[Psalm 1–2 E1]

Speakers in the audio file: Jon Collins, Tim Mackie, Adrian, Propaganda, and LaDonna

Jon: Welcome to BibleProject podcast. Tim and I want to start reading the Psalms together. And so, today we begin. The Psalms are Israel's hymnbook, full of songs that are intended to train our hearts and teach us how to approach God. There are 150 individual psalms. So where do you start?

Tim: You've got to start with Psalm 1 *and* 2, because the two distinct poems have been brought together into a unity as an introduction to the whole Psalm scroll.

Jon: Today, we're starting with Psalm 1. Most translations begin Psalm 1 with the phrase, "Blessed is the man who—" Tim translates it, "How good is life for the man who __"

Tim: This word *'ashre* is the Hebrew word underneath Jesus' nine-part opening to the Sermon on the Mount. How good is life for, or how happy is—this is opening with, "Here's an ideal way to be human."

Jon: Psalm 1 introduces us to a key idea. We're meant to meditate on the Bible and delight in it.

Tim: We think deeply about that which we find arresting and interesting, fascinating, beautiful. And that's the experience that the good-life person has with God's instruction, embodied in Scripture.

Jon: But the poem begins with what the good life is not. It describes a person on a journey towards a place called "the seat of the mocker." It's a person who pretends to sit above it all, critiquing everything in life with contempt for people around him.

Tim: How do you end up opting out of doing right by God and neighbor and making fun of people who are trying to do right by God and neighbor? How does a person get there? It starts by a small repetition of decisions from bad input.

Jon: Instead, this psalm invites us to become a tree: full of life, planted by a stream of flowing water.

Tim: The good life is a life sourced in something outside itself, God's instruction. And it leads both to personal flourishing and the generation of value for everybody else around. That's a lot different than being stationed in the seat of the mocker.

Jon: Today, we read Psalm 1. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical Break (2:24–2:27)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Jonathan Collins, hello.

Jon: Hello. We are going to read a psalm together today.

Tim: Yes, we are. That's the thing that we are doing.

Jon: Yes, and it is a psalm we've read many times together.

Tim: Mhm. Yes. Yeah. That's right.

Jon: Not only is it the first psalm in the collection of Psalms, it's a key psalm that reflects on, what does it mean to be a reader of Scripture.

Tim: Yeah. Which is why we've talked about it so much over the years.

Jon: Which is why.

Tim: It's the ultimate meta-psalm. It's a psalm in the Bible that's about reading the Bible.

[Laughter]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yep. We were talking recently, and I thought a cool addition to the podcast would be that we start meditating on some psalms. So I thought, let's start at the beginning.

Jon: Yeah. And if you're going to meditate on psalms, start with Psalm 1.

Tim: You have got to start with Psalm 1 and 2.

Jon: Ooh, Psalm 1 and 2.

Tim: Because the two distinct poems have been brought together into a unity as an introduction to the whole Psalm scroll. Now, that's a claim that I'm making that isn't just made by me. There's a lot of Psalm scholars who have advanced that claim. But I want to explore a reading of Psalms 1 and 2 over the next couple episodes that way.

Jon: So we'll do Psalm 1, and then, next episode, we'll do Psalm 2.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And then, we'll reflect on how they work together.

Tim: Yeah. And then we'll read them as a unity, and so many cool things pop when you do that. So that's the short little mission we have before us: Meditate on Psalms 1 and 2.

Jon: Where does the word come from, "psalm"?

Tim: Ooh, it's a Greek word.

Jon: It's a Greek word.

Tim: Literally a Greek word, *psalmos*.

Jon: *Psalmos*, which means "song"?

Tim: *Psalmos*, yeah, since there's no silent P in ancient Greek. Yeah. It just means a song, poetic composition, that's meant to be sung.

Jon: Okay. What's it called in Hebrew?

Tim: *Tehillim*, which means "praises."

Jon: Praises? *Tehillim*.

Tim: —*hillim*, and that *hil*—

Jon: *Tehillim*.

Tim: —is the same root that's being used in the word hallel-ujah.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: *Hallel*—

Jon: Okay. *Hallel*.

Tim: —is the verb "to praise," and then, *tehillah* is the noun "praise."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: It's in Hebrew tradition, it's called *Tehillim*, "praises."

Jon: And what would they call an individual psalm?

Tim: *Mizmor*.

Jon: A *mizmor*. Okay.

Tim: Mhm. Yep. *Mizmor*, which means a poetic composition designed to be sung, connected to the root *zammer*, which means to sing a poem. Mhm. And you know, of the 150 poems, about two-thirds of them have some kind of heading.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like, if you look in your Bible, often, there'll be the words "psalm" and then a number. Then sometimes, our Bible editors put in a little summary of the main idea of the poem, like "a song of deliverance" or something like that. And that's not in any of the Hebrew manuscripts.

Jon: Oh, it's not?

Tim: But usually, there's a little superscription. That'll be like, "A psalm of David, when he ran away from Absalom." Right, it's kind of notes. Those are in the Hebrew manuscripts. And sometimes, there'll be "A song of David," "A song for the day of Sabbath," stuff like that. And those are in the manuscripts.

Jon: Hmm. Alright.

Tim: Anyway.

Jon: You'll have to point them out as we go, which ones they are.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Which ones are.

Tim: And what makes Psalm 1 and 2 stick out in the first collection of the Psalm scroll is that they don't have those little headings. They're absent. They are anonymous Psalms, as it were.

Jon: Okay. That's atypical of the Psalms.

Tim: It's atypical in this first collection. So with all that said, should we just read Psalm 1?

Jon: Let's do it.

Tim: Cool.

Jon: "How good is life for the man who doesn't walk by the counsel of the wicked. And in the path of sinners, he does not stand. And in the seat of mockers, he does not sit. Rather, in the instruction of Yahweh is his delight, and on his instruction, he meditates day and night. And he will become like a tree planted by streams of water, which gives its fruits in its time, and its leaf does not wither. And everything he will do, he makes successful. Not so, the wicked. Rather, he is like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous, because Yahweh knows the path of the righteous, but the path of the wicked will perish."

Tim: Hmm. Mhm.

Jon: Psalm 1.

Tim: Psalm 1. Short, dense. And I guess, in one sense, not that hard to understand. Though when you start to crawl through it, little puzzles and treasures emerge. So let's do that.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. Let's just start at the beginning. Opening line: "How good is life for the one who, for the man who—" And actually, what's so great is, it's three words in Hebrew, and they all are spelled with similar Hebrew letters.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: And when you say them together—so I'll say them in Hebrew—*'ashre ha'ish 'asher*.

Jon: Oh. It's very poetic.

Tim: So *a* and *sh* and *r*.

Jon: *'Ashre ha'ish 'asher*.

Tim: *'Ashre ha'ish 'asher*. Mhm.

Jon: That line, in itself, probably became just a really wonderful poetic turn of phrase in Hebrew.

Tim: "How good is life, for the man who—"

Jon: *'Ashre ha'ish 'asher*.

Tim: Yeah. Three words. And interestingly, the psalmist kind of bound together in three main parts.

Jon: That'd be a fun puzzle to try to think of an English way to have a more poetic way of saying, "How good is life, for the one who—?"

Tim: Oh. Sure.

Jon: —but has that kind of repetition and sounds. I want to, like, spend some time considering that.

Tim: So it's this word, *'ashre*, is the Hebrew word underneath Jesus' nine-part opening to the Sermon on the Mount, which, in Greek, is *makarios*. But it's the phrase "how good is life for" or "how happy is the ideal." This is opening with an ideal. Here's an ideal way to be human.

Jon: Hmm. How good is it?

Tim: *'Ashre ha'ish 'asher*.

Jon: Yeah. *'Ashre*, *ha*—say it again?

Tim: *'Ashre ha'ish 'asher*.

Jon: That sounds so—

Tim: You blend it together. *'Ashre ha'ish 'asher*.

Jon: Yeah. Yeah. Okay, I see it.

Tim: So usually, when you—if you were to point at somebody, and say, “Dude, that person’s—they’re winning. They’ve got the good life.”

Jon: Yeah. “The one who wins is.”

Tim: “The one who wins is.”

Jon: That has some poetic resonance. “The one who wins.”

Tim: Yeah. Well, you—oh, “the one who wins.”

Jon: “The one who wins.”

Tim: “And the winner is.”

[Laughter]

Jon: “And the winner is…”

Tim: What you expect to follow is a description of the winning life. And that is not what follows. What follows, here in Psalm 1, is three descriptions of what the winner does not do. It’s a way of delaying the positive description, but, and it gives—starts with three negatives. Here’s three ways to lose.

Jon: Hmm. Lose at life.

Tim: So here’s three ways you can lose at life. And the good-life man doesn’t do these. And there’s three lines that match very closely. He doesn’t walk in the counsel, or by the counsel, of the wicked. In the path of sinners, he doesn’t stand. In the seat of mockers, he doesn’t sit.

Jon: Do you switch the sentence structure, because that’s what’s happening in Hebrew?

Tim: Mhm. The poet, yeah, switched. Yeah. So, “How good is life for the man who doesn’t walk in the counsel of the wicked?” And he wants to give you two more parallel descriptions, but he switches the word order so that this phrase “by the counsel of the wicked” matches “in the path of sinners” and “in the seat of mockers.” All three of those phrases actually start with the same Hebrew letter, which is *bet*, which is also the

second letter of the alphabet. And the first letter of the alphabet is *'ashre*, what the poem begins with.

Jon: Oh, so that first line has a bunch of—

Tim: *'Ashre ha'ish 'asher*, all three of those words have the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, three of them. Then, the next three lines, all start with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Jon: And the *bet* comes from which word?

Tim: It's translated as "by the counsel" or "in the counsel of the wicked," then, "in the path," and "in the seat."

Jon: So it's the preposition word, that has the *bet*.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. And what's interesting, then, is I think we're meant to both see them as a progression but also meditate on the relationships of all three of the lines.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So there's three verbs. He doesn't walk; he doesn't stand; he doesn't sit. So that, right there, is interesting. There's a little story being told there.

Jon: Walking, to standing, to sitting. What we're missing, then, is maybe laying down.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. That's right.

Jon: Right?

Tim: Yeah, totally.

Jon: That would be the final progression.

Tim: Yeah. You lay down in the bed you've made. But we're going from motion, to like, a stopping motion. You go from walking, to sitting, and in between the two is where you stop walking, but you're not yet down on the ground, you're just—you stand. Walking is one of the primary metaphors in the Hebrew Bible, and in most languages, for the story of your life, and the trajectory of your life and your life decisions. The path, you know. So walking by the counsel of the wicked means you are walking and making decisions. Every day of your life, you're walking through life, and you're making calls. What values are guiding your decision-making and the call that you're making? That's the counsel.

Jon: The counsel is, how are you deciding how you're going to walk?

Tim: Yep. That's right. How are you making your life decisions? What are the bigger, true north, the point of your compass, that helps you know, I'm not going to go right here. I'm not going to go left, here. I'm going to go straight. We're all making those calls, all the time, every day.

Jon: Yeah. I would say that if I had a friend who was like, "Oh man, I just think it's such a good idea if I, XYZ," and "I'm like, wait, who told you that? Okay. You're getting counsel from people who just don't get it."

Tim: Yeah. That's what counsel means. Input.

Jon: But I don't think out there, of like, "Oh, there's the counsel of the wicked. Let's go meet with the counsel of the wicked."

Tim: Oh, sure.

Jon: Right? So, like, it's just a turn of phrase to talk about people who don't have good advice.

Tim: Yeah. So we're also introducing a character here, the *rasha'*.

Jon: The wicked.

Tim: The wicked. Yeah. So this is someone, as we're going to see, who, from the poet's point of view, has rejected all forms of God's instruction. They don't heed God's wisdom and instruction. So when you get input from them, it's not God's input.

Jon: So underneath this is an assumption: To walk in life, you need counsel. You're going to need counsel.

Tim: You need counsel. None of us are born knowing how to live.

Jon: How to walk the walk.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: But you can get counsel from people who get it, or don't get it—

Tim: Yep.

Jon: —who will lead you on a path of life or a path of destruction.

Tim: That's right. And actually, they don't walk by the decision-making input of the wicked, which is just kind of the binary opposite of the word "good" or "righteous." And

then, they don't stand. So you go from walking by the counsel of the wicked, all of a sudden, you're going to find yourself not just walking anymore, standing. You're beginning to settle in a way of life. And that way of life is then associated with the path of sinners, the Hebrew word *khatta'im*, which means "to miss" or "to fail."

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: It's used of sling-stone throwers in the army of Benjamin, the tribe of Benjamin, in the book of Judges. They were left-handed, some genetic trait in the tribe of Benjamin. They could sling a stone at a hair, like a human hair. You could hold a hair. And they could sling a stone at it and never *khatta'*.

Jon: Never fail.

Tim: Never fail to strike the target.

Jon: Never miss the target.

Tim: So to be a sinner is somebody who consistently fails to meet the goal, to hit the target, of what a human being is for.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Mhm. Moral failure, the path of moral failure. And then, stand in that road long enough, and you'll find that it's not just, like, a temporary way station on the path. You've taken a seat. You've, like, settled into a habit of thinking and decision-making, and that's called the seat of mockers. Isn't that interesting? Mockers. You go from wicked, to sinner, to mocker.

Jon: Someone who is very cynical and thinks of themself as, kind of, better than everyone—

Tim: Yeah. A mocker is somebody who sits outside the game, because they've said they've opted out. Not going to play the game. And I'm going to take it upon myself to just make fun of everybody else playing the game. That's the mocker. You view yourself as separate, you view yourself as above, and you have contempt for others.

Jon: Who's the ancient version of this? I mean, like, what would they be doing in the ancient world?

Tim: Mmm. This would be somebody who makes fun of a person who decides to tell the truth, even though it doesn't lead to their advantage or gain.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Sucker. They didn't know how to—

Jon: One-up?

Tim: How to spin the story. So they told the truth at work about their involvement in a thing—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —and they ended up getting demoted, and they could have spun the story differently and not gotten associated with those people, and they could have gotten a promotion. Sucker.

Jon: We're going to do the 10 Commandments series. It won't have come out yet as this airs, but we are looking at the ninth command, which is, "Don't bear false witness."

Tim: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Jon: And then we meditated on a passage about how you could join your hands with a wicked man—

Tim: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: —and then, do violence against someone, together, by conspiring and telling a story, weaving a little untrue story about that person, and then, we benefit. And so, I guess, I'm imagining now, if you came to me and said, "Hey, Jon, we could go, and we can get this guy's field, or his ox, or whatever. We just have to weave this tale. Come conspire with me." And I'm like, "No," then you would mock me.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And you would be the mocker.

Tim: Yeah. I'm thinking of Psalms 15 and 24, which talk about, who's the person who can go up to God's holy hill and hang out with God? And there's one line that's echoed in both of those, about somebody who will swear an oath to their own disadvantage. So let's say your neighbor needs help, and they've run out of money. I'm going to put down the money on their monthly mortgage for their field so they don't go bankrupt, and they can get that month's crop and hopefully pay their bills the next month. I swear by the name of Yahweh, neighbor, I'm going to help you. I'm going to give you this money. And you know there's no way they're ever going to be able to pay you back. So you're

swearing an oath to your own disadvantage. And that's the kind of person who Yahweh likes to hang out with.

Jon: Yeah. And that person is easy to mock.

Tim: And the mocker would stand by and say, "Sucker."

Jon: "Sucker. You think you need to take care of the poor? Oh, that's cute."

Tim: "That's cute." Yeah.

Jon: "You think that you need to do right by your neighbor, and that person's your neighbor?"

Tim: "And suffer for it?"

Jon: "And you're going to suffer for it? Oh, that's sweet."

Tim: "That's a nice sentiment."

Jon: "Good on you."

Tim: That's the mocker.

Jon: That's the mocker. "Bless your heart."

Tim: How do you—is a person born that way? Like, usually, somebody starts to build that kind of contempt in their heart over the course of—right?—time, and of decision-making, and they began to view other people, who are actually trying to do right by others, and they view them as suckers. I don't know why the word "sucker" is in my mind, but it's just like, you're just easily taken advantage of. And how do you get there?

Jon: You're saying it's a progression towards sitting in that place.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: And that's what this is meditating on.

Tim: It's what these three lines are doing. Yeah. How do you end up opting out of doing right by God and neighbor and making fun of people who are trying to do right by God and neighbor? How does a person get there?

Jon: You don't wake up one day and just decide to do that.

Tim: It starts by, just, small repetition of decisions with—from bad input.

Jon: These three lines are a little tragedy—

Tim: They are.

Jon: —of the person who begins to listen to really bad advice from people who don't have good in mind and then slowly begins to stand, put themselves in situations where they're just going to miss. They're going to start failing at loving God and neighbor. It's going to happen all the time. And then, over time, they're just going to be like, "You know what? Just even trying to love other people, that's ridiculous, anyways. I just have got to get what's mine, and we're just playing this game, and I'm above it all."

Tim: Yeah. How good is life for the man who doesn't begin walking down the path that leads to that, what you just described. That's the opening line of Psalm 1.

Jon: How good is life for the one who doesn't fall into this tragedy?

Tim: Yeah. And it begins with walking. That is, patterns of daily decision-making. And who are you getting your counsel or your instruction from? Not the wicked. And then, here we go. Now, on to the next line, which begins with the word "rather."

[Musical Break (21:04–21:35)]

Tim: Verse 2 is set in complete contrast. So how is the good life guided? And that's what verse 2 is all about: "Rather, in the instruction of Yahweh is his delight. And on his instruction, he meditates, day and night." So, the word "instruction," it's the Hebrew word Torah. Comes as a designation for the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. But here, it seems to stand for the voice of Yahweh, the direct instruction of Yahweh, as a way to refer to the whole scriptural tradition but also to what it is that people encounter when they read and meditate on Scripture. They hear the instruction of God. They hear God's voice. Notice how it's phrased—"delight."

Jon: Yeah. The Torah, the instruction is—

Tim: —is their delight.

Jon: —their delight. Yeah. Now, is this a different word than "desire"?

Tim: Ah. It's a synonym.

Jon: It's a synonym.

Tim: So, desire, like in the 10 Commandments, you know, "Do not covet."

Jon: Yeah, do not desire your neighbor's stuff.

Tim: Do not desire. Yeah. And those words come from the garden of Eden story. God made every tree desirable to see.

Jon: Okay. And if this tree is desirable to see, it's a delightful tree.

Tim: Exactly. Yeah. So, this is the Hebrew word *khephets*. And *khephets* is naming the pleasure you get from the experience of having a desire met. Mhm, yeah. And delight can be—it's aesthetically attractive, a song, a piece of art, a poem—you know, we delight in things that we find beautiful.

Jon: Okay. Yeah. How is your desire met?

Tim: Your desire is met by God's instruction, not the counsel of the wicked. So, here, *torah*, the *torah* of Yahweh—

Jon: You could have said the counsel of Yahweh.

Tim: Right. But instead, you get a little switch. The teaching of Yahweh is where this person delights. They don't make their calls in life from the counsel of the wicked—rather, their delight. And so, notice, in the *torah* of Yahweh is his delight, and in the Torah, he meditates day and night. I can probably get a pretty good reading on what it is I'm delighting in, in a certain season of life, by where my daydreams go. In the moments when I'm not supposed to be thinking about something else, what do I find myself thinking about? What are my thoughts drawn towards?

Jon: So what you delight in is shaping your imagination and focusing your attention.

Tim: So delight is connected with meditation, which is fantastic.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Meditation. We've talked about this word a lot over the years. I think you know this Hebrew word.

Jon: Mhm. We do. *Hagah*.

Tim: *Hagah*.

Jon: Yeah. I like this word a lot. And it's not the type of meditation that we typically think of, emptying your mind, just trying to disconnect from your thoughts. There's that type of meditation, which has become a practice that people do.

Tim: Yep. It's not completely different, but it's distinct from that, because, in Hebrew, *hagah* is what you are focusing your thoughts on. So you are basically emptying your mind of everything else except the one thing you're focusing on—

Jon: —which is your focus, yeah.

Tim: So, yeah, *hagah* is an interesting word, because it refers, in all of its uses, specifically to quiet words that come out of your mouth. Like, quiet sounds or words. So this is used in Isaiah chapter 31 to describe a lion that *hagah*-s over its prey. So, it just like got the rabbit, you know, broke its neck, and it's like hovering over it, kind of about to eat it.

Jon: It's hunching over it.

Tim: Like, *r*, *r*, that kind of thing. Uh, doves *hagah* in Isaiah 38. Like, doves up on the power lines, they *hagah.*

Jon: Their little cooing sounds.

Tim: Yeah, like, hoo, hoo. And then, a person can *hagah*. You can *hagah* with your tongue, in Psalm 71: "My tongue will *hagah* on God's righteousness, all day long." So, this is referring to the practice of quiet, focusing of your mind through reciting something out loud to yourself.

Jon: Okay. So what are you reciting?

Tim: *Torah*. God's *torah*.

Jon: The *torah*.

Tim: Yeah. Instruction. Scripture.

Jon: The Scripture.

Tim: Yeah. And I do that because I actually delight in it. It brings—I think it's beautiful. It's spellbinding. I can't look away from it.

Jon: Yeah. You know, in one sense, I don't get it in terms of—I think the way I grew up thinking about the Bible, as like a rule book—I don't think of that as like a delightful thing just to, like, say out loud over and over. That just feels like a discipline, right? That feels obligatory and not fun. But the way we just looked at those three lines of the man who does not—and just like, if you read that over and over, the way I relish a poem, you know?

Tim: Yeah. That's right.

Jon: And I keep thinking about—

Tim: —*'ashre ha'ish 'asher*. Remember, when I said that to you, you smiled.

Jon: I know.

Tim: And you got, like, super excited about it.

Jon: And that, like, sits in you.

Tim: That's delight.

Jon: That's delight.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And then, to think, like, yeah, the wicked, the sinner, the mocker, and to like really sit in that, and to get these insights, that's a delightful thing, too.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. That's right. We think deeply about that which we find arresting and interesting, fascinating, beautiful. And that's the experience that the good-life person has with God's instruction, embodied in Scripture. And we still don't have a description of the good life. We have a description of the opposite of the good life. And we have a description of the source of the good life. We still don't know what it looks like. And here, we come—transition into the middle of the poem: "The good-life person will become like a tree planted by streams of water, which gives its fruit in its time. Its leaf does not wither. Everything he will do, he makes successful." As we shift to another metaphor, not a path metaphor, walking on a path, but a tree.

Jon: Hmm. The good life is someone who becomes like a tree.

Tim: Yeah. That's right.

Jon: There's a little riddle.

Tim: It is. It's a little puzzle. The first thing said about the tree is that it's planted, which is not the same word as "sit," from sitting in the seat of mockers, but it is a provocative, well, synonym.

Jon: Yeah. To be stationary.

Tim: And it's passive. It *has been* planted. So when a tree is planted, a tree doesn't plant itself.

Jon: Oh. That's true. A tree doesn't decide where it's going to grow.

Tim: It gets planted by someone else. And then, it's planted by a source outside of itself. Where does it get the energy to give fruit and have leaves that don't wither? Because it's by a source of life for itself—that is, a stream of water.

Jon: Okay, so there's a type of life where I'm walking, I'm in charge, I'm going to find counsel from the people I think will give me a leg up that leads to failure, and cynicism, and contempt. Then there's another way of life, which is, I'm going to let something beyond me not just direct my path but plant me somewhere. And then I'm going to let something beyond me be my source of nourishment.

Tim: Yeah. And it's interesting, because "planted" means "stationary," but when you're planted by a stream of water, you're constantly being renewed by new things, a source of newness. What a wonderful image of, just, perpetual newness than a river. This is the old philosophical puzzle of, like, you never step into the same river twice. It's just new water in motion perpetually. So that's a lot different than being stagnantly stationed—right?—in the seat of the mocker. This is planted by a stream of water that also makes the tree so it is producing newness all the time.

Jon: Yeah. It's a fruit tree.

Tim: It's a fruit tree. And what is fruit except just new value, constantly being generated, out of—right?—this piece of wood stuck in the ground by a stream, and it keeps making new stuff, and it's perpetually alive. Its leaves never wither.

Jon: Yeah. Creating things that sustain life for others.

Tim: Ooh. Life for others, which is the opposite of the mocker.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Right? Mockers opted out, and he's, like, making fun of people who are trying to do the right thing, create value by it.

Jon: The mocker thinks a fruit tree is kind of a dumb way to live.

Tim: Kind of stupid.

Jon: “Why are you giving out all your goods to others?”

Tim: Mhm. Mhm. Yeah. Yeah. So notice that the tree and the stream image comes right after we were told that the good-life person’s delight and meditation is the instruction of Yahweh. So that’s the source, as it were. We’re mixing the two ideas now. What’s the outside source for the good-life person that is perpetually new and generates value out of their life?

Jon: Oh, okay, so the stream is the instruction.

Tim: The stream is the *torah* of Yahweh. Yep. Yep.

Jon: Now if this is all pulling from garden-of-Eden imagery too, the streams in the garden of Eden seem really important, like the river.

Tim: Yeah. Yes, that’s right. So Genesis 2, verse 4 begins a new literary unit, the Eden story, and begins with the wilderness, and nothing can grow. But then, God—or rather, we’re just told, a stream popped up out of the ground, and then God forms—begins planting a garden and forming the human.

Jon: So the stream represents—

Tim: —a divinely provided source of life.

Jon: Of life.

Tim: Yeah. And actually, if you’ve ever had the chance to go look at a spring, popping up out of the ground, it’s a miracle. It looks like a miracle, because you’re just like, it’s just perpetual water, coming up out of a crack in the ground. And it just creates these little oases. It’s remarkable, especially if you, like the biblical authors, if you live in a desert region, those are really special places.

Jon: Yeah. Very special.

Tim: That’s the idea here. So finally, we’re to the good life. The good life is a life sourced in something outside itself, God’s instruction, and it leads both to personal flourishing and the generation of value for everybody else around.

Jon: “Its leaf does not wither.” Uhm, my apple tree loses its leaves.

Tim: Yeah. Drops its leaves. Yeah. So probably, we're meditating on a certain species of plant. I don't have my ancient botany encyclopedia uploaded right now. But we live in the Pacific Northwest of the US. We have trees—

Jon: —evergreen.

Tim: —yeah, evergreen, and also deciduous trees with leaves that don't ever fall off. There are certain species that do that, but that's become a metaphor here for a kind of life that just keeps producing value.

Jon: And then this last line, "Everything he will do, he makes successful."

Tim: Right.

Jon: That's going a little far, right?

Tim: Yeah. Sure.

Jon: Right? This is a bit of an exaggeration.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Though I think we're meditating here on the whole arc of a human life. Because you know, you can have somebody who's had a lot of hard things happen, but when you look at the trajectory and what their whole life produced, you can see that it was successful.

Jon: So you could think of it as every little thing. Every—

Tim: You could think of it that way.

Jon: —every thing, every project, every circumstance, success. Or you could say—

Tim: Like Joseph style. Actually, the story of Joseph is a good example, because he went through a long period of suffering, hardship—like, almost 20 years. And then that formed him into a certain kind of person. But once he stepped into the courtroom of Pharaoh, boom.

Jon: You wouldn't say that everything Joseph did was successful.

Tim: But that's right. If you're going through, like, moment-by-moment of his life story.

Jon: That one moment he, like, got thrown in a pit.

Tim: Yeah. Totally. But there was a long season of his life where he brought benefit to himself and others, to say the least.

Jon: So this line could have been, “And the fullness of the person’s life, the trajectory of the person’s life, is success.”

Tim: Yeah, you know, biblical authors work and write in terms of ideals, and binaries, and extremes. We’ve got the good life and the wicked. The tree and, notice, we’re going to see the chaff that the wind blows away. So it’s just a rhetorical strategy used a lot by the biblical authors to give moral instruction by painting things in terms of binaries. And that is helpful in one sense, because it gives a kind of clarity to the extremes, right? But most of our life isn’t lived in the extremes; it’s lived in the middle. But you don’t often know what to do in the messy middle if you don’t have a sense of what the extreme ends of the spectrum are. So this poem is dealing in kind of extreme ideals.

Jon: The extreme end of the spectrum is, a man or a human who is so connected to the wisdom of God, meditating on that day and night, so in line with and in union with God’s wisdom, that person is always in step with the right thing, and things are always producing life.

Tim: Mhm. That’s the extreme ideal state. It’s the Eden ideal. Now, here, outside of Eden, it’s a little more complicated, doesn’t always go that way. But I think it is the case that if, over the course of a whole human life, someone who consistently loves God and loves neighbor tends to do better in life and to generate value—not always, not in every circumstance, because you get Job moments, right? And that’s super important, too. But Psalm 1 isn’t trying to deal with the messy middle. You have a whole book of the Bible that’s about the messy middle, it’s called the book of Job. But Psalm 1 is trying to paint the extreme, ideal portrait. This guy, who’s like a tree, planted, stationary, full of life—verse 4 then comes and provides a contrast, “Not so the wicked.” So that “not so” is a clear contrast to the tree. Not like the tree, is the wicked one. So we pick up, that’s from the first line, the wicked. “Rather, that one is like chaff, that the wind drives away.” The word “chaff” is spelled with similar-looking letters as the word “tree.” So “like a tree” is the phrase *ke‘ets*, and “like chaff” is *kammots*. So it’s the same first and last letters, and the middle letters look similar. *Ke‘ets*, like a tree; *kammots*, like chaff. And not only are they spelled similar, they have opposite meanings, because what could be more opposite? Chaff—okay, I didn’t grow up with this—

Jon: Oh, as a farmer.

Tim: I had to learn this from an encyclopedia.

Jon: Yeah. What is chaff?

Tim: So chaff is referring to wheat. So look up a stalk of wheat. And when you look at the little, like, fruit seeds, the grain, that gets you know, ground into bread, and flour, and all that kind of stuff—

Jon: That's the goods.

Tim: That's the goods.

Jon: That's the fruit.

Tim: And every one of those comes surrounded by a little, dried type of shell that you kind of have to separate and break off from the seed itself.

Jon: Oh, wow. You really do? I've never done it. That's what you do. You crack it open. It's a little seed.

Tim: Yeah. It's a little seed. It's a little different than, like, a sunflower seed, which has a hard shell.

Jon: Yeah. Is it crumbly?

Tim: It's a little, kind of, soft. It almost looks like little leaves.

Jon: Oh, little leaves.

Tim: And when it's growing fresh, they're green. But as it begins to ripen, the whole stalk turns kind of tan, or brown, as it dries out. And then the dryness of both the stalk and that little chaff thing—

Jon: Oh. That crumbles away.

Tim: —crumbles away. And so, when you separate off the chaff, you might just rub it with your fingers.

Jon: I see.

Tim: And the little chaff, it's just, like, this dry biomass that just kind of just blows away.

Jon: Just blows away.

Tim: It's the exact opposite of—

Jon: —a planted tree.

Tim: That's *kammots*, like chaff, is the opposite of being *ke'ets*, like a tree.

Jon: *Ke'ets* or *kammots*.

Tim: That's right. Yeah. So the middle of the poem gives you a description of the good life, like a tree, which is the opposite of like chaff, which is no longer connected to the source of life. It's shriveled up, and it's driven away by the wind. So now we've got, how good is life for the person who doesn't end up on a trajectory that leads to sitting in the seat of mockers? Rather, they've got a source of life outside themselves that is their delight. What kind of life does that lead to? And you get two contrast portraits: the tree life, or the chaff life. That's the center of Psalm 1, which leads us then to the last movement of Psalm 1, which begins in verse 5.

[Musical Break (40:12–40:40)]

Tim: "Therefore—" That's a nice break in the poem. It's a clear signal. Alright, we're going to land the plane, here. "Therefore, the wicked"—there's our key actors, again—"the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, nor will sinners, in the assembly of the righteous."

Jon: Okay. Yeah. Lots of questions. Great. Alright. So the judgment.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: What's the judgment?

Tim: *Bammishpat*.

Jon: *Bammishpat*.

Tim: *Bammishpat*. *Ba* is "in."

Jon: Oh, that's that preposition with the *bet*.

Tim: Same *bet*. Yeah. Exactly.

Jon: *Bammishpat*.

Tim: The *mishpat*. *Mishpat*—

Jon: Yeah, *mishpat*.

Tim: Yeah. *Mishpat*, at its most basic, refers to a decision that you make about a situation that has come up in my community or in my life—usually your community, because it's a public social impact kind of decision.

Jon: He uses the word often translated as "judgment," or sometimes "justice."

Tim: Yeah. Justice.

Jon: Justice. Justice.

Tim: Yeah. So these are decisions that a leader makes that has a social or communal impact. There's some dispute that's between two people. "You did wrong to me." "No, I didn't. You did wrong to me."

Jon: Who's going to decide?

Tim: Who's going to decide?

Jon: That's the *mishpat*.

Tim: A *shophet*, a judge, will be the one to decide.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: This is what Moses is doing, all day long, when his father-in-law, Jethro, comes to him, this is Exodus 18, and says, "Like, man, you got to appoint some delegate judges to make these calls in your community." So that's a *mishpat*. So in day-to-day life, almost every community has to find some way of appointing someone a position of wisdom and leadership and making calls about justice.

Jon: Okay. I'll go quickly. So *bammishpat*.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: There's no "the" in there.

Tim: Ah, there is.

Jon: There is?

Tim: There is.

Jon: No, because “the” is *ha*, right?

Tim: Mhm, but the *ha* got absorbed into the long vowel, which is why it’s *ba-mmishpat*.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Perhaps great-, great-, great-grandpa Jeremiah said *bahammishpat*. But a few generations in, and *bahammishpat* becomes *bammishpat*, and the *ha* falls out.

Jon: Okay. So it is *the* judgment.

Tim: It is the judgment. There is coming a *mishpat*. This is referring to some kind of ultimate sorting out, the judgment of a final sorting out, that God, the ultimate, righteous judge, will accomplish at the fulfillment of his plans.

Jon: I see. Because you look out, and the wicked win a lot in life.

Tim: Yeah. That’s right.

Jon: The wicked are making lots of deals, lots of wins, racking up. But there is going to be an ultimate moment of sorting.

Tim: That’s right. And what are the words about the two outcomes? I can be declared guilty, I’m in the wrong, or I can be declared righteous, to be in the right. To be declared guilty, or in the wrong, is the word *rasha‘*, “the wicked.”

Jon: Oh, that’s the guilty.

Tim: And to be declared, “I’m somebody in the right,” is to be the *tsaddiq*, that is, “the righteous.” So in the judgment, there’s going to be two assemblies, the assembly of the righteous, those who have been declared to be in the right, and the assembly of the wicked, that is, those are declared to not be in the right. These have done right by God and neighbor. These have not done right by God and neighbor. So in other words, the ultimate, like, the ultimate measuring line, both is how you fare in the present—right?—whether you’re like a tree or like chaff. But we all know that we’re outside of Eden, and how somebody fares in life, success or failure, may or may not be a sign of whether they do right by God and neighbor. You might do right by God and neighbor and be like Job; terrible stuff happens. So the ultimate, kind of, measure of whether you are doing right by God or neighbor is about how my life measures up to the ultimate standard of justice—that is, divine justice, divine decision. In other words, what it’s saying is, there is

a way to live in the universe that's in line with the purpose of being human and for the purpose of the universe, and to be out of line with it.

Jon: And there will be an ultimate moment where that line—

Tim: —is made clear.

Jon: —is made clear.

Tim: Yep.

Jon: And you can be in the assembly. You could be in the group of people who held that line.

Tim: Oh, that's right. And this is fantastic, because the assembly of the righteous is called the *'adat tsaddiqim, ba'adat tsaddiqim*. It's in direct contrast to the counsel of the wicked, which is the *ba'atsat* of the wicked.

Jon: Was it the same word?

Tim: It's one letter different. The assembly is the *'edah*. Counsel is *'etsah*.

Jon: Oh wow.

Tim: So you can be in the counsel of the wicked, or you can be in the assembly of the righteous. That's verse 1, matching verse 4.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So why is it that in the *mishpat*, that the wicked will not stand up, and that they won't be counted among the assembly of the righteous? And the last line of the poem makes that clear: "Because Yahweh knows the path of the righteous." We're back to the path again. "But the path of the wicked will go to ruin," or will perish.

Jon: Yahweh knows. This is back to the wisdom instruction of Yahweh.

Tim: Yeah, yeah. That's right.

Jon: There is a path that is formed by God's wisdom. He knows it.

Tim: Yeah. That's right.

Jon: He will plant you there.

Tim: Right. So God is the ultimate knower of what is good and not good. He's the author of creation itself. Also, knowing is about relational intimacy. This is echoing the use of the word "know" in the early chapters of Genesis, because God is both the knower of good and bad—

Jon: —by declaring things good and bad.

Tim: Yeah. That's right. And when the snake says to the woman, "You will be like God, knowing good and bad—" In other words, we all know that God is the ultimate knower of good and bad. But after the Eden narrative, in Genesis 4, verse 1, you get another use of the word "know," which is, Adam knew his wife, Eve, which means, like, referring to sexual intercourse. So to know is not just to have knowledge about something.

Jon: Yeah. It's not information. It is not just information.

Tim: It is to actually have union with the thing that you know. And if that's another person, then—so Yahweh is in relational union with the path of the righteous, because the path of the righteous is an invitation of God's own way, God's own path. And man, if you are in relational union with the Author of life, then you're going to be a lot like that tree. So what's great is, Yahweh knows the path of the righteous, but the path of the wicked—and it doesn't say, God will destroy the wicked. It doesn't say that, right? Because you think in the divine judgment from the previous line, you think of divine judge, and you're like—right?—all your stereotypes about the God of the Old Testament, sends fire, lightning—that's not the picture here. The picture of the path of life is being in relational union, being known by God. And if you are not in relational union with God on that path, then your path is just simply going off the cliff to ruin. The path of the wicked goes into nothingness.

Jon: The word here is "perish."

Tim: Perish, *to'ved*. There's a story in 1 Samuel. There's a guy named Saul, son of Kish. And his dad and uncle lose some donkeys. And these donkeys are said to *'avad*. It's the same verb. They got *'avad* in the wilderness. So it, at its most basic, it means to be lost.

Jon: To be lost.

Tim: Mhm. To be lost. You are no longer home, secure, fulfilling your purpose. This is about purpose.

Jon: Is this used to talk about people dying? Would you say, if someone died, they *'avad*?

Tim: Mhm. They *'avad*. It's a very—

Jon: But you could also use it as, just, wandered away, and we can't find them.

Tim: Wandered away, and they're gone. And the role that they played in the harmonious ecosystem, they just—they spun off. So the point is, is that Yahweh doesn't have to destroy the wicked. The wicked destroy themselves by choosing a way that's away from the source of life. And that's *'avad*, here. The path of the wicked will perish.

Jon: Is this a passive verb?

Tim: Will perish. It's called a stative verb, but it has the same effect of—it's the natural outcome. It's the logical outcome of their life choices. The path, remember? The path of the wicked.

Jon: Right. This reminds me of the chaff blowing away.

Tim: Oh, exactly. Yes.

Jon: It's just kind of, like, no one has to go and be like, let's bury that chaff. Let's put that chaff in its place.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: No, it just blows away.

Tim: It blows away.

Jon: And it's gone.

Tim: Yeah. That's the line here. So, which makes you go back up and meditate on the good-life person. So the good-life person is connected to God's instruction. It's connected to a source of life outside of itself that generates value for the tree and—right?—for the leaves, are like the tree flourishing, but also fruit for everybody else. That's the opposite of the wicked, that are both not sourced in a life outside themselves and so, they eventually do wither; their life doesn't tend to generate value for others. And eventually, they're just like lost donkeys, going off and *'avad*-ing in the wilderness. They just disappear, and that's the last line. Yahweh knows, is in union and intimacy, with the path of the righteous, because it's his path, but the path of the wicked just goes back into the dust of the nothingness. This is Psalm 1.

Jon: So I think, an initial reading of this psalm, especially when I get to the end, it always feels a little jarring. I'm thinking about the tree, and it's beautiful. And it just ends

with like, you know, the wicked are going to perish. And I think the initial feeling I have is, and I think other people have this too, is like, “Oh, it feels harsh just to label people wicked, and then, be like, ‘Yep, they’ll get what’s theirs.’”

Tim: Yeah, sure.

Jon: And then also, it just doesn’t seem true of life. Like, when I think of myself—right?—it’s not always a clear delineation between, there’s the type of person who doesn’t have moral failure, and there’s the type of person who does. And we can make these clean buckets, and just, like, it creates an us-and-them kind of thing.

Tim: Yeah, I understand. Yes. So maybe this is about us tuning into a different culture’s way of giving moral instruction. You know, I’m in a season of my life where—music has always played a big role in my life and in my family’s life. And for a long time, whenever I heard country or bluegrass—I didn’t grow up with it. I just didn’t resonate. And I found a handful of bluegrass artists that are changing my life. And I just—they are blowing my mind. And I ended up at a country music festival with a friend and was just exposed to all these, like, new country-bluegrass artists who were on tour. And it was the funnest day I’ve had in a long time. And I’ve been rediscovering this whole new genre of music with a deep history—especially bluegrass has, like, it’s a very American form of music. It’s really beautiful. And a lot of early bluegrass stories—we’re talking, like, 1800s, 1900s—so many of the songs are cautionary tales that deal in the same kind of moral binaries as Psalm 1. And they’re songs mostly about people making decisions through life, and then they destroy themselves. And that’s the song. But those songs play a really—there’s, like, *Grimm*’*s Fairy Tales*, the Brothers Grimm. And they sound kind of harsh and extreme to us now, but I think there’s value in naming the fact that the small decisions that we’re making day by day add up over the course of a human life. And they really do set you on trajectories towards relationship, wholeness—right?—stability, security, joy, and then the opposite of all those things. And what’s the type of literature that could motivate me out of the messy middle of my day-to-day life and see, like, there are real stakes in the course of a human life, and you can end poorly, or you can end well. And it’s getting jolted awake. So that’s the function of wisdom literature, or this kind of poem in the Bible, is to say, “Get your periscope above the surface, and zoom out, and think about, measure my day-to-day decisions, in light of these real outcomes.”

Jon: Yeah. I mean, that helps me appreciate the binary nature of this for my personal reflection. But then as I look out, and I think about, how do I relate to my neighbor? It feels like if I just go, “Well, is my neighbor the wicked, or the righteous?” Then it feels like I’m starting to label and group, and now I’m kind of being the judge. And if this psalm leads to that, that’s—it seems like its own type of mockery.

Tim: Yeah, that's great. No, that's fantastic. It's a great example of how the social location of where a poem comes from, and then the setting in which I read it, makes a huge difference. So the Hebrew Bible comes to us out of a persecuted minority, living in Jerusalem, after the exile, being ruled under one cruel empire after another. That's where Psalm 1 comes from. That's where the whole Hebrew Bible comes from. It is not the literature of the powerful. It's the literature of the powerless, whose hope alone is not at any human kingdom or ruler or judge, whose hope is in the Author of all of life as the judge. So if you've spent most of your life living in occupied territory, paying taxes to a system that gives you no advantage—and I'm describing the life of an average inhabitant of Jerusalem after the exile, and in the time of Jesus—hearing Psalm 1 written by that community and for that community is a very different social location than reading Psalm 1 as a 21st-century Christian American who's living after hundreds of years of a Christianized Europe-in-American culture. And Psalm 1, you're totally right, can become a tool for labeling, and alienating, and seeing the world in terms of us and them. And I think then we're out of touch with what the purpose of Psalm 1 is trying to do.

Jon: Well, it's interesting, because there is a like, good path, bad path.

Tim: And there's value—

Jon: Yes, and we need to be like, "I want to live a life that results in fruit, and in ultimately being declared, like, yes, what you've done is good, and beautiful, and this will last on."

Tim: Yeah. I mean, Psalm 1 is not written to outsiders. It's written to God's covenant people to motivate and encourage faithfulness to Yahweh's word and covenant. Even when it looks like it's not going to lead to success and flourishing, in fact, it is.

Jon: Well, let me ask you this way, then. If I read Psalm 1 and I get self-righteous—right?—I'm doing it right, and I'm going to stand in the judgment. And you can see how quickly that might become—

Tim: Totally.

Jon: —you might kind of corrupt yourself in that. Totally. And not realize, like, there's a lot of my chaff that's going to get blown away too.

Tim: It's 100 percent.

Jon: And when I stand in the judgment, it's not going to be simply like, "Good job, you did all the things. You're in." There's going to be, I mean, the Apostle Paul talks about

that moment of, wow, all these things I thought were good are now being blown, like, burnt up.

Tim: Yeah. It's great.

Jon: And I'm escaping, as if through the flames.

Tim: It's good.

Jon: And that—Psalm 1 doesn't have any of that—

Tim: —nuance. No, no. Again, it's not trying to do everything at once. But maybe also, it's the value of moral education. If you're trying to teach someone something that's complex, you don't start with complexity, right? You start with simplicity and, like, the big picture. Big picture: You can ruin your life as a human being for yourself and everybody else around you. Let's paint clarity about how you end up there. But the point isn't to say, it's so that you can stand up and criticize everybody else who you think is on that path. Psalm 1 is aimed at me. It's not for me to aim at everybody else.

[Laughter]

Jon: That's interesting. Because if you look at the way Jesus, then, relates with—

Tim: Totally.

Jon: —the people who are failing, on the path and how he reaches out to them, it isn't by just, like, labeling them and being like—

Tim: In fact, he has that parable in Luke, I think it's 18, where he says, "Two guys went up to the temple to pray. One guy said, 'Oh, Lord, thank you that I'm not like those tax collectors, and thank you that I'm not ruining my life like them.' And then a tax collector comes up to pray, and he's just like, 'Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner, a failure.'" And he says, "Which of those two went away in right relationship with God?" You can see where he's going there. So both of those people could be instructed by Psalm 1. Only one of them has read Psalm 1 rightly. That's a good way to put it.

Jon: I love that.

Tim: If Psalm 1 is a tool for me and my community to label people, and then, begin to—

Jon: —look down at people.

Tim: —look down at people, we are, by definition, misreading Psalm 1. But if Psalm 1 is giving me and my community moral clarity about the kind of community we don't want to become and the kind of community we do want to become—

Jon: And also, a lot of empathy and desire to be like, "The way that I see someone living over there is destroying them. I want them to find life."

Tim: Oh yeah. Of course. Totally. Yes, that's right. But I think, an environment like we're inhabiting, where one's life choices tend to be more compelling than talking about the reasons for your life choices—and a tree of life is known by, often, by its fruit than by the tree trying to talk about its fruit. Maybe, that's one way to put it.

Jon: Yeah. I love that image you gave us, of the two people going before God, and one —

Tim: It's Jesus. Jesus gave us that.

[Laughter]

Jon: —and the one says, "Thank you, God, that I'm not like those losers." And the other one says, "Have mercy on me." And you said both could read Psalm 1 and get that conclusion, but only one read it correctly.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: So with that in mind, would you just read Psalm 1 for us one last time?

Tim: Mhm. "How good is life for the man who does not walk by the counsel of the wicked. And in the path of sinners, he does not stand. And in the seat of mockers, he does not sit. Rather, in the instruction of Yahweh is his delight, and on his instruction, he meditates day and night. And he will become like a tree planted by streams of water, which gives its fruit in its time, and its leaf does not wither. And everything he will do, he makes successful. Not so, the wicked. Rather, he's like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous, because Yahweh knows the path of the righteous, but the path of the wicked will perish."

Jon: *’Ashre ha’ish ’asher*.

Tim: Yeah, man. Good job. Yep. How good is life for the one who is known, whose path is known by Yahweh. I want Yahweh to know my path.

Jon: Be in union with my path. My path to be in union with him.

Tim: Yeah. May God have mercy on us.

[Musical Break (1:03:33–1:03:35)]

Jon: Thanks for listening to BibleProject podcast. Next week, we read Psalm 2. If Psalm 1 is directed at the everyday man learning to live by God’s wisdom, Psalm 2 is directed at ancient warrior kings who are living in rebellion against God and God’s anointed one.

Tim: This is a way to think about all of human history: of humans organized in planned rebellion against the Kingdom of God.

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Propaganda: I first heard about the BibleProject when a couple of buddies of mine came up here to, you know, start doing some music and ministry, and we met the team and fell in love. I use the BibleProject for saving my sanity. Man, this is a beautiful thing we hold to.

Adrian: My favorite thing about BibleProject is about the stories when God tells us to be encouraging and helpful.

Propaganda: My favorite thing about the BibleProject is the tone that Tim and Jon speak with. Just kind of make me feel like a story that I'm a part of, you know what I'm saying? We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus.

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