

# H2R P15 - Design Pattern E3

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## Crossing the Chaotic Waters

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Speakers in the audio file:

Jon Collins

Tim Mackie

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## Crossing the Chaotic Waters

Tim: Hey everybody. Welcome to The Bible Project podcast. My name is Tim, one of the co-founders of The Bible Project, and you were the wonderful person that you are. Welcome to the podcast. Normally, my partner and co-founder of The Bible Project, Jon Collins does these introductions. This is actually my first one ever. So I'm a little bit nervous, but there you go. I'm just gonna pretend like I'm talking to you even though I can't see anybody.

Anyway, this is Episode 3 of a four-part series that Jon and I did. It was a whole set of conversations we had in our "How to Read the Bible" series, both conversations and videos that are coming out on our YouTube channel. Here, these four conversations are about feature of biblical narrative that we're calling Design Patterns.

The first two episodes were actually done live before a live audience where we did Q&A. I really recommend listening to the first two episodes of this series on Design Patterns. This episode and the following won't make a lot of sense without those previous episodes.

But basically, we're talking about the way that biblical authors have designed and coordinated different stories across the whole of the Bible, and how they've embedded repeated key themes and words in all these different stories so that as you read through the Bible over and over and over again, you start to connect the thread and are able to follow the developing theological claims and arguments and ideas that are being worked out in all these coordinated patterns stories.

In this episode, we're going to finish up the example we were developing in the previous ones about the temptation pattern of human failure. In this one, we're going to start a two-part conversation about pattern of God's salvation, specifically about God providing salvation at sunrise by rescuing his people through the dangerous waters. And it all leads up to the practice of early Christian baptism. And if that sounds weird to you, trust me, it's so incredible.

So there you go. This is going to be fun conversation. I learned a ton, I hope it's helpful for you. Let's dive in and learn together.

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Tim: So we're having a conversation about how to read biblical narrative. This is the last installment.

Jon: Plot character setting, and now—

Tim: Plot character and setting, and then—

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Jon: Those are basic ones.

Tim: Pretty basic elements to any narrative whatsoever. Then this last one is actually a combining all of those together and learning to pay attention to design patterns in biblical narrative. It's actually a technique that all narratives draw upon in some way, but it's something that the bigger authors have refined into a supreme form of artistic expression and communication.

It's just part of how the biblical narratives make sense and make their arguments and communicate this through these design patterns that are asking you the reader to compare narratives, and characters, and settings, and plots, both the ones that are right next to each other, like we looked at Cain and Abel, and Adam and Eve, but then also to begin linking together so that you compare narratives that are distant from each other, but united by these design patterns.

Jon: We looked at a bunch of examples when we were down in Milpitas, with that crew, and I was really surprised at how many stories pattern after each other. It's almost ridiculous how much they do it. Almost, to the extent of like, "Wait, is this all the Bible is doing?" I guess just rehashing these ideas again, and again, through different characters and different times.

Tim: This whole discussion represents a project that I'm working on with a number of other friends and scholars. These design patterns, it's something people have noticed for a very long time. Especially when you read Jewish literature about the Bible from the period of the Second Temple, early Christianity, when you look at how the New Testament authors, the apostles use the Old Testament, they're paying attention to all this stuff. They're super keyed in.

So this isn't a new way of reading the Bible. It's actually one of the most ancient ways, and it seems to have been woven into the fabric of the composition of these narratives in the first place. So you're right, it's not—

Jon: It almost seems like it was the main thing on the author's mind.

Tim: It's like one of the main vehicles of how these authors use the narratives to make claims, to make an argument.

Jon: There was different levels of how much you're using this technique as an author. One level was, "I wrote this really an interesting story. Oh, I have an idea. I could take this one scene on my story and connected back to this other scene in the story. Oh, that'd be neat."

Tim: Sure.

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Jon: So there's one level of like, it's an afterthought. But on the other side of the spectrum would be every time you come to the new story, you go, "Okay, what's this patterning? This needs to pattern something, and I'm actually going to pattern a number of things." It's the first thing on your mind.

If that's the spectrum, and anywhere in between, it really feels like biblical authors are on the far end of the spectrum of it's like the first thing on their mind, how is this connected to other stories?

Tim: Correct. Plot setting characterization are all different ways that they can create design patterns between stories. But the patterning and design so that you begin to compare parallel elements and different stories, that's like the bread and butter, you could say, of how they communicate. Even I think we looked at a long example of the temptation narrative.

Jon: Temptation narratives, yeah.

Tim: So the first humans to distrust God and make a stupid decision, whereby they embraced their own destruction.

Jon: Yeah, Adam and Eve.

Tim: So it makes perfect sense that that's the narrative that would become like a template. They get to replay it, because that narrative is trying to make a claim about the human condition. Of course, all these key junctures were significant characters in the biblical narrative are faced with moments of decision, and it's like, "Oh." That's what you would expect, that it would be a replaying of the humans on Pages 1, 2 and 3 in the Bible.

Jon: Well, and so in cinema, this happens a lot, where you have a template for how a story's told. Like a "Buddy Cop" movie, right? There are tons of those, and they all kind of have the same beats, and they all share the same beats. And you can actually dissect them and put like...What's Eddie Murphy one? Hollywood Cop or something? Anyways, you put them next to each other, and they kind of mimic each other. In fact, one reason why Pixar has been so good at their early storytelling is they would like take Toy Story 3, for example. Do you know Toy Story 3?

Tim: I didn't see it.

Jon: You never saw Toy Story 3?

Tim: No. I just saw 1.

Jon: Oh, really?

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Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Oh, wow.

Tim: I just showed it to my kids for the first time.

Jon: Oh, yeah?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Did they like it?

Tim: Oh, they were so into it. I can't wait to show them 2.

Jon: Watch 2 and then watch 3. Three, there's a scene where all the toys are...I'm going to spoil Toy Story 3 story for you a little bit.

Tim: It's okay. It's totally fine.

Jon: All the toys get sent to this daycare, and it's like prison for them and so they're just like, it's a nightmare. And so they need to get out of this daycare. So there's this whole jailbreak scene, and the authors, the writers of Toy Story, it's a bunch of people working out together, in order to write that scene, they watched dozens of prison movies and paid attention to all the just the tropes of like in the prison movies there's always the old man who's in prison. He's kind of a wise old man. He's a salty guy, but he gives you good advice.

There are just all these beats for how a prison escape works in Hollywood. So what they did is they just took the best of that, and then they retold all of those in their Toy Story prison break. And that's what makes it so good.

Tim: That's exactly right. That's a great example of both similarities but also different than what the biblical authors are doing. The similarity would be, when you're reading through key narratives about a character in the Bible of being faced with a choice in this, you'll start to notice, odds are that you're going to see the garden temptation, and then all of its iterations. Each time another iteration happens like with Abraham and Sarah, then the third repetition will pick up key phrases and ideas not just from the first one, but from both the first and the second.

Jon: They'd be layered on each other.

Tim: Remembers this was why in Saul's story when Saul's hiding among the baggage, that's parallel not to the garden but to Achan hiding the coveted Babylonian cloak and gold—

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Jon: Which is connected to hiding in the garden.

Tim: Yeah. So in Achan story, the "gold" it's it "fruit," whereas, in the Saul story, Saul becomes the "fruit." But he also maps on to the idolatrous plunder of Achan. It's a narrative argument to say that Saul has become the idol. "The people have installed a new idol in the place of God," it's a human King.

So that shows a similarity that there are these repeated patterns. But the question is, where did these patterns come from? In the example you just gave, it's the writers looking to all these other literatures outside the narrative world—

Jon: Outside of the Toy Story narrative world.

Tim: Outside of the Toy Story narrative like, look at every other jailbreak. And that was actually the way Robert Alter, the scholar whose work I was drawing on, that's the way he frames it is there were just these Israelite ways of telling about how people meet and get married. It usually happens at a well and there's hero coming and the woman is there. But his point is, there's some pattern that exists just out there in Israelite culture and then all these different stories are mapping onto it.

What I'm saying is different in that when you see these patterns, what you're watching an author do is not try mold the story to some just common way Israelites told for narrative. It's you're watching a narrative being formed in light of that author's own pondering and reflection on the Genesis narrative itself. It's internal. Its internal to the narrative world of the Bible.

Jon: It's all within that same [inaudible 00:11:30].

Tim: That's right. So the analogy with Toy Story would be if they modeled the jailbreak seen off of a jailbreak in Toy Story 1.

Jon: Right. It's going to be hard for them to really have much material until like Toy Story 8.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. Then the reverse would go, it would be that they actually had mapped out Toy Story 1 to 18, and you can go back and see they actually designed Toy Story 1 to have within it all the very Easter egg clue for the rest of the unfolding story. But you're not going to recognize any of those until you've seen all the way through to 18.

Then you go back to one and you're like, "Whoa, that's why it talked about them being naked and not ashamed. That was interesting, but what does it have to do

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with anything?" And then you see that those little Easter eggs have relevance for later iterations of the pattern.

[00:12:55]

Jon: Yeah, that makes sense. So it's not like they just looked out into culture and said like, "Well, how does culture at large talk about temptation narratives?" I mean, obviously, they would be influenced by the culture at large.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. The question is the primary influence, where's the first place I go to look?

Jon: But primarily, they'll go, "Okay, well, in our Scriptures, how have we talked about this before? Let's start there.

Tim: Let's start there. Because, again, the first instances of these patterns begin with the stories about human and life on pages 1, 2, 3. So the narratives, even the names of the characters are trying to tell you that they're giving you like a template or a playbook of sorts that every story after this is going to be riffing off of this template in some way.

Jon: Cool. So if I remember correctly, what we did last time was we started with looking at how words will clue you in the patterning?

Tim: That's right. Key repeated words and vocabulary.

Jon: And then we also then—

Tim: Clue you into the linking together stories across a long spectrum. Like the whole Saul story is linked together by that word "to see" - to look at or to see. And it's the big stretch. It's like eight or nine chapters that that keyword just keeps developing. So that can happen in stories next to each other where keywords clue you into connections and comparisons being made.

Jon: "Seeing."

Tim: Yeah. Then we went broader, and then we saw how the same technique key repeated words can connect stories together that are really distant from each other.

Jon: I see.

Tim: That was the idea.

Jon: And it's not just words. It also phrases...

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Tim: Phrases, that's right.

Jon: ...and situations.

Tim: Parallel plot situations, parallel settings, parallel...all that.

Jon: Cool. We were going through a bunch just to fly by as we did. The Adam and Eve story, we saw how it was to Cain and Abel story, how that was connected to—

Tim: Abraham and Sarah.

Jon: Abraham and Sarah, yeah. I never thought about that. That's really crazy.

Tim: Connected to Aaron and Israelites and the golden calf.

Jon: And then the whole story in Joshua about...what's that guy's name?

Tim: Achan.

Jon: Achan. He's hiding that plunder.

Tim: The golden plunder.

Jon: The golden plunder. Then that is all these ideas then link to Saul being raised up is king and he becomes the idol or the temptation of Israel.

Tim: Yeah. the Israelites become the "adam," the human Adam and Eve figures redefining good and evil according to their desires.

Jon: I think you said offhand when we were there that this could be a theme video - the temptation motif at some point.

Tim: Well, I'm wondering if this should be the primary example in this theme.

Jon: In this video. So maybe this is kind of a theme video and temptation but showing how patterning works.

Tim: Yeah, that's right.

Jon: That'll be interesting.

Tim: Then what we didn't do with the group is the last example. It's just a short one. After you've got the pattern, the way that David and Bathsheba's story is introduced is David's on his roof, he sees a woman, the man sees the woman, and she was good of sight. Very.



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- Jon: Is that an awkward way to say in Hebrew?
- Tim: No. Often you'll put it like that, but "very good" to see that something is good and then to see that it's very good.
- Jon: Adam and Eve saw that the fruit was good.
- Tim: That's right. Which itself is riffing off of—
- Jon: That God made things good.
- Tim: That's right.
- Jon: So it's this whole battle of who decides what's good?
- Tim: Yeah. Then once David sees that she is good, he takes her. It's just kind of this crown jewel, all you need is a few little breadcrumbs and you get it.
- Jon: And the story now is connected to everything before it.
- Tim: That's right.
- Jon: And it's really rich way because of a couple of words.
- Tim: So let's pause. This example is mainly about humans, human characters, and their behavior. So this isn't just a way of being artsy and fancy. Each of those stories is developing the Hebrew Bibles claim about the human condition. So we redefine good and evil.
- Jon: We see that things are good so you want to take them.
- Tim: Yeah. Look all these different portraits of the human failure. It can take place in power, sexual abuse situations - Abraham and Sarah and Hagar. It can take place in one-person selfishness overflowing to ruin for the many like Achan.
- Jon: And his greed.
- Tim: Yeah. It can come when people idolize political institutions or people and turn them into god figures. And will compromise and redefine good and evil if we could just get that person as our leader. So profound.
- Jon: Really profound.
- Tim: So it's a really sophisticated way of these narratives making their theological claims about humans and how we operate. How stupid we are.

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So the second example, I want to look at, which when we're done with it, we might choose to make this the prime example in the video. I can't decide. This one's about a pattern in God's behavior, and a way that God typically acts to bring salvation. It's usually at sunrise and there's usually water involved.

Jon: God's romantic.

Tim: Totally. So again, it's the same technique, repeated words, parallel scenes, all this. And pages 1 through 3 is where it all begins as it usually does.

Jon: It's such a packed, dense piece of literature right there.

Tim: Okay. So should we go for it?

Jon: Let's do it?

Tim: Dive in. All right.

[00:19:38]

Jon: Here we go.

Tim: Literally, the first sentences of the Bible, God creates sky and the land, and God's Spirit is hovering over the dark, abysmal waters, the wild and waste. That's the foundation image. The foundation image of uncreation or the natural state of things that needs to be ordered is dark water.

Jon: Which is very intuitive to land creatures. It's gnarly out there.

Tim: Yeah, I don't belong out there.

Jon: I don't belong.

Tim: I belong here.

Jon: That's chaotic out there. And man, they just found this...I feel like we're talking about this kind of thing a lot. But they just found this creature that's like a shark that we didn't know existed and it's prehistoric. And it's like this snaky crazy shark. He's got like—

Tim: Where did you see this? On Wired or something?

Jon: I hope this is legit thing. Where did I see it? It's got all these needle teeth and it just looks creepy. It just lives in the deep, deep ocean. Discovery of a new shark.

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- Tim: Oh, yeah, did. July 31 on National Geographic: Etmopterus lailae. It belongs to the lanternshark family. It was found nearly 1,000 feet below the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Hawaii's northwestern islands.
- Jon: Like some guys were just trolling—
- Tim: It looks like a crazy dinosaur snake.
- Jon: Yeah. Ancient shark with a snakehead. Now, can you imagine if you ran into one of these things and then you just had to tell stories of what you experienced? It is gnarly. We do not belong in the ocean.
- Tim: That's not our place. Look at that thing.
- Jon: It's been hanging out on our planet with us.
- Tim: Wow.
- Jon: The chaos dragon. The sea dragon.
- Tim: Yeah, totally.
- Jon: It's got like 20 different rows of these crazy teeth.
- Tim: Yeah, dude, tohu wa-bohu - wild and waste.
- Jon: Yeah, man. So yeah, we got the dark abysmal water.
- Tim: The fundamental image is what must be overcome and done away with is that. The dark chaotic waters that belch up terrifying creatures.
- Jon: They are thousands of feet below.
- Tim: So how does God's Spirit hovering over the waters do that? Well, remember the whole thing of breath and word?
- Jon: Yeah.
- Tim: God's breath authors the word; the first word is "Let there be light." So "light" becomes a fundamental image of light opposed to darkness. Light representing God's creative life and energy just flooding the darkness. And God separates the light from darkness, day 1.
- Jon: In Hebrew thought they must know that light comes from the sun.

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- Tim: Correct. Yes, that's right.
- Jon: So what are they talking about here? Because in the narrative logic, the sun hasn't been created yet.
- Tim: Two things going on here. One has to do with the literary design of Genesis 1. This is a little off topic, but that's okay. So it's set in two parallel panels. The six-day has been set in two parallel panels of separating light and dark.
- Jon: Day 1 is connected to day 4?
- Tim: Day 1 is separating light and dark, day 2 is separating waters from the waters, day 3 is separating waters and dry land. Then what day 4, 5, and 6 does is go back through that triad and name and provide inhabitants for the realm.
- So the separating becomes an act of ordering - bringing order to the chaos. Then in that ordered space, inhabitants are connected.
- Jon: So the inhabitants would be the sun and the moon and the star?
- Tim: Yes. In the ordering of time, light and dark, the creatures that inhabit that space, give that order through physical realities: the sun, moon, stars.
- Jon: Got it.
- Tim: The creature's inhabiting the water above and below the fish and sea, that's day 2. And then days 3 and 6 is the land inhabitants.
- Jon: Got it.
- Tim: What this patterning tells you is that even the sequence of those six days—
- Jon: It's more literary than anything else.
- Tim: Yeah. Or it's about the theological claim being made that God is the one, especially...I actually just read this and I actually think it's right. Tohu wa-bohu, the Hebrew words that introduced this account, wild and waste, connected to unformed and uninhabited. What's God doing on days 1 to 3 is forming order and what He's doing on day 4, 5, and 6 is creating inhabitants. So precisely the problem of the dark chaotic waters.
- Jon: Wait. So Tohu wa-bohu, is that the literal meaning of that word or unformed and uninhabited?

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Tim: A wild wasteland. "Wild" meaning "unformed," "unordered," and "waste" meaning "uninhabited." Then that precisely corresponds. So the point is that the ordering of the six days seems more determined by a literary-theological agenda than like we're watching security camera footage of the first sentence.

Jon: Then you know what? Why don't we make that video?

Tim: Just that point right there?

Jon: Just that point.

Tim: It could be an awesome video.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: What this allows you to do then is, once you separated these days from God bringing into physical material existence, things that did not material, that's not the framework here. It's about ordering and filling the habitats. Then all of a sudden, it makes perfect sense that the ordering of time can be separate from the inhabitants of the sun, moon, and stars. Because God's not creating photons here. He's establishing an order of light and dark.

And when He names what the light and dark, He doesn't name them photons. He names it day and night, which are categories of time that are meaningful to humans.

Jon: Right.

Tim: It's an ordering of the time.

Jon: It's kind of Walton's point, right? Is it same Jon Walton?

Tim: Oh, Walton.

Jon: Walton?

Tim: Yes, that's right. That's correct.

Jon: And what did he call it?

Tim: Functional.

Jon: Functional versus...It's kind of having these examples of when you're creating a business, you're putting together the paperwork and stuff. You're not actually creating anything. You're just forming the structure in which it makes sense. But you're not—

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Tim: Bringing order and creating structures so that something new can operate.

[00:27:11]

Tim: So my point in bringing up days 1, 2, and 3 - it's actually related - is that each of the first three days involves an act of separating and ordering. So separating of light and dark, day 2 is separating waters above and waters below by the dome - or some translations have firmament or expanse. But it's a solid thing.

Jon: The rakia.

Tim: The rakia, the blue thing up there that separates the waters above from the waters below. So again, it's separating but now waters from waters. And then day 3 is now the waters under.

Jon: Is the same waters it says that was chaotic waters? Am I supposed to be imagining like this big just chaotic water getting separated?

Tim: Well, yeah, it's as if some waters that we're all one turned into two to waters above and waters below. Now let's focus camera pan down, focus on the waters below. Those waters gather together and dry land emerges. So now it's a separating of water from dry land.

So that's the fundamental act of this "Let there be light." If at sunrise God begins separating three acts 1, 2, 3 and dry land emerges. That's where the humans can go. So out of the chaotic waters, God separates and provide a safe reliable place for humans, and the dry land is called the yabbashah.

Jon: Yabbashah.

Tim: Yabbashah. So you just read forward, keep reading the story, and wow, that's cool. All right. Just talk that all the way. Where's the next story where I'm going to come across chaos waters that are destructive and where waters need to be separated or rolled back for somebody to be saved? It's actually not that many.

Jon: Yeah, but there's a really big one.

Tim: This is a really important one in just a few pages.

Jon: About the flood.

Tim: About the flood. The flood story, is an introduction with the sons of God Noah, but once the water starts getting talked about, what God says is He's going to bring waters that wipe out the living nephesh - the beings.

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And the first narrative statement of the flood is in Genesis 7:11. It says, "The springs of the cosmic deep split open." So have I heard of the cosmic deep before?

Jon: Yeah, the waste in the wild."

Tim: Yeah, that's the wild and waste. This is why as we've talked about this before, the flood narrative is uncreation story.

Jon: Creation reverse.

Tim: It's God letting. Yeah, it's a reversal of Genesis 1. It's God allowing creation to sink back into chaos again. "So the deep waters split." So tuck those both away.

Jon: Deep waters splitting.

Tim: It's the springs split open. It's the idea that the cosmic waters that have been submerged back from under, it's now—

Jon: Because the idea is the waters on top now they're close to us that isn't the chaotic crazy waters. It's really the stuff that's out in deep?

Tim: It's either out there around the disk of the land that run or its waters under the land that run that you can tap into when you get a well or something. But then sometimes those will split open in like a geyser.

[00:31:02]

Tim: So the waters below burst up and the waters above the windows in the rakia—

Jon: Burst open.

Tim: Literally the doors...Oh, no, it's windows. It's the windows in the rakia's open. Remember the waters were separated from the waters on day 2. So even right there, it's picking up the explicit words and ideas from Page 1, God allowing creation to fold back in on itself in wild and waste.

Then we're told later in the story, everything that had the breath of life...is hard to do an English. It's nishmat-ruach chayim. So the breath of the breath of life.

Jon: The breath of the breath of life.

Tim: It's the two words for breath. Nishmat—

Jon: The breathing in.

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Tim: Breathing in. And then the "ruach" of life.

Jon: The breathing in of the breath of life?

Tim: Yeah. Everything that inhales the ruach that sustains life.

Jon: Okay. Everything that inhales the life-giving breath?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Got it.

Tim: Everything that has that, that lives on the dry ground, it died. Every being was wiped away from the face of the ground; human, adam, beast, creepers, birds of the skies. So he just named the list of the creatures from days 2 and 3. That's just precisely the list.

Jon: Days 4 and 5?

Tim: Days 4 and 5, excuse me. So you read this list and you're going like, "Oh, no. The light, all the ordering of Genesis 1 collapsed, all the habitats going away.

Jon: Decreation's happening.

Tim: It's decreation. There's no hope. There's no hope.

Jon: The next thing would be all the waters...Well, no, all the waters have come back together. The next thing would be light and darkness—

Tim: Yeah. That's itself collapsing.

Jon: It collapse.

Tim: But instead, the next sentence is, "But Noah remained." The idea is there's a remnant saved out of the collapse of creation. God preserves a remnant, Noah with Him in the ark. So Genesis 1 is undone but now it's just the one riff. Remember in altars example of the Gunslinger? But then the one appears with a rifle.

Jon: With a shotgun.

Tim: This is that moment where you go like, "Oh, no, Genesis, it's all being undone. Oh no, no, we're all going to die."

Jon: And then Noah is there.



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Tim: And then right there, but Noah remained. "Oh, there's hope. There's still hope." Then Noah's out there floating. The key hinge moment in the flood narrative is a statement "but God remembered Noah." Which is kind of like, "Did He forget about him?" But He remembered Noah which means this is the moment that Noah can see that he's not forgotten because something's about to happen. God caused a ruach...

Jon: A wind?

Tim: ...a wind to pass over the land and the waters began to decrease.

Jon: Which is like a creation story again?

Tim: Yeah, it's sentence two. It's God's ruach passing over, but now over the land and beginning to push back the wall and the waters turned back from upon the land. So it's reestablishing order by means of the ruach.

Jon: Separating again?

Tim: Separating again. And it came about on the six hundred and first year of the first of the month, the waters dried up—

Jon: Six hundred and first year of what?

Tim: This is the Genesis 1 through 11 chronology.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: It's mapped into the genealogy of Chapter 5.

Jon: Got it.

Tim: By the second of the month, on the 14th day, Noah looked up, and behold, yabbashah, the waters have been separated from the land.

Jon: Yabbashah.

Tim: Just like they were on day 3 of Genesis 1 and the end of day three of Genesis 1 God called the dry land "yabbashah." After God causes the wind to blow back the waters to separate water from dry land, yabbashah is what Noah sees.

[00:35:37]

Tim: So just pause. We have these two stories here. Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 narrative. You see all this? Somebody is trying to talk to me.

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- Jon: What are they trying to say?
- Tim: What was God doing with all the separating?
- Jon: He's creating room for life, but ultimately, human life. So He's separating chaos to create the space for life to flourish. We see that in Genesis 1?
- Tim: Yes.
- Jon: Then in Genesis 7 with the flood - or is it starting in 6?
- Tim: Starts in Genesis 6, but what we looked at was on Genesis 7 and 8.
- Jon: Is got all de-escalating and collapsing back on itself.
- Tim: Sorry, let's pause. Let's think back. I didn't talk about this, but what's the cause of creation descending back into chaos? Why does God do this?
- Jon: Because everything in humans hearts were evil all the time.
- Tim: So in violence.
- Jon: In violence.
- Tim: Evil and violence.
- Jon: Okay.
- Tim: So humans are the ones who caused creation to descend back into chaos, and then God hands it over. That's an interesting difference. God fights back the chaos or tames it in Genesis 1 to create space for humans. But then humans create the chaos.
- Jon: Bring the chaos back.
- Tim: Then God just says, "All right, if you want Me to let this thing go back to chaos, then go right ahead." And that's with the flood. So sorry.
- Jon: Yeah, that's cool. So these stories are trying to tell us that it's a good thing when God reigns in chaos for life, but it's something that we can undo, and that it's something that God can redo.
- Tim: Yeah, that's right. So, God, He redoes us His act of "here it's a form of rescue for Noah."
- Jon: Right.

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Tim: So then that makes you go back to page one and think "That is a kind of rescue. There are no people—

Jon: But He's rescuing just existence.

Tim: Or it's the beginning of the cycle I guess. It's the beginning of the paradigm. We're being given, like a template here for how God overcomes chaos, or in this case, evil, but yet, always sparing, and providing space for a means of escape or a remnant. That's what the Noah story is, is God's purpose is to cleanse His world of evil and chaos so that there can be space for humans to be what He intended them to be. That's the fundamental storyline here between these two.

As we move on, what's another story where we're going to have some kind of humans creating chaos, they're suffering, God remembers and He fights the waters to save His remnant. You start to see a storyline.

Jon: Fights water?

Tim: Or He does something. He confronts the waters.

Jon: Yeah, totally.

Tim: You start to take those two stories in Genesis and you go through, okay, think forward, where else am I going to find all these images packed together into one sequence?" Usually, there's not that many. So the Exodus narrative is the is the next big candidate.

Jon: Because in Exodus narrative the water is being the sea that they walk through.

Tim: Yeah, it's the next conspicuous story where a separating the waters becomes a way that God rescues.

Jon: Oh, man. It's funny because the story of Exodus for me, and you get to the moment of the crossing of the Red Sea or the Reed sea and it just feels like a really cool parlor trick or something. Right?

Tim: Oh, okay. Yeah.

Jon: It's a cool visual these big walls of water, the gelatinous walls of water. Do you remember that?

Tim: Yeah.

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Jon: Like that's it. It's just kind of like, well, they needed a way through. I guess that's a nice little trick. But you connected to this idea of God separating waters to create space for humans to flourish, all of a sudden, you're like, "Oh, this is mapping on to a much bigger idea." That's cool.

Tim: Yeah, yeah. What we're getting in these narratives is a portrait of the fundamental salvation story, which itself is just an expression of God's purpose for creation in the first place is to push back the chaos to separate an order so that human communities can flourish. That's page 1.

Then that same creative purpose will get expressed to meet at all these different points now where humans reintroduce chaos. And so God will replay it. But never full replay. It's these creative patterning - design patterns. I have the Exodus story mapped out just key relevant things here.

So the Exodus story begins with Israelites enslaved, and the key hinge point is Israelites cry out - this is at the end of Chapter 2 - and God remembers his covenant with Abraham.

Jon: Some phrase from Noah.

Tim: It's exactly the phrase from Noah, the story of Noah. Then it's the moment where God appoints Moses. The next story after God remembers is raising up Moses. So He points, Moses, burning bush, all that, Moses says, "No, thank you," and God convinces them otherwise. And He says to Moses at the end of Chapter 4 - and this is actually planting a seed for what's coming later on - He says, "This is what you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Israel is My son, My firstborn son, so I tell you, let my son go free so that he may serve Me.'" So now God's remembering the plight of His sons suffering in slavery. And this whole narrative is about God freeing His son.

Jon: And this is the first of an order. I'm trying to remember firstborn means like, first of a kind.

Tim: Yes, firstborn son meaning "status."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The one in whom I am represented and my legacy is carried on. That kind of thing. All right?

Jon: Yeah.

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Tim: So you know, the story, there's 10 plagues, all that. I'm skipping a lot here. We're just touching down. Pharaoh eventually is compelled to let them go after the Passover, and the death of the firstborn, but then he regrets it.

So I'm fast forwarding to the scene at the sea here at the waters. So you have Israelites are down at the coast and Pharaohs like, "What? Oh, no. Why did I let them go?" So he gets 600 chariots and here's Pharaoh and his chariots advancing on this band of escaped slaves.

The people start freaking out and here's Moses response. "Don't be afraid. Stand here and see the salvation of Yahweh He's going to accomplish for you today. The Egyptians that you see today, you won't see them anymore, Yahweh will fight for you." As for you here's your job is to stand here and do nothing. Keep quiet. "God tells Moses lift your staff extend your hand over the sea and split them." Split. Splitting the waters.

Jon: That's the word from the flood story?

Tim: From the flood story, it's the springs of the deep waters split open.

Jon: And this is a different word than "separate" but it's the same idea?

Tim: Yeah, correct. So this is a good example where it's not a very common word, it's in both cases related to the key moment of God dealing with the waters. In the flood story, it was about the floodwaters unleashing - chaos unleashing. Here the splitting has to do with the taming of the waters. So the same word has opposite functions in the story but it's still meant to do—

Jon: Remind you.

Tim: Yeah. So the "split the waters" and "let the sons of Israel go free" in the middle of the sea on the yabbashah.

Jon: Yabbashah.

Tim: Think through Genesis 1, days 2 and 3. Day 2 is separating waters above and waters below. Day 3 is separating waters and dry land. Here it's split the waters so that the Israelites may go in the midst of the sea...

Jon: The separated waters.

Tim: ...on the dry land. So it's merging days 2 and 3 where the water split, sea, and dry land split.

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Jon: Splitting the water to create dry land.

Tim: Yeah. so good. All night long the wind's blowing. That's where we're going to see...Oh, we haven't had the wind yet. Sorry, that's what about to happen. Sorry. I should just read it. "Then God set a pillar of cloud and fire between the camps of Egypt and Israel all night long. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and Yahweh led away the sea - caused it to go back - by a strong eastern wind. All night He turned the sea into dry ground and the waters were split." You can see all the vocabulary keeps getting repeated here. Oh, but the new thing is the wind.

Jon: It's the wind, yeah. The ruach.

Tim: The ruach. So that's the ruach from Genesis 1 and the ruach of the flood story - the pushback of the waters. "So the sons of Israel went right into the middle of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were a wall for them on the right and on the left. The Egyptians chased after them, every horse to Pharaoh, chariots, horsemen into the midst of the sea, and it came about in the morning watch at sunrise." The sunrise.

So just the whole thing is now being painted as God has split the waters, His people are being delivered on the dry land through the waters as the sunrise. So now it's all of days 1 through 3 of Genesis. The light, the separating of waters.

Jon: It's all happening.

Tim: It's all coming together here.

Jon: "Yahweh in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down at Egypt, confused the camp of Egypt and the waters began to turn back and cover the chariots." So now God's letting the waters turn back. "They were in the sea and not one of them was remaining." Not one of them remained. It's that remnant word from the Noah story.

Jon: Oh, remnant.

Tim: But again, the purpose of the words been reversed in the flood story, Noah's the only one remaining in the waters. Now Israel is passing through the waters like Noah, and as for the bad guys, there's no remnant because they're consumed in the floodwaters. But the sons of Israel went through on dry land. So rich.

So this becomes the foundational salvation story through the waters at sunrise. They're like a new Noah and his family, the remnant, saved out of the waters, Pharaoh becomes like the sons of God, and the evil generation consumed in the flood. And all of this is mapped on to God's creative intent to tame the chaos so that

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human life can flourish on the dry land. All these stories meld together in these really beautiful ways.

Jon: Yeah. I mean, what's the purpose of doing this? I guess what I have always expected the Bible to do is to be really plain about like, what does it mean to be saved? And let's get really...what's the word I'm looking for?

Tim: Be clear.

Jon: Yeah, be clear.

Tim: If it's essential for your eternal destiny, you would expect it to be just crystal clear.

Jon: Yeah, let's make it really crystal clear. But the way that we're looking at these stories and creation, and how salvation is kind of all tied into this, it gets more interesting and more rich, and beautiful, but it becomes less clear.

Tim: What's less clear?

Jon: Well, it becomes less clear, like, "what does that mean for me?" Right? Because if you said, "Well, salvation is this. Say this prayer, do these things or something," but if you say, "Well, salvation is God splitting open chaos for you to be able to thrive" then it's like, "okay."

Tim: Yeah, I got it. Well, maybe we'd have to finish [unintelligible 00:49:08] and the second book of the Bible.

Jon: Yeah, okay.

Tim: I mean, where we're going to land is baptism. Christian baptism is where all this comes together.

Jon: All right.

Tim: Jesus's baptism and Christian baptism. But the point is that baptism becomes a symbol loaded with every one of these stories, and we're going to watch the apostles do exactly that. They're going to draw on all these stories to help understand the meaning of baptism. So it will become concrete for people who need to respond to Jesus. But it's this big, huge, beautiful thing that we're being invited into through baptism.

Tim: All right, everybody. Thank you for listening to The Bible Project podcast. I hope this was helpful for you. Our show today was produced by Dan Gummel with music by Tae The Producer. The Bible Project is a nonprofit crowdfunded animation studio in

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Iorio: Hi, my name is Iorio Di Gisela [SP]. I'm from Portland, Oregon, born and raised, but I now reside in Baltimore. What I like about the Bible project is they do a beautiful job with visualizing what the Bible has to offer, which is the truth. We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus. We are crowdfunded project by people like me. Find free videos, podcasts, study notes and more at [thebibleproject.com](http://thebibleproject.com).