

Gospel P4

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Podcast Date: January 6, 2017

(62.53)

Speakers in the audio file:

Jon Collins

Tim Mackie

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Jon: This is The Bible Project podcast. I'm John. In this episode, I'm going to be finishing up a conversation with Tim on the Gospel of Luke. If you haven't listened to the other three episodes that come before this on the Gospel of Luke, I highly recommend it so you get the context for where we're at.

In this episode, we're first going to talk about that strange story in Luke 9, the transformation of Jesus on the mount.

Tim: He becomes like the Ancient of Days enthroned in heaven in Daniel chapter 7.

Jon: In the next chapter is 9 through 19, Jesus travels to Jerusalem. In this section, we find many of the parables that Jesus told and we find Jesus at many banquet parties that he attends. In fact, Jesus is fascinated with parties, he even use them to talk about what the kingdom of God is like

Tim: When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends, don't invite your family or your rich friends. Go get the poor, the crippled, and the lame and the blind, and then you'll find true blessing.

Jon: All of these stories in this section reinforce that Jesus' mission was first the outsiders. It's a message that gets him in trouble with the religious leaders of the day.

Tim: "You don't need anyone to go look for you, you already are trying to be devoted to the God of Israel. But now, there are all these other people who have not been devoted to God of Israel or have been excluded for different reasons, and I'm going out to find them and include them and you're getting angry and calling me into question for including the people who are on the outside."

Jon: Jesus gets to Jerusalem, and we discuss the final meal he has with his disciples.

Tim: Jesus didn't give a lecture on the meaning of his death. He gave a meal - a symbolic meal.

Jon: We talk about his arrest and execution.

Tim: He's being crucified as the kind of rebel that he was calling Israel not become. He literally dies in Israel's place as the kind of person that he was calling Israel to turn away from being.

Jon: Finally, we talked about the last story in Luke. It's about two disciples who unexpectedly run into Jesus and don't recognize him until Jesus reveals himself to them.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Tim: It's only when you see the crucified Messiah as the real victor and king that you can actually recognize Jesus. And even then, you don't have a handle on him because he's gone.

Jon: Thanks for listening. Here we go.

Tim: We've been talking about this opening section that goes through Jesus' ministry while he's in Galilee recruiting his disciples, giving the Sermon on the plain, there's healings.

Tim: The way this opening section and galley ends then is with the story of Jesus being transformed on the mountain. Jesus takes three disciples: Peter, James and John, closest crew, he goes up to this mountain — not described where. He's on a mountain and a cloud of divine presence descends. So we're like, "Oh, is it Mount Sinai?" "No, that's really far away." "Oh, it's one of these flashes on the back screen of Mount Sinai."

Jon: You should be thinking about Mount Sinai.

Tim: That's right. Then Jesus is transformed in their midst.

Jon: Which means?

Tim: Shining white. He becomes like the Ancient of Days enthroned in heaven in Daniel chapter 7. That's the flash of my back screen, is the Ancient of Days gleaming like shiny metal fire and so on. That's what Jesus turns into.

We all know the transformation on the mount is a very interesting story. Is this a vision the disciples are having? Where did this story come from? Presumably, it came from the... Actually, Peter reflects on the event in 2 Peter. He looks back on this memory and says, "We were there." He says, "What we saw and heard was very strange, but it's what we saw."

Then they hear from the cloud, the divine voice echoing what was said at the baptism. And then it's Moses and Elijah there. Here's another flash, two other prophets who were on a mountain and met God in the cloud, and they start having conversation and about Jesus' Exodus.

So there are all these things rushing together here at Jesus that you just saw go do all this awesome upside-down Kingdom stuff. He's the king of Israel, but he's more. He's the enthroned one of Daniel 7. In Daniel 7, it's all the visionary symbolism of Daniel, where the Son of Man is this figure who represents Israel who gets trampled by the beasts, the beastly kingdoms, but God comes and exalts the persecuted

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

sufferings Son of Man figure and exalts him to his right hand to share in his rule over the nations.

The Son of Man figure is in Daniel a way of representing Israel in a single person. And Son of Man was Jesus's favorite self-designation. It's how he called himself. He actually never called himself Messiah, other people called him that. He called himself the Son of Man, which is he knew he was the king, but he knew that he would come to his kingship in this way that involved the road of suffering.

Jon: We're going to do a whole video on Son of Man eventually.

Tim: Yes. It's going to be so awesome.

Jon: But let's talk about it a little bit here. Is Jesus doing something noble here with a use of Son of Man? Or did other people have an idea of "Oh, this is an actual character versus just an image, a metaphor for Israel?"

Tim: Well, yeah. Here's the Son of Man video that we'll make in a nutshell. It all goes back to the Genesis image. Because Son of man just means a human one. It's just the Hebrew way of saying "one who belongs to humanity." A human.

So it's Adam in the garden. He's called the rule the beasts. And He rules the beast by humbling himself under God's rule. Then when humans rebel, they began the road to Babylon, Genesis 1-11. And so, humans actually become the beast that destroys other humans.

Babylon, then in the Pentateuch, gets linked to Egypt. Then you have God's covenant people who are suffering under the oppression of Babylon, Egypt distorted human beast. So, Daniels aware of all this. The book of Daniel is tracking with all this.

Babylon becomes this icon of everything that's wrong with the human race. And so, these human kingdoms that don't acknowledge God's kingdom cease to be human, like Nebuchadnezzar ceases to be human when he won't humble himself. And they become a beast. Then Daniel sees visions about the Son of Man suffering and trampled by the beast.

Jon: So, it's an Adam like character?

Tim: Yeah, it's Adam like character, but now Daniel and his friends who are from the line of Judah, they are in the belly of the beast in Babylon trying to be faithful to their God and they're persecuted, thrown to the lions, thrown to the beasts, thrown into the fire, and so on. And at every point, God delivers and vindicates them and they share and they get exalted.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

So the stories in Daniel, this whole arc, this narrative arc of humans from Genesis are made to rule but when they don't acknowledge God's rule, they become beasts and persecute other humans like animals. But Israel, God's chosen people are supposed to be different; they live under God's rule and they're persecuted by the beast, but one-day God will vindicate this human one the Son of Man and exalt him to a place of rule over the nations. That's Daniel 7.

Jon: That being Israel?

Tim: Well, in Daniel 7, explicitly the symbol of the Son of Man is unpacked as referring to the saints of the Most High. So in Daniel 7, it's a reference to the people, God's covenant faithful people as a whole, but they're represented in the vision by a personified single individual.

It seems clear that in Jesus' mind, he's merged the suffering vindicated Son of Man of Daniel with the suffering servant of Isaiah. And he sees all of that as his vocation and calling. This is all that we can see going on underneath the surface of how Jesus quotes from and uses the Old Testament is he's connected all this. How do we get there?

Jon: So this is a picture of him being more than...?

Tim: Jesus being transformed in the mountain. Yes.

Jon: It's connecting him to Daniel?

Tim: Yes. He's being exalted as the exalted Son of man, but we know that happens only after suffering and being persecuted by the beast, which in the Old Testament is always pagan nations. But as he's going to go to Jerusalem, we're going to see that Israel itself has become the beast and will kill its own king. That's on our minds as well as the Moses imagery of...

Jon: Ok, sorry, so I'm an Israelite during this time, I'm familiar with Daniel, familiar with Son of man, and then a guy comes up and he calls himself Son of man. How do I take that? What does that mean to me?

Tim: It's tricky. We know the book of Daniel was really popular in many circles in Jesus' day. The Son of Man figure was talked about and referred to, often connected to a coming ruler king. The Qumran community has a lot of references to this figure.

Jon: So this is person who will be connected to be the king?

Tim: It's a person who is also the leader of a group of people. It's never separated as—

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Jon: It's a leader of a movement.

Tim: It's a leader of the movement but the remnant, God's true people presented by their true leader will be trampled by the beast and vindicated. That's how the Qumran community—

Jon: Saw themselves?

Tim: Again, for our listeners, the community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls that were found in 1948. This community read the literature, they viewed themselves as this faithful remnant that would be vindicated. They view themselves as—

Jon: So, their leader would have been the son of Man?

Tim: They called him the teacher of righteousness was how their leader is referred to.

Jon: They didn't call him the Son of Man?

Tim: No. It's in the air that Daniel 7 help Jewish people who wanted to be faithful to the covenant. It gave them hope.

Jon: Have there been other leaders, teachers walking around calling themselves the Son of Man in any time before or after, during this?

Tim: Good question. Off the top my head, I'm not aware of any, but I have to do a little homework. I do know that son of man was the term Jesus used to refer to himself and no one else ever referred to him that way. And it didn't stick. None of the disciples or apostles call him that anywhere else in—

Jon: Yeah, they call him the Christ.

Tim: They call him the Messiah, the Son of God, the righteous one, but no one called him the Son of Man after. It was Jesus is special way of referring to himself pre crucifixion. It is interesting.

[00:11:51]

Jon: So let's move into the second section. If Luke, if the main thing is this reversal, and we see it kind of the launch of his ministry and then we see it when he's being crucified, let's talk about this middle section then. How does it fit into him traveling to Jerusalem and telling these parables?

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Tim: The travel section in Luke 9 - the end of 9 through the half of chapter 19, it's the biggest section in the book. There's a lot of material in here. I've wondered if this has kind of become like that kitchen drawer for Luke, where it's like—

Jon: It's like the story doesn't fit anywhere else but there.

Tim: He got a lot of material and he didn't get any information about where it fit chronologically, so he's like, "I'll put it here." But that's how Psalms stories and sayings feel like. But you can see through repetition. He's put a lot of repeated words and themes in here. And that's what's highlighted in the Read Scripture video.

He talks about more about his disciples' relationship to wealth in these 10 chapters of Luke than you find anywhere in all of the Gospels. Money is a big deal to Jesus but again, how you relate to money indicates how you relate to the dominant social values that he's here to turn upside down.

Jon: It's an indicator.

Tim: Yeah. It's also not a democratic republic capitalist society because he's mostly down on trying to acquire or build wealth in these chapters. But in their day, if someone was wealthy, it was either because they inherited or it was sketchy.

Jon: You mentioned that in the Money and God episode.

Tim: It's a different setting.

Jon: Because we live in a society where getting wealthy is altruistic because you're growing economy, you're creating jobs, you're helping people. That's the American myth.

Tim: And because of the in theory feedback loop of our culture where honesty is actually the best business, then, in theory, doing honest business is the way to success. And there are many cultures in the world today. You could even argue, in American culture, much of our economy actually doesn't operate that way.

Jon: Sure.

Tim: But in theory, you know. One, how you relate to money as a sign of whether you're going to accept Jesus' radical subversion of your view of the world. Two, the banquet parties. There are multiple banquets where Jesus is ... I mean, what kind of people's is he hanging out with here? The blind the sick, Samaritan, Zacchaeus. Little Zacchaeus has Jesus over for a party.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

So he's having all these parties with people, and then there's more than one dinner with Israel's religious leaders or the Pharisees, and somebody questionable comes into the room where Jesus says he doesn't wash his hands, and then they get into a debate. So Luke has almost created these contrasting parties.

There's like the lame party that represents Israel's current leadership, and then there's the new kingdom community and that's where the celebration is. And it all gets brought into chapter 15. This all comes together and chapter 15, which is there's no way we can do—

Jon: Hold on. I'm sorry. When he has the banquet with Israel's leaders, what's that story?

Tim: You'll look at the references there.

Jon: 11:37 through 52.

Tim: When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat. He went in, reclined at the table but the Pharisee was surprised when he saw that Jesus didn't wash his hands. And then Jesus is just like, "Well, wash your hands." And then you just goes into his thing about "Listen, you guys, tie and you've created all these new rules but woe to you."

Jon: It's an awkward dinner.

Tim: It becomes a really awkward dinner party.

Jon: So that's the contrast between the banquet with Zacchaeus?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay. The other one is beginning of 14.

Tim: One Sabbath, Jesus went in to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee. He was being carefully watched. In front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. Oh, and then this becomes the debate about this healing on the Sabbath. So, he heals the man.

Jon: Abnormal swelling of the body.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Wow. So, this guy was at the dinner party?

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Tim: Yeah, apparently. Jesus heals him. We don't know why or how. Then Jesus started noticing how the guests were given certain places of honor at the table. First, this was about Sabbath and Torah, but now he's going call him out for giving into the Roman honor, shame, way of life, and be like, "Listen, you assign your value by how close you get to sit to the head of the table."

Then he tells these parables about if you live in the kingdom, and you have a party, you invite all the nobodies and no names. When you give a lunch or dinner, don't invite your friends, don't invite your family or your rich friends. Go get the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind, and then you'll find true blessing.

Jon: Which is what he was doing.

Tim: Which is what he was doing, yeah.

Jon: And he's basically saying, "You should be doing what I'm doing. You should be going and throwing parties to the poor."

Tim: Yeah. Chapter 14 it all comes together. Then chapter 14, he tells the parable of the great banquet. He's still at this party where he's just already insulted the guests and the host. And then he says, "When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, 'Well, Blessed is the one who will eat the feast of the kingdom of God.'"

And Jesus says, "Let me tell you about the feast of the kingdom of God." It's this parable about a man who threw a great banquet and then all the guests who were invited say, "Oh, sorry I'm busy, can't come." So he goes invites all the poor, the lame and so on. And then the people who are first invited will never get to come to the banquet. That's the parable he tells. Jesus is really anti-social.

Jon: Don't invite that guy back.

[00:19:01]

Tim: Chapter 15 begins by saying, "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around Jesus." Average day now. Jesus has all kinds of people.

Jon: Crowd of people. People who are stoked, people who aren't stoked.

Tim: And questionable people, specifically. Matthew Levi, prostitute types.

Jon: Oh, tax collectors.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Tim: So, he's got his usual crew of all the wrong people around him according to the Pharisees. The Pharisees of the law are muttering, "Look at him, he eats..."

Jon: Wait. Sorry. To be a tax collector you're not accepted in the religious community, you've kind of sold out. You're like can't go to what tabernacle or the synagogue or whatever.

Tim: You work for the Romans, which means you're meeting with your Regional District overseer, you're probably not eating kosher when you're in his house giving your weekly report. That kind of thing. So he's mixing with Gentiles all the time and not to mention he's exploiting and profiting off of the taxation of your own people by a military occupier. Tax collector, you're unclean and you're a traitor to the covenant people.

So the Pharisees say, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Their accusation is about these people that Jesus is bringing in the kingdom too. Then he tells the parable of the lost sheep, he tells the parable of the lost coin. Somebody loses something, they drop everything to find it, then they find it, and there's a big party. For the sheep, for the coin.

Then there's the parable of—

Jon: The Prodigal.

Tim: It's called the Prodigal Son. What's interesting is that in most modern retelling of the story, the focus is on the father showing grace for the son. I mean, that's huge. That's a big part of the thing. So, the father, no matter what the son has done, the son comes back with humility, and the father, no questions asked. He just comes right back on it.

But that's not where the story ends. It ends with the other brother who never went away and he's been faithful to the father all along, and he's really angry. So you can see in this exchange with the Pharisees, he tells two parables about what he's doing, and then he tells another parable where these grumpy Pharisees are woven into this story now.

Jon: They're the older brother.

Tim: "Why are you so angry that the lost are found?" The last line of the parable, the father says to the grumpy son who represents the Pharisees, "My son, you're always with me. Everything I had is yours, but we had to celebrate because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and now he's found."

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Jon: So, he's telling the religious leaders, "You're already in? I mean, you've got it." I mean, sometimes he's bummed on them, like, "You got this so screwed up." But here he's throwing them a bone. He's kind of like, "You're already inheriting the favor of God."

Tim: Yeah. "You don't need anyone to go look for you. You already are trying to be devoted to the God of Israel. But now there are all these other people who have not been devoted to God of Israel, who have been excluded for different reasons, and I'm going out to find them and include them, and you're getting angry and calling me into question for including the people around the outside."

Notice it's cool that on the three parables everyone's uses this phrase "lost and found." Lost coin, I found it, let's rejoice. Lost sheep, I found it, let's rejoice. Then this parable ends with lost and found imagery, but also death and resurrection. This brother of yours was dead, now alive; lost and found.

Again, think, this pre-resurrection, pre-crucifixion, why would a Jewish teacher telling a parable about death and alive again would that mean to a Jewish hero? And you've only got a small number of places in the Old Testament that he could be echoing. There's the Valley of dry bones in Ezekiel, there's the book of Daniel, where the suffering remnant can have the hope of being resurrected, and then Isaiah is very similar - Isaiah 26.

Jesus pulls on this hope, from the prophets, this language from the prophets that when Israel is brought back the New Covenant, it will be like the resurrection of Israel. So, Jesus pulls on this language.

Jon: So that would be on the backdrop there?

Tim: That is some of back screen is that when Israel gets renewed as the covenant people, it's the resurrection of Israel. And Jesus is saying, "And look who's a part of that new Israel. It's these people."

Jon: Now again, the religious leaders, they wouldn't disagree that God wants to include these people, but they would be saying, "You're doing it the wrong way because we have our standards now. We have the way to do this and you're breaking these rules."

Tim: You're breaking it. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: "You got to do it on our terms. We're not going to do on your terms."

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Tim: That's it. That's it. If Levi the tax collector, if he wants to repent, change his ways and come back to synagogue, we'll accept him. Are you kidding? We'll accept him."

Jon: But under our authority and power and terms.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. What made Jesus scandalous was that he was going outside those accepted channels of religious authority and starting a populist movement, and intentionally going to the Levi's and the prostitutes and calling them to follow him.

Jon: And then saying, "What you guys think you're doing, I'm actually doing."

Tim: "I'm actually doing; is going and finding those who are lost."

Jon: "You think you're being true to this covenant, all these things that the prophets were hoping for, and you're hoping for, I'm doing." And they would have been like, "You're nuts."

Tim: Yeah. I'm trying to think of analogy. It's the difference of maybe a county-run food bank that's located in the suburbs, and how are the homeless people downtown supposed to get all the way out there? But then these two high school students start up and they get all their friends to donate food. And then they just go to downtown and set up shop and pass out hamburgers.

It's not perfect analogy, but its idea of going outside the authorized channels and doing your own thing. And then claiming this is actually where God's really at work, this is where the God of Israel is raising people.

Jon: You should be celebrating with us none sulking in the corner of the room.

Tim: Correct. This is what the story has always been about, the finding of the lost.

Jon: So you need to come on my terms and embrace what's happening here.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Which would be very humbling.

Tim: Yeah. It would be the two high school students then saying to the county, "You need to adopt our model Yeah, of coming down here."

Jon: "Give up your programs."

Tim: That's right. It's kind of threat that Jesus posed. You can begin to see here how a really righteous, good man who tells people to love their neighbor gets executed.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

That's kind of a puzzle. If I only ever told us, people, to hug each other and be nice, why did he get killed?

Jon: And would heal people and do great things, feed people? You might think he's crazy but let him do his thing.

Tim: But he is helping people but he's doing it in this intentionally and persistently challenging the political-religious leaders. That's Jesus of Nazareth.

Jon: And he knows he's doing that.

Tim: Oh, he's in the guy's house telling a parable about...

Jon: He's not thinking to himself, "Wow, I need to ease them into this new revolution or I need to be diplomatic." He's just like, "Guys, you're missing it." I mean, no wonder it was so clear to him that he was going to get killed.

Tim: Yeah, absolutely. The writing was on the wall.

Jon: He just knew it was going to be time. I mean, I always would read that and just assume like, "Oh, because he's God, he has special insight into what was going to happen." And maybe that's true. But regardless of that, whether or not he had special revelation about—

Tim: But the question is how did that awareness arise? What circumstances would lead Jesus...?

Jon: There would have been plenty of circumstances. I mean, well, forget they tried to kill him a number of time already. Did that happen in Luke at all?

Tim: Once in chapter 4, people try and push him off a cliff, but it happens more in John where he's in Jerusalem. That's the travel section. That's how I want to boil that down. There's lots more going on, of course, but these contrasting banquets and the way the lost and found parables or maybe just the lost son parable boils it down to its essence, we can't do Luke without doing that.

Also had Luke is the only gospel with the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is also an upside down. He makes the Samaritan the hero and he makes the priest and the Levi the villain. Which is like taking on Islamic State suicide bomber and making them the hero of your story, but making the US Marine the villain. They are just very provocative images.

[00:29:32]

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Tim: From here, Jesus rides into Jerusalem for Passover. We talked about this already. In Luke's version, he's weeping over the city. In Matthew and Mark, he goes into the city, he's rejected and then he weeps. In Luke, he's combined the weeping as he rides in.

Actually, this is interesting. This is in the end of chapter Luke 19. Do you like how I say everything's interesting?

Jon: You do say that a lot.

Tim: As Jesus approached the city of Jerusalem — this is Luke 19:41 — the crowds have already hailed him as the Messiah. The Pharisees have said, "Tell him to be quiet." Jesus says, if they are, then the rocks will start shouting."

As he approached Jerusalem, he saw the city and he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but it is now hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you encircle and hem you in on every side. They'll dash you to the ground, your children within your walls, not one stone will be left on another because you didn't recognize the time that God was coming to you."

Jon: This is Jesus predicting the downfall of Jerusalem?

Tim: First of all, Jesus is saying, "Him riding into Jerusalem is the time of God's coming to his people." Which goes all the way back to John the Baptist announcing God was going to come, Isaiah 40 and Malachi 4, and then Jesus shows up. This is another place where local flash on the backdrop these scenes from the prophets of God returning to those people, returning to the temple. Then what you see on the stage is Jesus riding a donkey into the city.

So, he could just write here, "Jesus is the God of Israel coming to be the Messiah King," but instead he does it that way.

Jon: Yeah, because there's this prophetic hope of God Himself coming.

Tim: God Himself, like the cloud and the fire and the pillar that led us through the wilderness, and the cloud that came over the temple.

Jon: And everyone's waiting for that. That's going to be a glorious day. It's going to change everything. And here it is happening and only and some outcasts arising.

Tim: Just the blind and the lame, and the tax collectors can see.

Jon: Otherwise, no one notices.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Tim: Notice what he says what's the result of Israel's leaders not recognizing Jesus as their king. If they had, look at what he, says, it would result in peace. So you have to stop and think about what did following Jesus mean if you're one of these Galileans who started living out his teachings. It means somebody steals from you, you don't retaliate. Somebody hits you, you don't retaliate. You give generously to the poor. I mean, there's most evocative teachings of non-retaliation and forgiveness. Following Jesus results in peace, literally.

So, he was calling individuals to that. But now you realize he's calling all of Israel to it. And this is where the Roman oppression of Israel becomes this back dropped, the story where not 30 years ... well, they're already sparks of revolution happening against Rome.

Jon: What kind of stuff is happening?

Tim: There were already bandits living up in the hills of Galilee, Robin Hood types who would do rating parties on Roman convoys. This is why Levi the tax collector carried the dagger with him - because he had an "X" on his back.

Jon: They're signs that Rome might have to step up and do something?

Tim: Correct. Actually, the Greek term to refer to these rebellious revolutionary Jews was the term kleptés it usually gets translated as thief. But when Jesus storms the temple, he says, "You've turned this place into a den of kleptés." Which is why in the loop read scripture video, we translate it as rebels. You've turned it into a den of rebel. Jesus is crucified alongside side two kleptés. They didn't get caught shoplifting.

Jon: They were rogue men in the house.

Tim: And Jesus is crucified as a kleptés. As a rebel.

Jon: He's lumped in with - what would you call that?

Tim: He's lumped in with Israel doing the very thing that he was calling them not to do, which is violent retaliation against Rome. Again, it's the reversal. When Jesus rides in and says, "If you followed me and accepted my way of the kingdom, it would bring peace. But now here I am, you've rejected me, you're on a road to no return." Which is what? Which is, the Roman armies building siege ramps, killing everybody, tearing down the walls. It's this haunting a prediction of what happened in 70 AD.

Once again, it's the political layer of Jesus's Kingdom mission comes out here, where the rejection of Jesus literally resulted in the wrath of Rome coming down on them.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

- Jon: Why is he saying, "If I was accepted here and we turn this into a city of peace, Rome wouldn't take us over?"
- Tim: It's the theme we brought out in the Gospel of the Kingdom video. He was calling Israel in that moment of their history to be the kingdom of God in a way that didn't involve killing their enemies. What else does love your enemy instead of killing them mean? How was a Jewish person supposed to live that? Well, you've got your enemies in your village because so and so cheated me five years ago.
- Jon: Yeah, he's not talking about that.
- Tim: Well, he's talking about that too. But what does it mean to have a military occupier?
- Jon: It's like a real enemy.
- Tim: You have an enemy. Rome is just the most recent installation. There's the Greeks before them, the Persians before them.
- Jon: He does not have a category for living in that kind of environment.
- Tim: It's very hard for most Westerners too. So, we don't immediately catch the controversy Jesus would cause when you would say something like, "Go the extra mile, turn the other cheek." Things like that.
- Jon: It's because you're resisting?
- Tim: Yes.
- Jon: Like you're trying to resist this empire, and that's a righteous thing to do.
- Tim: In Jesus' teaching, you're also resisting.
- Jon: But you're resisting in a different way.
- Tim: But resisting in a nonviolent way.
- Jon: Upside down way.
- Tim: Yeah. Which is again, the whole moment of the crucifixion then becomes so layered with significance, that by the time you actually get to it because he's being crucified as the kind of rebel that he was calling Israel not to become. He literally dies and Israel's place as the kind of person that he was calling Israel to turn away from being. That's a very powerful moment in Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem in Luke.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Then he goes and storms of Temple. "You've made it a den of kleptés, a den of kleptés these guys." Actually, he's quoting from Isaiah and Jeremiah as he does so.

Jon: What did the Jewish religious leaders think of these kleptés? Did they crucify them? And does the Rome crucifying them?

Tim: Yeah, Rome crucifies them.

Jon: They probably think they're kind of heroes in the way that—

Tim: It probably depends. If you're a power broker in Jerusalem, and you're trying to work things out with Rome—

Jon: You're probably bugged by them.

Tim: You think they're dangerous. It seems like the Pharisees had a divided mind among them as how to relate to military Jewish revolutionaries. And then probably most people are just trying to farm their land and survive.

Jon: So they would go and raid Roman towns when you say they would go raid towns, the kleptés?

Tim: Yeah. If you like historical fiction, there's a New Testament scholar who tried his hand at historical fiction and I think succeeded. A guy named Gerd Theissen wrote a wonderful retelling of Jesus called "The Shadow of the Galilean."

He tells it from the vantage point of one of these Galilean revolutionaries. Then his brother, someone related to him be a kleptés, but then he starts hearing about this Jesus from Nazareth who is telling us not to do this. And he eventually runs into him in Jerusalem.

The main character ends up being one of the kleptés in Luke, who says, "Remember me when you come in your kingdom." So it's all about how would violent Jewish Galilean view Jesus and only at the last minute come to see who he really was. It's brilliant. It's called "The Shadow of the Galilean."

Jon: It sounds really great.

Tim: It's really great.

Jon: You read it?

Tim: I did. I read it leading up to when you and I went Israel together.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Jon: Did you?

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: That might have been cool to read. Did any of these guys followed...None of them were one of the disciples?

Tim: Jesus recruited one into the circle.

Jon: That's what I was wondering. Not one of the 12?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Oh, one of the 12?

Tim: Yeah. Let me look real quick. It's either in Mark's list. He's called the Cananaean. In Mark chapter 3 where you get the list of the 12 disciples: Simon Peter, Jacob, son of Zebedee, John his brother, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, Jacob, son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus and Simon the Cananaean, which is spelling in Greek letters the Hebrew word for zealot or revolutionary.

Jon: So Simon was one of these—

Tim: Simon was a former hill thug, hilltop gang, and he heard the teachings of Jesus and was like said, "I'm leaving that way of life." So dude, who else is in that crew? Levi the tax collector.

Jon: They would have hated each other.

Tim: Dude, talk about intentional forming a team of rivals. Jesus got a former tax collector and a former assassin of tax collectors in his inner circle.

Jon: Sheesh, the dynamics there.

Tim: Yeah. But think about as a symbol what that means, what that would communicate to people.

Jon: What do we know about these men in the hills?

Tim: Our main sources for what's going on the Second Temple literature, Josephus, who was a Jewish historian, he serves among one of the revolutionary groups, but then turned and became a servant of Rome. He was born around the time that Jesus would have been executed.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

He writes an account with biblical history, the retelling of the whole Hebrew Bible. Then he does a historical account of - it's called the Jewish wars. How did 70 AD the destruction of Jerusalem happen? What were the events?

Jon: Have you read Josephus stuff?

Tim: You know what? I haven't read any of his works beginning to end. I've just read portions as they're relevant.

[00:41:36]

Tim: All this leads up to then Jesus offending the temple authorities. He gets arrested. But the night before his arrest, the day is around Passover, and so, Jesus uses the Passover meal. Once again, Exodus, Passover imagery flashes on the back screen. And he says that his death will play the equivalent of the Passover lamb and also bring about the new covenant. He mentions his blood and his body bringing about the new covenant.

So this is about sins being forgiven, but also about creating the new faithful remnant people of God. Again, for his disciples—

Jon: That phrase, New Covenant wouldn't have been a new idea for those people?

Tim: No, no. It's woven into the heart of the Scriptures in the story. But the idea that Jesus just keeps saying is going to die, and then we have this meal, Passover meal, and he takes the symbols that already have a symbolic meaning in the Passover meal, but he says that all of a sudden, they symbolize something new. His body and his blood

Jon: Because the bread symbolizes how quick you had to go.

Tim: The bread was the unleavened bread made without yeast, so you got to get out of your quick. The lamb represented this substitution that God will bring His justice on Egypt. But for those whose houses are covered by the blood, they're spared. It's about God's judgment and mercy.

The bread becomes a symbol of sustenance, this broken body. Bread is what gives you life. So his body will be broken so that others can have life. Then, this wine symbolizes blood, which means you're going to die, but has the sacrificial meaning to it, that it's about God's mercy and judgment.

Then he says the blood is the covenant. The blood of the covenant or the new covenant in my blood. So was that echoing Jesus didn't give a lecture on the meaning of his death? He gave a symbolic meal.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

And then the events, you know, the wheel's moving, he's arrested, put on trial. During his trial, he says, "From this moment on, you'll see the Son of Man lifted up and exalted in Israel."

Jon: He says that to Pilate?

Tim: He says that to the Sanhedrin Jewish leaders. The implication being Jerusalem has become the Babylon. Jerusalem has become the beast that tramples the Son of Man.

Jon: How does it mean that? Oh, because he's quoting Daniel 7?

Tim: He's quoting from Daniel 7, where Babylon is the iconic of the rebellious nations trampling on the line of Judah - Daniel and his friends. But now Jesus is the Son of Man and Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin, the temple leaders are the beast. Luke highlights his innocence. We talked about this.

Jon: The Centurion.

Tim: He adapts the wording of the Centurions confession so that everybody now is recognizing this was a righteous man. What that does is it just turns up the paradox and the tension of now he's the one dying as the criminal.

Jon: But innocent in what way? I mean, their accusation was that he's dangerous to their religious order. And he's guilty of that, right? He'd ever pulled any punches with that. I mean, what's he officially on trial for?

Tim: Luke 23: "The Sanhedrin arose, led him to pilot they began to accuse him saying, 'We found this man subverting our nation. He opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar — actually false — and he claims to be the Messiah our King.'"

Jon: Which he never goes out right and says. But he let people say it.

Tim: He let people say it. What he did in the temple—

Jon: He acted like it.

Tim: He acted like it.

Jon: So he's guilty.

Tim: Then the question is, Jesus has in his mind what he thinks it means for him to be the Messiah and it's very different from what they think it means, and what Pilate has. Because Israel hasn't been allowed to have a king, the high priest was the most powerful role in Israel on this time under the Greeks and the Romans. They weren't

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

allowed to have their own governors and kings anymore, because that would just park back to the days of independence and monarchy. So anybody who comes claiming to be the king—

Jon: Because the Messiah is equivalent of a king.

Tim: It means the king from the line of David. When Pilate says, "Are you the King of the Jews?" there's already a king. His name is Caesar Augustus.

Jon: He's the King of the Jews.

Tim: And Pilate his embodied representative as the governor. So it's kind of like, I don't know, it's like the governor of Oregon.

Jon: Are you the president United States?

Tim: Are you the president? You're the president. It's people accusing you of calling yourself the president. And Jesus says, "You say so." To which Pilate says, "There's no valid charges against this guy."

But they insisted, "No, he's stirring up people all over Judea by his teaching. He started and up in Galilee and now he is down here." When Pilate heard that he's a Galilean, he's like, "Oh, this is my guy. This is Herod's guy up north. This is Herod Antipas. He's Herod the Great - son or grandson. Dang it, I forget. And he's just over galley like a puppet Governor."

Herod was greatly pleased because for a long time he had been wanting to see this Jesus of Nazareth character. From what he'd heard about him, he hoped he might perform a sign.

Jon: And do a trick.

Tim: So, he plied Jesus with many questions, Jesus never said a word. Chief priests and teachers of the law were there accusing him. Herod and his soldiers mocked and ridiculed him, dressed him up like a king and send him back to Pilate.

Then Pilate once again starts asking him questions and says, "There are no valid charges." But all of this it seems like Luke includes to play up Jesus's innocence. Luke's highlighting the substitution thing, there's no reason Jesus actually deserves to be on the cross. The only reason he's going to there is by staying silent and allowing himself to be falsely charged.

Again, think back to the Sermon on the plain. When people strike you, let them. And you think you're losing, but actually, you're defeating. And he's doing it. That's what

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

he's doing. It's crazy. Even right now, just as I say it, I'm like, "This is a way to live your life."

Jon: I know. And it gets you killed.

Tim: This kind of thing will get you killed. And it's what gets Jesus killed. So right to the very end, Jesus is forgiving the Roman soldiers as they crucify him. That's all in Luke. "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing."

The kleptés, the rebel who makes fun of him, but then says, "Remember me when you come in your kingdom," Jesus immediately forgives them and promises him "today up with me in paradise." That's only in Luke. So Jesus is just in command of the situation even as he's hanging there giving out mercy. And then he dies.

[00:49:27]

Jon: Is the road to Emmaus unique to Luke?

[crosstalk 00:49:30]

Tim: It is. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus is only in Luke. Once again, it's about surprise. They thought Jesus was going to redeem Israel, but now he's dead. That's their bummed.

Jon: And these are too the 12?

Tim: They're just one of the cruise people who went on the road with Jesus.

Jon: And what's in Emmaus?

Tim: It's a town near nearby. So, Jesus is dead, party's over—

Jon: Everyone's going home.

Tim: These are two very disillusioned disciples.

Jon: They might be from Emmaus maybe.

Tim: Most likely. Why else would they be going there? They're processing all of this. Then Jesus is there. This story is loaded with layers of irony. There's reason Luke tells it here.

They're talking about it and then Jesus is there but they don't recognize him. That's the first thing in the story you are like, "What? Wait." They see him but they don't see him.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Jon: He's there with them. What do they think? He's just another dude traveling?

Tim: Yeah. It says their eyes were kept from seeing him, which as the reader you go, "Okay." They can see that there's a Jewish man here walking with us, but they don't recognize him. Why? You got to keep reading.

Jon: Wouldn't that be strange to be on a road to a city and someone's just awesome just cruising with you?

Tim: It probably happens all the time.

Jon: These people are cruising? It's like being a hiking trail and someone's like, "Hey."

Tim: Yeah, it's like a well-traveled road. You come across travelers. Jewish man. "Oh, he's Jewish. He's one of us."

Jon: "Walk with us for a while."

Tim: "Walk with us." And Jesus says, "What are you guys talking about?" So dramatic. This story is as dramatically told as the introductory stories. They stopped faces downcast. One of them, Cleopas, who's likely the husband of one of these women who was at the tomb, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who doesn't know what happened?" Then Jesus plays dumb. "Well, I don't know. What? What thing?" "Jesus of Nazareth for goodness sakes," he replied.

Look at how they describe him. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and all rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; we hoped that he was going to be the one to redeem Israel.

Now, this is key because this echoes the line of Zacharias poem the very beginning. He will rescue us from the hands of our enemies. That's what Zachariah said the Messiah would come and do and that's what they hoped would happen. But that raises the question Jesus said, he came to give his life as a ransom for many.

So their words get you thinking of these two different interpretations of the Messiah; Jesus' version of redemption, and their version of redemption. Their version, if you get crucified, you didn't bring redemption because you're dead. But then it's even weirder. It's the third day, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb to see his body, and then they came and said they saw some angels who said he's alive.

Then some men went, which for them was more trustworthy, some went, but it was just as the women said, and nobody has seen Jesus. Then Jesus is just like, "Dude, you guys, didn't the Prophet say, the Messiah would suffer and enter His glory?"

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Daniel 7, Isaiah 53." And beginning with Moses, he started to tell them, "Come on, the Hebrew Scriptures said this is what would happen."

So they're having this conversation as they go into the village, they urge Jesus, "stay with us, it's almost night," and he acted as if he were going further. That's my favorite part.

Jon: It's like, "Ahh, I got to keep going."

Tim: I got to see man but horse. Then they are like, "No, keep with us." "Okay." As he had the table with them, he took the bread and gave thanks and he broke it and he started to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they see him. They recognized him. So he took bread, he gave thanks, he broke it, and he gave it to them. It's clear echoes you could want to the Last Supper.

Jon: Yeah, the same phrase.

Tim: Same exact phrase as the last supper. And then they recognize him.

Jon: And then he disappears.

Tim: And then he's not there. So the question is, how did they come to see him? They had a certain interpretation of who Jesus was that didn't involve him dying. And as long as they hold that idea and that view of the world, and Jesus, they've remained blind to who he really is.

But all of a sudden, when they see the Jesus whose body was broken for them so they could live, the interpretation that Jesus offered of his death at the Last Supper, it's only when you see the crucified Messiah as the real victor and king that you can actually recognize Jesus. And even then, you don't have a handle on him, because he's gone.

This story is brilliant. It's symbolizing the journey I think that every disciple of Jesus has to undergo.

Jon: Yeah, that's what I was thinking. It shows that there's this slow awakening to what's really happening. It's not like, all of a sudden. Jesus could have just been like, "Hey, guys, I'm Jesus, and I'm alive. Isn't that awesome?" And they could all high five. But instead, it's this really elongated journey of them going, "Oh, okay, so Jesus had to die? Oh, okay." Then like, "This is really interesting and this something's burning within us." And then all of a sudden there's that moment of like, "You are Jesus."

You can see how that would mirror the process of coming to faith after the resurrection. "Wait, so Jesus was saying that? And this is what the Scripture was

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

saying?" And then it's all sinking in and then eventually the coin drops and you're like, "Oh yeah, I'm in."

Tim: Yeah, that's exactly right. So powerful.

Jon: It's kind of spooky these last scenes. I'm kind of reading ahead here where's the next story is they go tell the disciples like, "Yeah, Jesus is alive. We saw him." Then they're just talking about it, and then all of a sudden, Jesus is there.

Tim: Yeah, exactly. Then what he does is he has the same Bible study with them. He unpacks the Hebrew Scriptures and said, "Listen, the suffering vindicated Messiah who dies to liberate others from evil and sin, to create the new covenant people, this is what the Old Testament was always about."

So there is also this element of like, once you read the Old Testament through the lens of the story of Jesus, you can see all this. In the same book by Richard Hayes, he talks about how this paradox of a crucified Messiah is the foundation of Christian worldview. He actually quotes from the former, I think, Archbishop of Canterbury Anglican Church, Rowan Williams, who wrote this book called "The Wound of Knowledge." Great title. Who wrote this: "Christian faith has its beginnings in an experience of profound contradictoriness inexperience, which so questioned the religious categories of its time that the resulting reorganization of religious language was a century's long task."

He goes on. "That experience of a profound contradiction is the crucifixion of Jesus as the event that somehow brought God's salvation to the world. The paradox of God's purpose made flesh in a dead and condemned man." He says, "The Gospel of Luke is one of these first attempts to reorganize our view of the world. Yeah, around an event that seems so bizarre and strange."

Jon: So this road to Emmaus is also that a picture of what Luke's trying to do for you. He's been on a journey with you and telling you and he syncs it.

Tim: There's no coincidence that it's another journey story. Just like Jesus has been on a journey, now you're the one on the journey with Jesus. Luke wants you to see that you probably are still blind to Jesus in significant ways.

Jon: Jesus might be right in front of you and you can't see him.

Tim: And you can't see him because you haven't really deeply embrace the upside down paradox of his kingdom that the cross embodies. And it's only when you see that that life comes through giving up your life.

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

Jon: You know what would have been nice to have? Is the Bible study that he does with these guys. Why didn't Luke write that down?

Tim: I know.

Jon: It'd be like the best seller.

Tim: He walks in through the TaNaK, which is the shorthand for the Jewish structure of the Hebrew Bible, Torah, Prophets, and writings with the Psalms. So, he takes them through the Hebrew Scriptures and he says, "Listen, this is what it was all about. And so, now here we are. I'm the king of the world. I'm the exalted king of all things and you all are going to go out and keep doing what I've been doing, which is going to the nation's, announcing that there's forgiveness and new life in the Kingdom of God. But stop and wait for the Holy Spirit to..."

Actually, this is what says: "You're witnesses of all this. I'm going to send you what my father promised which echoes the promise ... like what comes along with the package of the Messianic Kingdom, you get the Messiah, you get the nation's, you just said go to the nations. You get starting in Jerusalem.

So the spirit, the personal presence of the God of Israel who is now coming through and being sent through Jesus who he calls wait till you're closed with power from on high. Then they were went out from the meal they were having with him.

He was taken up to heaven. This isn't about some strange extraterrestrial transportation...To be exalted up into heaven is Daniel 7, it's an enthronement language. He's enthroned as king of heaven and earth.

Jon: They are not talking about like he just elevated into the sky.

Tim: Yeah. Then he floated away. Whatever happens to Jesus here that they saw is connected to the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven up into the presence of God to take up His throne and then dot, dot, dot, wait for the book of Acts.

Jon: Wow. Is the ascension here? Is that unique to Luke?

Tim: The original ending of Mark doesn't have an ascension like this. Matthew just ends with the Great Commission. He meets them on a mountain up in Galilee and says, "Go make disciples, and I'm with you to the very end of the age." Then John end with Jesus having lunch with Peter and John in the beach. Luke's the only gospel with Jesus and concluding with an enthronement of Jesus.

Jon: Thanks for listening to this episode of the Bible Project. Throughout this year, we're going to make a whole series of animated videos that walk through the literary

Luke E4: Jesus, Rebels, & Resurrection

design of Luke. You could find them on our YouTube channel, youtube.com/thebibleproject, and you can find them on our website, thebibleproject.com.

Up next on the podcast are a couple things. We're starting a new animated series called "Intro to the Bible" or "Intro to Biblical Literature." I think we're actually just going to call it "How to Read the Bible." The first episode is What is the Bible? You'll get to listen to that coming up soon.

Then also the next theme video that's going to release is on the Holy Spirit. There's going to be a few episodes of our discussion preparing for that theme. Make sure to subscribe if you haven't. If you like this podcast, it's really helpful to give a review on iTunes. And say hi to us on Facebook, facebook.com/thebibleproject. And we're on twitter @JoinBibleProj. Thanks so much for being a part of this with us.