

[Letter of Jude E4 Transcript]

[Recap of Introduction and Setup for Verses 8-10 (0:00—10:21)]

Jon: The Bible has all sorts of warnings about things you should not do in life. “Don’t murder.” That’s one of the 10 Commandments. “Do not be afraid.” God says that to Joshua. “Do not judge.” That’s a teaching of Jesus. Well, today, we’re going to talk about a warning you’ve probably never thought of before: “Don’t slander angels.” What’s that about? We’re working through the letter of Jude, and slandering angels is on the brain as Jude accuses certain men in his community of doing just that.

Tim: They slander the glorious ones. Glorious ones, as we’re going to see, is a way of referring to heavenly spiritual beings, angels. These people criticize them, think they’re better than them. So why? What is going on here?

Jon: And if this isn’t confusing enough, that’s just one of three accusations that he strings together. He says—

Tim: “These people claim to have divine revelations. Well, look what they do. They pollute the flesh, they are rejecting the Lord’s authority, and they slander the glorious ones.”

Jon: Okay, if you’re like me, you’ve probably gotten to sections like this in the Bible and think, “Yeah, this is a bit complicated. I’m going to move on.” Well, today, we’re not going to move on. We’re going to dig in and we’re going to talk about all of it, including angels, their role in the Bible, and what it means to slander them.

Tim: Up there are God’s delegated rulers to order the functioning of the cosmos. They’re pretty key players.

Jon: Why does the Apostle Paul say God’s law was given to Israel through angels? Why did the author of Hebrews take an entire chapter to talk about how Jesus is greater than angels? And why does Paul write that one day we’ll judge angels? It turns out the first-century Christians had a lot of thoughts about angels. And one of those thoughts is to respect them because, in some way, respecting angels is respecting God.

Tim: Jude says, "These people, the things about which they have no knowledge, they slander." They claim to have knowledge, and actually, they have no clue. They are slandering both God and God's delegated powers."

Jon: That's today on the podcast. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical Break (2:14—2:21)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hey, Jon Collins. Hello.

Jon: Hello. Welcome back to Jude—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Judah.

Tim: Jude-ah—

[Laughter]

Tim: The letter of Judah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. There's 25 verses, one of the shortest documents in the New Testament. But it is jam-packed. Like, we're—we're not making our way quickly here—

Jon: No.

Tim: Are we?

Jon: Nope.

[Laughter]

Tim: You want a big picture again before we dive in?

Jon: Yes. Walk us through: Where have we been?

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Okay. So this is a short emergency letter—right—written by Judah, the brother of Iakob, both of whom are men who grew up with Jesus of Nazareth

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In—in their home. And Judah's become a house church leader—most likely up in Galilee are the last traces of him—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In early church history—is where he landed. His grandsons, you know, are spotted there a couple generations later. And so he writes this emergency letter. I mean, we're not but a—a decade or two out from, like, Resurrection Sunday.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: I mean, we're talking about early house church network, certainly mostly just Jewish followers of Jesus, probably lots of relatives of Jesus in these communities. He said he wanted to write a whole theology of our shared salvation. Like a f—he wanted to do a—like, a Hebrew Bible, like, design pattern, hyperlink theology of salvation.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But he needed to write the short letter because some people have started hanging out in their house churches. And he has the deep conviction that their way of life is actually destructive and is going to erode not just the faith, but also the moral integrity of these followers of Jesus. And so he wants to warn them. And the way that Second Temple Hebrew Bible nerd Jewish people thought and wrote to each other was to talk about everything in their lives within hyperlink design patterns from the Hebrew Bible.

[Laughter]

Tim: So he wants to warn them that these people in their communities actually fit the bill of all these type characters from the Hebrew Scriptures that ruin themselves and bring ruin on each other, and why you should stay away from them. So he uses six biblical stories, and that takes up verses five to 13. We're halfway through that.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Then he's going to bring up two prophecies, one from ancient times, from Enoch, another from contemporary times, from the Apostles, and say, we've been warned about these types of people and the effect that they can have, and to stay away from them. And then in verses 20 to 23 will be the only positive, instructive things that he tells them to do. We'll probably get there in the very last conversation—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In this little series. And then he praises God at the end. So there you go.

Jon: That's the shape.

Tim: That's the shape of the letter. We are right here in verses five through 13.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: We just finished three biblical design patterns that he linked together—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The story of the rebellion of the spies who rebelled against Moses and God in the wilderness—so: they're like the leaders of the people of Israel who were rescued—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And now are betraying God. They're like the angels in that they have been given their own proper realm of responsibility, and they grab for more. They want more than what God has allotted to them.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's that analogy. And then he likens it to the men of Sodom and Gomorrah who tried to gang rape the angels that came to them. And it's connected to sexual immorality, but then also to an inappropriate view of spiritual beings. And that's what he's about to go into right now.

Jon: An inappropriate view of spiritual beings.

Tim: Yeah. Let's just—I'm going to leave that—

Jon: All right.

Tim: Ambiguous because we'll fill it in.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So that's what he just went through. Remember, we also went through how he's going to quote from ancient biblical texts and then use this interpretive technique that was real popular in Second Temple Judaism, which was, in the common elements between network of texts, they see a larger idea emerging out of it.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then they say that bigger idea, these kinds of people—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's these people who are coming into our churches.

Jon: So during our series where we looked at the formation of the Bible, at the very end, we did a Q and R where someone asked about God's word—like: Why do we call the Bible God's word?

Tim: Oh, yeah.

Jon: And you started talking about how God's word is that bigger thing, like—

Tim: Oh, sure.

Jon: Like—

Tim: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jon: Like Scripture, the things written were, like, the stories, and the design patterns, and all that stuff. But then, when you read that, you're encountering—

Tim: Oh, sure.

Jon: Some bigger ideas—

Tim: Yeah, the voice of God—

Jon: The voice of God.

Tim: Speaking to you and your community in this moment.

Jon: The wisdom of God.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And then—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: In Hebrews, it talks about that. That's alive.

Tim: It's a living and active—

Jon: It's a living and—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Thing.

Tim: That's good. That's a great—

Jon: So that's what he's doing. He's like—

Tim: That's great.

Jon: He's connecting to that living, alive—like: There's something bigger here, and I can apply it to my community.

Tim: Yeah. Yep. And maybe even more specific, Judah sees himself and his community as living in the moment of the—the last days, that is, the days brought on by the arrival of God's Kingdom through the Messiah. So all of the pointers to a final reckoning of God bringing justice in and through his Messiah to bring about, like, the rebirth of Heaven and Earth—like, that's top of mind. I mean, J—the Messiah just rose from the dead, like, a few years ago.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Like—

[Laughter]

Tim: There was a intensity, a fervor, in those—in that first generation because they're praying in Aramaic, "*Maranata*"—marana tha—"come Lord—come back, Lord."

Jon: Hmm. And they really did think, like, this was likely the last few generations?

Tim: Yes. I—I think that's going to come through loud and clear—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In—in—as we read through the letter.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And it comes through in other writings of the Apostles too.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "The end of days has begun."

Jon: Yeah. But yet here—

Tim: Uhm—

Jon: We are—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Like, a hundred generations later.

Tim: Exactly. Yep. Which is why Second Peter had to write his letter near the end of his life, and say, "Listen, you might think the Lord's slow in coming—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "Because it's been a few decades now, but time to God is fundamentally different than—"in fact, time—

[Laughter]

Tim: What time is to us—there's no real relation or reference to God and time the way we think of time.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So I know 2,000 years seems a long time for us, but if you get cosmic about it, it's not even the blink of an eye. Right?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: From the perspective of a rock—

[Laughter]

Tim: Oh, man, I was just down in—in the redwoods not long ago, and they had this old growth ring of a redwood tree tha—I mean—ah—I—I didn’t measure it. It—it was gigantic—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: How wide it was. And—

Jon: And these things are a thousand years old, right?

Tim: Dude, they had actually marked on it the ring that was, like, the birth of Jesus.

Jon: Oh, okay.

[Laughter]

Jon: Oh, wow.

Tim: And it was not at the center. It was like—

Jon: Oh—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So this thing’s thousands of years old.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. So from—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The perspective of a tree—

[Laughter]

Tim: You know, anyway. That’s a much bigger question.

Jon: All right.

Tim: So he's going to apply those three biblical stories, the rebellion of the spies, the rebel sons of God, and the men of Sodom and Gomorrah—he's going to apply it to these people, and that's what we're going to look at now. Shall we?

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Okay.

[Musical Break (9:57—10:21)]

[Angels in the Hebrew Bible and Second-Temple Literature (10:21—39:02)]

Tim: So verse eight, he dives in. We actually looked at this right at the end of the last conversation.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "But in a similar manner—"similar to the three examples, those three stories—"even these people, being inspired by dreams, they do three things." Everything comes in triads in—in this letter. So they're inspired by dreams, which is—in Second Temple Judaism, even throughout the Hebrew Bible, dreams are a—a form of apocalypse, a way God shows people heavenly, divine realities—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Like Pharaoh's dreams that Joseph interprets.

Jon: Yeah. So these guys are having some sort of nighttime, like, dream experience.

Tim: Or ecstatic trance experiences—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Through prayer. These types of experiences are described all over the Prophets. And—uhm—it's a thing—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Connected to: intense experiences of God's presence often bring on an elevation of consciousness where you're seeing things on a different dimension or something.

Jon: Okay. But it doesn't always mean that you're really connecting to the source?

Tim: Exactly. Yes. And this was a huge problem. Especially the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah encountered this, where there were prophets in Jerusalem who claimed, "I had a dream last night, it's from Yahweh, and there's no way Babylon is going to take the city."

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: "We're just fine."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "God's good with us."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "He's going to protect us." And Jeremiah was saying, "I had a dream—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "And Jerusalem is going to burn, and we're all going to go into exile."

Jon: So what do you do when there's two—

Tim: What do you do when there's two—

Jon: Contradictory—

Tim: You got it.

Jon: Prophecies?

Tim: He's saying "These people claim to have divine revelations, but look what they do." He says three things. "They pollute the flesh—" which is Leviticus-18-style terminology for: They're sexually promiscuous. So that's the first thing. So that's how you know they aren't really speaking for God: They don't have moral integrity in their relationships.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And if they don't have moral integrity in their relationships, that means they are rejecting the Lord's authority, that is, the Lord Jesus. Sermon on the Mount—like, integrity in relationships is—that's—that is the language of the Kingdom of God—right—

is doing to others what you want them to do to you, loving your neighbor, that kind of thing.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So they reject the Lord's authority. And those two, we're kind of like, "Okay, yeah. That's an interesting way to say it, but I think I can understand that." Third thing they do

—
[Laughter]

Tim: "They slander the glorious ones."

Jon: Yeah. Okay.

[Laughter]

Jon: What's this about?

[Laughter]

Tim: I love—what a great response.

[Laughter]

Tim: You're just like, "I—what is going on?"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: This is one of those moments in the Bible you're like, "Oh, what—what does that mean?"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Except you can't—you can't really skip over it because verse nine is entirely dedicated to giving an illustration—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Of what that means.

Jon: Well, you see, I wouldn't realize that.

[Laughter]

Tim: R—real—

Jon: I'd just be like—I'd be—"On to the next weird thing."

Tim: Okay. Yeah. That's true. Yeah. So he's going to—they slander the glorious ones. "Glorious ones," as we're going to see, is a way of referring to heavenly spiritual beings.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Mhm. They show contempt for spiritual beings.

Jon: Contempt for spiritual beings.

Tim: Yeah. What does this mean? We're going to actually probably spend most of this conversation—

Jon: Slander means to speak poorly of someone, right?

Tim: Mhm—

Jon: Or—

Tim: Yeah, but in a—in a public way.

Jon: In a public way.

Tim: Yeah, to speak publicly in a way to lower someone's value or social status.

Jon: And you're saying, behind that is contempt.

Tim: Mhm, an attitude of contempt. Yeah. Think of how politicians or public officials get attacked, you know—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: On, like, social media posts.

Jon: Right.

Tim: And not necessarily for a policy decision they made, but attacking their character. So you know, that's what it is. There's beings that have a glorious—a high status, like, angels and spiritual beings, but these people criticize them, think they're better than them, and—and speak about it. So why? What is going on here? Okay.

[Laughter]

Tim: So before we dive in—because next, he's going to quote from a Second Temple text—

[Laughter]

Jon: Right.

Tim: What's happening here? Okay. First of all, the role that angels played in the Hebrew Bible is fairly indirect. There's the Angel of the Lord—

Jon: Right.

Tim: Who comes onto the scene. And then occasionally, they're right there in the foreground, like Sodom and Gomorrah, for example.

Jon: Yeah, there's a couple angels.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's not super common. Like, G—

Jon: Yeah, D—Daniel has his encounter with angels.

Tim: So let's just notice that the first book of the Bible—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: Has lot—loads of angels. Like, they're just kind of—they're appearing to Jacob, they're appearing to Hagar—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Lots of angels.

Jon: Yep.

Tim: And then it just kind of chills.

Jon: Yeah. That's true.

Tim: Exodus, the Angel of the Lord appears in some stories, guiding the people through the wilderness.

Jon: And in Mount Sinai.

Tim: And at Mount Sinai. But after—oh, you're saying, in the burning bush?

Jon: In the burning bush with Moses.

Tim: Yeah, with Moses.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's right. And then, they kind of—they kind of chill out. And then Joshua encounters a man with a sword. Uh—

Jon: What story is that?

Tim: That's when Joshua goes into the promised land—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And they're—the captain of the armies of the Lord is standing there. It's the Angel of the Lord—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: He's just not called that.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: And then—

Jon: We haven't looked at that.

Tim: No. It's such an important story. We need—we'll get—we'll get to Joshua one day, Jon.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And Judges—

[Laughter]

Tim: And then Samuel and Kings. But right now, we're doing Jude.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So point is is that angels are—there's a lot in Genesis. They are moderate throughout the rest of the Torah and Prophets. And then they really come into prominence in the Prophets. When the Prophets have visions, often they're encountering these humanoid—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Angelic figures. And in—like in Daniel. So it's really interesting that the bookends, Genesis and then the Prophets and Daniel, is where you get the most angels. And in Second Temple Jewish thought, what Jewish Bible nerds did was take all of these clues within the Hebrew Bible, and they took the worldview that comes from Genesis one, the s—

Jon: Oh, okay,

Tim: Seven-day creation narrative, and days four through six of creation—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Where day four is the sun, moon, and stars, which are the rulers above—

Jon: The rulers of the sky.

Tim: The sky rulers, and they mirror the human images of God that are rulers below.

Jon: The day six—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Rulers, the land rulers.

Tim: And that concept of Heaven and Earth as mirrors of each other—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: That idea is then carried forward in: Second Temple Jewish Bible nerds began to think through the implications of that. And so they begin to fill out a portrait of the spiritual realm, but they do so using language and vocabulary from the earthly realm. And so you get a lot more detail about angels as you get into Second Temple Jewish literature, but it's the result of them meditating on the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Like Enoch.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. And loads of texts. I'm about to show you a bunch.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So what I'm going to show you are two examples of how Jewish thought about angels took the ideas of the Hebrew Bible and developed them.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: This is like early biblical theology. So first is that idea I just mentioned, that on day four of creation, God appoints the lights in the sky as rulers and governors of day and night. So that idea of the lights in the sky—and they're called the hosts of Heaven at—in Genesis 1:31—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The hosts of Heaven, which is the phrase for angels, spiritual beings.

[Laughter]

Jon: One of the—one of the terms.

Tim: Yeah, one of the terms. That's right. That turns into this portrait of the lights in the sky and angels as delegated rulers of the cosmic order of day and night, which is a pretty important rhythm for life in our world.

[Laughter]

Tim: I mean, it's super important.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And so there's all sorts of texts in the Hebrew Bible that talk about how the light of the sun and the stars—it's all designed by God, ordered by God. And those are lights in the sky, images of God's light, and they follow God's orders all the time, except for the handful of ones that wander—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The wandering ones, which Jude's going to mention.

Jon: Okay. Now, just to state it, these are the planets and the sun and—

Tim: That's right.

Jon: The stars?

Tim: "Planet" comes from the Greek word *planao*, which means to wander.

Jon: To wander.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah. And in an ancient perspective, these were the creatures. These were the heavenly hosts.

Tim: Yeah, they're—

Jon: Right?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Like, to me, that's a different category.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Like, there could be heavenly hosts, let's talk about the spiritual realm.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: But that's different than—

Tim: You got it.

Jon: The stars and the sun.

Tim: We think of them as different. In Genesis one, the lights in the sky are called 'otot in Hebrew, which—

Jon: Signs?

Tim: Means sym—

Jon: Symbols?

Tim: Signs or symbols, which is a synonym of humans being called images of God, or— or likenesses.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So just like humans image God, the stars are symbols of God's light. And if you want, this would be a good time to pause this conversation and go back to our long series from years ago called the God series. And we have multiple episodes on the stars and spiritual beings in a lot more detail.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So you could kind of hyperlink to that, maybe in the show notes.

Jon: I don't think I've closed the loop in my mind about it.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Like—

Tim: I've actually had a whole bunch of new thoughts about this recently that I've been just looking for time to write it down—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: So I can fill it out and then talk with you about it.

[Laughter]

Jon: About spiritual beings?

Tim: Yeah. But—and particularly the stars and then the mir—the way they mirror Heaven and Earth—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: And where the names come from. Because here's—what's interesting also is that many angels get names. Let me just show you—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: A bunch of examples. Actually, one of the latest books in the Hebrew Bible names a couple of these. Their names are "Who is Like God," and "God is a Powerful Warrior." We know them as "Michael" and "Gabriel."

Jon: Mhm. Okay.

Tim: But “Michael” means “Who is Like God.” “Gabriel” means “God is a Powerful Warrior.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But in later Second Temple Jewish texts, they get names. Ah, in the book of Enoch, there is a chief angel who is the leader of all the lights in the sky, and his name is named after what God shines into the darkness on day one. “Let there be *ur*.” [The form in Genesis 1:14 is *ma’or*] His name is “Uriel,” “My light is God.” So it’s a name of a chief star—

[Laughter]

Tim: Whose—and the name of it is, “The Light That I Shine is God’s Light.” Isn’t that rad?

Jon: That is cool.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Would there have been a star in the sky that they would point at and be, “That’s Uriel”?

Tim: You know what, probably. I haven’t—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Looked that up.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: I don’t—yeah, that’s a great question.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I don’t know. In another passage in—uh—the book of Enoch, chapter 82, it just starts naming all of the leaders, all of the chief stars. And all their names are symbolic that have God in them.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: It’s the word *’el*.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So the point is is that star beings up there are God's delegated rulers to order the functioning of the cosmos, because you get light, and then light shines on the ground, and you get fruit, and—right—the plants, it makes everything grow. So they're pretty key players—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the order of the cosmos.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's important. Here's another important thing connected with angels. Again, this comes from the Hebrew Bible. There's a poem in Deuteronomy 33 that Moses sings, and in this poem, he's retelling poetically the moment God showed up on Mount Sinai. And he includes a detail in the poem that wasn't explicitly there in the narrative in Exodus about when God showed up. And he puts it this way, Mo—this is Deuteronomy 33:2: "Yahweh came down from Sinai. He dawned upon them from Seir—" which are the mountains, like, East of Sinai. "He shone forth from Mount Paran—" which is another way to refer to the—that mountainous region there.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "He came with myriads of holiness." Thousands of holiness.

Jon: Literally?

Tim: Our English translations, many of them do "thousands of holy ones," but it's a singular noun. "Thousands of holiness."

Jon: Hmm.

[Laughter]

Tim: "And at his right hand was a fiery law for them."

Jon: And the "them" is the holiness?

Tim: The "them—"you have got to wait for the "them."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "He loves his people—all of the holy ones—" and there it is plural—"were in your hand. They bowed down at your feet, each one accepting direction from you." The "you" is God. "A *torah* Moses commanded for us as a possession for the assembly of Jacob."

So Yahweh came down with a whole bunch of holy ones onto the mountain. And in God's right hand was a—

Jon: Well, hold on, he came down with thousands of holiness.

Tim: Ho—that's true. Thousands of things that fit in the category of holiness.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Holiness is the unique set-apartness that is—that is associated with God. So thousands of ones who participate or share in God's holiness. And in God's hand was a law—

[Laughter]

Tim: That was on fire.

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah. And this is the Torah?

Tim: Yes, it's a way of conceiving of God's word—

Jon: Becoming *torah*.

Tim: That the people heard. And what they heard was lightning and thunder. They saw lightning, heard thunder. That's why they freaked out.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So that's being described poetically as—

Jon: The fiery law?

Tim: A fiery law in God's hand.

Jon: Oh, is that actually the word *torah* there?

Tim: It's fascinating. It's an Aramaic word.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: The Hebrew word for *torah* is down here in verse four. The Aramaic word—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: That's equivalent in Aramaic for *torah* is *dat*.

Jon: There's an Aramaic word in Deuteronomy?

Tim: Yeah. Isn't that interesting?

Jon: Huh.

[Laughter]

Tim: Actually—actually, this little—this phrase, '*eshdat* is a whole rabbit hole. We could spend a whole episode, actually, just on—

[Laughter]

Jon: On that word?

Tim: That one word.

Jon: Okay.

[Laughter]

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Or two words. Uhm—

Jon: A fiery—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: '*Eshdat*.

Tim: Mhm. Then verse three goes on to say, “God loves his people—”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: “The ones to whom he came on the mountain.”

Jon: I'm thinking, now, the people who God—God's making a covenant with?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: This is the "them."

Jon: This is the "them."

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And so—

Tim: Yep.

Jon: He loves them. He loves—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: This people.

Tim: He loves this people to whom he came with a fiery law in his hand, accompanied by thousands—

Jon: Thousands—

Tim: Of—

Jon: Of holiness.

Tim: Of holiness.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And his people, whom he loves, are then called "the holy ones in your hand."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And they bowed. So God has holy ones above with whom he comes down—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Thousands of holiness—right—that he comes down with.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then, he were—as it were, the Torah becomes a fire from Heaven that comes down to Earth—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: In the form of God's words and commands. And then when they touch down on earth, they meet God's beloved ones, who are also holy ones.

Jon: I see. So this is the mirror of the land and the sky rulers.

Tim: Yes. So the holy ones above, the holy ones below.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And the holy ones above accompany God as he comes down to give the Torah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: What is so interesting—you see it appear in the New Testament in Paul and in the book of Acts and in Hebrews, this idea that the law given to Israel at Mount Sinai was actually given through angels.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Paul explicitly references this in Galatians 3:19, where he's—is talking about, you know: Why and where did the law come from—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: For Israel?

Jon: Yep.

Tim: And he describes it as being ordered through angels by the hands of a mediator, Moses.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: In Stephen's speech in the book of Acts chapter seven, he talks about: Our ancestors received the living oracles of God, the law, by the direction of angels.

Jon: Right.

Tim: And you can look in Josephus—first century Jewish historian. You can look in other Second Temple Jewish texts. There's a book called Jubilees that's a retelling of Exodus that just retells the story of Mount Sinai and Israel there with Moses, and it just puts in an angel. And the only one Moses ever talks to is the angel. Uh—the angel is called "The Angel of the Face," that is, God's face. And that's who gives the Torah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So here's why this is all relevant. Why is Jude saying it's a real problem that—

Jon: To slander the angels.

Tim: That these people show public contempt for spiritual beings? In Second Temple Jewish thought, angels were associated as delegates of God over the cosmic order and over the covenant relationship.

Jon: The Torah?

Tim: The Torah, yes. Oh, actually, there's one—another step here. So Adam and Eve were destined and—to be images of God who rule over Heaven and Earth. That's Genesis chapter one. And they—right—they blow it. And so they end up going back to the dust, and so does all their children. So when the Messianic hope starts to build momentum through the Hebrew Bible, a really important kind of summary moment where all those hyperlinked ideas come together is in the book of Daniel, which we've talked about many times. Daniel chapter seven—such an important chapter.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And there, there's a whole bunch of beasts and mutants that—

[Laughter]

Tim: It's a dream—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That he's having.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Beast mutants that represent violent empires and kingdoms come up out of a dark, chaotic ocean—kingdoms that actually don't bring order—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But actually bring chaos and dis—they de-create the world—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Through violence.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So they come up out of the—the chaotic sea.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: They're returning the world back to the chaos from which they came. This is Daniel's way of describing—

[Laughter]

Tim: Ba—Babylon.

Jon: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Kind of intense.

Jon: Some intense political rhetoric.

Tim: Yeah, he and Jude would've—would have been great friends—

[Laughter]

Tim: Right? But Daniel has a vision that God's going to raise up a son of Adam, one like a son of Adam, who's going to be enthroned in the heavens, sit on God's throne, a human-like figure. And all powers, human kingdoms, but also heavenly beings, will bow down to him. That's in the portrait.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And so Paul the Apostle comes onto the scene, and he believes that Jesus is Israel's Messiah. And he believes that Jesus, in his resurrection and ascension to God's right hand, now is the ruler over Heaven and Earth, over all humans, and over all spiritual beings. Even more, what he says is, "Man, if you put your trust in the Messiah —"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "His life is your life—his identity is your identity."

Jon: "So even you—"

Tim: So Paul says, for example, in the letter to the Ephesians, "Okay, so there is the Messiah whom God raised from the dead, seating him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion." Right? Then Paul can go on to then say of the Ephesians, "Hey, guys, you should know that you all used to be dead in your transgressions and sins. You were slaves to the spirit at work in people who live against God's wisdom." He calls them the "sons of disobedience."

Jon: The spirit—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: This isn't like referring to multiple angels? This is—

Tim: I think he's referring here to the chief evil one—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The *satan*. "But because of God's love for us, he's rich in mercy, he made us alive with the Messiah—"this is key—Ephesians two, verse six: "He raised us up with Christ. He seated us in the heavenly realms." Like, we're—we have a Daniel seven identity now.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So we—

Jon: Hmm, wow.

Tim: Rule over the angels.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It may not feel like it, but that's our future.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In fact, Paul explicitly says this—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: A couple times—

Jon: Right.

Tim: In—like in First Corinthians, he tells them, “Don’t you know that you are the holy ones, and you’re going to be responsible for ruling the whole world one day? We’re going to even judge angels.”

Jon: Hmm. Right. Okay, and this is where he gets this from?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Okay. So I—can I say it back?

[Laughter]

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Not only are the angels ordering the sky and, like, the cosmos and the order of how things work, they’re actually involved in giving us God’s order for our lives?

Tim: That’s right. Yeah, over the moral order, you could say.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So in other words, it’s a vision of: In a realm of spiritual mediators between Heaven and Earth, there’s God above—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The heavens in the heavens—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And then there’s the lights in the skies that are signs or symbols of spiritual beings. And when God, who is above, makes contact with earth, he does it through these delegates.

Jon: Huh.

Tim: Who—the delegates do what God did on day one, separating light from dark.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So they’re—they’re cosmic order-ers.

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: And then also through the gift of the Torah to Israel, angels beca—have this honored role of being the mediators of the moral order.

Jon: Didn't we kind of completely lose this idea then in Christianity? Like, we never talk about—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Some sort of angelic mediation between—

Tim: That's right.

Jon: God and us.

Tim: And that is because the Apostles were convinced that Jesus Messiah is the human image of God that was destined from the beginning to rule over Heaven and Earth.

Jon: So we don't need the angels?

Tim: That's exactly right.

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: And you could just say: This is why the letter to the Hebrews begins with a whole chapter dedicated—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: To talking about why Jesus is more important than angels.

Jon: That's right.

Tim: He—and he has to write that to a Jewish audience—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: To signal a shift in how they see—

Jon: Gosh—

Tim: The world.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "Listen, your whole life, you've been raised," the author of Hebrews is saying, "thinking that angels are the thing. And you know what? They're awesome."

Jon: Yeah. Okay. And so in your world, to—to say you have contempt for the angels is like, that's just saying, "You don't get it at all." Like—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: You're—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Misunderstanding God's, like, design for you—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Because God gives you his instruction through the angels.

Tim: Yeah. And now we realize, the one in charge of the angels, Jude will say, is the risen Lord Jesus Messiah.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But don't—don't diss the angels, man.

Jon: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Tim: Like, they have an honored role still in the cos—

Jon: It's such insider—

Tim: Cosmic—

Jon: Language, "Don't diss the angels."

[Laughter]

Jon: Oh my goodness.

Tim: "Don't diss—"that comes from being raised on the West Coast—

Jon: Oh, well, your—

Tim: In the 1990s.

Jon: Yeah, saying "diss—"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Is insider for West Coast.

Tim: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jon: But “Don’t—don’t slander the angels” is such a, like, insider term—

Tim: Mhm. Maybe—

Jon: That makes sense to them.

Tim: Yes, exactly.

Jon: Out of that sense of “Let’s honor the angels, they mediate on our behalf,” came this realization of, “Oh, but Jesus—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “Is the one we need.”

Tim: Right.

Jon: “Jesus is there now. And the angels respond to him, and we have direct access to Jesus.”

Tim: “To him.”

Jon: “In fact, we’re, like, kind of seated there with him—”

Tim: Which is—

Jon: “We’re part of his crew.”

Tim: Exactly right.

Jon: And so like, the whole angel thing switches. It changes. But you can still say something like, “Oh, well, they’re dissing the angels.”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And that would make sense.

Tim: Yep. Exactly.

Jon: All right.

Tim: That was a long setup. Now—

[Laughter]

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Let's go back to what he said. So he says, "Listen—" I'm going to paraphrase, here. In verse nine, he's going to say, "Hey, friends, here's a text in our church library—"

[Laughter]

Tim: "You all have read the Testament of Moses, right? You know, we all read it together?"

Jon: And you've also referred to it as "the ascension of Moses," right?

Tim: Oh, it's known by two names in ancient descriptions of it.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And it has a rabbit hole attached—

Jon: That's fine.

Tim: But I'm just—

Jon: I just was—

Tim: Going to call it the Testament of Moses—

Jon: Testament of Moses.

Tim: Also known as the Ascension of Moses.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yes. It's a Second Temple Jewish work that's imagining Moses giving a final speech, like, right before he dies. And he's forecasting the whole history of Israel right up to the destruction of Jerusalem in—

Jon: Oh, okay. So this is like: Deuteronomy speech just happened, and then Moses is like, "One more thing."

Tim: "One more thing."

Jon: And then—

Tim: Yeah, he forecasts—

Jon: This is the Testament of Moses.

Tim: The r—the exile of Babylon. He then talks about the return from Babylon, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and then the destruction of Jerusalem even again.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. In it is a story about the burial of Moses.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And it's a story about Michael the archangel being the one to bury Moses. But then, the *satan* shows up.

Jon: Oh, really—

Tim: Yes—

Jon: The *satan*?

Tim: In the Testament of Moses, the *satan*, the evil one, shows up. And the *satan* says, "Moses is not worthy of honorable burial because he murdered that Egyptian." That's how the story goes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Then Michael has this response. And that's what Jude is quoting from here. And so here's what Jude says. He says, "Listen, even Michael, like, the chief angel of God—"

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "When he was disputing the slanderer—"often translated, the devil—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Don't you remember, even Michael didn't dare to bring about a judgment of slander. Rather, he said, 'May the Lord rebuke you.'"

Jon: Oh.

Tim: If there was anybody who was in a right position to bring divine judgment on the evil one, surely it was Michael in that moment. And even Michael didn't take it upon himself to render a judgment about even a rebel spiritual being. He said—

Jon: Oh, that's what this is about—

Tim: "Let God take care of that one."

Jon: Huh.

Tim: So then Jude goes on. He says, “But these people, man, the things about which they have no knowledge, they slander. And man, whatever they think they do understand like irrational, instinct-driven animals, by these things, they are destroyed.” So they claim to have knowledge. And actually, they have no clue. They are slandering both God and God’s delegated powers. They don’t understand the workings of Heaven, but they think they do. They claim to have knowledge of the workings of Heaven and Earth. “We’ve been enthroned with Messiah over the spiritual beings. That gives us freedom to rule the world as we see fit.”

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Remember, they pollute the flesh.

Jon: Okay—

Tim: They reject God’s—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Authority.

Jon: So that would have likely been something they would have said, maybe?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “Hey, look, guys,” like, “aren’t we greater than the angels and aren’t—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “We, like, seated—”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: “In the skies?”

Tim: Yes.

Jon: “So let’s just party.”

Tim: “Let’s party. We are enthroned above the angels with the Messiah, and so sleeping around is not a big deal. That doesn’t affect my eternal destiny.” This was actually a widespread—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Distortion of early Christianity that became really popular. Paul was confronting a version of this in a—a more Greek, Romanized version in Corinth. But it’s very similar. He calls it being worldly, *kosmikos*, thinking in a worldly way. And so that guy who’s sleeping with his mother-in-law and they think it’s all fine—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Still going to the Greek and Roman temples, sleeping with the cult prostitutes there.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "What—what does that have to do with me acknowledging Jesus as my Lord?" And Paul's like, "Good night."

[Laughter]

Tim: Like, "It has everything to do—"but that was a new way of thinking, especially for Greek and Roman—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: People.

Jon: And this is what taking the grace of God and turning it into—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Permission—

Tim: Permission—

Jon: To just—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Do what you want to do.

Tim: Yeah. So here's what I love about this paragraph of Jude—

[Laughter]

Tim: Is he's naming a book in their church library—

Jon: Yes.

Tim: That is not in—

Jon: That I've never read.

Tim: Yeah, and that—it's not in the Hebrew Bible, but it was a text that his church community read and read the Hebrew Bible in light of.

[Musical Break (38:35—39:02)]

[Michael the Archangel's Restraint (39:02—1:06:12)]

Jon: Yeah. Okay. Let's talk about this story more, because I don't think I fully understand what's going on.

Tim: Yes. Why is this Second Temple text talking about the burial of Moses as a disputing ground for an angel and the Satan?

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah. Why that—

[Laughter]

Jon: And what did Michael mean by, "Oh, I'm not going to slander Satan"? Like, what's

—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: What's really going on? I don't get it.

Tim: Okay. Yes. All right. So—whew—welcome to the—the mind of Second Temple Messianic Jewish Bible nerds. So their minds are so saturated, they're simultaneously thinking of about half a dozen hyperlinked biblical texts all of the time.

[Laughter]

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. So we're going to have to take this step by step, like, for all of the pieces. First of all, the story about Moses' burial—let's start there.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: It's the last chapter of the Torah, Deuteronomy 34, and it has a little detail in it most of us would read over, but it sparked a whole lot of meditation for ancient Jewish readers. So Deuteronomy 34, verse five, we read, "Then Moses the servant of Yahweh died there in the land of Moab according to the command of Yahweh. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Bet Peor. And until this day, nobody knows where he's buried."

Jon: And who buried Moses.

Tim: Yeah. So the last words of the previous sentence are, "He died according to the command of Yahweh. And he buried him."

Jon: Hmm, Yahweh buried Moses.

Tim: What does that mean?

[Laughter]

Tim: What—what does it mean? We know that Second Temple Jewish Bible nerds were puzzled by this. What is fascinating is there is a Dead Sea Scroll manuscript of Deuteronomy of—for this very section. And when it comes to this part of Mo—God burying Moses, it actually has a plural verb, not a singular. So—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: "And they buried him." Which is just as puzzling, because you're like—

Jon: Well, who's the "they?"

Tim: Well, who's the "they?"

[Laughter]

Tim: But then, what we get in other Jewish Second Temple literature—we find out who the “they” is.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So there were Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible, and some of these Aramaic translations were also a form of commentary woven into the translation.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And all the Aramaic targums have a plural, “they buried him.”

Jon: Wait, an Aramaic targum is a translation of—

Tim: Targum means translation.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah, so the Aramaic translation. All—and all of—there’s multiple versions of these Aramaic translations.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And all of them have the plural buried. One of them, which is called Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, tells you who the “they” is. And—

[Laughter]

Jon: Oh.

Tim: This is how they translate Deuteronomy—the—what we just read—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In Deuteronomy 34. “Therefore, Moses, the servant of the Lord, was gathered there in the land of Moab by the kiss of the word of the Lord.”

Jon: Okay. That’s kind of—

Tim: “Gathered” means to—to die.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So God gave him a kiss as his body gave out.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: "Michael and Gabriel arranged a golden couch set with diamonds—"

Jon: Ooh.

Tim: "Sardonyx and beryl." These are tabernacle jewels.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "They arranged with silk cushions and purple cloth and white robes. Also, Metatron, and Yophiel, and Uriel, and Yephephiah—"

Jon: Were these other angels?

Tim: "Four masters of wisdom carried him upon it."

Jon: Ooh.

Tim: So he's actually getting buried by six angels.

Jon: Ooh, in like some, like, very fancy procession.

Tim: Super fancy—

[Laughter]

Tim: Like, funeral couch.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Then, by means of his word, the Lord led him four miles and buried him in the valley opposite Bet Peor."

Jon: So Yahweh still buried him, but now, there's all these angels involved.

Tim: Yeah. It's like an—

Jon: So this—

Tim: Angelic procession.

Jon: So when would this have been made?

Tim: Well, the targums are very difficult to date.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But in the late Second Temple period or—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Right—right after. Mhm. What this reflects is Jewish Bible readers—

Jon: Okay—

Tim: Who—

Jon: Doing commentary?

Tim: Yeah. What do we mean when we say God personally—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Does something?

Jon: Or that there were multiple people involved?

Tim: Yeah. Well, usually, when God does things on Earth, the Bible might say that, but then there are other stories of God coming to do something, and the way he's doing it is through angelic mediators, like the visitation of Sodom and Gomorrah or the visitation of angels at different events in the life of Elijah or Elisha. So it must mean that actually, it was angels who came—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And buried him.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So it—it's an interpretive imagination that's doing theology—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: But vi—by means of—of hyperlinks.

Jon: Okay. And so the Ascension of Moses—is that's what we're calling it?

Tim: The Ascension of Moses, yeah—assumes that Michael was there at the burial of Moses. Why? Wh—why?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And so—uhm—it's all generated out of interpretive reflection on the—what it means that Yahweh buried him.

Jon: Right. Okay.

Tim: That's why Michael's there.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's—so that's the first step.

[Laughter]

Jon: Okay. Why is Michael there—

Tim: Why is Michael there in the first place?

Jon: Burying Moses?

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Now. Why is the *satan* there?

[Laughter]

Tim: This is even more wild—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But this is so fascinating. So the idea of the *satan* standing there accusing Moses after his death—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: Before God—where is this idea coming from? So this is the result of a Jewish Bible nerd who has hyperlinked about half a dozen other biblical texts together. And here's—I'm just going to list them all—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And you'll—and you'll start to see how they work together. First of all, think of the snake in the garden—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Who heard God's command and is there trying to undermine Adam and Eve's trust in God's command—

Jon: Right.

Tim: Not to eat from the tree.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. Think of Abraham with Isaac in Genesis 22, and Yahweh tests Abraham and asks him to surrender the life of Isaac—right—by offering him as a going up offering on Mount Moriah. Okay.

Jon: Okay. Well, there's—

Tim: Think—

Jon: No satan there.

Tim: Nope. These are all the necessary ingredients—

Jon: All right.

Tim: To get to the—

Jon: We're making the stew.

Tim: We're making the stew. Next is a weird story in Exodus four where Yahweh comes to put Moses to death—

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: The night before he arrives back in Egypt to confront Pharaoh.

Jon: And then his wife saves him.

Tim: And his wife Zipporah saves him. Why is Moses going to be put to death by Yahweh? Well, the narrative logic and the hyperlink in that story is—I think, is most likely that it's a measure-for-measure consequence—God's holding Moses accountable for his murder of that Egyptian—

Jon: Oh, right.

Tim: And burying him in the sand.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So next, think of the story of David counting up all his fighting forces with a census. There's two versions of that story in the Hebrew Bible.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The first version in Second Samuel 24 says, "Yahweh was testing David." You read the parallel story to that in First Chronicles 21, and it says, "The Satan tested David."

Jon: Oh, okay. All right. Who's doing the testing?

Tim: Who's doing the testing? Let's hold in our minds also Job chapters one and two. You got Job—

[Laughter]

Tim: Righteous guy, faithful in everything that he's done. The *satan* comes and accuses Job of having ulterior motives for serving God.

Jon: Yep.

Tim: And last but not least, we need to hold in our minds the text that actually is being quoted from in the Testament of Moses that Jude quotes.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: That little phrase that Jude says—that "Michael responded, 'May the Lord rebuke you—'"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: He's quoting from this Second Temple text, the Testament of Moses.

Jon: But that's quoting from—

Tim: But that is quoting from Zechariah chapter three. Zechariah chapter three is a story about after Ezra and Nehemiah come back and lead a whole bunch of people back from Babylon to go rebuild Jerusalem and live there. They're rebuilding the temple, and they're going to install, like, the old priesthood, but in the new second temple—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In Jerusalem. And Zechariah chapter three has this scene where a guy named Joshua, he's the high priest about to get installed in the newly built second temple—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But then, Zechariah has a vision, and it's as if Joshua is standing in the heavens right before the Angel of the Lord. And guess who else is there? The *satan* is standing at his right hand to accuse him. So—

Jon: So he's got an angel on his left—

Tim: He's got a—yeah.

Jon: Oh. This—is this where this comes from?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: The angel on one side, the Satan on the other.

Tim: This will evolve in Christian thought and theology to an angel on your shoulder—on one shoulder, and a devil on the other.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: But what this is is this is Joshua while he's alive, and Zechariah is seeing, as it were, a heavenly dispute—

Jon: Huh.

Tim: Over whether or not Israel deserves to get another shot in the land.

Jon: Yeah, okay.

Tim: Because what we see is that Joshua in Zechariah chapter three, verse three, is clothed with filthy garments—

Jon: In the vision?

Tim: Standing up there. In the vision.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So basically, it's—well, you've got the high priest of Israel who represents Israel. They've come back into the land after exile, and their high priestly representative is still —his clothes—

Jon: He's compromised.

Tim: Are still stained—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: With the sins of Israel. So you can see the scene here. Basically, the *satan* is like this—

Jon: Like, "See guys?"

Tim: Like—

Jon: "You can't do it."

Tim: Like the snake coming up before this new Adam figure—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And saying, "This guy doesn't deserve to be here."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "He comes from a people with a whole history of idolatry and—"

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: "Violence—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "And injustice. That guy doesn't deserve to be here." So that's the scene.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Then we're just told in verse two, all of a sudden, "Yahweh said to the accuser, the *satan*, 'May Yahweh rebuke you—'"

[Laughter]

Tim: "Oh, accuser—"

Jon: Oh, wow. Yahweh says it.

Tim: "And may Yahweh, who chooses Jerusalem, rebuke you."

Jon: Mmm. Yeah. None of that.

Tim: So it's Yahweh speaking.

Jon: "Get behind me, Satan."

Tim: Yes. Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So in the scene, though, we've got a—the high priest, you've got the *satan* on one hand, the accuser—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: He's like a prosecuting attorney, and then you have the defending attorney. And—

Jon: The Angel of the Lord?

Tim: It is the Angel of the Lord.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But then all of a sudden, it's just verse two—it's then Yahweh says, "May Yahweh rebuke you."

[Laughter]

Jon: This is another one of those Angel of the Lord moments, where you're like, "Wait, is this—"

Tim: Yes.

Jon: "Is this Yahweh?"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It's like Moses and the burning bush.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And what happens is Yahweh forgives Joshua, and says, "Take the dirty garments off of him. Give him clean robes. And he's going to have walking access, in and out of Heaven and Earth, and the heaven—and the temple." So what you get in Second Temple Jewish literature is all of these stories hyperlinked together. So for example, there's a Second Temple Jewish text called *Jubilees* that's a retelling of *Genesis* and *Exodus* written by a super Bible nerd.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: When he retells the story of Abraham and Isaac in *Genesis* 22—and that story begins with, "Yahweh tested Abraham—"he begins it by saying, "The *satan* tested Abraham."

Jon: Huh.

Tim: And he imagines a whole scene that happened right before that, and it's basically *Job* chapters one and two, but with Abraham—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: In the story.

Jon: Oh, fascinating.

Tim: So the *satan*—

Jon: So you're talking about when Yahweh said to Abraham, "Go up and sa—"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: "And give me your son."

Tim: Yep. Yep.

Jon: Very clearly in Genesis 22, it says, "This was a test from Yahweh."

Tim: Yes. Yeah.

Jon: But in this Jubilees passage—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: It's going, "Yeah, but I bet there was some real tension there. Some—"

Tim: It's reading that story in Genesis in light of what happened to Job, and saying, "Well, I know the test that Job faced where he lost his sons—"

Jon: Lost everything.

Tim: "Uhm—happened because Yahweh was talking about how proud he was of Job as a faithful one." And that's how the story begins in Jubilees, telling about Abraham. It begins, this is in Jubilees chapter 17, that "Words came in Heaven about Abraham, how faithful he was in everything that God told him, and he loved the Lord. He was faithful even in affliction. And so the *satan* comes—"in Jubilees, he's called Prince Mastema, which is a variation of the word *satan*. And then he starts saying, "Well, you know, actually, Abraham loves Isaac, his son, more than he loves you, God." That's—that's the accusation.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "And if you were to tell him to offer up Isaac, I bet he wouldn't do it."

Jon: Right.

Tim: That's the *satan*'s accusation here. So in other words, these are Jewish readers that are now—anytime Yahweh tests anybody, they're letting all the stories illuminate each other, and they'll fill in the details missing in one story from these other hyperlinked texts.

Jon: So any test that was from Yahweh, they're like, "I know there was the accuser there too."

Tim: There was a Job one and two scene happening, and it'll import. So this happens—

Jon: Okay, this is a lot.

Tim: Dude. But this a l—but the—this happens with the story of Moses in—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: In the book of Jubilees.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: This is Jubilees chapter 48.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: When God commissions Moses, it imagines a scene where Prince Mastema, the *satan*, comes and says, “You can’t use Moses. He’s a murderer.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “You can’t use a murderer to liberate people from a violent Pharaoh.”

Jon: “He’s not qualified.”

Tim: “He’s not qualified.” So that’s how Jubilees does that. So what we’re talking about is anytime God tests somebody in the Hebrew Bible, it’s reading all those stories in light of the Satan’s test of Job in Job one and two, and in light of this little story in Zechariah of the *satan* accusing Joshua.

Jon: Okay. And the Zechariah story seems really important because that’s what he’s quoted from.

Tim: That’s what he’s quoting from.

Jon: And I think this is where I still don’t fully appreciate—so—

[Laughter]

Jon: In Judah’s, like, library is—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: The Testimony of Moses. Also, he reads Jubilees.

Tim: Oh, yeah.

Jon: Like, he knows—

Tim: He for sure knows about it—

Jon: All these stories.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And so he's meditated a lot on these themes we've just talked about—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: How the Satan is always there to, like, set a trap and accuse.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: Okay. And so there's a story in the Testament of Moses where Moses' burial is happening. We actually have another version of that story where—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: There's six angels or—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But in this one—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: It's—

Tim: Just one angel.

[Laughter]

Jon: Focused in on—

[Laughter]

Jon: Michael.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay. And the Satan is there just like in Zechariah's story of the new Joshua at the new temple, saying, "Hold on—"

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Like, "Moses—remember, he's a murderer." Like, "We can't give him this kind of honor."

Tim: That's right.

Jon: So just like in Zechariah, Yahweh says, "May Yahweh rebuke you—"

[Laughter]

Jon: To Satan.

Tim: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Jon: Which is a little rabbit hole.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jon: In the Testament of Moses, Michael—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Says—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: To Satan "May Yahweh rebuke you."

Tim: That's right.

Jon: So he uses the words of God a—uh—at that moment.

Tim: You got it.

Jon: And what does he mean?

Tim: "May Yahweh—"yeah. In other words, this messenger of Yahweh is not taking it upon himself to offer this judgment about the slander of the *satan* against Moses. So if there is anybody qualified—

Jon: Right.

Tim: To offer a judgment against the *satan* and say, "You slandering, lying scum, get out of here." Like, "Yahweh is generous. He's merciful. Get out of here with your accusations."

Jon: Right.

Tim: That's what Michael could have said.

Jon: Michael could have said that.

Tim: But instead, he just says, "You know what? I've got a boss. His name is Yahweh."

Jon: "We're going to let him have the say."

Tim: "Let Yahweh rebuke you. I've got a lot of things I want to say to you right now, *satan*. But I'm going to let Yahweh do it because he's in charge."

Jon: Hmm.

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah. "Yahweh has a plan for all of this."

Tim: Yeah, and Yahweh is generous. And Yahweh forgave Joshua in Zechariah. And therefore, if we imagine that Moses was being accused at his death for having a dirty past—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yahweh will be generous to Moses, and that that doesn't disqualify him.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And even Michael didn't take it upon himself to offer a judgment against the *satan*. So now, apply this argument. Judah has this group of bad news people—

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: Who are hanging out in his house church community. And they think that they are risen with the Messiah, elevated above Heaven and Earth, they're going to rule the new

creation with the Messiah, but they've got a deep misunderstanding of what that freedom and honor means.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: They think what it means is, "Dude, we can sleep around—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Because our bodies are all going to turn into something else—"uh—right—"In the new creation." And Judah's like, "No, that's a deep misunderstanding." And Paul the Apostle had to address that too. We talked about that a few minutes ago. But now, what Judah also really wants these people to understand is that yes, while God is going to elevate humanity as his stewards and rulers over the new creation—back to our line—don't diss the angels. Just because you're going to have authority over them doesn't mean that you get to—uhm—bring accusations against them now. Be like Michael, who just says, "Let Yahweh deal with you."

Jon: What would that mean to—that they're accusing the angels?

Tim: Because what these teachers are doing, as he talks about elsewhere, is they're dismissing the relevance of God's moral wisdom in the Torah, right? So angels delivered the—the wisdom of the Torah to Israel. "And well, if with the Messiah I'm exalted over the angels, it must mean the—like, the laws of the Torah are irrelevant for us."

Jon: "I can dismiss those too."

Tim: "I can dismiss those"—dismiss the 10 Commandments and all the wisdom—"right—"that they have. And it must be that I can now boss angels around." And so then Judah says, "Okay, no, no, no, no. Remember that we have this book in our library, our church library, that brings all these passages in the Hebrew Bible together. Even Michael, the most exalted angel, didn't take it upon himself to think that he could bring an accusation against—"uhm—

Jon: Who is clearly—

Tim: "The most corrupt angel."

Jon: The most corrupt angel.

Tim: "And he said, 'Let Yahweh deal with you.'" And—

Jon: So these men should have an attitude of, "What I really want is Yahweh's final word."

Tim: Yes.

Jon: "That's what matters the most to me."

Tim: Yes.

Jon: "And if that's what I want, I'm going to recognize that God's moral order is important—"

Tim: Yes.

Jon: "And still has relevance in my life."

Tim: Yep. And "The moral order that's issued through the wisdom of the commands in the Torah are relevant." This is why Jesus had to himself clarify, "I didn't come to set aside the Torah—"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "And the Prophets. I came to fulfill them."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So this is another group that's misunderstood Jesus, and they think they can just set aside the laws of the Torah as irrelevant and live how they want. And in so doing, they are slandering the angels because they—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Viewed them as the—the ones through whom—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: God gave the Torah.

Jon: So—

[Laughter]

Jon: I kind of get it now.

[Laughter]

Tim: I know—

[Laughter]

Jon: I kind of get it now.

Tim: I know. I know.

Jon: But like, we're entering into such a foreign—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Worldview—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: For me.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: I just don't—

Tim: Me too.

Jon: I've never read these passages.

Tim: Me too.

Jon: I never think about this.

Tim: Me too. Yeah.

Jon: So fascinating. But—but here we have a letter in our Bible that we read that brings God's wisdom to us.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And it's quoting—

[Laughter]

Jon: A Second Temple scroll—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And a story written by Jewish Bible nerds reflecting on the Hebrew Bible and all these other texts—

Tim: These other—yeah.

Jon: That for them is also God's wisdom.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And I need to kind of figure out what to do with it.

Tim: Yeah. This Testament of Moses passage is itself meditating and reflecting on an idea found throughout the Hebrew Bible that when human beings fail to discern between good and bad, we make stupid decisions that hurt ourselves and hurt other people—uh—it creates a—a real question of like, “Well, if God's going to forgive and restore us, does that just, like—uhm—whitewash all the bad stuff that we've done and the trail of pain that we've left behind in the world?”

Jon: Right.

Tim: Like, that's still real. All that pain is real. And you could bring all that up and say, like, we deserve to pay for all that. And that's a real tension that the biblical authors are exploring, and they're doing it through all of these hyperlinked kind of testing stories. And that is what's at stake in all the hyperlinked texts, you know, that I was naming—Adam and Eve, Abraham and Isaac, Moses and the murder of the Egyptian, the story of Job. And so Jewish Bible nerds of Judah's period wanted to probe that question more. And so they did a theological exploration, but their minds do it by linking all these texts together. And now Judah's doing it to address an—another crisis in his church community. So maybe—it's just a little window into a subculture of—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Early messianic Jewish Christianity that—they were such Bible nerds, they could talk about moral issues that we recognize—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like not sleeping around—

[Laughter]

Tim: Obeying God's—right—moral—moral wisdom. But the way they talk about it and try and persuade each other seems so—

Jon: So foreign. So weird.

Tim: So foreign to us, yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Because they just lived in a different time and place. But there you go.

[Laughter]

Tim: I—I don't know what else to say other than—

Jon: And then remind me again what he goes on to say about these people after this.

Tim: Ah, he says, "They take it upon themselves to slander the angels that gave the Torah and ignore God's moral wisdom in the Torah. What they're slandering are things that they really have no clue about. And the things that they think they do understand, they don't really understand because they're destroyed by the little they do understand just like an irrational animal driven by instinct." He's really frustrated that these people have made relational inroads in his house church. And he is painting them in very unfavorable colors—

[Laughter]

Tim: We could say.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah. Okay. So—

[Laughter]

Jon: Where from here?

Tim: Yeah. So what he's now going to do is compare these people to three characters in the Hebrew Bible whose stories are all hyperlinked together—

[Laughter]

Tim: That not only disobeyed God's commands, but they did so in a way—uhm—that led other people to ruin and destruction—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Cain, Balaam, and Korah.

[Laughter]

Tim: And why he's going to bring them up and how their stories are connected—that's what we'll explore next.

[Musical Break (01:03:39—01:03:43)]

Jon: Thanks for listening to BibleProject podcast. Next week, Jude's going to reference more wayward characters in the Hebrew Bible, including Cain, Korah, and Balaam.

Tim: What links them together is subtle in the Hebrew Bible. These are three stories of people who themselves made bad decisions, but then they bring other people into their deception.

Jon: BibleProject is a crowdfunded nonprofit, and we exist to help people experience the Bible as a unified story that leads to Jesus. Everything that we create is free because of the generous support of thousands of people just like you. Thank you so much for being a part of this with us.

Danielle: Hi, my name is Danielle from Newark, Ohio.

Johnny: My name is Johnny, and I'm from Scotland originally. I first discovered the BibleProject when I was with some friends back in 2017.

Danielle: I first heard about the BibleProject through my undergrad at Cedarville University. I use the BibleProject for the podcast. I'm able to share it with our house church.

Johnny: We often use BibleProject as a family, and we watch through some of the series that have been produced, and we just love them, and our kids do too. My favorite thing about the BibleProject is the excellence and the depth that has been shown.

Danielle: My favorite thing about the BibleProject is learning Scripture and this whole narrative and seeing God as this generous host of creation.

Johnny: We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus. BibleProject is a nonprofit funded by people like me. Find free videos, articles, podcasts, classes, and more on the BibleProject app and at BibleProject.com.

Danielle: Thank you.

Johanna: Hi, my name is Johanna, and I'm on the finance team, where I handle the logistics of our merchandise and distribution. I've been working at BibleProject for three years, and one of my favorite parts of working here is the culture and community. There's a whole team of people that make the podcast come to life every week. For a full list of everyone who's involved, check out the show credits wherever you stream the podcast and on our app.