

Two Kinds of Work

7th Day Rest E3 Final

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- Jon: This is Jon Collins at The Bible Project, and we're working through a biblical theme about the seventh-day rest. God created in six days and on the seventh day He stopped. He rested in his creation to rule it with humanity. And to remember this and to anticipate it happening once again, God gave Israel a weekly practice called the Sabbath. On the Sabbath, you acknowledge seventh-day rest by stopping from your work. But does that mean that work is bad? And if so, why did God put Adam and Eve in the garden to work it?
- Tim: Humanity here is being put into a garden whereas we're going to see they're taking strolls with God is this image where this is an environment designed and cultivated for God and humans to exist together where humans can be fruitful and multiply. So humans have to work in the garden, but they're in a place where it's a different kind of work.
- Jon: For most of us work is work. It feels like two steps forward, three steps back. But what if the problem isn't the work is bad, the problem is the way we work in the things we have to work with are fundamentally broken? And if that's the case, what if work doesn't have to be work?
- Tim: You're at peace with your environment and your environment just provides for you because that's how God designed it. It's work that simultaneously enjoyment.
- Jon: This was the opportunity presented to humanity on page two of the Bible. But something else looked even better. We wanted to work on our own terms without God.
- Tim: Once that's happened, we go to Genesis 3, and all of a sudden the ground that was the source of humanity's life as a gift from God - Genesis 3:17, cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil, you will eat food from all the days of your life - instead of producing fruit trees for you to eat freely from, now it produces the inverted tree, thorns, and thistles. So all of a sudden, we've lost the seventh-day ideal, or humanity has not attained to it.
- Jon: In spite of this, God still wants humanity to experience this seventh-day ideal, this destiny of experiencing restful work with Him. So what is He going to do?
- Tim: Here's what God does. He calls one human out of the realm of laboring unto death, and He makes him a promise. That promise is what God says to Abraham in Genesis 12. And what God says to Abraham in Genesis 12 is a seven line poem.

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Jon: Two Biblical portraits of work and God's plan to bring seventh-day rest to humanity through the family of Abraham. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

This is our third section third episode talking about the Sabbath. And not just the day which you rest but the whole idea of time culminating...

Tim: ...in a seventh-day.

Jon: In a seventh-day.

Tim: The many meanings of that seventh-day in the biblical story.

Jon: Well, specifically two meanings, which we've kind of narrowed down on. Which is that the seventh-day is about completeness, and fullness, and abundance. It's something that we all desire. Then the seventh-day is also about finding that fullness in spite of or coming out of a broken, disordered, dark reality.

Tim: The seventh-day is something you have to wait for and anticipate as you go through days one through six. It's the end of the journey, and then that end of the journey is the full completion and abundance of God's good ideal world.

Jon: We talked about two Hebrew words. One is "Shabbat" which means to cease or to stop. For example, the manna stopped coming once the Israelites passed the Jordan. It Shabbat. And then there's a related word, which is often translated "rest." It's Noach.

Tim: Nuakh. Noah is Noach in Hebrew.

Jon: And his name means?

Tim: It's a name derived from nuakh.

Jon: It means "to rest" but actually more specifically it means to "settle in."

Tim: Settle in and take up residence in a stable, secure, safe place.

Jon: These two ideas are related because to settle in you have to first stop. You have to stop from all the order you're trying to create, and then just be and settle in. In the creation narrative, God Shabbats. He stops for creating...

Tim: Which means ordering and organizing.

Jon: He stops ordering and organizing the created order. He's done it all.

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Tim: Yeah, it's complete.

Jon: But then we also see Him come, I mean, and rest. He kind of fills creation. And that's what we're actually going to probably look at more in Genesis 2, like, He comes in and settles in. All of this is connected to this temple theme, which is if creation is a temple and God comes to rest and creation like a king resting in this palace. That the work of creating the palace and creating all the order of the kingdom has been done, and now you get to just settle in.

Tim: Yeah, and experience the fruit of all of that work that now can just operate and you oversee it in God's presence.

Jon: And in a perfect world if everything was ordered well, and everyone's getting along, reigning at that moment is just going to be an abundant, awesome, joyful, exciting experience. But that's not the world we live in. One of the questions that was going through my mind as we've been talking about this, especially the last hour was I kept saying like, well, reigning is a type of work. And so like settling into your new job, sure you're settling in but you're settling in in order to work. And then you said, "Well, there's the potential work."

Tim: There's the work of Genesis 1 to get the thing ready and then there's your building a vacation home on a tropical island. It takes a lot of organization, especially if you don't live on the island. You got to work. But then it's done. And then you go take your first week of vacation there. You know, once you're there, you got to go get some groceries, you got to prepare the meal, you got to maybe do some laundry after a couple of days for the second half of vacation. But that's a different kind of work than getting the house built and done that. Well, this is what we're going to talk about, Genesis 2 and 3.

Jon: Because in Genesis 2, they're put in the garden work.

Tim: Yes. Actually, here, the line that you just alluded to in Genesis 2, let's read it.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Genesis 2:15. Let's just get the sequence of events. Genesis 2 takes us back in vs 5, begins a new narrative movement.

Jon: For those following along who aren't familiar with Genesis 1:2, Genesis 1 is a creation story, seven-day structure. We talked about in detail in the last episode. Genesis 2:4 begins a new story...

Tim: Begins a new literary unit.

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Jon: New literary unit. And it's another creation story. It's connected to but different from the first one.

Tim: That's right. So it goes all the way from Genesis 2:4, although the narrative proper begins in Genesis 2:5, and then it goes through to the...actually to the end of chapter three is all a narrative unit. It begins with the parallel image to the darkness and disorder of Genesis 1 except here it's uncultivated lack of fertility. So no shrub of the field, no plant to the field for the Lord God, first of all, hadn't sent rain - that's anticipating the flood narrative - second, there was no human to work the ground. That's key. The word "work" is *avad* or working as a noun is "*avodah*." These are the same words as to be a slave and slavery.

Jon: Oh, really?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: There was no one to slave the ground? To be slaves of the ground?

Tim: Yeah, totally. All kinds of productive interconnections between labor and slavery and work, especially in this narrative.

Jon: Is there a Hebrew word for work that isn't connected to slavery?

Tim: Yeah, *melakah*. It's usually in the Sabbath instructions "You shall do no *melakah*, but Shabbat and *nuakh*." But *avodah* is more about labor.

Then you get to Vs 7, the Lord God formed human from the dust of the ground. So you get human. And then Vs 8, Yahweh God planted a garden toward the east in Eden. Eden is a whole region, and in that region, that's in the east is a garden.

Jon: Puts a man there.

Tim: Vs 8 he placed the man there and then caused to grow all the trees. "Now pause. Let me tell you about some rivers." It's verse 10 through 14. We'll have a lot of conversation about that another day. Then look at vs 15. After we've digressed about the rivers, we come back and restate God putting the man in the garden. Do you see this? Vs 15. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden." For some people, that's a hiccup in the narrative, because you're like, "Wait. He put him there in Vs 8." It's very common narrative technique. We've gotten to one point in the narrative Vs 8 and 9, God put the man in the garden, Vs 10, actually broke the narrative flow.

Jon: Real parentheses.

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- Tim: Even in the Hebrew grammar, it tells you like, "Hey, here's an aside." Vs 10 through 14 all about these rivers. Vs 15 is a way of taking you back up to the last moment of action and restating it to get the story going again. Now, Lord God, remember He had taken or took the man, but the vocabulary is different this time. In chapter 2 vs 15 it's "the Lord God took the human and nuakhed him, rested him in the garden to work it and to keep it."
- Jon: He rested him in the garden. Well, he settled him in. That makes perfect sense.
- Tim: It makes perfect sense.
- Jon: Well, He settled him in.
- Tim: That's right. This is the first appearance of the word "nuakh," of this word for rest in the storyline. What that does is active...even though it's different than Shabbat, but it's a synonym, it's a related synonym. We get a meditation literature. If you read through the Hebrew Bible, you go, "I see what's going on." So God Shabbated on the seventh day, then God nuakhed the human into the garden. And I think it's supposed to activate the Shabbat seventh day ideal to be like, "Okay."
- Jon: So here we are in the seventh day
- Tim: Here we are. God Shabbated and filled the temple with His presence, now we've got the humans nuakhed in the garden. We're set up. We're ready to rock the seventh-day forever. I think that's the ideal. We're ready to realize that seventh day ideal, that the opening story, I mean, he's going to nuakh in the garden. This is great news for everyone involved.
- Jon: Then isn't that a contradiction to nuakh him in the garden to work it? Because if you're...
- Tim: This is why I brought I brought this up.
- Jon: This is my hang up I guess a little bit.
- Tim: The idea of these cultivated gardens, in a garden, you have to work it, but the idea of a garden is that it's an environment cultivated for you. You're not going to die in hard labor scratching out an existence in a garden. Because the image of a garden is there's just all this life coming into existence around you that you didn't...you had to work for it, but it's like the fruit is just there.
- Jon: People who garden would probably tell you it's a lot of work.

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- Tim: It's a ton of work. Oh, my wife's a serious gardener and it's a lot of work.
- Jon: Are you saying this is an image of a type of garden where because the seventh-day was blessed, there's an abundance, there's like this...it's not a typical kind of garden we're talking about here.
- Tim: Yeah. I think we're meant to see humanity here as being put into a garden whereas we're going to see they're taking strolls with God. Like they're walking with Him in the garden. That comes from Genesis three. But it's this image where this is an environment designed and cultivated for God and humans to exist together where humans can be fruitful and multiply. Remember in chapter 1, He gives them all the seed-bearing plants for you to use for food, and they just generate themselves. So humans have to work the garden but they're in a place where it's a different kind of work.
- Jon: You've described it once before in the sense of it's the kind of work where it's like, "Oops, drop the seed there. Well, look at all this abundance." It's kind of like it's just happening and it's like not in spite of you, but just in a way that's just really easy.
- Tim: Yes. I mean, a good analogy, again, just because I read so much C. S. Lewis and my early years of reading the Bible, but Perelandra in The Space Trilogy, when Ransom lands on...I'm forgetting the name of the world that he lands on right now. Oh, Perelandra. The name of the book. He lands and then he encounters these floating islands that are in the narrative world an equivalent of Eden. There's all these pages and pages about him encountering all the plants there for the first time. There's just food all around him, and he picks one of these fruits off a tree and it just changes his life forever.
- I think that he is trying to translate the Eden ideal of peace with the animals. So that's the Son of Man video. But you're at peace with your environment and your environment just provides for you because that's how God designed it to be.
- Jon: And you've also mentioned that this phrase "to work and take care of it" is a priestly phrase.
- Tim: This is a hyperlink from Numbers, chapter 3 and 8. This is what the priests do in the tabernacle and temple. They are priestly work.
- Jon: But I remember this was really important to me to realize that the purpose of humanity in the garden wasn't just to chill.
- Tim: I see.

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Jon: But it was to work.

Tim: That's right. But you don't have to survive on the seventh-day.

Jon: It's not work for the sake of survival.

Tim: Correct. That's right. That comes once you're exiled from the garden.

Jon: It's work for the sake of achievement, pure joy of creation...

Tim: Yeah, it's work that simultaneously enjoyment.

Jon: Well, I guess I'm kind of obsessing about a little bit because if Sabbath is the idea of stopping from working, then what kind of work are we talking about?

Tim: Let's push pause on it. We may be able to answer it better once we see the next step in the story. So humans are nuakhed in the garden.

Jon: They are nuakhed in the garden.

Tim: Right. I think it's supposed to activate the Shabbat and the seventh-day and "awesome, Eden. This is it, man." Humans and God in creation.

Jon: We're settled in to the sacred, beautiful, abundant creation.

Tim: Totally. The line after God nuakhing them and the garden is "eat freely. Just eat. It's all here for you."

Jon: Any tree.

Tim: But from the tree of knowing good and evil don't eat because you'll die. It will kill.

Jon: Poison tree.

Tim: So we've talked at length. We've decided to make at some point, a year or two from now, a video just about the trees.

Jon: The trees.

Tim: Let's just get to it. Finally, let's just nail down what's going on with these trees. But this represents the test. This becomes the moment of Oh, the rest with God in the seventh-day environment is contingent, it's conditional - iIt could all go terribly wrong. And it all depends on whether they're going to trust God's knowing of good and evil and not take it or if they're going to take it for themselves. And so from here that begins the drama of what are the humans going to do.

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Jon: Seventh-day rest requires a buy-in from the humans.

Tim: Correct. Yeah, you're right.

Jon: Not a lot. Not like some big thing.

Tim: Actually, this is important for how the patterns going to work out throughout the story. Trust and in obedient response to God's will is necessary for human to experience the ultimate Sabbath rest. When humans scheme and try to buy their own wisdom, know good and evil, what they end up doing is creating pseudo Sabbath environments where they are trying to create their own stability and safety, and it never work. That's what the story is about. It's as if Genesis 1 gives you the full story of how things could go from darkness and disorder to the ultimate Seventh-day.

Genesis 2 says, "All right, here we are." God and humans nuakh in the garden with a new twist now. That seventh-day isn't just going to come by itself. It's going to come through cooperation of God and humans together, and humans trusting God. And so what happens in Genesis 3, they are deceived and take the knowing of good and evil on their own time and then their own way and it goes terribly wrong.

Once that's happened, we go to Genesis 3, and all of a sudden the ground that was the source of humanity's life as a gift from God, right, eat from the trees, God just says, "Trees grow."

Jon: There's trees everywhere.

Tim: Trees everywhere. They'll provide food for you.

Jon: Fruit everywhere. "Eat any of it."

Tim: All of a sudden they're exiled from the land of the blessed seventh-day.

Jon: The land of delight.

Tim: And now they're exiled to Genesis 3:17. "Cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. Instead of producing fruit trees for you to eat freely from, now it produces the inverted tree, thorns, and thistles. You'll eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow, you will eat food until you return to the adamah, for from it you are taken for you are a far dust and to a far you shall return. So now you're like, "Oh."

Jon: Toil and death.

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- Tim: Back to the land of disorder and death. All of a sudden, we've lost the seventh-day ideal or humanity has not attained to it.
- Jon: It's kind of two ways to think about it. Losing it or not attain to that. I mean, in the logic of the narrative, it was there.
- Tim: It was there. They were in it.
- Jon: And then they lost it.
- Tim: And then they forfeit it.
- Jon: But in another sense, what God wanted was not just some great Christian. He wanted humanity ruling with Him.
- Tim: Correct.
- Jon: And that was never actually attained.
- Tim: The Sabbath ideal ruling with him, which means to oversee and enjoy it, which requires a kind of work, but also that the garden ideal is that God provides it for you by growing it up out of the ground for you. So your work is really just to kind of oversee this abundance that you don't have any power over that's a gift from God. Maybe that's the different kind of work. There's a work where you think you have to supply your own existence, and there's a work of the seventh day which it's all a gift. And really all I'm doing is just organizing all these gifts that are given to me by the tree.
- Jon: It's like the work of organizing your Halloween candy. Tootsie rolls over here.
- Tim: That's exactly right. Sorry, I'm laughing so hard because I have little kids and that's a thing.
- Jon: Oh, man. It's so enjoyable.
- Tim: For days. My boys, they'll organize it and then put it all back in the container and then get out the next day and reorganize it. That's it. Halloween night is the work of getting all that candy but on the seventh day, they just pour it on the floor and just put in...
- Jon: But even the work and getting the candy is kind of an Eden kind of work.
- Tim: That's true. It's dropping out of your neighbors front doors. That's a great point. What a wonderful image. That's the kind of work that you do in the garden. Work outside the seventh-day blessing, it's Genesis 3. It's a painful toil that kills you.

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Jon: Halloween an American thing?

Tim: Well, is from All Hallows' Eve, which is not an American thing. That's a...

Jon: For international listeners, it's a day we bug our neighbors for candy.

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Jon: I mean, this is important to me and just the fact that I know that there's strict adherence to the Sabbath and not working.

Tim: That's right. What is that about? What that's about is disciplining myself to have a day out of seven where I inconveniently interrupt my life. Remember that Matisyahu sabot concept of interrupting your week to remind you that my efforts and labors to secure my own existence are actually not the real things keeping me alive. The real thing sustaining my existence and supplying for me is the sovereignty and rule and generosity of God. Ultimately, it's mostly "remember that truth," but also in the Sabbath day, you're pointing forward to hope that one day God will be the one solely providing for all of us in the great culmination of history in the ultimate Sabbath that never ends, where I never have to worry about scratching out my existence.

Jon: And not only does God say to work the garden and take care of it, but before that, the commission is to subdue the earth.

Tim: To rule and subdue the earth. That's right.

Jon: That would take work.

Tim: Yes, it would.

Jon: When I link those two things together my mind, I actually get a picture of humanity expanding the borderlines of the garden. Like, garden was put towards east in Eden, but the idea is that humanity is supposed to subdue the earth - all the land. And how would you do that? "Well, let's grow this garden. Let's keep pushing the boundaries of this garden now." Is that something I'm supposed to be?

Tim: Let's nail this down. This is not even clear in my own thinking. So maybe this conversation can help us both. Once humans are exiled from the chance of the seven-day rest in Eden, it's only in the post-fall world that the Sabbath command comes to observe now the Sabbath every seventh day. Why? Well, it reminds me of a truth. Well, what we just talked about. That I'm not autonomous - I don't actually supply my own existence.

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But it's also pointing forward; it's a foretaste, it's a symbolic recreation of my hope that the whole all of history is headed towards an ultimate seventh day. And so in that ultimate seventh day, I will cease from my labor to secure my own existence, but there's a whole new creation to be explored and cultivated. But if the ideal there is life with God forever, it's not a labor that my life depends on. It's a labor that's just pure creation and cultivation.

Jon: There is that different word for labor versus work.

Tim: That's true. Yeah, that's right. There's avodah, there's avad, which is this: you'll work the ground. Avodah. Which is the same word as "slavery." But it is the word of avad that's used in the garden. God rested him and said to work it and to keep it.

Jon: That's the slavery word?

Tim: It's the word "avad."

Jon: Labor.

Tim: It just means labor. Yeah, labor. I think there's work and then there's work. There's work in the post-fall world and then there's the work of the Sabbath world, which is a different kind of work because I'm not working to secure my life existence. Maybe you could say that the prohibition on working on the Sabbath day is a post-fall necessity to remind people in the fallen world of something...

Jon: I think that's at the center of this is that in Eden, it's not that they've ceased from working. In Eden, they're working. But then if...

Tim: But their lives don't depend on their work.

Jon: Their lives don't depend on it. It's a different kind of work. Simple quality work. But then you get to post Eden and then you get the command of the Sabbath. And you're saying the Sabbath is connected to remember that this is all heading somewhere. It's all heading towards rest. And it's culminating and that we can trust that and we can anticipate that and we can even practice that now.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: But one of the ways I want you to practice it is to cease from working. And that's where it's like, "We'll wait, but they were working. Sabbath was work." Then actually fast forward to Revelation, and what are they doing? They're reigning.

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- Tim: Yes, they're reining, which requires work.
- Jon: Because reigning requires work. And who knows what kind of work, but I mean, it's not like we're going to be sitting around watching Netflix.
- Tim: The real difference between the work of pre eaten and of new creation and the post-Eden work is does my life depend on it?
- Jon: Maybe what you're saying is we're so addicted to thinking that our life depends on our own labor that in order to really anticipate the Sabbath, you just have to stop.
- Tim: Stop.
- Jon: Just stop. Don't try to rethink work, just stop working.
- Tim: That's right. And I imagine a whole day where I get to exist just as a sheer gift from God where I don't trick myself into thinking that my work is what gives me value and what's makes me safe today. It's a work of your imagination to practice the Sabbath.
- Jon: It's a work. It gets really philosophical in a way. I've thought about this before in the terms of like, what's the difference between work and play? Because if you watch kids when they're playing, they're training their brains how to deal in social environments, they're coordinating their body, they are doing a lot of work, they're learning about the world kinesthetics and everything, but for them, it's just pure joy but it's worth.
- Tim: I haven't yet quoted from one of the most classic works on the topic. Abraham Joshua Heschel 20th century Rabbi and philosopher and biblical scholar he did it all. One of his most classic works is just called "The Sabbath." An opening in the prologue, he's talking about how humans create and organize our spaces around us as if we are its masters in the modern world. He's writing in the mid-20th century. So it's still in the intoxication with technology in progress.
- Jon: We're building skyscrapers.
- Tim: I mean look at the Empire State builders. This kind of thing. "We are infatuated with the splendor of space with grandeur of things of space. Our imagination can mold all concepts into images in space." He's living in this day and look at what humans can do. "In our daily lives, we attend primarily to that which our senses are spelling out for us. Reality is to us this thing consisting of substances that occupy space. Even God is now conceived by most of us as a thing in our world that we can choose to believe or disbelieve."

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- Jon: An object we could put in our space or not.
- Tim: Yeah, totally. "The result of our obsession with thingness is our blindness to all realities that do not identify as things, such as time." We've tricked ourselves and that we're masters of space, that it's a way of displacing our fear of death and our slavery to time. He goes on. He says, "We know what to do with space but do not know what to do with time, except to make it subservient to space. Most of us labor for the sake of things of space. As a result, we suffer from a deeply rooted dread of time and stand aghast when compelled to look into its face."
- Jon: That's what I was saying - remember? - earlier.
- Tim: Yeah. He goes on. "Time to us is sarcasm. A slick treacherous monster with a jaw like a furnace incinerating every moment of our lives. Shrinking therefore from facing time, we escape for shelter to things of our created space."
- Jon: What an image?
- Tim: Basically he's just saying death is a monster. Death and aging...
- Jon: The march of time.
- Tim: ...is consuming all of us, and we arrange our physical spaces and bodies to...
- Jon: That's why we hate turning certain decades. I think when it hits us the most is when we're like turning 40.
- Tim: We were just talking about this about different people that we've met who as they age, they...
- Jon: ...they don't even want you to know how old they are.
- Tim: They don't want you to know how old they are. Like, what's your birthday? How old are you turning out? "It doesn't matter. You don't want to know.
- Jon: "You don't want to know and I don't want to tell you. Because I don't want it to even speak it out loud."
- Tim: "That I'm dying."
- Jon: "I'm on my way to the grave."
- Tim: We're like preoccupying ourselves with working and working to create some little pseudo Eden in my home, in my gaming world, in my career,

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when in fact all I'm doing is arranging furniture on the sinking ship that is my body and a treacherous monster with a jaw like a furnace incinerating my life.

Jon: What does he say...time is sarcastic?

Tim: It's time to us is sarcasm. It's making fun of us. When you're sarcastic it allows us enough time to think that we could live forever and that we can really be masters of our life. 70 years. It gives you long enough to think that you're responsible for your own life, but in reality you're just getting eaten alive.

Jon: There's people who have like a clock that tells them how many hours they have left, based off of the average lifespan.

Tim: Oh, wow.

Jon: You can put on your desktop.

Tim: That's intense.

Jon: That's stare in the fiery furnace face.

Tim: It totally is.

[00:32:35]

Tim: This is interesting. In the biblical story of mortality and of the clock ticking on our lives, this is a major sub-theme throughout the biblical story, especially in the wisdom literature.

Jon: Ecclesiastes.

Tim: Just check out Psalm 90. This is a good meditation here. "O Yahweh, you have been our dwelling place in all generations."

Jon: And there's that term "dwelling place" again.

Tim: Totally. It's different than rest, but it's related image. The place where God lives. Throughout all generations that come and go, there's Yahweh.

Jon: He's our home.

Tim: He's our home. "Before mountains were born before you gave birth to the world." How's that image? It's the word for "labor." "Before you gave birth to the land and the inhabited world. From everlasting from age to age, you are Elohim. You return human back to the dust and say, 'Go

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back, O sons of humanity..." He's reflecting on Genesis 3. "Go back to the dust humans."

Jon: To dust you will return.

Tim: A thousand years in your eyes are like yesterday passing by, like a couple of hours in the walk of the night. You sweep them away like a flood." You can see Genesis 1-11 here. They fall asleep... Death. Death is like a flood. Like the flood. In the morning, humans they're like grass. But then...

Jon: Springs back up.

Tim: Springs back up. "In the morning it flourishes sprouts a new but in the evening, the sun's too hot. It withers away." Then look, where it goes now. "You know why are we all dying out here? Well, it's because of God's judgment. The exile from Eden. We've been consumed by your anger, by your wrath we are dismayed. You've placed our iniquities before you. Sin and death have returned us back to darkness and disorder. Our days decline and in your wrath we finish our years like a sigh." Dude, that word "sigh"...Hold on one second.

Jon: Moaning in NIV.

Tim: Yes, moaning. This is what the Israelites do in their slavery in Egypt. They're groaning. "As for the days of our life, 70 years. If you're strong, 80. Yet their pride is but labor and grief. Soon it's gone and we fly off." And that doesn't mean fly to heaven. It's like a metaphor of your years just like evaporate and you're gone. "Who understands the power of your anger and your wrath according to the fear that's due to you." This is the image. Teach us to number our days that we may offer or bring to you a heart of wisdom. It's an interesting line.

Jon: Oh, offer a heart of wisdom. NIV is gain.

Tim: Gain? Yeah. NIV. It's interesting. Then look, return, literally turn back Yahweh. How long nahum, show mercy on your servants. He's asking how long will the sentence of death be over humanity exiled from Eden returning to the dust, laboring under the shadow of death? So we asked for God to repent, shuv, to return back and...

Jon: Bring new creation. We didn't register this prayer is the only poem in the book of Psalms. And the book of Psalm is connected to Moses.

Jon: Oh, yeah.

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- Tim: It's the prayer of Moses. These lines right here are all hyperlinked to Moses's intercession on Mount Sinai after the story of the golden calf. This poem pictures Moses now doing what he did for Israel, but now doing it for all humanity dying outside of Eden.
- Jon: That's cool.
- Tim: Isn't this interesting? He's asking God, like, "We're just puny little, dirt creatures, we're dying out here and we earned it, like we've created this terrible world of exile, but show mercy.
- Jon: Your anger is justified, but can you show mercy?
- Tim: Look at what he says. "Satisfy us." Verse 14. Yeah, dude, it's the word - Holy cow. I've never noticed this - sab'enu. It's the word "seven." Literally it's saba - to satisfy us.
- Jon: To fill us up.
- Tim: But dude, by this point there's all these narratives in the Pentateuch that have made these word plays on the seventh-day is when God's people are satisfied and sabad. Holy cow. Seven us in the morning with your covenant faithfulness
- Jon: The morning of the Sabbath day?
- Tim: Yes, totally. Think of darkness and disorder and let there be light, days, one, four and seven in Genesis 1 it's all about...
- Jon: Morning and evening.
- Tim: "Make us glad according to the days you've afflicted us. We had the season of being exiled unto death so give us as many days and even more of joy for all the years that we've seen evil. Let your work..." So we've been out here working and dying, so now you do your work to bring about the new creation. "Let your work appear to your servants, your Majesty to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon on us and confirm for us the work of our hands. Yes, confirm the work of our hands." It repeats same line twice.
- Jon: Confirm the work.
- Tim: Make firm.
- Jon: Make firm. Make it so that our work actually lasts and does something.
- Tim: Yes, I think so.

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Jon: Turn our work into something that actually works.

Tim: Totally. What a great final line. You just ponder it. Most of our work withers and fades and it goes away, just like our lives. But when God satisfies us with the morning, with the new day of new creation, imagine doing work that doesn't fade and imagine the life of the new creation that doesn't fade. If God returns and has mercy and brings about the new creation, that's what he's praying for here. This is a profound poem. Psalm 90 it's worth many cups of tea and long walks. It's all reflecting on Genesis 3.

[00:40:06]

Tim: We walk out of Genesis 2 and 3, going, "Oh, man, the seventh-day was out there to be had for humans and God but humanity has forfeited the Sabbath ultimate seventh-day rest. And now we're exiled to the land of labor and work. And even that doesn't secure our lives because we die."

Jon: "So what do we do? We call out to God?"

Tim: "We're waiting for God to do something that will bring about the seventh-day that never actually was."

Jon: What do you do? Do you work harder and obsessed more?

Tim: The next movement forward is going to be the calling of Abraham and God setting in motion through Israel plan to restore blessing to all of the nations.

Jon: Abundance.

Tim: Abundance. But how is humanity going to get to the Sabbath rest? Well, here's what God does. He calls one human out of the realm of laboring unto death and He makes him a promise. And that promise is what God says to Abraham in Genesis 12. And what God says to Abraham in Genesis 12 is a seven-line poem.

Jon: Wow.

Tim: Genesis 12:1-3 "I will make of you a great nation. Two, I will bless you, three, I will make your name great, four, so that you will be a blessing. Five, I will bless those who bless you. Six, those who curse you I will curse. Seven, in you will be blessed all the families of the earth. It's a seven-line poem.

Jon: Man, that works almost perfectly in this version, NIV, except the last line's broken into two. So it looks like an eight-line poem.

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- Tim: I was first drawn attention to this by that's Italian Jewish commentator who noted all those sevens in Genesis 1.
- Jon: He's counting. He's out there counting verses.
- Tim: He was raised knowing Hebrew. He's never read the Bible in English. He reads in Hebrew. Now, here's what Cassuto also notes. "There's five the word "blessing." Which remember the seventh day was blessed in Genesis 1. He notes the word "blessing" occurs five times.
- Jon: In this poem?
- Tim: In the poem to Abraham. The word "curse" occurs five times in Genesis 3 to 11.
- Jon: Oh, really?
- Tim: Yes. Yes.
- Jon: Wow.
- Tim: He thinks that it's reversing the curses that have been laid on. Right now God's putting in motion a plan to reverse all the curses of Genesis 3-11. Do you think that's a coincidence?
- Tim: I don't know, man anymore. These authors are so sophisticated. So sophisticated.
- Jon: In Genesis 3-11, there's five times word "curse" is used?
- Tim: Correct.
- Jon: The first one is He curses the snake and then He curses the ground...
- Tim: And then Cain is cursed.
- Jon: Cain is cursed. The ground is cursed again.
- Tim: We recall the curse on the ground. In chapter five Canaan is cursed. Canaan.
- Jon: So there's just kind of this compounding of cursing?
- Tim: Yeah. Then the word "blessing" appears five times in the promise... I mean, you just point it out school and you just go, "Ah." Clearly the author has made sure there's seven lines in God's words to Abraham. For sure. There's no way that's a coincidence. Get the arc here. This is where we begin to pick up the narrative pattern of how this video can work. You

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can see Genesis 1 going "creations liberated from darkness and disorder unto the completeness of the seventh-day." God wants to rest and rule with humans, His presence filling the world with the human.

Jon: That's the seventh-day ideal?

Tim: The seventh-day ideal. Genesis 2 gives it from another angle. "Humanity's nuakhed in a garden designed to give him life." It's all contingent on, will humans trust and submit to God's wisdom and participate with him? No they don't. Oh, the seventh-day ideal is lost into the realm of labor unto death.

Jon: Toil and death.

Tim: Toil and curse. And so what's going to happen? Well, a lot is going to happen. Genesis 3 to 11 there's a lot in there.

Jon: Lots of curses.

Tim: But the ultimate way...

Jon: Lots of rebellion.

Tim: Lots more rebellion and cursing and a guy named "rest" who saves the world in his own body and family. I mean, there's a lot we could do with the Noah story.

Jon: His name is Noach.

Tim: His name means rest. Maybe we should talk about it. I think in the video we need to go from exile from Eden to what God's going to do. He calls one mortal dying human - an old man. Dying.

Jon: About to be dust.

Tim: He and his wife.

Jon: He's around the corner to dust.

Tim: And he says, "I'm going to give you the Sabbath blessing of Eden. Through you and your family, the Sabbath blessing of Eden will be restored to all the nations of the earth" in a seven-line poem. I mean, you can just see it what's happening here. Now all of a sudden, you're like, "Okay, the Sabbath Eden blessing is now entrusted to this family. And you're just going to watch through all of Genesis, wherever this family goes, there's gardens following them around. They're constantly hanging out by trees and wells and rivers, they have great crops. Like

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Isaac, he gets this hundredfold of crops and all the people around are like, "Wow, that guy is..."

So they become this little channel of Sabbath blessing to the nations and they keep ruining it. So God has to save them. But that's where it's all going.

Jon: That's cool.

Tim: It's totally cool.

Jon: It'd just occurring to me, is this the new creation video?

Tim: Yes. Yeah. The seventh day is new creation.

Jon: Because on the original list is the new creation video.

Tim: Oh, I see.

Jon: Is there a place for that video that's separate from this video?

Tim: I think so.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Though, to be honest, by the time we get there, we've made so many videos that end in new creation.

Jon: What else do you have to say?

Tim: Yeah, totally. But this is particularly focused on the structure of seven, the culminating...

Jon: The seventh day. Seven is all about completion and liberation. That's new creation.

Tim: Yes, true. Are you beginning to think we should just call the video seventh-day?

Jon: Well, I mean, we have been saying that a little bit, but...

Tim: It kind of makes sense.

Jon: I mean, at least I have to be doing that for myself. Otherwise, I keep thinking I have to just talking about the Sabbath in terms of the actual...that day. By calling it the seventh day, I think of it more as a new creation video that Sabbath day becomes just a piece of the whole thing.

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Tim: I understand. That's what we said earlier. The actual practice of the Sabbath day is just one expression of this bigger theme of the seventh day, new creation, Eden, new Eden, hope for humans who are laboring to death.

Jon: It's a new creation through the lens of seven.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. As we're going to see, it's not even just the seventh day. Once we get into the laws, this idea was expressed every Sabbath, but also every seventh year of release, and also every 49th year.

Jon: Every seven days, every seven-year, every seventh year.

Tim: And every seventh month.

Jon: In the feasts.

Tim: With the feasts of the seventh month. And about whole bunch of seven-day feasts. That's right. You're right. This is bigger than the Sabbath. But the Sabbath is just...

Jon: It was kind of the launching point because...

Tim: Because Genesis 1 culminates in the Sabbath.

Jon: It's kind of how it first appears.

Tim: That's right.

[00:49:01]

Tim: One story in Abraham's life to just see how it works in the Abraham story it's in Genesis 21:22. "Now it came about at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham..." Abimelech, Abraham met him in the previous chapter, chapter 20, and he is the king of a city called Gerar. Abraham actually previously lied to him about his wife.

Jon: "She's my sister."

Tim: And it's the second time Abraham lied about his wife. Abraham, he wronged this guy. He made it right, but...just going on. He says to Abraham, "God is with you in all that you do; so, therefore, swear to me..." The word "swear an oath to me" it's the word shaba, which is spelled with three letters of seven.

"Swear an oath here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but show me the kindness, the same

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kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me and to the land in which you have sojourned." Abraham said, "I sheba." But Abraham had a complaint with Abimelech because there's this well of water." Remember water is a gift of God from the deep, abysmal waters beneath...

Jon: Whenever biblical writers are talking about wells, they're not just talking about wells.

Tim: Yeah, it's a symbol of a gift of Eden life springing up from the ground. Again, remember Abraham is going to be the source of the New Eden blessing to the nations around him. So Abraham says, "Hey, you know, there's this well that your servants seized. We were using this well and your servants took it." And Abimelech said, "I didn't know about that and you didn't tell me. I'm just hearing about it today. I didn't know. You're going blame me for it? I didn't know." Abraham took sheep and oxen, and he gave them to bend the leg and the two of them made a covenant." So interesting.

Abraham and the nations, there's this problem over water. And so how are they going to solve it? Well, I see God is with you. The nations are going to make a covenant with Abraham. So Abraham gets out seven lambs. This is all a wordplay through the story. "Make an oath with me" is the word "sheba" So Abraham got out sheba - lambs. This is the number seven. It's the same three letters.

Abimelech said to Abraham, "What are these sheba lambs? What do they mean? Why have you set them apart?" He said, "I want you to take these sheba lambs from my hand so that it may be a witness to me that I'm the one who dug this well. You took it from me, I dug it; you have these lambs now to remember that this is my well. Therefore, he called the name of that place Beersheba. The word "beer" is the word for "well." The word "sheba" is the three letters that spell oath and seven. You can see wordplay coming out here.

Jon: It's Sabbath.

Tim: Well, no, that's Shabbat. This is just sheba. Seven.

Jon: But isn't the same three words?

Tim: No, no. Sheba is also the same three letters as "complete or fullness."

Jon: Complete or fullness.

Tim: You got it. He named it Beersheba because there the two of them made a sheba. They made a covenant. Abimelech and Phicol and the commander

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of his army, they went back to their land. And you know what Abraham did by that well, the well of seven? He planted a tree at Beersheba and he called on the name of Yahweh, the everlasting God." Here's Abraham at conflict with the nations and then the nations come, he makes a covenant with them. There's peace now between Abraham and the nations, and it's at a well where then he plants a tree, and he's living by the well of seven under his tree at peace now with God and with the nations. It's a little micro Sabbath Eden that just got created here. Peace with God, peace with man. I'm living by a well of seven under a tree.

Jon: It's not just a random story of making good about something.

Tim: How these narratives work, these are all little hints back at Eden, but now it's out in the wilderness of Garer. And it's a story about Abraham at peace with God and man by a well named the well of seven where he lives under his tree now.

Jon: Is this what you're saying? I mean, you said before to me before we started recording that once you start looking for it, Sabbath is everywhere, seven is everywhere.

Tim: Yes, that's right.

Jon: It's like in one of these narratives. And then it seems like such a mundane narrative.

Tim: Yeah. Why is the story in here?

Jon: Yeah, why is it in here?

Tim: It's about God giving Abraham a little gift of Eden and Sabbath rest as he's going through his journeys and people bumping into each other crashing into each other. But when Abraham is able to peacefully by means of a covenant resolve his conflicts with people, it creates a little moment of Eden rest.

[00:55:18]

Tim: The big story is God wants to liberate...creation is a form of liberation from darkness and disorder in Genesis 1 into a land of completeness and wholeness and blessing and divine presence and abundance. And all that is on the day of seven. Genesis 2 shows us God creating, and placing, nuakhing, resting humanity in the garden designed for God and men to live together and abundance but it's conditional humanity trust, they don't. They forfeit this wonderful opportunity and find themselves exiled to the land of curse and laboring on to death.

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But God promises that through the family of Abraham, through a seven-line poem, that there will be the blessing of Eden and Sabbath restored to all the nations now through this family. And then all throughout the stories of Abraham, you find these little moments where he gets a little taste of the Sabbath Eden ideal. Like for example, when he settles a conflict, that normally people go to war over water, access to water, but Abraham, he's a man of peace and he's able to resolve this through negotiation and a covenant. Then all of a sudden, God's chosen one is able to create peace with the nations, and then he enjoys life under a tree by a well of seven, which is a typical biblical narrative way of alluding back to the Garden of Eden. The question is, how will that Eden blessing and Sabbath blessing be restored ultimately to all creation through this family? You got to keep reading.

Jon: It's great summary.

Tim: All right. Then the family goes down to Egypt and they get enslaved to slave labor. Same word "avodah" in Egypt.

Jon: They become slaves, and they're not working in the garden.

Tim: They're exiled from the promised land down in Egypt.

Tim: They're exiled from the land of delight - the promised land, and they're in another place and they're digging ditches, and making bricks.

Tim: The slavery in Egypt becomes this intensified version of the curse of Genesis 3 of labor unto death.

Jon: Labor unto death. It's a very literalized version. Laboring to death as slaves - in someone else's empire. Someone else who is pretty cruel, doesn't care about you, will use you and abuse you, and only is interested in their own self interest. That's how Eden they're going to break out.

Tim: That's right. That's our next conversation. The exodus story and Passover is a liberation from slavery unto a Sabbath rest. And the exodus story culminates with Israel celebrating a seven day feast to celebrate their liberation from slavery. It's a Genesis 1 played out in a whole narrative form with all these new ideas introduced.

Jon: Thanks for listening to this episode of The Bible Project podcast. We are going to be taking questions for this entire conversation around seventh-day rest. We're going to do three, maybe even four question response episodes. These episodes are going to be extra episodes in your feed. There'll be additional episodes during the weeks to follow. If you have a question pertaining to this conversation, please send it to us. You can

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email it to info@jointhebibleproject.com. If you are able, record your audio, use your phone or whatever you have, try to keep it around 20 seconds and also let us know your name and where you're from.

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Today's show is produced by Dan Gummel. Our theme music comes from the band Tents. We're crowdfunded nonprofit in Portland, Oregon, and we make all these free resources to experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. Thank you so much for being a part of this with us.

Man: This is Ayer Brodan. I'm from Romania. I first heard about The Bible Project from my daughter in law, Rebecca. I use the Bible Project in my preaching in my church, in VIA Church in Romania, Cluj-Napoca. My favorite thing about The Bible Project is its clarity and the fact that is memorable. We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus. We are a crowdfunded project by people like me. Find free videos, study notes, podcast and more at thebible.com.

[foreign language 01:00:17]