesus as the true human who succeeds in the wilderness and shows he is the ruler of the land and the skies. This clip is from an episode in the Son of Man series titled "Jesus and the Wild Beasts." Let's listen in.

[Transition (20:29—20:30)]

Tim: So Mark chapter one introduces Jesus—ooh, the first sentence is—uh—"The beginning of the Good News about Jesus the Messiah—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "The Christ."

Jon: "The Christ."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Right.

Tim: So you're—this is the first sentence.

Jon: Yeah, and that's the term that the Apostles use—

Tim: Yep.

Jon: To refer to Jesus—the title.

Tim: Correct. Yep.

Jon: But it's not the term—

[Laughter]

Jon: Jesus—

Tim: Jesus uses—

Jon: Tends to use.

Tim: Yeah, exactly. So then immediately Mark begins his narrative by, actually, a copy and paste quote from Exodus 23, Malachi 4, and Isaiah 40—

[Laughter]

Tim: Like welds them all together—all about—uh—how the prophet said that a messenger—God would send a messenger, a herald, to come before the God of Israel showed up personally to both rescue Israel and all humanity. And then the narrative begins, introducing us to John the Baptist—

Jon: As the messenger.

Tim: As that herald or messenger. Jesus is introduced. He's down by the river. He gets dunked by—

Jon: By Johnny.

Tim: By Johnny—Johnny B. We've talked about that baptism story—

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: At length in—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Many other discussions. What I want to pay attention to is just this short little detail —

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Of what happened to Jesus after the baptism. It's in Mark chapter one, verses 12 and 13.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: We read, "Immediately, the Spirit cast out Jesus into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness 40 days being tested by the Satan and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels were serving—"or"—ministering to him." And then—next story.

[Laughter]

Jon: That's it.

Tim: Yeah, it's over. And then the next story—

Jon: Now, does Matthew have like a longer version of this? Yeah.

Tim: Correct.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. Matthew and Luke.

Jon: And Luke.

Tim: So this is very interesting. What's often—it's called the temptation—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Or that Jesus is test—temptation narrative of going out into the wilderness. And—yeah—and the most well-known versions are Matthew's and Luke's—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: Which records a whole—

Jon: Yeah, a whole back and forth.

Tim: A whole back and forth between Jesus and the slanderer or the devil, it's often translated.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But Mark's version doesn't have a narrative about—

Jon: Yeah, what—

Tim: The testing—

Jon: What happened. Yeah.

Tim: No. Uhm—it just gives us two details—three details. He's in the wilderness—first of all, cast out by the Spirit. It's a strong verb.

Jon: What do you mean a strong verb?

Tim: Oh, I—sorry. It's a verb—it's a forceful verb—

Jon: Like?

Tim: "To drive someone out."

Jon: Mmm. Yeah.

Tim: As we're going to see, a—it's—the verb Mark chooses is very intentional.

Jon: Okay. What's the—what is it in Greek?

Tim: Uh—*ekballo*.

Jon: *Ekballo*.

Tim: *Ballo* means to throw.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: And then *ek* is out.

Jon: And *ek* is out.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Literally "to throw out."

Jon: To throw out.

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Mhm. So the Spirit throws Jesus out—

Jon: Sheesh.

Tim: Into the wilderness.

Jon: Like, “See you later.”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “Get out of here.”

[Laughter]

Tim: Well—or it’s just “drives him.” It’s—I guess the idea is it—he had to.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: He was forced—

Jon: He was forced.

Tim: Into the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Detail one: He was there 40 days being tested by the Satan. Detail two: He was with wild animals out there. Detail three: Angels were serving him.

Jon: That’s all Mark gives us.

Tim: That’s all Mark—and then the next thing is, “Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the Good News of God.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So in Mark’s storyline, you’re left to fill in. You’re just supposed to know, like, “Okay, we have Jesus who’s the Son—right—the Son of God Messiah, going out into the wilderness to be tested by the power of evil. And he’s with wild animals, and angels are serving him.”

Jon: So going out to the wilderness—that is—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: A biblical motif we’ve talked about.

Tim: Correct. Yes.

Jon: And that the wilderness is—is a place of—

Tim: Testing.

Jon: Testing.

Tim: Correct.

Jon: Israel goes into the wilderness—

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Before they get to the promised land.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Cain is—

Tim: Dri—

Jon: Sent out—

Tim: Driven into the wilderness—

Jon: Driven into the wilderness.

Tim: Exiled after he kills his brother. Mhm.

Jon: And so that's easy—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: For me to pick up on.

Tim: Yep, yep. And—uh—human, Adam and Eve—

Jon: Are—

Tim: Are—

Jon: Exiled.

Tim: Ca—cast out into the wil—into—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: East of Eden.

Jon: Yeah, they're—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Forced out.

Tim: Exactly right. And in fact, in the old Greek translation of Genesis, when God drives out Adam and Eve, and when he drives out Cain, the Greek—

Jon: *Ekballo*?

Tim: Verb is *ekballo*.

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: This—exactly the same verb. Yeah. So Mark is placing Jesus' exile into the wilderness on analogy with Adam and Eve's exile—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Into the wilderness as well.

Jon: All those stories should be ringing in my ears.

Tim: Yeah, totally.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Except—but also remember creative inversions.

Jon: Right.

Tim: So in Genesis three and four, it's—

Jon: It's: screw up—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And then you get pushed out.

Tim: Yeah—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's somebody failing the test—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then they get cast into the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Here, Jesus is cast into the wilderness, and that's the place where he's tested, which is where Israel was tested.

Jon: Yeah. Well, because Israel's wilderness journey—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Which was 40 years—

Tim: Yeah, totally.

[Laughter]

Jon: And this is 40 days—

Tim: Yeah, totally.

Jon: They didn't do anything wrong to go into the wilderness.

Tim: No, they were rescued—

Jon: They were rescued.

Tim: From slavery.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And have—

Jon: But they were in the wilderness for that long because they kept screwing up.

Tim: Totally. That's right. Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Deuteronomy begins saying, "Listen, this should have been 11 days—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "From Sinai—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Or from where they sent out the—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Spies, Kadesh Barnea, up to the land—

Jon: Nice little hike.

Tim: And it took 40 years. So yeah, the 40 right there—okay, so look at how biblical narrative works, dude.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: This is design patterns.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The first story is: Adam and Eve tested—failure—exiled into the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Cain—

Jon: Right.

Tim: Failure.

Jon: Into the wilderness.

Tim: Yes, both times by beasts and spiritual evil—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Spiritual evil depicted as beasts. Cheoo—

Jon: Got it.

Tim: Then you get Israel exiled in Egypt—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: By the end of the book of Genesis—

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: Uhm—you have the family of Jacob—

Jon: So Egypt's a kind of wilderness?

Tim: In Egypt. Uhm—but the reason they're there is also because the sin of the brothers against—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Joseph. That's why they're there—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Ultimately. But God exalted Joseph to be ruler out of his suffering. Then the Israelites are redeemed out of slavery in Egypt, and they're led through the wilderness. And here in the wilderness, God brings little gifts of Eden to them—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like the bread from heaven, which looks just like—

Jon: In th—

Tim: This—remember this—the stones of the m—the manna?

Jon: The manna looked like—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Wh—which—what did it look like again?

Tim: Tota—totally. In Exodus 16 and Numbers 11, the manna is described, like, what it looks like—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And it has the color and sheen of those precious stones in the garden of Eden.

[Laughter]

Jon: That's right.

Tim: And those are the—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Only places in the Hebrew Bible where these words for—

Jon: That word.

Tim: This precious stone occurs.

Jon: Yeah. And—

Tim: Totally.

Jon: Then the water—

Tim: The water.

Jon: In—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The wilderness—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Is to recall these—the water in—

Tim: At—river Eden.

Jon: The river, yeah.

Tim: Yeah. So God creating little Eden pockets—

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: For his people in the wilderness, and what do they do as they're waiting for the water? They test—they test God. Or God tests them by being patient to wait for the water. And of course, Israel fails all of those tests. So here you get Jesus. And so he is like a new Adam—

Jon: A new Israel.

Tim: He's a reversal of Cain, and he's a new Israel in the wilderness, not being tested in a garden, but being tested down out in the wilderness. That's—all those stories lay on top of each other—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then Jesus—just these few lines from Mark just activate—are supposed to activate all that stuff.

Jon: But Mark doesn't tell us that he, like, passed the test, kind of like Matthew and Luke do.

Tim: That's true. Well, he was being tested by the Satan—we'll talk about the beasts and the angels—and then the next thing is, "Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Good News of God—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "The Kingdom of God's at hand."

Jon: So you just kind of assume—

Tim: I th—yeah.

Jon: He took care of that?

Tim: I think—yeah—the narrative logic assumes that: “Oh, Jesus overcame the test—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “The test of Adam, the test of Cain, the test of Israel—”he’s the first human and the first Israelite—

Jon: We don’t get a story of him failing the test. So you just kind of have to assume—

Tim: You assume.

Jon: He passed.

Tim: And then in the next line, he’s on the scene li—acting like a boss—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like—

Jon: Proclaiming the Kingdom.

Tim: “Kingdom of God is here and I’m the one bringing it.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. So he’s with the wild beasts. Ah, this detail is not found in Matthew or Luke. This is only Mark’s little detail.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: He’s with the wild beasts.

Jon: They’re—

[Laughter]

Jon: In the wilderness.

Tim: That’s totally true.

[Laughter]

Jon: I guess there would be beasts out there.

Tim: Yeah, totally. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: But yeah, what a strange detail to add.

Tim: Yeah. So then you just have to ask: Why would somebody be telling me about Jesus existing—coexisting—for 40 days with wild beasts out in the desert?

Jon: An Adam kind of figure.

Tim: Tot—yeah. There's—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: No other reason that—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Detail's there—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Except—ooh—uh—he's i—do you remember there were two—uh—narratives about people peacefully coexisting with beasts? Actually, no, three, now that I think of it. I think I said two in a previous conversation.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: You got Adam—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In Eden.

Jon: Noah in the ark.

Tim: Noah in the ark. Daniel in the pit.

Jon: Oh, in the lion's pit—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Thing. Yeah.

Tim: And he's at peace with the—with the lion-beasts.

Jon: Cool.

Tim: And then Jesus. So an—

Jon: In the wilderness.

Tim: A Noah—an Adam-Noah-Daniel figure—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: All laid on top of Jesus. For sure. For sure. Brandon Crowe is a New Testament scholar who wrote a book zeroed in on this. It's called *The Last Adam: The Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels*. So it's a whole book on Adam—

Jon: This theme?

Tim: Adam-son-of-man, new-Adam imagery in the gospels. So here's how he summarizes this story in Mark. He says, "Whereas Adam failed the temptation in the garden and was cast out, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness, a setting associated with Israel's testing and failure. Unlike Adam, Jesus does not fail the test. And in both stories of Adam and Jesus, expulsion is the same Greek word that's used."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "I—"

Jon: *Expal—ekballo*.

Tim: *Ekballo*. Yep, yeah. "In the wilderness, Jesus is with the wild animals but remains unharmed, which is supposed to strike the reader as unusual." Y—yes.

Jon: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Unusual detail.

Tim: Yeah, "I saw a desert beast out"—I mean, in biblical times, man—lions—

Jon: What kind of wilderness are we talking here?

Tim: Oh, almost certainly the hill country of Judea.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So we're not talking like Saharas or something—

Tim: No.

Jon: L—kind of like—

Tim: No.

Jon: Full desert.

Tim: No, this is the same hill country desert that David—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like—

Jon: So there would've been lions—

Tim: Was she—yeah.

Jon: And there would've been—

Tim: Lions, leopards—

Jon: Probably a lot more than there are nowadays.

Tim: C—correct.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I—yeah, I don't think there's any large predators. Brandon Crow goes on. "Jesus' peaceful coexistence with wild animals signifies his authority over them—"that's a—he's kind of—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Taking it that way—"and it recalls Adam's dominion over the animals in the garden. Like Adam, Jesus has been granted worldwide dominion, becoming an instrument of God's dominion over the world." And then the angels serving him—

Jon: Yeah, what's that about?

Tim: Do you remember in Daniel seven when Daniel was seeing the divine throne?

Jon: Yep.

Tim: Once he sees the divine throne—this is Daniel chapter seven—"Thousands upon thousands were serving him."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Myriads upon myriads were standing before him." It's a depiction of the divine council.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So Mark is depicting Jesus as a new Adam, but then also as the son of man—

Jon: He's surrounded by the heavenly hosts—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And the—yeah.

Tim: They're his servants. The point is: they're his servants.

Jon: Got it.

Tim: He doesn't obey the cosmic powers, the cosmic powers are there to come under his rule.

Jon: You know, it's funny. I've always just read that as just this nice detail of like, "God was taking care of Jesus."

Tim: Oh, righ—

[Laughter]

Jon: You know?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But man, it's about Jesus—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Being in charge of the cosmos—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Over even the spiritual beings.

Tim: Yeah. As he'll say in the end of Matthew—uh—"The son of man has authority over the skies and the land."

Jon: Yeah, okay. Wow.

Tim: But here in Mark, he's—already has authority over the realm of the skies—

[Laughter]

Tim: And the land—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the wilderness. It's just nobody else knows about it. Oh, wow. Yeah. Man, that flows real—in terms of the logic of Mark one, Jesus is identified as the son in the baptism—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Overcomes the test in the wilderness—

Jon: He's kind of revealed as the, like—

Tim: Oh—

Jon: True—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Human ruler.

Tim: Yeah, over the land, namely, the beasts—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: And over—

Jon: Yeah. And over the—

Tim: Th—the sky realm. Whoa. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: Yeah, wow.

Tim: So in Matthew, Jesus says it explicitly—

[Laughter]

Tim: "I have authority over Heaven and Earth."

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: Here in Mark it's: He kno—

Jon: He's just kind of showing you.

Tim: He's showing through the narrative.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Wow, I've never—that's very helpful.

Jon: That is really cool.

Tim: Thank you, Mark.

[Laughter]

Jon: In such a small amount of details.

Tim: Three short little statements.

Jon: Yeah.

[Transition (33:24—33:28)]

Michelle: That clip was from our 2019 series Son of Man, episode seven, titled "Jesus and the Wild Beasts." Let's wrap up our hyperlink episode with a short clip that connects our wandering in the wilderness to our final hope: rest in the land of promise. This last clip is from our series on Sabbath rest, the hope of the final rest in new creation, the ultimate land of promise. In this clip, Tim and Jon are reading the letter to the Hebrews, where the author shows us that the wisdom gained in the wilderness is not just for the past but stands as a challenge to every generation. It warns people not to rebel like the Israelites who perished in the wilderness due to their lack of trust. We'll jump right into this episode after Tim quotes the author of Hebrews referencing Psalm 95, which says, "Today, if only you would hear his voice, 'Do not harden your hearts ...'" Let's listen in.

[Transition (34:28—34:30)]

Tim: This Psalm wasn't just about our ancestors in the past. This Psalm is to every generation of Israel who has yet to enter the ultimate seventh-day rest, which is exactly the point that he draws. He says, "Listen, everybody, let's encourage each other every day as long as it's called 'today—'"

[Laughter]

Tim: Of Psalm 95. Because Psalm 95 said, “Today, listen—”

Jon: Today.

Tim: “Listen—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Not the—no—the past is just—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: a—instruction for the people waiting to go into the future rest. So “Today, we have come to share in the Messiah if we hold on to our conviction firmly until the very end, just like it’s been said, ‘Hey, don’t be like the people of the wilderness generation.’ Who were the people who heard and rebelled? Well, it was the people Moses led out. Why did they perish there in the wilderness? Because of their lack of trust,” he says. The point is: He reads those wilderness narratives as a challenge and exhortation to every future generation that from the—

Jon: You could get lost in the wilderness, too—

Tim: Yeah, that’s right.

Jon: If you don’t listen to his voice—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And you harden your hearts—

Tim: Correct.

Jon: And you rebel.

Tim: That’s right. And the whole design of the wilderness narratives in the Torah is trying to tell you that the promised land itself is an image of the ultimate future seventh-day rest.

Jon: Say that again.

Tim: The design of the wilderness narratives in the Torah itself is trying to tell us that the arrival in the promised land is an image of the future seventh-day rest that is s—beyond.

Jon: How does it do that?

Tim: Well, those rebellion narratives are a huge, like, wet blanket on the storyline of going into the promised land. So they go into the promised land, but it's only the second generation because all the c—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The parents are de—

Jon: But the second generation get—

Tim: De—

Jon: In, so they find the rest.

Tim: Oh, c—right. In theory.

Jon: In theory.

Tim: In theory, until they repeat the sins of their ancestors—

Jon: And they never really do find the rest.

Tim: In the land. Correct.

Jon: And so you're saying because there really isn't ever any rest found in the promised land—

Tim: Throughout the whole Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Throughout the whole Hebrew Bible—

Tim: It's keeps setting you up—

Jon: You read that and you're clearly like—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "Whatever this promised land rest is, it doesn't happen when you enter the promised land—"

Tim: That's right.

Jon: "And inhabit it."

Tim: That's right. And so—

Jon: It requires more.

Tim: S—that's right. And so the point of Psalm 95 is: Those past narratives are an image of the future hope.

Jon: I—someone was just remarking about how the number one promise in the Hebrew Bible is about the land.

Tim: Ah, yes. Yeah, totally.

Jon: And then it seems like here, when we're talking about entering the rest, we're referring to the promise of the land—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But are we talking about the promise of the land anymore?

Tim: In its narrative sense.

Jon: What does that mean, "its narrative sense"?

Tim: Oh, well, if you're just in the narrative—thinking from the narrative perspective of these characters, it's about the land—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of Canaan.

Jon: A place where you can live in freedom—

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: And abundance.

Tim: That's right. And by the time you get into the Prophets, the land gets expanded out to encompass the whole of creation.

Jon: When they talk about the land?

Tim: Uh—very often, that's right. There's a handful of key texts where that particular plot of land becomes an icon for the whole of the—of the new creation.

Jon: That'd be interesting to look at.

Tim: And you can see part of that going on right here. So in Hebrews four, verse six, he says, "Listen, everybody, it still remains for some to enter that rest. There's still a rest that—"uh"—is yet to be entered into, a future rest."

Jon: Now, if you were—uh—a Jewish person in the first century reading that, you could think, "Oh, yeah, we'll get the land back. We won't be occupied, and we'll have abundance and freedom here in this land that was promised to us."

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Is that what the writer of Hebrews is talking about?

Tim: No. I think he's following a different line—a different line of interpretation. In his mind, the promised land, the actual promised land, what we today call Israel-Palestine, is an image of something greater and more and more expansive. But what he's focusing on is on the seventh day, not the land as such. But for him, it's universal.

Jon: I see. So when he says, "enter the rest—"

Tim: Yeah, but wa—let's just watch his logic.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay, let's go back up to verse three of chapter four. So he's contrasting—he's saying, "Listen, the previous generation, they died, yeah—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "In the wilderness—right—"verse three"—now, we who have trust, we do enter that rest, just as God said—"and he quotes Psalm 95—"I declare it on my oath, 'They won't enter my rest.'" And then he says this: "And yet God's works have been finished since the creation of the world, for, you know, somewhere in the Bible it has spoken about the seventh day with these words—"he quotes in Genesis one—"On the seventh day, God rested from all of his work." But then again, in the passage we're talking about, Psalm 95, it says, "They shall never enter my rest.'" Do you see what he's doing here? He sees Genesis one, which says God rested—

Jon: Hmm. That's his rest.

Tim: But then he reads Psalm 95 and says, "But here God's saying my rest is something yet to come."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So which is it? Did God rest in the past, or is the rest to come yet in the future? So he draws the conclusion, verse six: "It still remains." There's still—uh—a—

Jon: The seventh day is yet to come.

Tim: Seventh day is yet to come.

Jon: But he also said in verse three, we have entered it by believing.

Tim: Yeah, that's right.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's something you enter in the present—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Which will come to its ultimate fulfillment in the future.

[Transition (40:16—40:19)]

Michelle: That clip was from our 2019 Seventh-Day Rest Series, episode 13, titled “Hebrews: The Quest for Final Rest.” And that’s it for today’s episode. I hope you enjoyed listening to this hyperlink edition of The Wilderness. You can find links in the show notes to the full episodes we sampled today. Keep an eye out for a theme video on The Wilderness, along with a collection of resources for deeper study. You can find everything on our app or at BibleProject.com. BibleProject is a crowdfunded project. We exist to help people experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. Everything we make is free because of the generous support of thousands of people just like you. Thanks for being a part of this with us. I’m your host, Michelle Jones, and there’s a whole team of people working to bring the podcast to life every week. For a full list of who’s involved, check out the show credits in the episode description wherever you stream your podcast and at BibleProject.com.