

Torah P2 - Genesis E2: 12-50

Q&R

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Jon: Hey, this is Jon at The Bible Project. If you've been following along the podcast, you've noticed that this summer we've been releasing audio from our YouTube Q&R Series. These were originally live videos of Tim and I interacting with you and answering questions on different books of the old testament and different themes.

Last week we released Genesis 1 through 11, and this week we're going to release our live discussion on Genesis 12 through 50. We cover a lot of ground on these Q&Rs, including why God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. That seems strange, especially because God says He opposes child sacrifice. We talked about who the author of Genesis was, and what's the deal with this strange character, Melchizedek.

There's that and more in this episode. Here we go.

Tim: Hey, welcome to The Bible Project live streaming number two.

Jon: This is the second one.

Tim: We're going to be talking about the book of Genesis. We made two videos on Genesis. Part two is about Abraham's family onward. So we are going to field questions about that video and the second half of the book of Genesis.

But before we do that, I was thinking all week about the first live stream and some of the questions and discussions that we had, and I decided I wanted to start this week—and we might do it every week—with a preface.

Jon: A disclaimer.

Tim: Jon wants to call it a disclaimer. I call it a preface.

Jon: You call it a preface.

Tim: Yeah. Here's the thing. The spirit of The Bible Project is we want to make amazing video resources that help people change their paradigm about what the Bible is and what it's for, namely, that it's a unified story that leads to Jesus and has wisdom to offer the whole world. So that's The Bible Project.

But as we do these live Q&A times, you guys are going to ask really good questions that are going to raise issues of interpretation that might be controversial or debated. And so, when we respond to those questions, it's good for you guys to know, in a way, we're not responding as The Bible Project...I mean, we are because we make The Bible Project but we're responding as Jon and Tim.

The goal for us, we never want to make a video about a topic that has 10 billion views, and it's going to be divisive. We want to make resources that any follower of Jesus and anybody who's not religious can learn from and keep the main thing the main thing.

Jon: For example, last week, we were in Genesis 1 through 11 and a lot of people are asking about creation, is it literal or not? The questions where we're never going to make a video on whether it was a seven-day creation or not, because that's not as divisive, and it's not—

Tim: We think that no matter what view you hold; you can still see Genesis as a unified story that leads to Jesus. We've got viewers and supporters who are Catholic and all streams of Protestantism and people who aren't religious, or people who are Jewish. And so, we're trying to shoot down the center. We're not trying to be controversial. But when we get asked a question, we're happy to give our view on something.

Jon: So these live Q&As, we're going to have to go into areas that we wouldn't go to on a normal video.

Tim: In the video, yeah.

Jon: Cool. That's the disclaimer.

Tim: Disclaimer.

Jon: So let's go through the first question.

Tim: Let's do. Trevor Hoffman [SP] asked a really interesting question that I liked because it really raises a question just about the whole Bible. He put it this way, Trevor Hoffman. I think you can see his question. "How do you guys approach the consistent theme that God's remedy to the mess ultimately winds up being a mess itself? So like the action of Simeon and Levi in chapter 34 of Genesis or Reuben and chapter 35, and ultimately the repeated failure of Israel's history all throughout the Old Testament."

It's a great question, and I think it's some it's a question that should strike any reader of the biblical narratives, but especially the Old Testament.

Jon: Because Genesis 12 to 50 is an overview. That's what we're talking about.

Tim: Yes, yes, that's right.

Jon: It begins with Abraham being called out, amongst all these tribes, and saying, "I'm going to do something special with you for everyone. Then there are four

generations, 12 through 50 of his son Isaac, and then his son Jacob, and then Jacobs 12 sons. There are all these messy stories. And so, why is God using...if His plan is to rescue the world through this family, why use the screwed up thing? It seems to be snowballing out of control.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. I think one way to frame it is go all the way back to pages 1 and 2. The nature of the biblical story is we live in a world created by a being who wants to partner and share with humans who are his image. This being for God's image.

And so, the whole story is set up as the future and the purpose of the world is for a shared responsibility. That sets the tone for the whole shape of the biblical story. Whatever God wants to do in the world, the nature of the world is such that God is doing it in partnership with his creatures, specifically humans. And He's given humans enormous amounts of freedom and responsibility within certain constraints.

And so, essentially that's the playing field for all of the screwed up cast of characters that He puts up with throughout the story of the Bible.

Jon: Because what else could He do other than just stop working with humans?

Tim: Yeah. You can use the analogy, and it's often done about any relationship with a good friend. Of course, you can bulldoze all your friends, and you can make them hang out with you, and always do what you want to do. But to have a genuine relationship, there's give and take. And so, there's room for error. There's room for mistakes.

God chooses Abraham and his family, certainly not because they're great moral examples. Most of the stories in Genesis are about them screwing up and putting God's plan in jeopardy. In God's freedom, He's chosen to commit Himself to flawed creatures like ourselves, and He's chosen one family in the history of humanity through which to bring about his own Gods own entry into humanity. At the end of the story, God's ends up being, through Jesus, the only human that is a faithful human that He made us all to be but that we failed to be.

The reason the story is so long and complicated is because God has given great dignity to the freedom and responsibility of humans in the story of the Old Testament of Israel.

Jon: So this is a privilege?

Tim: Yeah, yeah. The question of how do I approach that theme, I approached it as good news to me. Because what it means is that God's committed to us here, humanity, and that God's committed to me despite my flaws and failures. That's one way that

the story of the patriarchs in Genesis and their flaws, I think leads up to Jesus as the one human who does what we can't do ourselves.

Jon: In our video, we spent a lot of time showing the flaws.

Tim: Yeah, mostly.

Jon: Mostly.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: We're showing how God's promise by them...He actually uses this coin, that kind of...or the base that drops and...

[crosstalk 00:08:14]

Jon: And that the whole point is God's promise. So we're going to drop the ball.

Tim: The reason why we highlighted that in the theme, some people thought we were too hard on the characters in Genesis.

Jon: Yeah, because we want to look up to these guys. These are the heroes of our faith in some ways.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. I think there's an assumption, "Oh, the Bible is a divine handbook on how to be a good person, and what these stories are about as models of good behavior." There are a handful of times that they are models for good behavior, but the vast majority of the stories are showing the characters as a mixed bag at best and deeply flawed as the norm.

So why is that? The authors trying to communicate something to us through that, and it's not something that many modern readers even think to look for. So that's why we brought that theme out in the video.

Jon: Cool. Caleb Rigsby [SP]. I'll read this one. "Who is the angel of the Lord as referred to a few times in Genesis? Is it an angel or is it an expression of deity? Is it the person of Jesus being expressed in the Old Testament as some claim?"

Tim: Yeah, Caleb, all three of your guesses, angel, expression of deity, or Jesus appearing are basically the three most common responses that people and thinkers have had throughout church history in Jewish and the Christian traditions.

This gets us into the depiction of God in the Old Testament narratives. And it starts on page 1. Again, in the beginning, God created everything. Then it gets more into

the story. Well, how is that working out? And in the depiction of Genesis 1, it's not God, but God's Spirit who's the personal life presence of God and at work in the world, bringing beauty in order out of chaos and goodness.

So right there on page 1, you start saying, "Wait, who created? Was it God or was it God's Spirit?" There's something of a complexity to how these narratives present the identity of God in the stories. And so, that continues where you have a figure called the angel of the Lord.

A part of this is the English word "angel" is loaded for us in English now in ways that it's not quite in the Bible. The word Angel in Hebrew is the word "malak." The book of Malachi, his name is a derivative of that word, malak. It literally just means "messenger."

Humans are called malak. Malachi, the prophet is called malak. But then there can only be spiritual or divine messengers on behalf of God. That are also called malak.

Jon: So when I think of an angel, I think of the bright white, the wings?

Tim: Wings? There is no winged human in the Bible ever called an angel. It's a modern creation. There are animal-like creatures with wings that are called—

Jon: Like the seraphim.

Tim: They're not called angels, messengers, they're called cherubim or seraphim. They're not called angels. The figures that are called angels in the bible never have wings. I don't know.

Jon: So get that out of your head.

Tim: Dude. And it's so pervasive. Every children's book that I can find for my kids—

Jon: These are really like intense, like warrior angels with wings or it's like chubby little figurine that looks like angels with wings.

Tim: That's right. No winged humans in the Bible. There's one in a strange vision that Zachariah has of some women with wings but they are not called angels. Anyway, all that to say, that's a little-known trivia fact but an important one.

We're talking about angels. Essentially, what you have in the Genesis stories is this figure called the messenger of the Lord. Sometimes it's depicted as a being who's distinct from God and talks about God in the third person. But then other times, the angel of the Lord, all of a sudden, becomes or speaks as if he is the God of Israel.

And so, I think these narratives, they fit into this bigger portrait of the biblical authors had an awareness that there's some level of...I just use the word complexity to God's identity. And that the way God interacts has...Complexity is the only word that I want to use because it's the seedbed of what would become the idea of the incarnation and the Trinity later on.

The New Testament often we'll look back to these narratives and use the language of spirit or use the language of the Son of God to flesh out who Jesus is, and how that redefines the notion of God. So it's a much bigger question.

For the angel of the Lord, I'm just satisfied saying, for the biblical author, it's a being who is the Lord God of Israel, but at the same time is distinct from the Lord God of Israel. And the narrative just don't—

[crosstalk 00:13:36]

Tim: Correct. In the language of the gospel of John, the Word was God and the Word was with God at the same time.

Jon: So that would kind of lean you to say, maybe it is Jesus in some way. Potentially.

Tim: Yeah. There's a very long-standing Christian tradition of reading the angel of the Lord as a pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus.

Jon: So there's a possibility?

Tim: Yeah. I think it's a possibility. Did the biblical authors have that in their mind? I don't think the Old Testament authors did.

Jon: Well, because they had no idea about Jesus.

Tim: You know, there is an interesting passage in the Gospel of John chapter 12, where John refers to Isaiah's vision of the Lord in the temple and he describes it that Isaiah was seeing Jesus in throne. But there's a lot more to that. There you go.

Jon: Cool.

Tim: Thanks, Caleb. Good question.

Jon: Thanks, Caleb. Final question that we have pre-selected that you guys emailed us. This is from Danny. Hey Danny.

Tim: What's up Danny?

Jon: "In Genesis 22 God requested Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. I'm confused about why God would request human sacrifice and action that God Himself hates and condemns elsewhere in the Bible. It just seems uncharacteristic what the Israelites condemned for the worship of Molech in sacrificing children?" Great question.

Tim: Yeah, super good question. The simple part of answering that question is, yes, the God of Israel unequivocally in the Old Testament is opposed to child sacrifice, which was widely practiced in the Canaanite cultures around Israel and that Israelites who didn't care about the covenant with God of Israel, sacrificed children. Their narrative is Israelites doing it not approved of by the God of Israel.

So then that leads to the question, well, what's going on in the story in Genesis 22 about Abraham? This is one of those narratives where you can approach a good explanation of what's happening, but at the end of the day, the story is supposed to bother you, but not for the reasons that you might think.

So it's really significant that the first line of the story is a little-embedded quote that gives you—

Jon: Why do you go to Tim's computer?

Tim: Oh, yeah. If you guys can see my screen here, the first line of the story has really important effect on the reader. It's one of the most artfully, literarily crafted beautiful stories in the Old Testament. The first line of the story is, "Sometime later God tested Abraham."

Now, that right there, you need to stop and just think about how does that affect how you read the story. What it tells you is that God's going to ask something of Abraham that's going to test him. And don't think like final exams, whatever.

Jon: Doing your multiple choice.

Tim: Biblical testing, this is the theme. When God chooses people as leaders or to a high degree of responsibility, He's singles the Mount. It's very common that in their story, God will test them.

Jon: Who else does He do that?

Tim: He does it to Israel in the wilderness. Actually multiple times, he tests Israel when he gives the manna in the wilderness but he says, "Only gather enough for each day." He tests Israel when He shows up on the mountain to see if they are truly committed to Him.

So you have these themes of God testing people's that He's called and given responsibility to. And the point of the test is not that God wants them to fail. The point of the test is to show how they can rise to the occasion, but they'll learn and be matured in the process.

The first line of the story tells you the command to sacrifice Isaac isn't at all God's intention or desire. But the question that Danny is asking is it seems uncharacteristic.

Jon: Right.

Tim: So, there you have to get to—

Jon: Why ask someone to do something that you know is wrong even if you are testing him?

Tim: That's right. I mean, I'll get my response. I don't know if we can answer this question but I think we can give a response. What does Isaac represent in the narrative plot line? God has chosen a family out from among the nations, and through this family, He's going to restore His divine blessing to all the nations of the earth. Then he calls Abraham, and then Abraham—

Jon: Has one kid.

Tim: Right.

Jon: That's the dude and it's going to happen through him.

Tim: So God's own promise hinges on this. But at the same time, there's a very ancient traditional culture, people's worth, male and female and family, their whole worth is built on their ability to produce children. So modern Western culture—

Jon: You don't have a bank account; you have a family.

Tim: Yeah, totally. That's right.

Jon: You don't have a retirement plan, you have kids.

Tim: That's right. Abraham, he's an itinerant sheepherder...

Jon: They are going to take care of you when you're old.

Tim: That's right. Everything's about family. You have to stop any kind of probe under the narrative. There has to be something going on in Abraham story where God knows

that if Abraham is truly going to be faithful to His calling, that what he prizes and values most...like He's going to have to reckon with Abraham.

This is what Timothy Keller—if you're familiar with him, a pastor and author—would call your idols. So they're good things in your life, but that can become ultimate things. The text doesn't say this, but it begs the question of God's asking Abraham, "Are you going to follow me and be faithful to me, even if it means giving up the thing that is most precious to you?"

Now, God isn't actually going to take it away from him. But the whole point is that Abraham needs to undergo a deep level of transformation if God's really going to use him. And so, that's, I think, essentially where the story is going.

And the whole point is that Abraham received Isaac as a gift. And all of his calling and what God called him to do is a pure gift. And so, the experience on the mountain becomes this way of Abraham truly becoming open-handed to receive this calling, and so on.

Jon: Let me ask it this way.

Tim: All the same, Danny, I recognize it seems very odd I think especially to modern leaders, the nature of the test. But that's true...I'm sorry, I interrupted you. But I think that's true to our life experience.

I think trying to follow Jesus there come moments of crisis, where hardship or difficulty come and you're sitting there going, "There's no way I can say that God is good. How can God be good when this happens?" We wrestled with those questions. And those are real, honest questions. But surely what the story is trying to capture there is, this is the ultimate test for Abraham.

David Charlton, who you're in the UK, and you're awesome. Thanks for watching, and your interest in The Bible Project. You asked a great question from the Genesis story about Isaac and Jacob and Esau. "Why is it that Isaac was limited to what he could bless Esau with after he had already blessed Jacob?" This is in Genesis chapter 27.

Jon: That's a good question.

Tim: Yeah, it's a great question. Again, that the threat of the narrative, actually, all this goes back to...I have a hard time being concise. Every time you ask a question, I want to take it back to pages 1 and 2.

But the whole point is that after the garden narrative and the rebellion of the man and the woman, that God says there's going to be two lines coming out. Not necessarily physical lineages, but two types of people in the narrative.

There are those who are of the line of the women of the promise, and of that line are the people who is the line of the snake crusher. So those who resist evil and will conquer evil. And it only points to someone who will destroy evil at its source. But then also it says that the snake is going to have a lineage as well.

And what that story then sets you up to do is to say, "Oh, in the rest of the story, the world consists of two types of people. Those who given to the same kind of temptation and evil as the serpent, and then those who choose to align themselves with God's plan to resist evil and its destruction." So that flows out of there.

Then the rest of the story throughout Genesis is of God just selecting people and tracing a family line through. So it goes right from the women, all those genealogies that are boring, but they're important because it's like a trail of breadcrumbs that leads you to Abraham. Then Abraham has more than one child, but Isaac becomes the line of promise instead of say, Ishmael, for example.

Then from there, Isaac and Rebecca, then they have Jacob and Esau. The narratives really try and portray Esau as a chump. He's short-sighted, selfish guy, who doesn't value the fact that he's the firstborn. Oh, yeah, I didn't talk about this. But in all these narratives, it's the firstborn who is never the one who actually becomes of the promised line. Sometimes it's something stupid they did, but other times, it's just the whole point—and Paul picks up on this in Romans 9 through 11—is that it's God's freedom to choose people through history to carry the promise.

So when it comes to Isaac, the point isn't the...because Isaac does actually end up blessing Esau. He does pronounce the poetic blessing over him, but Esau has forfeited his right as the inheritor of the Divine promise. And that goes to Jacob who, by the way, it doesn't deserve it any more than his brother. He's a cheater, and a liar too.

So, the point more is it's a good question if all you're looking at is Genesis 27. But when you see it within the flow of the whole storyline of Genesis, that God keeps turning upside down human value systems and the firstborn, the people that we think are the most important people are never the people that God chooses to be the carriers of His promise. And so it's part of a broader portrait.

Jon: Is that a theme? It seems like it's a theme.

Tim: Oh, it's a huge theme in Genesis. But think of the story of David. Who gets selected as King? It's not his good-looking first brother Eliab. He's the runt out in the field. And it becomes a theme and that line that says, "Humans look at the outward appearance, but God deserves the heart." And therefore, God has a way of choosing people to work with who are the exact opposite of who you would expect.

Jon: And that goes all the way to Jesus, who's the suffering servant, and he says, "the first will be last and last will be first."

Tim: That's right. So, Jesus is the epitome of the unexpected fulfillment of God's promises. Right down to the Podunk hill country town that he grew up in of Nazareth. So it's a great question.

The reason I like David is because if you're only looking at the narrative in Genesis 27, it seems arbitrary and weird. But when you see it in the flow of the book of Genesis, it gets put in a larger context.

Jon: What does it mean that he blessed his son? I think that's something we just don't have that in our culture anymore.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: There's a sense of like, "Okay, I blessed you so now, I can't Bless you, Esau. I blessed Jacob already." Why can't he? Why can't he just bless everyone?

Tim: But it's the blessing specifically as who of these sons who's going to receive the gift of the divine covenant promise of God because that's about a family line. And so it can't be both of them. Only one of them can become the conduit of the line of the woman.

Jon: So is the narrative saying this is up to Isaac?

Tim: No, because that goes back to the promise. Even when Rebecca was still pregnant, that...

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: ...that he's chosen. And that's what Paul picks up in Romans 9 through 11. And so, part of it is God's freedom to choose even the most unexpected people to become the vehicles of His promise.

Jon: That would be a cool theme video.

Tim: What would we call it?

Jon: I don't know. The backwards—

Tim: In the gospels that it's the upside down kingdom.

Jon: It's the least of these.

Tim: Yeah, the least of these. It's a good point. It is a very dominant theme through the whole Bible.

Jon: It's a cool theme.

Tim: Kickpuncher3000, you have an awesome name.

Jon: We shout out to you already.

Tim: You asked a great question about: who does Tim think is the author of Genesis? That Kickpuncher3000 is a wonderful question. Let's start first with, who cares what I think?

What information do we have in the biblical texts itself? The Book of Genesis doesn't indicate its authorship. If you're just looking at it as a distinct book in and of itself, there's nowhere does it ever indicate its authorship. The traditions and the stories predate by a long shot the figure who's traditionally connected to it, and that's the figure of Moses. But Moses doesn't appear until Exodus.

Then the first time Moses is ever mentioned writing is an Exodus chapter 17 before they're even at Mount Sinai when he asked to write down the story of a battle that took place. So even Moses' literary activity in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, doesn't even start until they're almost to Mount Sinai.

Then Moses is mentioned as someone who's writing a lot, but even then Moses is not identified as the author of the full Pentateuch as you and I have it in Genesis to Deuteronomy. He's connected specifically to writing out the narratives of Israel and certain amounts of the law covenant codes in those books themselves. So the Pentateuch itself doesn't tell us who the author of the final thing is.

Jon: But traditionally, people say it's Moses.

Tim: So but traditionally, because Moses is mentioned writing in later sections of the Torah, people began to assume that he's the author of the whole thing itself. What's interesting, and Kickpuncher3000, is go read Zachariah chapter 7 and 8 and go read Daniel chapter 9.

In both of those cases, those prophets mention what they call the books of the Bible, the Torah, and the prophets. And what they simply say is the Torah and the prophets came from and were produced by the prophets. Plural. So even later, biblical authors don't attribute the authorship of the Pentateuch only to Moses. Rather, they see the Torah and the prophets as a whole literary section that comes simply from the prophets.

So I think we have to think of stages. I think Moses was definitely involved in the literary production of some first or second edition of the Pentateuch as we have it, but of course, he didn't write Genesis. He received traditions and oral traditions and stories from people before him. So the most we can say, he was a compiler or an editor of some of the material he received.

Jon: Maybe he was the final editor. But then yeah, the last verse—

Tim: Yeah, totally. I mean, Moses, we're reflecting back on his death at the end of the...So he definitely didn't write the last chapter.

Jon: Someone else compiled that part.

Tim: That's right. The biblical texts themselves gives us clues that the books came into existence through stages, through a succession of prophetic authors is what I call them. There you go.

If you're interested on my website, timmackie.com, right on the front page, I have about an hour and a half long lecture that I gave not long ago on The Origins of the Bible. It's pretty abbreviated, but it gives a big picture of the authorship of biblical books and stuff like that. So

Jon: It's right on the homepage.

Tim: It's on timmackie.com, scroll down, it's on the homepage. I did a whole session on The Making of the Books of the Bible that I think you might find interesting. Good question.

Jon: It would be really cool to do a whole series on how the Bible was made.

Tim: Oh, absolutely. I guess it would. I agree we should do that.

Jon: Sweet. I think we have time for one or two more of these questions.

Tim: A few more?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Cool. Robin Rimple [SP] asked a question about the Joseph character in Genesis as a type of Christ. Why are so many chapters given to the Joseph story?" Robin.

Jon: He's a great guy. He gets to that story and is like, "Finally, I can root for someone."

Tim: Other than his snot-nosed punk moments right at the beginning, where he tattle tales on his brothers and he's pretty excited to share his dreams about ruling the world...

[crosstalk 00:32:30]

Tim: That's right. A what 17-year-old wouldn't—

Jon: You want to slap him around a little bit.

Tim: After that, he becomes a really amazing character. One of the best moral example character is in the book of Genesis.

So why is so much space given to that story? First of all, I'll just recommend. I recommended this books last week by John Sailhamer. Here, you guys look at my screen. And I'm going to recommend the most significant commentary on the Pentateuch, I think in the last 30, 40 years by John Sailhamer called "The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-theological Commentary."

He pointed out some things in the shape of the book of Genesis that are really significant for understanding how it works. First of all, Joseph is one of the 12 sons, and becomes one of the heads of the 12 tribes and families, whereas his two sons do. So he's significant.

The whole story begins with Joseph having these dreams that all of the brothers are going to come and bow down to him. And then it's the whole story of God's providence of actually his way to being exalted is by being sold through the treachery, and nearly getting murdered, and he's in slavery in Egypt, and all this kind of thing. But then God exalts him to become second in command over the ancient Egypt. It's a remarkable story.

But right at the Joseph's story's beginning is a very strange story, Genesis 38, about another son of Jacob, one of Josephs brothers called Judah. Judah is a scoundrel, and he's not a good man, although he did help Joseph out later on in the story.

It's a story about how he sleeps with a prostitute and then goes about his way and dishonors some agreements that he has with her. Her name's Tamar. Then she uses his lying and treachery as leverage to get him to do what she needs him to do in

chapter 38. You guys know the story in Genesis 38. And then it goes back into Joseph's story.

Jon: Yeah, there's some interruption.

Tim: You're just like, "What?" But here's what's interesting is that that whole story is about the line of Judah being preserved through the actions of this prostitute Tamar - the line of Judah. And then you read on through the Joseph story, and Joseph ends up being exalted as ruler, and all his brothers come and bow down to him, and everybody in Egypt bows down to him just like his dream said he would.

Then you get to the end of the book of Genesis, Genesis 49, and it's Jacobs final words of blessing on all of his sons. Jacob goes through blessing the sons. Who gets the blessing of the divine covenant promise is not the firstborn. That's Reuben - and he slept with one of his dad's wives. It's not Simeon or Levi, because they are really angry and short-tempered murderers. It's the fourth son, Judah.

Then we're told from the line of Judah will come in King who will be like a victorious lion. Then Jacob says, "And your brothers will bow down to you."

What Sailhamer points out is that this is the author of Genesis', his way of showing you that the story of Joseph is actually about the line of Judah and that the story of the Joseph, all of a sudden, going into slavery, nearly being killed and being exalted.

Then what you get is a poetic promise about the line of Judah and what the future is for the king from the line of Judah is precisely what happened in the story of Joseph that all of the brothers come and the whole world bows down to him.

Jon: Because you would think that since Joseph is so lad and it should be his line that the king will come from.

Tim: That's right. But it's not. The author of Genesis wants to show you that the snake crusher from Genesis 3 and the seed and the offspring who will bring God's blessing to all of the nation's is a king who's going to come from the Lion of Judah. That's what Genesis 49 says.

Then Genesis 49 and the way the Joseph story is shaped tells you that the Joseph story is being put forward as a type or an image of the story of the Messianic King from the line of Judah.

Jon: So it's a type of Jesus in a way.

Tim: It's a type of the Messiah. That's a little bit different than just saying, "Oh, Joseph is a type of Jesus." What Sailhamer is saying is that the author of Genesis has

constructed the story so that you walk away going, "Whoa, the king coming from the line of Judah is going to have a story like Joseph's story." And that's like what the author intended.

Jon: And he thinks that because everyone's going to bow down to that King in the same way all the brothers bow down to Joseph.

Tim: Correct.

Jon: So then there's this parallel between Joseph's story arc where he does the right thing, but then he gets punished for it and he rises to power, and then he blesses the world.

Tim: That's exactly right. It's exactly the storyline of Messianic King from the book of Isaiah and the book of Zachariah. The point is that the author of Genesis is trying to communicate this.

Jon: That's cool.

Tim: It's not something we look back and impose on the story. It's actually something that the story is trying to get us. Anyway, I could go on for a long time. Next question.

Jon: We have time for another question.

Tim: Sweet.

Jon: A lot of people are asking about Melchizedek.

Tim: We got Robert Hernandez. "Can you explain the appearance of Melchizedek?" Well, probably not. But I can tell you what I think about it.

Jon: First of all, tell us the story. Like Melchizedek how's he show up, why?

Tim: Abraham's nephew gets kidnapped by a bunch of Canaanite kings and Abraham's ticked and he wants to rescue his nephew. And so, he gets together an army and goes and rescues his nephew. Then the king of Sodom comes out and wants to give honor. The king of Sodom comes out and wants to pay homage to Abraham, and kind of get over Abraham's good side, and Abraham's like, "Hey, you know, sorry."

But then the king of Salem, which is the ancient name of Jerusalem comes out. And we're told—

Jon: So the king of Salem, he's some dude who runs a tribe probably of some sort of, a big civilization in the hills of this area, and he's called Salem.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: And he's not Jewish? He's not an Israelite?

Tim: No, he's a Canaanite king. But we're told us that he's also a king, and he's a priest. He's like the big honcho - the king and a priest in Jerusalem. Then he pronounces a blessing on Abraham, and Abraham gives to him a homage offering from the winnings. And then the story is over. It's this very interesting story about a priestly king in Jerusalem who Abraham pays homage to. And that's of the role in the story.

The significance of it, you just sit there as, "Who is this King in Jerusalem?" And you actually have to read on into later in the biblical story where you learn the Jerusalem is the place where David from The line of Judah establishes kingdom. And then Psalm 110 comes along and says that the future messianic King is going to be both a king and a priest in the line just like Melchizedek.

So I think his significance in the Genesis story is another one of these pointers that the author gives to show that the city of Jerusalem, the line of Judah of David is going to be the place where the Messianic Priests King will rule from.

Jon: Boom. Melchizedek. Hey, thanks for listening to this episode of The Bible Project podcast. You can check out all of our resources. We've got them on our website, thebibleproject.com or you can see our YouTube channel, youtube.com/thebibleproject.

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