

[The Wilderness E10 Transcript]

[Recap of Theme and Setup for Jesus as a New Moses Figure (0:00—14:03)]

Jon: In the story of the Bible, people, through their own foolish choices or through the choices of others, end up in the wilderness. The wilderness is a tragedy, but God uses it as an opportunity to prepare them for a future garden land.

Tim: These wilderness moments become seasons where God invites his people into a moment of hardship—scarcity—where the only thing they can trust on is the word and the presence and generosity of God.

Jon: God shows up with daily bread and water in the wilderness. But even so, the harsh reality of the wilderness is too great of a burden to bear. While the wilderness is an opportunity to live in union with God, instead, it becomes a realm of failure and death. But this is not the last word. God brings a new gift into the wilderness: His own presence, the person of Jesus.

Tim: He succeeds in the wilderness where his ancestors failed.

Jon: In the previous two episodes, we looked at the baptism of Jesus in the wilderness, and then we looked at the testing of Jesus. Today, we look at what happens next.

Tim: He walks out of the wilderness, and the first thing that you're told is he goes around announcing in the towns of Galilee, "The Kingdom of God has arrived." "Game on."

Jon: Jesus is the good shepherd leading his people through the wilderness.

Tim: "When he saw the people, he felt compassion for them because they were distressed and dispirited—they were harassed, and they had no life energy—like sheep without a shepherd."

Jon: In today's episode, we'll look at Jesus feeding thousands in the wilderness.

Tim: Matthew portrays Jesus as a new-Moses shepherd of Israel as a flock in the wilderness, and he's going to provide bread for the lost sheep of Israel who come to him in the wilderness.

Jon: When we're with Jesus in the wilderness, we can find garden life. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical Break (2:02—2:09)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hello, Jonathan Collins.

[Laughter]

Tim: We are 10 hours in as of this conversation—

Jon: Is it the tenth hour?

Tim: To talk about the wilderness—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the story of the Bible, the meaning of the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: We are. We've covered a lot of ground, and it's always a bit precarious to try to summarize because it—sometimes it takes half of the episode—

[Laughter]

Jon: To just summarize.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: What do we need to have on the brain today about the wilderness?

Tim: Mmm. Okay. Aside from talking about what it means, its symbolic meaning, like in the Genesis one creation story and the garden of Eden story, the most consistent place where the wilderness gets brought up is talking about Israel's sojourn through the

wilderness as they go out of slavery and into the promised land. There's a long in-between phase. And in that in-between phase, the wilderness is a dangerous, hostile environment, and that's its main meaning—is as the uncreated place or the place that is not hospitable to human habitation. But God brings his people through that type of environment on purpose, because—uhm—

Jon: They're not ready.

Tim: They're not ready. That's been another big theme.

Jon: They're not ready for the land of promise.

Tim: They're not ready to be in the garden. Adam and Eve aren't ready to be in the garden when they're in the garden, they prove.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And now that humanity is out of Eden in a cosmic wilderness, so to speak, they're also not ready to go in. And so these wilderness moments, however, become seasons, environments, events where God invites his people into a moment of hardship—of scarcity—where they have to trust. The only thing they can trust on is the word and the presence and generosity of God.

Jon: Yeah, that illusion of: "I've got this. I can control my own destiny." Uhm—"everything that I have is because of my ingenuity and hard work." That illusion can get really strong when you're in the garden.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But when you're in the wilderness, it's really hard to keep that illusion alive.

Tim: Yes, it is. Yep. So the season of Israel in the wilderness becomes like a model or a template for seasons of hardship or danger in Israel's covenant life with God that's told—that story is told in the Hebrew Bible. So moments where they are back in the promised land even later, but there might be a famine or a lack of rain, and all of a sudden that becomes like an echo of a wilderness test, like in the days of Elijah, where Israel's allegiance to God is tested in a time of drought. When, after many generations, the Israelites are so unfaithful to the covenant God hands them over to Assyria and then to Babylon, and the Babylonian exile is called and described by both Isaiah and Ezekiel as a wilderness period—Ezekiel calls it "the wilderness of the nations—"

Jon: Oh yeah, that's right.

Tim: In Ezekiel 20. But one thing that Israel had in the post-Egypt wilderness and one thing they look forward to in the Babylonian wilderness is a Moses figure. So they had Moses, and Moses became an image, an icon.

Jon: The leader to bring you out of the wilderness, but then also through the wilderness.

Tim: And through it, yeah. And Moses had to go through his own wilderness—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: Before Israel did. That was the burning bush encounter.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then Israel's wilderness journey actually becomes his, too.

Jon: Right.

Tim: And he ends up failing his test as well.

Jon: I know, which is so disheartening.

Tim: Th—yeah, there's so much to ponder there.

Jon: Yeah. If the wilderness is meant to prepare us for the garden—

Tim: Yeah. It's not working.

Jon: It's not working.

[Laughter]

Tim: It didn't even work for Moses.

Tim: I know, totally.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. Or David, as we saw. So when we came to the story of Jesus, then, lo and behold, when God raises up a new son of Abraham, son of David—we've been focusing on Matthew's portrait—who comes on the other side of Israel's exile—Matthew's genealogy of Jesus has three parts that go from Abraham, then David, then the exile. Those are the big three moments. So he's teeing you up to see Jesus as a new son of Abraham, son of David, Son of God, who's going to restore Israel from their —

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: Wilderness exile.

Jon: Those are the three leaders?

Tim: Mhm. The genealogy is broken into three parts.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And those are—

Jon: And each part has that—

Tim: A f—

Jon: Deliverer connected to it. Moses is in the first part. David's—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: In the second part. When you're in the Prophets, there's talk of the—the Messiah, the one who'll come—

Tim: Of a coming—yeah, that's right.

Jon: And that's what you mean by Son of God.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. And that's what Jesus is called when he arrives on the scene—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In the wilderness. So we've talked about John the Baptist in the wilderness. God's taking his people who are now in the land, but through John, God invites them to the wilderness to get prepared—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: For a new leader. And that new leader is also described as God coming to his people.

Jon: Yeah. They're in the land that's supposed to be the garden, but since they're not ready for the garden—

Tim: Right.

Jon: It's not really the garden.

Tim: That's right. So within the boundaries of a garden land, they go to the eastern edge that's—

Jon: Back into the wilderness.

Tim: That's a—an in-between—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You know? You're close enough to some towns—

Jon: Right.

Tim: But you can be out in the desert by the Jordan River. That's where John goes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And he says a great testing is coming—a purifying fire is coming. And the one who's going to bring it, the one who's going to bring God's life-giving Holy Spirit and bring a purifying fire, is one who is greater than I. And then Jesus shows up in the wilderness.

Jon: And purifying—that's the role of the wilderness, is to purify?

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. That's right. And in the book of Numbers, fire actually does come down from heaven to purify the camp of Israel from a bunch of rebels—a couple times, actually. But—

Jon: And God's leading them through. It's not described as a spirit. It's more his glory is leading them through, right?

Tim: That's right. Yeah, it's a pillar of fire or cloud.

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: But when the prophets look back, Isaiah, in Isaiah 64, he just says, "God's Spirit—"

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Le—

Jon: Spirit and fire—

Tim: Led them through. Mhm.

Jon: In the wilderness—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: To purify us—

Tim: Yep.

Jon: Get us ready.

Tim: Get us ready. So Jesus comes onto the scene. His baptism at the river in the wilderness announces him like he's the Son of God. God says, "This is my son." But that divine, beloved son with cosmic privilege and honor sets aside that status and is baptized and is in solidarity—he joins himself to the people of Israel who need to turn back to God because of their sins and their failures.

Jon: Right. Where Moses needed his own wilderness, Jesus doesn't.

Tim: Yeah. That's right.

Jon: And John the Baptist goes—John the Immerser—

Tim: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Says, "What? What are you doing?"

Tim: "Why are you here?" S—

Jon: "I'm—I'm not going to baptize you."

Tim: Right.

Jon: "That's silly."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "Baptize me."

Tim: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Jon: "You don't need this repentance. You don't need a wilderness." And not only does he get baptized, but then he goes into—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The wilderness as another sign of solidarity.

Tim: That's right. Yeah. And he says he's going to "fulfill all doing right—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Meaning Israel, as God's covenant partner, has failed to do right by God. So not only is he going to live out the Torah and the Prophets and fill them full, he's also going to do right by his promises with Israel by actually entering into Israel's suffering and hardship and sinfulness—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And identifying with it. S—

Jon: Real quick, connect with me the idea of fulfilling doing right and being ready to enter the garden. How are those two ideas related?

Tim: Oh, I see. Well, if you were doing right by God and neighbor, we wouldn't take from the forbidden tree. We would trust God—

Jon: It's a sign that you are ready.

Tim: Yeah. Doing right by God and neighbor is—

Jon: Means you're ready.

Tim: Trusting God's wisdom to not do what is good in my eyes, but to do what's good in God's eyes.

Jon: Is it—so are we talking about the same thing?

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: These are synonyms?

Tim: Th—yeah. For humans to trust God and live by his word and command is to do right by God and neighbor.

Jon: So are we ready to do that?

Tim: Jesus is ready.

Jon: Jesus is ready.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And he's saying: "I've come to fulfill that," meaning, "I'm coming to get you ready as well."

Tim: Yes. His goal is to create a renewed, restored covenant people of God.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's what Jesus came to do. Baptism's the first step. His wilderness testing is the second step. That was the previous episode. He succeeds in the wilderness over a period of 40, where—

Jon: He shows that he's ready.

Tim: Where his ancestors failed in the wilderness over—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: A period of 40.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Yep. So now he walks out of the wilderness, and the first thing that you're told is he goes around announcing in the towns of Galilee, "The Kingdom of God has arrived." Like, "Game on."

Jon: Yep, and "here's how to fulfill all righteousness."

Tim: He—he goes up onto a mountain. All these sick, hurting, poor Israelites come, and he says, "The Kingdom of God is yours. You are the light—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "And the city on the mountain. You're the salt of the land. Let's—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Do this."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Let's do it." So Jesus—he's launching the renewed covenant people, and he's portrayed like a new Moses. He—uhm—

Jon: Giving laws on a mountain.

Tim: Totally. And then before that, the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Before that, going through the waters.

[Laughter]

Tim: Before that, coming out of Egypt—

Jon: Yeah. Mhm.

Tim: As a child. And before that, barely escaping a tyrant king who was murdering baby boys.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So Jesus' whole story is setting you up as also a: He's succeeding both where Israel failed and where Moses himself failed. So we've got a lot of stock now in this new Moses figure.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. So it won't surprise us then for Matthew to begin portraying Jesus in Moses-type language, themes, ideas. And so one of those—we're just going to look at it real quick to set up—is Jesus is portrayed in Matthew uniquely. These are all unique themes in Matthew that don't have parallel material in Luke, Mark, and John. Matthew portrays Jesus as a new-Moses shepherd of Israel as a flock in the wilderness.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then he's going to do what any shepherd and what Moses did for Israel, which was give them bread in the wilderness. And so, lo and behold, just as Jesus trusted his Father and withheld bread from himself in the wilderness, now he's going to flip it as the new-Moses deliverer, and he's going to provide bread for the lost sheep of Israel who come to him in the wilderness. So that's what we're going to look at.

[Musical Break (13:30—14:03)]

[The People's Need for a Shepherd (14:03—24:04)]

Tim: So we're told "Jesus went throughout Galilee—"this is Matthew chapter four, verse 23—"teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the Kingdom, healing every kind of disease and sickness among people. And he healed them, and large

crowds followed.” That’s the end of Matthew four. Then Matthew gives you the Sermon on the Mount. And you’re like, “Oh, sweet. So that’s what it looked like for him to teach and announce.” Then Matthew gives you eight through 10, what we call Matthew eight through 10, and it’s nine healing stories or Jesus doing signs and wonders. And you’re like, “Oh, that’s what it looked like.” He’s unpacking this little phrase, “healing every kind of disease.” So then, after all of that, Matthew provides a little concluding paragraph at the end of chapter nine. And it reads like this: “Jesus was going throughout all the cities teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the Kingdom, healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness—”and you’re like, “Oh, that’s copy and paste from the end of chapter four.”

Jon: Yep.

Tim: But here’s the twist. Here’s the new thing. “When he saw the people, he felt compassion for them because they were distressed and—”mmm—“dispirited—”this is the New Amer—New American Standard—“they were harassed and they had no life energy—like sheep without a shepherd.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So that little line right there is showing Jesus—he sees the people. He has compassion. They’re like sheep without a shepherd. There’s just glowing hyperlinks. When Moses fails his test in the wilderness and God says, “You’re not going to get to go into the land,” he’s bummed. And then—so he appeals to God, and he says, “Okay, well, you need to appoint a new leader because I’m going to die in not very long.” So in Numbers 27, he has this prayer to God where he says, “May the God of the spirits of all flesh appoint a man over the community who will go out before them, come in before them, so that the community of Yahweh will not be like a flock of sheep without a shepherd.”

Jon: Mmm. Okay.

Tim: So Israel—

Jon: Jesus is quoting this—or Matthew’s quoting this.

Tim: Israel without a Moses figure, just like sheep scattered on a hillside: no shepherd.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And Moses actually was a shepherd—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: Before. So he led sheep to Mount Sinai—

[Laughter]

Tim: In the burning bush. Then he led Israel to Mount Sinai. There's also an important hyperlink here from the prophet Ezekiel, who, sitting in Babylonian exile, looks back and he sees what horrible leaders the priests and the kings and the prophets of Israel have been throughout their whole history. And he describes the history of abusive leadership in Israel's history. This is how he summarizes it. He calls them bad shepherds. He says, "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves. Shouldn't shepherds feed the flock? But instead you eat the fat sheep." Like, "The best ones, you eat them." "And then you clothe yourselves with their wool, and the healthy animals you slaughter, and you don't even feed the whole flock. You haven't strengthened the weak. You haven't healed the sick. And the hurting, you have not bound up their wounds, and you haven't regathered the scattered sheep or searched for the lost ones." Come on.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: You see where I'm going here.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Th—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: This is all the vocabulary that Jesus uses—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: To describe what he's doing when he goes around the hills of Galilee.

Jon: Yeah. Right. I mean, he's very explicit about it in one of his teachings.

Tim: "The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's right from Ezekiel 34.

Jon: And then he's got the whole parable about—

Tim: Oh, yeah.

Jon: The 99 sheep—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And the one.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: Is that in Matthew?

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay, this is interesting. I'm trying to tie this to the wilderness theme for me.

Tim: Yeah, the whole point is: Where sheep graze is in the wilderness.

Jon: Okay, so that's what I was going to ask. Because we talked about that. We talked about that in-between place. Is that—which one is that? The Sada—the—

Tim: Yeah, the field or *sadeh*—

Jon: *Sadeh*.

Tim: Can refer to a farm field or to a field right on the edge of un—the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then the wilderness is the wilderness, but then a wilderness, *midbar*—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Can also be right—

Jon: Creeps in.

Tim: Creeps in to cultivated land.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And so—

Jon: There's that area where—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: At times, rains come, the grasses grow, and th—

Tim: Temporarily.

Jon: It temporarily—

Tim: Or you find an oasis.

Jon: Yeah, you can go out there and you can find life, but it's only for a moment, and you have to—you need someone to bring you there—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Or you can, like, end up in the wrong spot.

Tim: You need a shepherd.

Jon: You need a shepherd.

Tim: If you're going to be in that in-between wilderness—

Jon: Yeah, there it is.

Tim: Land, you need a shepherd to—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Know where to lead you to the—

Jon: Yeah, because—

Tim: Oasis into—

Jon: You bring the sheep to the field that had sprouted because of the rains in that moment, then the sheep can have life.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But if you just leave them there, they're going to die.

Tim: Totally. Dude—

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And so I guess—

Tim: Have you ever—have you ever been around a—like a—

Jon: Oh, no, not really.

Tim: A flock—a flock of sheep.

Jon: Not really. I've seen videos.

[Laughter]

Jon: I saw this one video where there's like this big—

[Laughter]

Jon: Kind of like, trench-crevice thing in the earth—

Tim: Like a ravine?

Jon: Kind of—

Tim: Or even steeper?

Jon: But it's like only like a foot wide—

Tim: Oh—

Jon: But it's obviously deep.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So it's a crack in the earth or something.

[Laughter]

Jon: And this sheep, like, headfirst gets stuck in it—

[Laughter]

Jon: And its little feet are just like—

Tim: Oh my gosh.

Jon: Dangling up. And so the shepherd comes and, like, rips it out of it and immediately it, like, hops back in—

[Laughter]

Jon: On accident.

Tim: Oh, it gets stuck again.

Jon: It just gets stuck right back in.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So—

Tim: So—very—hmm, I was about to say i—unintelligent. I'm sure sheep have a—

Jon: Their own intelligence.

Tim: Intelligence, it's just relative to their limits. Yes, they're a particularly vulnerable animal.

[Laughter]

Jon: To be clear, we're the sheep in this.

Tim: Humans are the sheep, and always as a metaphor. And then in this metaphor, Israel is like a flock.

Jon: And the leaders are the shepherds.

Tim: Leaders are the shepherds.

Jon: And humans need someone wise to lead them. Or the idea is: On our own, we're going to get stranded in the wilderness. And—

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, you need a Moses.

Jon: If you—but the problem with a Moses is that a Moses—

Tim: Yeah. Right. Even he blew it. But he never took advantage of the sheep. He just called them—

Jon: That's true.

Tim: Rebels and hit the rock and—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Was mad.

Jon: So there's some leaders that, while they're not perfect, they really care for the sheep.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: But then there's some leaders that take advantage of—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The sheep and these—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Are the corrupt kings.

Tim: Yep. They don't heal the sick. They don't bind up the wounded. They don't search for the scattered or the lost.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Yep. That's Ezekiel.

Jon: But isn't the idea, though, that at the end of the day, it's just sheep leading sheep? Like—

Tim: Oh, in that—

Jon: Right?

Tim: Sense, yeah, sure.

Jon: We're all sheep.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And so yes, we might say, "Okay, you lead us. You be our king."

[Laughter]

Tim: Chief sheep.

[Laughter]

Jon: But that—

Tim: Ch—

Tim: One might just jump into a ravine as well—

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Right?

Tim: When—when the chief of sheep—

[Laughter]

Tim: Also—

Jon: Chief of sheep.

Tim: Ends up in a ravine—

[Laughter]

Tim: Then you're in real—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Trouble.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Yeah. That's it. So in Ezekiel 34, Yahweh pipes up, and he says, "Okay, clearly my sheep have been taken advantage of by these bad shepherds. So you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to come, personally. I will come and—"verse 15 of Ezekiel 34, "I will feed my flock. I will lay them down into pastures. I will seek the lost. I will bring back the scattered. I will bind up the hurting and strengthen the sick."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So—

Jon: So the new Moses figure is God himself.

Tim: Well, so that's what's so interesting. In one part of Ezekiel 34 is just straight up the divine "I." Then, as soon as God finishes saying, "I," then he says, "Then I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will feed them himself and be their shepherd." And you're like, "Wait, who's the shepherd?"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So Yahweh is going to? But then Yahweh's shepherding care is also going to be carried out by this servant-shepherd David.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: A—

Jon: And who's this David?

[Laughter]

Tim: And who's the new David?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. But what he's doing is described in the language of what Moses did.

Jon: Yeah, okay.

Tim: So he's like a—he's like a David-Moses.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So Matthew assumes all of this.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Like, he wants you to see all of this. And he's already set you up to see Jesus as a son of David. And he's also a—like a new Moses. He has succeeded where Israel failed in the wilderness. He has succeeded where Moses failed in the wilderness. So there's two stories in Matthew 14 and 15 where—here, I don't know if we've ever read these stories in the history of our conversations. So all that's backstory. Let's just read Matthew 14, starting in verse 13.

[Musical Break (23:35—24:04)]

[Bread in the Wilderness for Israel (24:04—38:12)]

Tim: “So when Jesus heard about this—”

Jon: About what?

Tim: Yeah. John the Immerser just got his head chopped off.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's what just happened—

Jon: That just happened.

Tim: By the son of Herod the Great—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Herod Antipas. Yep. Because he—well, that's a whole backstory. But it's just power politics.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So you can imagine the kind of impact that would have on Jesus. Like, Jesus got launched in and through John's ministry—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And he sees what happened to him, his relative—you know—it—you have to imagine that was an intense moment for Jesus to know what's coming his way too.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So it makes sense what he does next. "When he heard about John's execution, he departed from there by boat to a wilderness place by himself." Isn't that interesting? There's a whole story there that we don't know. He went to go be by himself.

Jon: Went to go grieve in the wilderness.

Tim: But not just anywhere, in the wilder—back in the wilderness where he and John had that—right—had that encounter with the voice of the Father by the river.

Jon: Yeah, interesting.

Tim: And he wants to be by himself.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Yeah, we talked about that. The wilderness is a place to get away from people.

[Laughter]

Jon: There's no people in the wilderness.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: People don't live out there.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Isn't it that psalm? "Oh, that I could be—"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "Like a bird and—"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "Fly to the wilderness—"

Tim: That's right.

Jon: "And no one would bother me."

Tim: Yeah, or there it's to get away from the people who want to kill me—

Jon: Ah.

Tim: In Psalm 54 [Psalm 55], I think.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. So he goes out to the wilderness to be safe, to meet with God, to go remind himself—right—of the loyalty to the Father that for him was especially tested in the wilderness. We don't know. But that's where he goes. "When Jesus heard about John, he left to go be by himself. When the crowds heard, they followed him on foot from all the cities. And then getting out, he saw a huge crowd."

[Laughter]

So let's just pause. I—I—

Jon: He went to go be alone.

Tim: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah. I know we talk about parenting a lot. It's the season of life that we're in. But it's that moment as a parent or the moment when just maybe something intense has happened, you n—just—you just need some time and some space to process heavy news.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: You get by yourself, and then the doorbell rings or then—

[Laughter]

Tim: The—the phone call—

Jon: Sure.

Tim: Or your kids run into the room.

Jon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tim: It's that moment.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. So those are usually moments where I am—uh—get frustrated.

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah. "What are you doing here?"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "Why are you bothering me?"

Tim: "Why are you bothering me? I had a plan."

[Laughter]

Tim: "This is not my plan."

Jon: "This is my alone time."

Tim: "Your being here is not my plan."

[Laughter]

Tim: Look at Jesus' response. It's really remarkable. "When he saw the great crowd, he had compassion on them and he began to heal the sick." That's just Jesus. Even in his grief, yeah?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And who knows—fear. He—when he sees the needs of others, he's able to foreground that. So what we know is the people went to look for him in a wilderness

place, and he wanted to be by himself, and now they're all around, so he's healing them.

Jon: And so now we have a big crowd in the wilderness.

Tim: Mhm. Yep, he's healing the flock in the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And because they and he just heard the report that somebody who's supposed to be their shepherd that's the current king of Israel is like chopping off heads of Israelites that he doesn't like—

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: That sounds like bad shepherds.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "So when it was evening, the apprentices approach." This is my translation. "Disciples" is how it's usually rendered.

Jon: Oh, you're trying out "apprentices"?

Tim: Yeah. I'm making a translation of Matthew for the Matthew BibleProject classes.

Jon: And you're not using disciple?

Tim: No, I'm using apprentice.

Jon: Wow. Okay.

Tim: I think it more immediately communicates—a disciple we kind of use in contemporary English—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But—but apprentice, we use way more.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And it's kind of stripped of its religious—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Layering.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Y—

Jon: Interesting.

Tim: Yeah. It's actually—I can't think of anything wrong with the word. It's like the perfect word in English.

Jon: The only thing wrong with the word—

Tim: Oh.

Jon: Is you got to choose your battles. Uhm—and I think this—

Tim: Oh—

Jon: Is a great battle.

Tim: Oh, I see.

Jon: But like, you know, we translate “heaven” as “sky.”

Tim: Yeah. Mhm.

Jon: And that's—

Tim: Ruffled some feathers.

Jon: Ruffled some feathers.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And so I think—yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So it's just that when I come to a new one where you're like, “Okay—”

Tim: Yeah, “Oh—”

Jon: This is going to be—

Tim: “Going to retitl the disciples?”

[Laughter]

Tim: “What could be more basic?”

Jon: So you've done “righteousness” as—

Tim: “Doing right.”

Jon: Doing right.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Heaven as sky.

Tim: Yeah. “Earth” as “the land.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And disciples as apprentices.

Jon: Disciples as apprentices.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah.

Jon: We’re going to need a new glossary for—

[Laughter]

Jon: Tim’s translations.

Tim: “The apprentices approached and they said to Jesus, ‘Listen, this is a wilderness place.’” It’s a Greek word, *er—eremos*, which is the Greek—traditional Greek word used to translate “*midbar*—”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In the Hebrew Bible. “‘This is a *midbar* place. And listen, the hour has passed by. It’s late in the day.’”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “‘You should release these crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘What? No, they don’t need to go away. You guys give them something to eat.’”

[Laughter]

Tim: So good.

[Laughter]

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So good.

Jon: “One problem with that.”

Tim: Then they said to him, “Uh, we don’t have anything here. Wait, go check, Simon. Oh yeah, we’ve got five loaves of bread and we have two fish. So that’s like maybe enough for the 12 of us. It’s going to be a lean dinner for the 12 of us, but—”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So I love—Jesus is like: “You’re the ones who just identified the problem. You solve it.”

[Laughter]

Tim: This is like a little test. It’s a test in the wilderness—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: For the apprentices.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: “We don’t have enough.” This is starting to feel like Israel getting three days into the wilderness—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And there’s—the only water is undrinkable water. “Give us something to drink.”

Jon: Hmm. This is a little softer. It’s kind of like, “Hey, heads up, Jesus. It’s dinner time —”

[Laughter]

Jon: “And we’re still in the wilderness. Like, maybe you should—uh—sunset this whole experience here.”

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. But I just love how he share—he includes them—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the crisis.

Jon: Right.

Tim: And then he includes them—he wants to name them as part of the solution, and then this will become a test of their trust. So he said, “Well, those five loaves and fish, why don’t you bring those here to me?’ And then he ordered the crowds to sit down in the grass, and having taken the five loaves—”of bread—“and the two fish, he looked up into the sky and then he said a blessing.” This may be just a little aside, but in Jewish tradition, when you say a blessing, you’re not blessing the food.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: I don’t know where this—this is a line, maybe—I don’t know—“Bless this food to our bodies—”

Jon: Right.

Tim: Is a thing that people say.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And it’s a request to bless the food, which I think means “Make the food multiply the energy that it gives to my body.” So it’s really a blessing on our bodies through the food. Or are we blessing—

Jon: Never really thought about it.

Tim: Hmm. My point is that—

Jon: Yeah, why are we blessing the food?

Tim: W—within a—a biblical and a Jewish view of reality, it’s an incoherent thing to say.

Jon: “Bless the food”?

Tim: Right. Food is the blessing. The food is not just already blessed—

[Laughter]

Tim: The food is God's blessing—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: To me.

Jon: Yeah. It's the nourishment.

Tim: It's the nourishment. So God's blessing, first, is to the animals—right—the birds, and the fish. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply." God blessed the humans—said, "Be fruitful and multiply." And then, "Eat the fruit of the land." So—

[Laughter]

Tim: The fruit of the land is the sign of the blessing because it's the thing that allows me to multiply. Anyway. So when he looks up into the sky and says a blessing, he's blessing the Father, and blessing is associated with multiplication—

Jon: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Tim: Which is what's about to happen.

Jon: Okay. He said a blessing. And there's probably traditional Jewish blessings—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Or what am I supposed to imagine?

Tim: Oh, yeah, he said a blessing. "*Barukh ata Adonai eloheinu melekh haolam—*"

Jon: Blessed be the Lord our God—

Tim: "*Hamutzi lekhem min haaretz.*" "May you be the one who's blessed, O Lord our God, King of the world, who brings forth food from the land."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But the point is he's—

Jon: "We're ready for multiplication."

Tim: Yeah. The point is, he's blessing God—uh—and he's asking God maybe for an increased blessing, but that is to multiply the food for the crowds. "And then having broken it, he gave it to the apprentices and the apprentices gave it to the crowds." This is almost exactly the same wording as the night of the Last Supper.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: "He took the bread—"

Jon: Mhm. He blessed it.

Tim: "Said a blessing. Having broken it, he gave it to the apprentices." So what's interesting in that is that's later in Matthew, but when you get to that point in Matthew, you're meant to hyperlink back to this moment. So Jesus gave bread to the crowds, but then at the Last Supper, he's giving the bread, which he says is himself.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Interesting. "And they all ate, and they were satisfied. Then they picked up an overabundance of bread pieces—12 baskets full. Oh, and those eating were men, about 5,000, apart from the women and the children."

Jon: Yeah, that's a massive crowd.

Tim: Totally. So—so—

Jon: I got to imagine for the ancient world, especially.

Tim: W—so we say feeding of the 5,000, but it's more.

Jon: Right, that's just the men.

Tim: Yes. Yeah. Now—okay. So there's glowing hyperlinks here, too.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "To eat and be satisfied." "Satisfaction" is connected to our Hebrew word, *sava*, but it's spelled with the same letters as the number seven.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: Uhm—

Jon: To be completed.

Tim: To be completed, filled full. So to eat and be satisfied is a key turn of phrase that begins with Moses' description of wh—the life in the promised land. "When you go to the land, you'll eat and be satisfied." Deuteronomy eight. Deuteronomy 31, God says, "I'm

going to bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, and they will eat and be satisfied.”

Jon: So this is about rest. This is about completion.

Tim: Yeah, it's Eden.

Jon: It's about fulfillment. It's Eden.

Tim: Eden. Yes. Here, in the book of Ruth, when Boaz provides this luxury meal for his migrant workers in his field, Ruth is able to eat and be satisfied, and she has some leftover.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And this is exactly Matthew's phrase—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Right here.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. My point is that when he tells a story about someone providing bread in the wilderness, and they eat and they're satisfied, these are Moses' words.

Jon: Okay, about being in the land.

Tim: About being in the garden—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like, the garden land. A—

Jon: And they're out in the wilderness. It's interesting, though, they're sitting on grass. Grass in the wilderness means—

Tim: Ooh, ooh. It means that it's springtime.

Jon: Mmm. Oh, okay.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah, the spring rains.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So they're in the wilderness. They're in that moment in the wilderness where you can find life in the wilderness if you have a shepherd.

Tim: Yep. Yeah.

Jon: And then the story about Jesus creating an abundance of food—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So that there is enough and everyone is satisfied—

Tim: Yep.

Jon: Garden in the wilderness.

Tim: Garden in the wilderness. There you go. So that itself is cool. All the little Moses echoes—I think the Ruth and Boaz echo—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: To eat, be satisfied, and have leftover—that's a little thread Matthew's pulling on here. And then also connecting it forward to Jesus' coming death through this hyperlink to the Last Supper.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Well, that's more like a foreshadowing that when you get to the Last Supper, you're going to remember this moment and then think to connect those two—that the bread from heaven, that is, from Jesus' prayer—ma—he looked up into the sky when he said that blessing, and then the provision of himself as the bread—those are closely linked moments as well.

Jon: So bread in the wilderness is a theme of saying: God will provide for you. There will be enough even though you're not in the garden yet.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: In fact, you can experience the garden now because bread from heaven is experiencing God's abundant garden blessing while still in the wilderness.

Tim: Yep. You got it.

Jon: And for Jesus to say, "I am the bread," in John's account—

Tim: Yeah, "of the feeding—"yeah. He says that he is the bread that comes down from heaven. Because normal bread you eat, and then you get hungry again.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But what if you could eat and never be hungry ever again? I want that bread. Give us this bread.

[Laughter]

[Musical Break (37:45—38:12)]

[Discussing Bread With Pharisees and a Canaanite Woman (38:12—47:35)]

Tim: So in Matthew 14, what happens after the feeding of the 5,000 is that the apprentices get into a boat and Jesus goes out to meet them on the water in a storm. This is—Peter walks on water. That's the very next story.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Then, when they get to the other side together, there's a bunch more sick people, and so he heals a bunch more sick people. So it began with sick people, healing them in the wilderness, then he provides bread for people in the wilderness, and then he saves his endangered followers on the chaos waters.

Jon: Hmm. Which is his own type of wilderness.

Tim: Yeah. So back to the early episodes of our conversation. Even Matthew puts two stories right next to each other of Jesus saving people. One in the wilderness and then —

Jon: One in the waters.

Tim: One in the chaos waters. Because wilderness and chaos waters are the two primary biblical symbols or images of the pre-creation state, and then of just the realm of danger and death. After that, there's a story of the Pharisees coming to Jesus, and they accuse him and his followers of not being faithful to the God of Israel because they are not faithful to what they call the traditions of the elders, because they don't wash their hands before they eat bread. Back to bread. So that's interesting.

Jon: This is like a purity ritual?

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. The Pharisees were a—what do you say, a, a relig—a c—I don't want to use—

Jon: You've described them as kind of the pastoral, on the ground—"Let me help you know how to live by God's Torah—"

Tim: Yes.

Jon: "In your day-to-day life."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And they're particularly pretty strict—conservative. Like they're pretty, like—"Let's get it right and let's, like, be thorough."

Tim: Yeah. Maybe even one—I mean, this is uncharitable because not all Pharisees were like this—but in Matthew in particular, they're portrayed as being pretty extremist. So for example, with this, this is not a command from the Torah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Rather, they're taking the commands given to the priests—

Jon: Yes.

Tim: And they are creating a whole system of purity and holiness for every Israelite to live like the priests.

Jon: That's a great intuition.

Tim: Yeah, exactly. It's actually a wonderful intuition.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But Jesus actually takes issue with them because he says—"Okay, so you're going to get on me about not washing hands—"

Jon: Mhm.

[Laughter]

Tim: But then he starts talking about how you also, by these same traditions, deprive your elderly fathers and mothers of financial support because you give to the temple—

right—an offering to God that you actually should be using to support your parents. That's the argument that they're about to get into.

[Laughter]

Tim: Anyway, my point is that it's a conversation about bread.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's important.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So they come and th—so the Pharisees are all hung up about the proper way to eat bread.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And we just know Jesus is like the liberal—

[Laughter]

Tim: Generous provider of bread—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the wilderness.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Where are you going to wash your hands out there?

[Laughter]

Jon: Where are you going to wash your hands in the wilderness? Yeah, exactly.

Tim: Right? And it's just—it kind of becomes like an adventure in missing the point. It's like, we're—

Jon: When God provides bread—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The point is: This is garden time.

Tim: It's garden time.

Jon: This isn't—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Purity time. This is garden time.

Tim: It's garden time. Let's seek and save and heal the lost sheep of Israel and give them bread. Why are you taking issue about hand washing before you eat bread? Okay. Story after that is: Jesus leaves Israel. We're not told why, but he goes up to the north, way north, to the district of Tyre and Sidon, and a non-Israelite woman who's called a Canaanite woman begins to follow him around saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David." Now, this is very interesting because she's a non-Israelite, but she's calling him by his royal Israelite heritage.

Jon: Yeah. She must know s—some inside information.

Tim: Something.

Jon: She's paying attention.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, if she has a synagogue in town. She goes—

[Laughter]

Tim: But she's not Israelite.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And we know Jesus is down for the lost sheep of Israel.

Jon: Right.

Tim: He has also—we didn't talk about this. He also told his apprentices, "Right now, this is not the nation's time for the Kingdom of God." He says, "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel only." But so this woman comes and she says, "My daughter is being oppressed by some spiritual evil presence. Have mercy on me." And he didn't respond. And the apprentices even come, and they say, "You got to get that woman out of here. She's not even an Israelite." And he answered her and said, "Listen, right now, my mission is to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." That should recall the feeding story

in the wilderness. And she didn't go away. She—in fact, she laid down in front of him and said, “Lord, help me.” And he answered and said—and we've talked about this story before—this is a deep rabbit hole—

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: “But is it right to take bread for the children and to give it to the little family dogs?” “Is that the right order of priority?” But she said, “But my Lord, even the dogs feed on the crumbs that fall—”you know—“from the family table.” And Jesus says, “Yeah, that's right, they do.”

[Laughter]

Tim: “Your faith is so great, woman—”like, “It'll be done as you wish.” And her daughter is healed at once. So notice this once again: a conversation about—

Jon: Bread.

Tim: Bread—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And the lost sheep of Israel. So Matthew wants us to see a thread here—

Jon: Okay. Yeah.

Tim: Jesus, he's the shepherd. He's the Yahweh shepherd of Ezekiel provide—

Jon: Healing and bringing bread.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Mhm. And Israel's current shepherds, the Pharisees—

Jon: And—

Tim: Are among their number—and the king—

Jon: Yep.

Tim: Become Ezekiel's bad shepherds who either are killing the sheep like Herod, or here, like for the Pharisees, depriving or making the sheep follow certain traditions before they can eat the bread.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And that's in contrast with Jesus. Not that Jesus doesn't care about holiness. He does. But he's convinced that the Pharisees' definitions of holiness have—have gone a step too far.

Jon: Hmm. They're missing the point.

Tim: Yeah. And now here's a non-Israelite woman who—Jesus says, "Listen, I'm here to bring bread to the house of Israel right now." And she's like, "I think there's some more bread."

[Laughter]

Tim: "I think you've got more bread to offer."

[Laughter]

Jon: I love this picture of her, like—the disciples are like—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "She is annoying. She's just shouting at us." You didn't read that line.

Tim: Mhm. Mhm.

Jon: But they say that sh—

[Laughter]

Tim: "Send her away."

Jon: "Send her away. She's shouting at us."

Tim: "She keeps shouting at us."

Jon: You just picture her—just persistence. And then she lays d—she bows down and just—

Tim: Just lay—

Jon: Like—

Tim: Yes. Mhm.

Jon: You imagine the person in the—the road like, “You’re not getting past me.” Like—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: There’s—in front of the car.

Tim: Yeah, that’s right.

Jon: You know, like, “I’m just—”human barrier. And then this discourse with Jesus of being like, “Listen, you’re saying you’re going to focus on Israel.” Like, “I know there’s more.”

Tim: Yeah. There’s more. There’s more bread.

Jon: Very persistent. Ask, seek, knock.

Tim: And then what he says to her is “Your faith is great.” Now, what’s great—this is a little hyperlink back. When the discip—when the apprentices—

[Laughter]

Tim: Were freaking out on the boat in the storm scene—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: And even when Peter comes out walking on the water and then he begins to sink, he says, “Oh, you with so little faith.” So the apprentices have little faith. The Pharisees limit the bread. And who’s the one with great faith that there is more than enough bread for Israel and for the nations? It’s this Canaanite woman. So good. There’s a play here because Jesus’ name in Greek is *Iesous*.

Jon: Mhm. “Joshua.”

Tim: Joshua’s name in the Greek Septuagint is *Iesous*. So it’s *Iesous* facing a Canaanite. And you’re like, “This is the book of Joshua.”

Jon: Oh.

Tim: In the book of Joshua—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The Canaanites were on the, like—the: Kick them out, and if they resist, take them out—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: List. And this becomes this fascinating inversion of the Joshua and the Canaanite story, where with this Joshua, the nations get bread. It's pretty rad.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Okay. So I'll never forget the moment—you know, some things when you learn them, you had to work for them. And then once you learn them, you never unlearn them.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That was how this was for me.

Jon: This next thing?

Tim: This thing I'm about to show you.

Jon: Oh. Okay. One more thing.

Tim: One more thing.

[Musical Break (47:08—47:35)]

[Bread in the Wilderness for the Nations (47:35—1:02:37)]

Tim: Next story, right after the Canaanite woman: "Moving on from there, Jesus came beside the sea of *Galilaías*." W—sorry, that's my translation—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Again.

[Laughter]

Jon: “Galilee”?

Tim: Galilee.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. I’m trying to preserve in the translation the Greek pronunciation of all these people and places.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: “And going up onto a mountain, he sat down.” Now, I missed some geography things, but when he got on that boat, he went to the other side of the lake.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And so that’s where he is.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In Mark’s version of this, he locates where Jesus is at is on the east side of the Sea of Galilee by the Decapolis.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Uh—which is mostly non-Israelite territory.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Like—

Jon: But it’s mountainous?

Tim: Yeah. Today, we call it the Golan Heights.

Jon: Golan Heights.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Mhm. “And the crowds approached him, and they brought with them the disabled, the blind, the crippled, the deaf—many others. They laid them at his feet, and he healed them. And the crowd was astonished.” And you’re like—

Jon: Is that the same word from Sermon on the Mount?

Tim: Uhm—what—what do you mean?

Jon: “Astonished”?

Tim: Oh, at the end? Yes. Yes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. This is the crowd’s response at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. And the people are bringing to him the people that he brought—that they brought similar types of people in the wilderness from the first—

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: Feeding story.

Jon: Mhm. Yep.

Tim: “The crowd was astonished because they saw the deaf speaking, the disabled were healthy, the crippled were walking, the blind were seeing, and they praised the God of Israel.”

Jon: Oh, okay. So these are non-Israelites.

Tim: These are non-Israelites. And that’s a little clue. The phrase “the God of Israel—” one, we know from the boat trips and then from the parallel in Mark, Jesus is on the east side of the lake. Second, the phrase “God of Israel” is the thing that you say when you’re trying to clarify for non-Israelites what—

Jon: Which God you’re talking about.

Tim: God you’re talking about.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: All the way back to, like, Pharaoh in Exodus, where he says, “I don’t acknowledge Yahweh, the God of Israel.”

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So now Jesus is healing crowds of non-Israelites. And you’re like, “Wait, he just told the Canaanite woman—”

Jon: That's not his deal.

Tim: That's not his deal. But then she said, "I—"

Jon: "But it—But it is."

Tim: "I know you've got—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "You've got more bread than just the lost sheep of Israel." And he says, "Good point." So he heals her daughter. And then this is what happens next.

Jon: Mmm. This is the next story.

Tim: This is the very next story.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: It's like—

Jon: Not only for that Canaanite, but this is going to multiply.

Tim: Yeah. I think Matthew is trying to tell us that the faith of that Canaanite—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Woman unleashed a—

Jon: What?

Tim: Tidal wave—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Of healing power—

Jon: Whoa.

Tim: For non-Israelites—

Jon: Huh.

Tim: On the east side of the lake.

Jon: Wow.

Tim: Why else—the Pharisees want to limit who gets the bread. And Jesus wants—and Jesus says he’s here to give limited bread to one group for this time. And she says, “You got more.” And he’s like, “Yeah, that’s right, I got more.”

[Laughter]

Tim: And then this is the next story. And then—okay. So the bread has become like a symbol for also healing. And remember that was joined in Ezekiel.

Jon: Yeah. Yep. And it was joined in the story of—in the wilderness. They came out—

Tim: Oh.

Jon: To get healed—

Tim: Yes. Yes.

Jon: And then they also got bread.

Tim: Yes. That’s right.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. H—God—oh, man. Totally. In the first story of the wilderness test in Exodus 15 with the waters, the bitter waters—

Jon: Oh, the waters need to be healed.

Tim: God says—heals the waters. I wasn’t thinking about that. Waters need to get healed.

[Laughter]

Tim: And then the next story is about the manna, the bread.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Whoa.

Jon: Huh.

Tim: Okay, so let’s keep that in mind.

Jon: So: healing and bread.

Tim: Healing and bread. Here it's—same. He heals non-Israelites. Verse 32 of chapter 15: "Then *Iesous*—Jesus—summoning his apprentices, he said, 'I have compassion on this crowd.'" So he had compassion earlier on the Israelite crowds, on the lost sheep. Now he's having compassion on these non-Israelite crowds. "They have remained with me three days." Oh, there's a test coming.

[Laughter]

Tim: Right? It's the third day.

Jon: Third day in the wilderness.

Tim: Somebody's going to face a test about right now.

Jon: Or they're not in the wilderness. They're on the mountain.

Tim: No, they are in—uh—oh, well, sorry. They are in the wilderness.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: You're—you're go—you're about to see.

Jon: You're about to find out.

[Laughter]

Tim: So: "They have remained with me three days and they don't have anything to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry. They'll faint on the way.' And the apprentices says, 'What? Where are we going to find bread for so many people in the wilderness?'" It's the third da—so good.

Jon: The third day in the wilderness.

Tim: The third day in the wilderness just like Exodus 15. We've been here before, like, four paragraphs ago.

[Laughter]

Tim: We were in this same spot. And—

Jon: Oh, was it that recently?

Tim: Yes. It was the bread for the 5,000.

Jon: Yep.

Tim: The Pharisees dispute about bread.

Jon: Okay. Mhm.

Tim: Canaanite woman—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: About bread. Now, here we are.

Jon: All right.

Tim: Yep. So now we're kind of rolling our eyes at the apprentices. We're just like—

[Laughter]

Tim: “Dude, these guys—”

Jon: You guys forgot.

Tim: Which is kind of how you feel about Israel in the wilderness—

Jon: Yeah, that's right.

Tim: Too.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Almost like comic. “So Jesus said to them, ‘Well, how many loaves of bread—’”

Jon: “Let's do this thing again.”

Tim: “‘Do you have?’ And they said, ‘Mmm, seven.’”

Jon: Oh, it was five.

Tim: Seven. And there's a few fish. "So instructing the crowd to lie down on the ground, he took the seven bread loaves and the fish and, after giving a thanks, he broke and gave to his apprentices, the apprentices to the crowd. So they—"

Jon: Just copy and paste.

Tim: "They all ate, and they were satisfied." He said a blessing.

Jon: Yep.

Tim: Here, he gives thanks.

Jon: No, it's the same. They don't sit on the grass. They lay down on the ground.

Tim: Yeah, yeah, that's right. There's little subtle differences.

Jon: Subtle difference.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: There's not five loaves and two fish. There's seven bread—

Tim: There's seven.

Jon: And fish.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: But then he gives thanks instead of the blessing.

Tim: Yep. He broke. He gave. Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: And then he gives to the apprentices. The apprentices give to the crowd.

Tim: You got it.

Jon: And the crowds ate—

Tim: And were satisfied.

Jon: And were satisfied.

Tim: And they picked up an overabundance of pieces, seven baskets. So the first for the 5,000—it was—

Jon: Yeah, what was it?

Tim: 12.

Jon: 12 baskets?

Tim: 12.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And that crowd was a bunch of Israelites.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Now, here we've got a huge non-Israelite crowd, and you get seven baskets.

Jon: Yeah, and this connects to the "satisfied."

Tim: Yep. "And they ate. They were satisfied. Seven baskets. And those eating were 4,000, apart from women and children. And then sending away the crowds, he got into the boat, and—"who. They go back to the west side of the lake. So what's so interesting, there's these two stories—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And this is all about bread for Israel and bread for the nations. And Jesus as—maybe this is how he's a Moses-plus. He's a new Moses. He's doing for Israel what Israel failed to do—providing for them. He's succeeding where Moses failed. But then he's more because he's providing bread and healing for the nations.

Jon: Yeah, in that way, he is the Joshua—the new Joshua, too.

Tim: He's like—yeah. That's right.

Jon: Because he goes into the nations—

Tim: Oh yeah, and instead of—

[Laughter]

Tim: Kicking—

Jon: And—

Tim: Them out—

Jon: Instead of kicking them out, he—

Tim: Gives them—

Jon: Gives them bread.

Tim: Gives them bread and healing.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So this is so cool. This contributes to our wilderness theme, where it's not just does he succeed where his ancestors failed, his success means that the calling of Israel is now fulfilling its purpose, which was always so that blessing would go out to the nations. That's one piece.

Jon: You also get this picture of the leader—yeah—the leader who can provide in the wilderness. So if this is this in-between moment for us, the wilderness, when we need a leader, like, Jesus is the one who's—who—uh—he didn't need to be refined by the wilderness.

Tim: Yeah. Right.

Jon: But he did. He let himself go through, and he's the one that can lead us through—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And he can provide bread.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: In the wilderness, Eden can show up. He's that. And he came to do that for Israel to show that he's the new Moses. And it was such an overabundance of life that he can also do it for the nations.

Tim: For the nations. I feel like this is a new development in our motif of the wilderness, where the wilderness keeps being a place where God's people fail to show they're ready.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You get an Israelite who is Yahweh, the God of Israel, become an Israelite, and finally, you've got someone who—

Jon: Hmm. Who's ready.

Tim: Who's ready—and ready to be in the garden.

Jon: And can make us ready.

Tim: That's right. And then he starts giving out the life of the garden to the lost sheep—the hurting, lost sheep for whom the wilderness is crushing and killing.

Jon: Yeah. So the wilderness is meant to prepare us to be ready for the garden. But here we're just talking about a feast in the wilderness—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Right?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Just a—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Spontaneous—

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Miraculous feast in the wilderness.

Tim: It's like what Abigail provided for David—uhm—

Jon: Right.

Tim: Back a number of episodes ago.

Jon: Yeah. But it's the sky bread showing up in the morning.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: And—oh, yeah, that's interesting. The sky bread in the morning for the Israelites was the test of: Just—just take enough.

[Laughter]

Tim: That's right.

Jon: So it became a test. Here in these stories, it's just a full-on feast with an overabundance in the wilderness. And so to me, I'm just trying to figure out if the theme is: Am I ready for the garden? Here, the twist is like: Actually, as soon as you just are with Jesus in the wilderness—

Tim: Mmm. Ah. Okay.

Jon: The garden appears.

Tim: It's mercy. It's like what the Canaanite woman asked for.

Jon: Yeah—

Tim: It—it's—

Jon: It's mercy.

Tim: Yeah, it's not—

Jon: You don't have to be ready.

Tim: You don't have to be ready.

Jon: Here it is. Here it is. Just take it—

Tim: God will—

Jon: And eat it.

Tim: Surprise you and just—

Jon: An—

Tim: Give you gifts of Eden in the wilderness, even when you're not ready to be in the garden.

Jon: Or maybe another way to say it is if you're in the wilderness with Jesus, then you're ready.

Tim: Then—oh, you're ready because he's ready.

Jon: You're ready because he's ready, and he's going to bring bread. And all—

Tim: That's right.

Jon: You have to do is take it.

Tim: Thank you. That's a—actually a—way better.

[Laughter]

Tim: That's—I—that's the right way of saying it. Jesus is ready. Therefore—

Jon: If you're with him.

Tim: His people are ready. If you're one of his people—if you're with him—

Jon: If you follow him into the wilderness—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You'll be ready, too.

Tim: You'll be ready. And you might say, "I'm not ready." Yeah. And I guess Paul the Apostle, who we'll look at next in the next conversation, would say, "Okay. You may not think you're ready, but it's not really you that's even you."

Jon: Hmm. Hmm.

Tim: He says, “It’s not me who’s living my life anymore. It’s the Messiah who’s living in me. And he was ready. So that means I’m ready, even when I feel like I’m not ready.” These people didn’t think they were ready. The apprentices didn’t think they were ready.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But Jesus makes them the vehicle. Oh, isn’t this cool? He gives the bread to them two times. Both—and he makes them the vehicle of the—the bread.

Jon: Well, it makes me also think about—you connected it to: He does this as Passover. “This bread is me—”but it’s just for them. There’s no crowds.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But then on the last mountain, he then tells them—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “Now go—”

Tim: That’s right.

Jon: “To the nations.”

Tim: Yes. Yes.

Jon: So it’s like he’s preparing them. Like, “I give you bread, you give bread to the nations. I give you bread, you give bread to the nations.” And then the Lord’s Supper it’s: “Take the bread,” and then it’s just this pause.

Tim: Yeah, pause, death, resurrection—

Jon: “Now give bread to the nations.”

[Laughter]

Tim: “Now all authority on the sky and the land has been given to me, so go into the nations baptizing, making apprentices—”

Jon: Mhm. “Teaching—”

Tim: “Teaching them to follow everything I’m—I’ve commanded.” Ooh, “And I am with you until the conclusion of the age.”

Jon: “I am with you.”

Tim: If—if—

Jon: “I will be there in the wilderness.”

Tim: Yeah. Hmm. If you’re with the Messiah, you’re ready because he’s ready.

Jon: Mmm.

[Musical Break (59:57—1:00:01)]

Jon: Thank you for listening to this episode of BibleProject podcast. Next week, we’ll finish this series on the wilderness by looking at several New Testament letters where the wilderness acts as a metaphor for this present age when the Kingdom of God has arrived, but new creation is not yet here.

Tim: The wilderness is the in-between phase where we’ve left slavery, but we’re not fully in the promised land, secure. The Messiah is risen from the dead. The Spirit’s been poured out. The new age has arrived, but our bodies are still returning to the dust.

Jon: BibleProject is a crowdfunded nonprofit, and we exist to help people experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. And everything that we make 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.

Micah: Hi, my name is Micah, and I’m from Minneapolis.

Sherri: Hey, my name is Sherri Cowhig, and I’m from Boulder, Colorado. I first heard about the BibleProject at church when we were studying Esther.

Micah: I first heard about BibleProject from discovering their videos on RightNow Media back in 2015. I use BibleProject for my own personal study, but also to supplement small group materials at my church.

Sherri: I use the BibleProject primarily for the podcast because I drive across the country regularly, and they keep me interested while I am driving very long distances.

Micah: We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus. We’re a crowdfunded project by people like me. Find free videos, articles—

Sherri: Podcasts, classes, and more on the BibleProject app—

Micah: And at BibleProject.com.

Lexi: Hello, my name is Lexi, and I'm on the Audience Care team, where I help out all our audience and patrons who reach out through the email or the app, or website. I've been working at BibleProject for three years, and one of my favorite parts of working here is all the amazing humans that I get to work alongside. Seriously, if you think Tim and Jon are great, they're just the tip of the iceberg. There's a whole team of us that make the podcasts come to life every week. For a full list of everyone who's involved, check out the show credits at the end of the episode wherever you stream the podcast and on our website.