



Spirit of God E7: The Spirit Poured Out on a New Humanity

Official Transcript

Speakers:

Hosts: Jon Collins and Tim Mackie

Credits ready by audience members Jonathan and Stephen, and by BibleProject team member Bradley

[Recap and Setup for Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (0:00-11:07)]

[BibleProject theme]

Jon: Welcome to BibleProject podcast. We're in a series on the Spirit of God, the *ruakh* Elohim, God's breath, God's personal presence that brings life and energy to everything. In the story of the Bible, everyone is sustained by God's *ruakh*. But it's up to each of us to decide what we will do with it.

Tim: [audio clip from the episode below] God gives this *ruakh* to all humans, but that isn't an endorsement of what every human does with the life-breath that's given to them. Humans do good and bad with the life energy that they have.

Jon: God's desire for humanity is for us to become united with his life and to represent him in the world. And while every human fails to live up to this calling, there's a hope that a supercharged human, one filled with God's *ruakh*, will show up and lead the way.

Tim: [audio clip from the episode below] Humans need a leader. We need somebody on our behalf to be filled with God's *ruakh* and to steward the gift of life towards goodness and creating more of it in the world.

Jon: The prophet Isaiah talks about this leader to come, someone anointed with God's Spirit to bring freedom, justice, and peace to Israel and the nations. And around this leader is an anointed crew, a group of new humans ready for God to do a new thing through them.

Tim: [audio clip from the episode below] These are people who have the Spirit poured out on them, they do what is right by God and others, and they have God's *torah* in their heart.

Jon: God's *torah*, that is, his instruction, leads humanity into life and wisdom, but the story of the Bible is how the human heart can't align with God's *torah*. So the prophet Ezekiel says that humans won't just get God's *ruakh* in a new way, they will also get a new heart.

Tim: [audio clip from the episode below] "I'm going to give you a new heart and put a new *ruakh* in you, and I'll remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh"—porous enough to truly merge and become one with God's *ruakh*.

Jon: Today, Tim Mackie and I look at the promise of God's Spirit in the writings of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Thanks for joining us. Here we go.

[Musical break (2:08-2:15)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hi, Jon. Hello.

Jon: Hello. We're moving forward.

Tim: Yes, we are.

Jon: Talking about the *ruakh* of God.

Tim: Yeah. Whew. We're six hours in now. How do we summarize where we've been? Or should we try?

Jon: Yeah, I think we do a real quick summary.

Tim: Okay.

[BibleProject theme fades out]

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] The *ruakh* of God. *Ruakh* is a word that can describe a number of things that we have other English words for. You breathe in *ruakh*. You see the *ruakh* blowing through trees. So it's this invisible kind of energy. And then, when we get to Genesis 1, though, when we first start reading the Bible, God is presented as *ruakh*, hovering over chaos to bring life. And so God is *ruakh* in some way. And then Job could say, "The *ruakh* of God is in my nostrils." So it's this very enchanted view of the universe where everything is ordered and sustained by the *ruakh* of God. I exist within it. I breathe it in. That's why I have life. And so this is this concept of *ruakh*. So we've been talking about that category of thinking, trying to bring ourselves into that ancient imaginative framework.

Tim: Yeah, that's step one.

Jon: [jokingly] That's step one. [chuckles]

Tim: Then there's, like, the way the biblical story is trying to tell us a story about who we are, where we are, who God is, what's the problem, and what's the solution.

[Jon laughs]

Tim: That's, like, what the story's about.

Jon: Sure.

Tim: And the way the *ruakh* that you described in step one plugs in and plays a key role in the storyline is kind of what we've been doing in all the episodes since.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] Yeah. At a baseline, it sustains and gives life. But then there's some moments where, like, God can plus that up for people to the degree where you're doing something that is—you need something a little extra, like interpreting a dream or being able to create the—

Tim: A portable garden of Eden?

Jon: [laughs] The portable garden of Eden.

Tim: [laughs] Yeah.

Jon: And then also, *ruakh* can give you, like, real power and strength.

Tim: Mmm. Yes, for leadership to, like, make things happen in the world on behalf of other people to bring us to good, goodness. Mhm.

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Or I was also thinking of just ripping people's heads off like in the judges—

Tim: Oh. [laughs]

Jon: [chuckles] —right?

Tim: [laughs] Oh, or like Samson's super strength.

Jon: [chuckles] Yeah.

Tim: Okay, but that brings us into the complexity of the portrait of the *ruakh*—is because God gives this *ruakh* to all humans, but that isn't an endorsement of what every human does with the life breath that's given to them.

Jon: Yeah. Right.

Tim: Like humans do good and bad with the life-energy that they have.

Jon: Yeah. Yeah, you can be filled with God's *ruakh*, and Saul, who we talked about at length the last episode—he did some really ambivalent things and eventually got to the point where God's like, “*Yeah, you know what? He just doesn't have what it takes.*” And —

Tim: Or: “*He keeps abusing these opportunities of ruakh-power that I'm giving him.*”

Jon: Yeah. “*I need someone with a different type of heart.*”

Tim: “*I need someone with a different heart. So Saul, you forfeited not your life-breath, but your plussed-up ruakh that qualified you to be the king for a time.*”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: [Tim backchanneling throughout] And we also talked about how: If I'm coming from a New Testament perspective, I come with this category of: God wants to send the *ruakh* to everyone. We are all invited to participate in the *ruakh* of God. And in the Hebrew Bible, it's taken for granted that we all have life because of the *ruakh* of God. But when God comes to *fill* someone and work with them, it's usually just a individual, right?

Tim: Right. Yes.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] Moses, and then Joshua, and then the judges. And then when Israel asked for a king. *“Okay, well, the ruakh will come on to Saul.”* And then when Saul disqualified himself, God is like, *“Okay, it’s going to be David.”* But it shifts from Saul to David.

Tim: Yes. Yes. This is about leaders. Humans need a leader.

Jon: Right.

Tim: We need somebody to do on our behalf and for us something that humans in the story just show themselves unable to do. [laughs]

Jon: Yeah, the point of humanity is to image God, reflect God’s character, rule over the Earth on God’s behalf.

Tim: And to be filled with God’s *ruakh* and to steward the gift of life towards that goodness—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —yeah—and creating more of it in the world. That’s the task. That helps us explain why the Hebrew Bible authors keep putting individuals in front of us.

Jon: Mhm. And saying: *“This person is going to be filled with the ruakh in a new, special way. Let’s see what happens.”*

Tim: Yep. *“Let’s see what happens.”* Yep.

Jon: And for, like, Moses—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: —you get a portrait of, like: *“That was—that was pretty great.”*

Tim: Some pretty cool stuff happens.

Jon: *“We could use another one of those guys.”*

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, that’s right.

Jon: But not—not perfect. Pretty great.

Tim: Mhm. But pretty great. And what he wished was that who he was on his good days, filled with the Spirit, could be shared with all of the people.

Jon: Yeah. That's a cool story.

Tim: In that story in Numbers 11: "If only Yahweh would make all of his people prophets and put his *ruakh* on them."

Jon: Mmm. Yeah.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. So it's the one and the many.

Jon: Ah.

Tim: The biblical authors want to put one key figure at a time in front of us, filled with this plussed-up *ruakh*, and show you how it goes. And there's usually some good. It's usually a lot of bad. Also, they are leading a many for whom it's sometimes good, usually a lot of bad.

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: And what you need is Spirit for all of them.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But the story is really focusing on the one through whom the many are affected. And there's Moses and then the Israelites, and then there's all these judges and then the people of Israel. There's Saul, Israel, then David.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The one and the many.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And the Spirit is needed for everybody. But it keeps not working out.

Jon: Yeah, especially with Saul.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: I mean, it is just a train wreck with Saul.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And then that's juxtaposed with David, where it's like, "*Okay, whew. We got a guy.*"

Tim: Yeah. [chuckles] Yeah, totally.

Jon: And we ended last conversation just being like, "*Okay, we got a guy.*"

Tim: Yeah. Yeah, that's right.

Jon: And we alluded to the fact that: Well, at the end of David's life—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: —you know, it kind of fell apart.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: But it was such a good run.

Tim: [laughs] Yeah. [laughs] Yeah, a Moses kind of run.

Jon: A Moses kind of run—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: —that when we reflect back, when the prophets reflect back, it's like, "*You know what? We just—we need another David. We need a son of David.*"

Tim: Yep. Yes.

Jon: [Tim backchanneling throughout] And the point is for that person to not just be a good leader, but to be the one that kind of unleashes humanity to be what humanity is meant to be.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Or to use the Apostle Paul's language, we need an *anthropos kainos*, a new human, a new humanity.

Jon: Mmm. Hmm.

Tim: Yeah. It's what we need, a new Adam, as it were. [laughs]

Jon: Yeah. [chuckles]

Tim: And that's who Paul says Jesus was. But Paul regularly draws on the language of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel to describe Jesus as the new human. So what's going on in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel that Paul would draw so much on their language to talk about the new human, that is, the Messiah Jesus? And what we find there is—we've used lots of metaphors over the years. The Hebrew Bible is like a mosaic through all of its narratives and poems, creating this job description that's vacant— [laughs] right?—of just, like, a human image of God—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —who will do the will of God.

Jon: Right. "*Please apply.*"

Tim: And—"please apply." And so all these characters apply, and their narratives and then the poems reflecting on the narratives create, like, a silhouette. But it's a detailed

enough silhouette that you get a real sense of, like: “*Okay, I can see what needs to be done.*”

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: “*Who’s going to fill the silhouette?*” And that’s what Paul and the gospel authors are doing: putting Jesus in front of us and filling him in the slot, as it were. So that’s what I want to do.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: I want to just do a survey of just some key passages in Isaiah and Ezekiel and show how each of them—

[Music fades in]

Tim: —their portrait of the one messianic Spirit-filled leader is intimately connected to the messianic Spirit-filled people of God, and that all of them are described as this new humanity. And it’s all about the new creative power of the Spirit in the one and the many.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So shall we?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: We’re diving into Isaiah. That’s where we’re going right now.

Jon: Let’s do it.

Tim: Okay.

[Musical break (10:37-11:07)]

[A New David with a Seven-Fold Ruakh in Isaiah 11 (11:07-23:22)]

Tim: All right, so we're jumping into the Isaiah scroll—ah, so much going on in Isaiah, more than we can talk about. But Isaiah is a prophet. He lives in the days overlapping with four kings of Judah.

[Music fades out]

Tim: So Israel has come into the land now. This is 200 years after David.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And the Israelites can't get along, so they've split in a near civil war and then a permanent split between North and South.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: South is Judah, with a capital in Jerusalem.

Jon: Yeah, this whole thing that Israel asked for with a king, with Saul, that—immediately we're told: not a good idea.

Tim: Yeah, right. Right.

Jon: David's like—well—

Tim: He's kind of the best version—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —that there could be until he's not.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. He appoints his son Solomon as king.

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: And Solomon unifies the tribes, but also—ah, this is a whole story. We don't have time.

Jon: Yeah. Wives?

Tim: But he scrambles the tribal boundaries and reshapes all the land according to tax districts.

Jon: Oh, really? [chuckles] We haven't talked about that.

Tim: And then he just starts making a lot of money.

[Jon laughs]

Tim: And he decorates Jerusalem accordingly.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: That's a pretty—

Jon: And he marries a lot of women.

Tim: And he—yeah, totally. And then he's kind of papering over these tribal tensions, and—so that by the time he dies, all the tribes just are done. They split apart.

Jon: Hmm. Wow.

Tim: So it's Solomon's son who can't hold the tribes together anymore, and Israel splits into North and South. And Isaiah's coming onto the scene now, like, half a dozen generations down the line, 150 years after Solomon. So he overlaps with four kings. And the big threat on the horizon is the empire of Assyria from the realms of Babylon and Nineveh. And Babylon is the second most on the heels. And he sees that if Jerusalem's leaders keep going the way they're going—not being faithful to the covenant laws of the Torah and running Israel by God's wisdom—disaster's coming in the form of Assyria and then Babylon afterwards. But he doesn't give up hope. And so there's all these beautiful poems. Sometimes they're in his mouth, sometimes they're in Yahweh's mouth, as it were, speaking through him as a prophet. And disaster's coming, but also hope on the other side of that disaster. So just like the exile of Adam and Eve is not the end of God's commitment to the human story, so disaster for Israel won't be the end of God's commitment to Israel and to humanity through them.

Jon: With the Babylonian exile?

Tim: That's right, yep. So we've already looked at one of these shining gems of messianic hope in Isaiah—

Jon: Mmm. Yes.

Tim: —in this series, because the *ruakh* of God is right there. Chapter 11, where we're told a shoot will spring up from the stem or stump of Jesse. So we need a new David. It doesn't say a shoot will spring up from the stump of David because Isaiah has lived with plenty of David's sons and grandsons and great-grandsons by now. He knows what they're like. But he also knows—

Jon: [jokingly] Mmm. Maybe Jesse had a ninth son.

Tim: Yeah, [laughs] totally. But he also knows there was that period of David's life that was awesome. It was like a Moses-like era in the best sense. So what we need is a new

David who will do that thing again. “And the *ruakh* of Yahweh will rest on him.” The resting is different than the verb used when the Spirit first came on David in the Samuel scroll. That was “to rush upon.” That referred to moments that were typically temporary, for a time, like a sudden onrush of something. And you’re like, “*That’s not sustainable.*” [laughs]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Just like adrenaline pumps through your body, you know, in an emergency, that’s what the onrush of the Spirit is.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: This is a different word. This is about settling.

Jon: And this is the word used for Moses, though, right?

Tim: Yes. Yep. The spirit that rested on Moses. That’s right. It’s also the word used to describe God’s own rest on the seventh day.

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: And the rest that the Israelites are to have. It’s about settling in.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It’s about an enduring rest, Sabbath rest.

Jon: Hmm. Okay.

Tim: So the *ruakh* of Yahweh will, as it were, permanently settle on this new David.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: It’s a *ruakh* of “*wisdom and understanding.*” And we’re like, “*Yep*”—

Jon: [chuckles] “*Need that.*”

Tim: —“*that fits.*” Ah, think of the mosaic picture.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And then all of a sudden Joseph and Bezalel come into mind.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Oh, because they were full of the *ruakh* and had wisdom to bring about—man, rescue in a famine and to create Eden—a symbolic Eden in the desert.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And you're like, "*Wow, all right. More of that.*" "The *ruakh* of counsel and of power."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So we need somebody who can strategically look out at the world and figure out: What should we do?

Jon: Yeah, deal with those snakes.

Tim: Deal with snakes. Yes. Yes. And then you need power to carry out those strategies and plans.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "*Oh, yeah, that makes sense. You need somebody who can make plans and then carry out the plans.*"

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Counsel and strength. Ooh, I like that. Never quite thought about how they go together like that.

Jon: Hmm. Yeah.

Tim: Then "the *ruakh* of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh." The fear of Yahweh—

Jon: Knowledge.

Tim: —according to Proverbs, is true wisdom.

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: Any knowledge you have—knowledge is about recognizing a thing for what it is, and then discernment is then discerning between what's good and bad based on your knowledge and then making decisions accordingly.

Jon: Mhm. And later in this poem, doesn't it say the whole Earth will be filled with the knowledge of God?

Tim: Yes, it does. The climax of the poem is: "All of the land will be filled up with knowing Yahweh."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: [excited] Oh, that's great. Thank you.

Jon: Hmm?

Tim: That's fan—that's great.

Jon: You're welcome. [laughs]

Tim: Okay, let's go—okay, hold on to that.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. So if you get somebody who's filled up with this *ruakh*—sevenfold *ruakh*—there were seven descriptions here—you're like, "*Whoa, this is like the human formed of clay in Genesis 2 but, like, supercharged.*" Verse three: "He will delight"—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —"his very delight is in the fear of Yahweh."

Jon: Yeah. It's desires lined up with—

Tim: Yeah, that's right.

Jon: With God's desires.

Tim: So "He won't make decisions about justice based on what he sees with his eyes"—going on to verse 3. "He won't make leadership decisions only based on reports that people hear." We talked about this already. He can see underneath the surface.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: He can discern the issue under the issue under the issue.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: You know, I'm thinking from—the only leadership experience I have is years in pastoral ministry, working as a part of a leadership team of a local church and then being a part of the leadership team leading this organization, [chuckles] the BibleProject.

Jon: Mhm. That's a lot of experience.

Tim: And one thing that keeps impressing me as the years go by is how much good leadership really is about not getting distracted by a surface issue, right?

Jon: Mmm. Oh, sure.

Tim: But trying to see the issue under the issue.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And you're like, "*Well, this is happening*"—whatever detail—

Jon: The signal beneath the noise, as they say.

Tim: [excited] Yes. Yeah. There's the presenting matter—you know?—of whatever, maybe it's a conflict between different staff people or a family or a husband and wife in your church or whatever.

Jon: Right.

Tim: There's some issue.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And the ability to see the issue under the issue, I feel, is what I consistently lack.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Jon: [chuckles] Awe.

Tim: Or—you know, like, tough problems—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —in human life and then communities—it's hard to sort out our problems.

Jon: Mmm. Yeah. You need seventy elders around you?

Tim: [laughs] Totally. I need the *ruakh*. Anyway. So you can see this is what this portrait is about. He's not easily fooled. He can see the issue under the issue.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So he's going to bring justice for the poor, we're told. Verse 5: "righteousness"—doing right by God and neighbor—"and faithfulness"—being loyal to God and neighbor—"it's like the very belt that holds his garment up."

Jon: [chuckles] Tying him together.

Tim: Yeah. It's like he's clothed with justice and loyalty. So cool. And man, you get a leader like that, you get a new Eden where the animals stop killing each other—
[laughs]

Jon: In Eden, animals aren't going to eat each other?

Tim: Well— [laughs]

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: I—

Jon: [laughs] That's not the point right now?

Tim: I—I don't know.

[Jon laughs]

Tim: But the picture of Eden is: There was peace between the animals just like on the ark, you know?

Jon: Yeah. [jokingly] I mean, eventually that wolf is going to get hungry.

Tim: [laughs] Totally. [laughs] And then God will feed the wolf with manna, apparently. I don't know.

Jon: Oh. Sheep manna.

Tim: The point is is that living things don't have to live at each other's expense. But there is enough—

Jon: That is the hope.

Tim: That is the hope. Now, right—but, you know, you can go vegetarian. You can go vegan. But I'm still living at the expense of a plant when—if I do the plant-based diet.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: But the Eden narrative isn't thinking in those categories. [chuckles]

Jon: No, but the Eden narrative is like, "*Yeah, eat the plants.*"

Tim: Exactly. "*Eat the plants.*" Totally.

Jon: "*Don't eat the animals. Eat the plants.*"

Tim: Exactly. Yeah. So there's something unique—

Jon: So it is kind of thinking about that.

Tim: —and—interestingly, even though we think of plants and animals and humans as all having *bios*, life—

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: —in the Hebrew Bible, the distinction between something with *ruakh* and not is about—animals and humans have *ruakh*, plants—

Jon: Right. Plants aren't breathing.

Tim: No. The *ruakh* blows on plants, but it's not animating them. And in *my* imagination, the *ruakh* is animating the plants—

Jon: From your modern imagination?

Tim: —and the animals and the—but that’s me—yeah—kind of using the biblical imagery, but then reshaping it in light of the way I see the world.

Jon: I see.

Tim: And I think that’s what we’re supposed to do. Anyhow, that was an aside.

Jon: Well, Isaiah put it right there for us—

Tim: So you— [laughs]

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: [chuckles] So: “No more hurting, no more doing *ra*”—bad—“on all of my holy mountain. . .” So there—

Jon: That’s the Eden callout.

Tim: Yep. That’s right. “. . . for the land will be filled with knowing Yahweh like the waters cover the sea.” So what I love about how you highlighted that a few minutes ago is this poem began with *one*—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —the one who’s filled up permanently with the sevenfold *ruakh* of Yahweh.

Jon: Mhm. And the climax of those seven are the knowledge and fear of Yahweh.

Tim: Exactly, knowing—

Jon: And then what’s going to fill the whole land?

Tim: Yeah. That’s right.

Jon: It could be filled with the chaos of the ocean. That’s one way this could all go.

Tim: Mhm. Mmm.

Jon: Right?

Tim: It could be filled with the chaos of violent creatures.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And here, I think a lot of the point of this animal peace imagery—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —is also to get you to think about the analogies between violent animals and violent humans that’s pervasive in the Hebrew Bible—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —that violence is like the animal inside of every human.

Jon: Hmm. But it'll be filled with the knowledge.

Tim: Filled. Yeah. So you get the one, and then the many will benefit when that one comes. We're back to the one and the many.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: When you get a Moses—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —man, ideally, you'd have a whole people filled with the *ruakh*. You get the new David who knows, who's filled with the spirit of knowing, and then you get a whole Earth filled with knowing.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Yeah, that's great. There you go. The one and the many. That's it, kind of in one poem right there.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So this figure—

[Music fades in]

Tim: —this portrait of the one, the new David, is a thread connecting all these different parts of Isaiah. It really gets developed in the servant poems in the latter sections of Isaiah.

Jon: Yeah.

[Musical break (22:54-23:22)]

[The Spirit-Anointed Servant and a Spirit-Filled People (23:22-42:49)]

Tim: So this is on the other side of Babylonian exile. This picture of hope in the one gets developed. And in these poems, like Isaiah 42, super important one—

[Music fades out]

Tim: —this is God speaking in first person through the prophet, saying, “Look, here is my servant. I am taking hold of him. He is my chosen one in whom my soul has delight.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: “I have put my *ruakh* on him, and he will bring justice to the nations.” And you’re like, “*Oh, yeah, that’s the Isaiah 11.*” Those are hyperlinks back to Isaiah 11—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —*ruakh* and justice.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: This is interesting: “He will not cry out or lift up and make his voice heard in the streets.”

Jon: [with new clarity] Hmm. Okay.

Tim: He’s not coercive.

Jon: Hmm. What do you mean?

Tim: Here, let’s take the next images. “He won’t break even a broken reed.”

Jon: Hmm. He’s very gentle.

Tim: “He won’t extinguish a dim wick.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So you have, like, a candle that’s, like, you know, almost burning out.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And you make any move around it—the tiniest movement of the air will blow it out. And this guy can dance around a candle—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —that's about to go out, and it never goes out.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Cool image. So he's not assertive or coercive in the way that—because you think about a Spirit-empowered ruler who's bringing justice—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You know, you—a certain kind of person enters your imagination. [laughs]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Who—who gets stuff done in the world?

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: What kind of person gets stuff done?

Jon: A Samson kind of person.

Tim: A Samson, a Saul.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And this is going to be a Spirit-filled justice-bringing leader you almost wouldn't pick him out in a crowd. And he's extremely gentle and unassuming.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: It's really counterintuitive. [laughs]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But: “He will not grow faint.” He won't get tired. Remember like Moses? He got tired. Moses got tired.

Jon: Oh. [chuckles] Yeah, and hangry.

Tim: Yeah, I think we have to be reflecting on that. It's hard to lead people, but: “He won't grow faint. He himself won't be broken until he establishes justice in the Earth.” And you're like, “*Whoa. Okay.*” “And all the distant lands are just waiting for his *torah*, his instruction.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Such a rad image. You can see elements of the Moses mosaic picture coming out here.

Jon: Oh, because Moses brought the Torah.

Tim: Moses brought the Torah, yeah, to *Israel*.

Jon: Uh-huh.

Tim: This is somebody who'll bring Torah—

Jon: Beyond.

Tim: —to the nations.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. But he'll do it in a—a kind of Moses-like way. Like Moses—well, I don't know, Moses was a complex character.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But there were moments where people criticized him—

Jon: Oh, for being too meek and mild?

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. Yeah, like his brother and sister, for example. Anyhow. So this picture in 42 then gets developed into what we sometimes call the suffering servant passages. And this Spirit-filled one is described as somebody who goes to his own people, and he's rejected by them. Isaiah 50: They pluck out his beard, they spit on him, they reject his message, kind of like Moses was. And then Isaiah 53—

Jon: And like a lot of the prophets.

Tim: Like a lot of the prophets. Exactly, yes. Isaiah 52 and 53: He's full-on rejected, killed, buried. And then right in the moment in Isaiah 53 where you think this guy's done for, he's alive, and he sees light, as it were, [chuckles] and he is looking upon a huge family called "his offspring" or "his seed" who will live long days. And all of a sudden, we're told that this servant—Spirit-filled new David, justice-bringing but in a humble non-coercive way—his death will be him bearing the sins of his people, carrying their sins, so that they can experience *shalom* and forgiveness. And he dies on their behalf.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: And then he starts speaking up, like in Isaiah 61, saying, like, "Hey, the Spirit of Yahweh is on me because he's anointed me to send good news to the oppressed and brokenhearted, and for everybody who is mourning in Zion to give them new clothes and oil of joy." So they get oil. So anointing—we haven't really talked about it. We did a whole podcast series on it—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —but that’s what Samuel did to Saul and David.

Jon: Anointed them with oil.

Tim: Yeah. So anointing of oil was a symbol of them being marked for this unique role as Israel’s key leaders. It also happened to the priests.

Jon: They get anointed with oil?

Tim: Mhm. And as we explore in our Anointed series—maybe we should put a link in the show notes—the pouring of oil was a symbol, essentially, of liquid life—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —the liquid life of Heaven being poured out on an earthly figure to mark them as the one who will reunite Heaven and Earth. And so the liquid Heaven, [chuckles] as it were, becomes closely a link to depicting the *ruakh* as a liquid. We’re about to see it—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: —in Isaiah elsewhere. But his point here is that: “*I’m an anointed one, and now there’s all these hurting*” —

Jon: Oh.

Tim: —“*oppressed people grieving, and I’m going to pour oil on them.*”

Jon: Mmm. “*I’m going to anoint them.*”

Tim: So like the anointed one starts anointing others and creating a crew.

Jon: The one for the many again.

Tim: Yeah, the one and the many. So this poem in Isaiah 61 starts talking about that many and calls them the blessed seed, and they are going to be like a garden that sprouts up plants and shoots in the land in the eyes of all the nations.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And you’re like, “*Wow, one and the many.*” So you can just see the thread of the Spirit—

Jon: Where did the Spirit show up in here?

Tim: Ah, right at the beginning, where he says “The”—

Jon: Oh, yeah, “The Spirit has anointed me. . .”

Tim: “The Spirit of Yahweh has poured oil on me, and then I’m going to share that oil with others”—

Jon: I see.

Tim: [Jon agreeing throughout] —“and they’re going to be like Eden plants sprouting up out of the ground everywhere.” So this one is the link between the one and the many. So there’s all these Spirit texts in Isaiah about the filling up or the Spirit coming on the one, and the many are kind of mentioned. But then you have all these other texts in Isaiah that really just focus on the many. So should we look at some of those?

Jon: Hmm. Yeah.

Tim: Okay. Isaiah 44—this is a classic one. This is God speaking through the prophet, saying: “Jacob, my servant, listen up, Israel, the one that I’ve chosen”—oh, this is interesting. So the individual servant who’s the one on behalf of the many is called “my servant,” “my chosen one,” in chapter 42.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: But now here’s all of Israel being called “my servant” and “my chosen one.”

Jon: Right.

Tim: So even right there you can see the link between the one Messianic leader—

Jon: And that was the point of Israel, was a chosen nation—

Tim: Exactly right.

Jon: —to represent God to the many.

Tim: That’s right. That’s right.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So here’s what Yahweh says: “The one who”—ooh, this is good. “The one who made you”—

Jon: Mmm. “*Bara*”?

Tim: Uhm, it’s “*asa*.”

Jon: Oh, “*asa*”?

Tim: But it’s alongside *bara*, create.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: *Asa*, “to do” or “make,” is the other most common creation word in Genesis 1.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: So “The Lord who made you”—using the language from the Genesis 1 story—
“and the one who formed you. . .” That’s right out of—

Jon: Genesis 2?

Tim: —Genesis 2, the forming of the human of the dust of the ground.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So it uses the two creation words from the seven-day narrative and the Eden narrative, and it puts them together. “I will be your help.” That’s also from Genesis 2.

Jon: Oh, the helper. Yeah.

Tim: “I am your *‘ezer*,” essentially. [laughs]

Jon: Oh. Hmm.

Tim: “I will be the one to be your delivering ally.” “Don’t be afraid, Jacob, my servant, and upright one, Yeshurun”—it’s a nickname for Israel in the book of Isaiah and Deuteronomy—

Jon: Oh, okay.

Tim: —that just means upright one—“because I will pour out water on thirsty land, streams on the dry ground. I will pour out my *ruakh* on your offspring and my blessing on your descendants, and they will spring up like grass, like poplar trees by streams of water.” Sounds like Psalm 1.

Jon: Hmm. Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: So Isaiah 44, verse 3 is a really condensed little biblical theology—

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: —of Spirit and creation and Eden.

Jon: Yeah. Because the water from Genesis 2 comes up out of the ground—

Tim: Yes. Exactly. Yes.

Jon: —and that’s where all of creation can have life.

Tim: That’s where the garden is planted, and the next thing that happens after the water is the trees and plants coming up.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And then that forms a river that flows out to all the nations.

Tim: To all the nations. Mhm. Yeah. Ah, that's great.

Jon: So here in Isaiah 44:3, water on the thirsty land—that's a wilderness land.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And it'll stream like that river in Genesis.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. And result in plants.

Jon: And then there will be plants. And the plants are the people, the crew.

Tim: That's right. So first of all, it's retelling, as it were, a story of the planting of Eden.

Jon: Mmm. But planting a new type of humanity?

Tim: But then, by putting in parallelism "I will pour out water" and "I will pour out my *ruakh*," it's then saying the planting of Eden is an image of the creation of a new humanity, a new Eden humanity.

Jon: Mmm. Through God's *ruakh*.

Tim: Yeah, so here, the Spirit is depicted as a liquid. Right here.

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: As—the servant said: "The Spirit of Yahweh has poured oil on me." But here, the Spirit is the liquid.

Jon: Mhm. Hmm.

Tim: It's not the Spirit pouring something else. It's like, here, the Spirit is the liquid.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: It is the oil.

Tim: Yeah. The word for "pour out"—it's the word *yatsaq*. And it's the standard word for, like, pouring liquid out of a container onto something.

Jon: Mmm. Okay.

Tim: So that's interesting.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: That's, like, crucial. The servant's anointing is deeply connected to a whole new covenant people of God having the *ruakh* poured out on them. And as you read on, these other descriptions of these many—there's a sweet set of poems in Isaiah 51 where the word *ruakh* doesn't appear, but this group is called "people who pursue righteousness."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: They pursue doing right by God and neighbor, and they will experience God "making the wilderness into Eden."

Jon: Mmm. [chuckles] Which is a Genesis 2 thing.

Tim: [chuckles] Yeah, totally. In Isaiah 51:4, they're called "my people and my nation who need to listen to me because," God says, "*torah* is going to go out from me, and my justice as a light for the nations"—"peoples." My righteousness is near. My salvation is going out. My arm will bring justice to the peoples. Man, the distant islands are just waiting for me. They're waiting for my arm to do its thing."

Jon: It's the many again.

Tim: So now it's: We've got the one—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —and then we've got the crew around the one—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —who are "my people," "my nation," the Eden people. And then through *you*, my *torah* will go out [blows] even to all the nations. If you feel like the Gospel of Matthew ringing in your ears of Jesus appointing the twelve—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —and then the crew of his disciples and then at the end of Matthew and then sending them out to the nations—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —that's Matthew architecting his story on the same framework from Isaiah. And then the last one's great, in Isaiah 51:7. God says, "'Listen to me, you who know righteousness. . . .'"

Jon: He's talking to the crew then.

Tim: Yeah. "' . . . people who have my *torah* in their hearts.'"

Jon: Mmm. We haven't talked about this word in this series.

Tim: What's that?

Jon: Torah.

Tim: Ah.

Jon: *Torah*.

Tim: Instruction.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It comes to be a synonym for the word of God, God's will as it's been expressed through his words. And the laws of the Torah, you know, were that for Israel.

Jon: Yeah, it becomes a bigger word than just the first five books, right? Or first five scrolls.

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

Jon: [inhales] What did you say? It becomes a what? A synonym—

Tim: A way of thinking about God's—

Jon: —for the word of God?

Tim: Yeah. Because it's about God's will and purpose expressed through words.

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: That's what God's instruction is about.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And these are people who we know have the Spirit poured out on them, they do what is right by God and others, and they have God's *torah* in their heart. So think about how heart and spirit are being linked here in these poems in the similar way they were being linked together in the Saul and David story that we explored before.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Humans need more than just life-breath or even plussed-up life-breath to do the will of God. You also need to do the will of God—

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: —which is about your desires and your heart and what you want and then what you plan to do with your life based on what you want. All of that is language of the heart.

Jon: Yeah. Not only do you need the instruction in the Torah, you need a heart that can align with it.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah, maybe: The *ruakh* is what gives you the wisdom and the power to do stuff in the world, but doing stuff in the world can go many ways.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So then it's about: How are you going to direct your life energy—

Jon: Yeah, okay.

Tim: —in a direction of your desire and what you value as good?

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] And God's *torah* will tell you how you should do it. But then the question still becomes: Well, will you do it that way?

Tim: That's right.

Jon: And so you need desires or a heart—

Tim: Yeah, that's right. And what we are told is Saul had lots of *ruakh*—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —but his heart was not aligned.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Then David in his early phase is depicted as somebody who has lots of *ruakh*, and he is a man according to God's heart, according to First Samuel 13.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] Yeah. This is interesting. Yeah, you need—hmm. Okay, you need God's Spirit. I mean, you wouldn't be alive without God's Spirit. But you can lean into it even more, and you need to do that. You need God's instruction, his *torah*. And you need a heart that's able to hear God's *torah*, really listen to it, and be able to live in line with it and then use the Spirit to then do good in the world. So all those things need to be true. And we see examples of people getting God's Spirit, but their heart's still compromised.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And we see God give Israel Torah, but then their heart's still compromised. So then you kind of see the prophets really focusing in on, like: "*Ah, there's something with the heart.*"

Tim: The heart.

Jon: The heart.

Tim: The heart is the thing.

Jon: The heart is the thing. Like, “*We need someone—we need a new heart.*”

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And yeah, it’s more Spirit with a bad heart—

Tim: Yeah, [chuckles] that’s not— [laughs] yeah.

Jon: Like, what’s that going to do?

Tim: That’s bad news.

[Jon laughs]

Tim: Truly.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Look at Samson’s.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: He had a lot of Spirit, but a pretty rotten heart.

Jon: Mmm. Yeah.

Tim: And Saul had a lot of Spirit and a *complicated* heart. So he did good and bad.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] Yeah. So we need—man, we need someone with the right heart who can handle the Spirit, and that’s the Messiah. We need that Messiah. And the thing that the Messiah can do needs to flow out to others.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Then we’ve got what we need.

Tim: We’ve got what we need if we have a one and a many who have both *ruakh* 1.0 and *ruakh* plussed-up with God’s *torah* in their heart.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You know, I’m remembering now conversations that we’ve had about the severe mercy of God exiling Adam and Eve from Eden.

Jon: Yeah. Right.

Tim: And actually, all of a sudden—

Jon: [excited] I just thought about that too.

Tim: —it was feeling like that—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —where God says, “*If humans, in a state of choosing to know good and bad by their own wisdom, were to have eternal life?*”

Jon: Yeah, misaligned desires, eternal life—

Tim: Ooh, it would be bad news. Bad for them, bad for everybody.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So he doesn’t kill them, but he exiles them into a realm where now every human life—

Jon: Will end.

Tim: [Jon agreeing throughout] —has a moment where it has to give back the *ruakh*, give back the breath. But if the *ruakh* wasn’t taken away, they would just keep on going because it’s God’s *ruakh*, which is forever. So in a way, permanent *ruakh* is about unending life.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But it’s too much for us.

Jon: Yeah, from that framework, no wonder more *ruakh* becomes a problem for people.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: Yeah.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: Yeah, yes. It’s too much. We can’t handle it—if your heart’s not aligned.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So—and that’s the portrait of all of these Spirit-filled leaders in the Hebrew Bible, is: The *ruakh* ends up being too much for most of them. And for a handful of people, they’re able to steward it wisely for a time. And that becomes the image that’s really developed in the Prophets here.

Jon: [Tim backchanneling throughout] If you get a person who has the right kind of heart who can then hear God’s instruction, it can become to them just native, and their heart is full of it, and they listen and live by the word of God—

Tim: [excited] Okay—

Jon: Right?

Tim: Yes, exactly.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] You get that kind of person—that's the anointed one. They are full of God's Spirit, but in a way that's truly going to bring good and life. And Isaiah is saying, *"We're going to find that person. He's not going to be what you think he's going to look like. And we're going to actually miss it, and we're going to even insult and abuse this person. But that person is the one who will allow us to be able to then have an interaction with the Spirit and God's torah in a way that will truly work."*

Tim: Yes.

Jon: *"And when that happens, then we can be the ones that go and bring that to the rest of the Earth as well."*

Tim: Yep. Yeah, you got it. That's it. That's Isaiah's portrait of the Spirit-filled one and the many. More to it, but that's a good summary.

[Music fades in]

Tim: So I want to quickly— [laughs] famous last words—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: —look at two other portraits. One is the one that probably everybody already knows because it's the one that Peter quotes on the day of Pentecost.

[Musical break (42:26-42:49)]

[A New Heart and Ruakh in Ezekiel 36-37 (42:49-1:02:47)]

Tim: Joel chapter 2: "'It will come about after these days,' God says, 'that I will pour out my *ruakh* on all flesh'" —

[Music fades out]

Tim: —“and your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions, even on”—

Jon: This is the, like, seventy of Moses.

Tim: Yes. “. . .even on male and female slaves I’ll pour out my *ruakh* in those days.”
Yeah, this is Moses’s wish.

Jon: This is Moses’s wish.

Tim: This is God saying that God will fulfill the thing that Moses hoped for, the pouring out of the *ruakh*. But notice it then systematically works through all these binaries. So: male and female—

Jon: Mhm. Old and young.

Tim: Old and young. And then, slave and free. And then male and female when it comes to slaves. So—

Jon: Yeah, everyone.

Tim: Everybody. All flesh. It’s pretty universal. It’s as universal as, you know, in Isaiah saying, “my *torah* and my salvation will go out to all the nations.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It’s another way of saying the same thing.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Ezekiel has a uniquely important contribution to make to our theme. He, in Ezekiel chapter 36—this is looking out at the hills of Israel. Now, he actually—he’s not looking out. He lives in Babylon in a refugee camp.

Jon: Okay. But he’s having a vision.

Tim: Yes. Yeah. He lives in a refugee camp, but he’s having a vision of the hills of Israel. And he had, in chapter 6, seen them covered with the dead bodies of his fellow Israelites—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —once Nebuchadnezzar and his armies swept through. And he has two poetic sets of oracles—we call them chapter 36 and 37—that work together. And the word *ruakh* is just, [whoosh sound] like, flooding these chapters.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: In chapter 36, he begins by retelling the story of Israel: how God brought them into the land—acted corruptly, broke the covenant, worshiped idols, sacrificed their children to other gods, allowed gross injustice towards the poor. And God said, “That’s it. I’m going to give you guys over to your enemies and into exile.” But verse 23, God says, “I am going to vindicate the holiness of my great name, my holy name that has been profaned among the nations, which *you* profaned” —

[Jon and Tim chuckle]

Tim: —“in their midst. And I’m going to do something that will result that the nations will know that I am Yahweh when I prove myself as the holy one among you in their eyes. I’m going to take you all out from the nations. I’m going to gather you from their lands. I’m going to bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle *clean water* on you, and you’ll be clean.”

Jon: This is purification stuff?

Tim: Yeah, yes. Ezekiel’s a priest.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So part of his training was about these ritual washings when people transitioned from a state associated with death into life.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: So “I’m going to clean you from all your filthiness and idols.” So it’s as if—

Jon: Mmm. That’s where the dirt is, is you following other gods.

Tim: Yeah. Yep. The death, in this case, isn’t, like, a skin disease—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —you know, or having touched, you know—

Jon: A dead body or something.

Tim: —bodily fluids or a dead body. Yeah, it’s—yeah. So notice the water. “I’m going to pour water over you, and you’ll be clean. I’m going to give you a new heart *and* put a new *ruakh* in you” —

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —“and I’ll remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I’ll put my *ruakh* in you, and cause you”—literally: “make it so that you walk in my statues”—

Jon: [chuckles] Mhm.

Tim: —“and observe my ordinances.” Okay, I’m appreciating this in a new way after our hours of talking.

Jon: Mmm, okay. Okay.

Tim: So we have the lead sentence: “I’m going to give you a new heart.”

Jon: Yep, and that’s the thing we’ve been wanting—needing.

Tim: “Put a new *ruakh* in you.” And then there’s a double click on both of those.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So the heart—

Jon: Tell me about that heart.

Tim: It’s a heart of stone. No matter what you do to it—rocks don’t soak up water. Actually—well, I mean, they can, but on a micro level.

[Jon laughs]

Tim: You know what I mean?

Jon: I love that every once in a while you get very bio—

[Tim laughs]

Jon: Like, you know about biology in some—

Tim: I don’t—

Jon: —obscure way.

Tim: Not very much.

Jon: Rocks soak up water.

Tim: But, uh, rocks can be worn down by water.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That’s—which is remarkable.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's so amazing. But I mean, the contrast here is, water doesn't do much to a rock.

Jon: Yeah. Okay.

Tim: So you just need a new heart, a soft heart. So flesh is soft, it's vulnerable. You can poke into it.

Jon: Hmm. Yeah.

Tim: You can't poke into a rock.

Jon: Right.

Tim: Can't get anything new in there. But flesh you can, right? It's pliable, in a way.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So you need a new heart, one that's pliable, receptive to something from outside of itself.

Jon: Hmm. Is this connected to, like, the hardening of a heart? Like there's something about our desires—

Tim: Yes. 100%.

Jon: —that—we're still human, but they've kind of caused us to become something that just is no longer human.

Tim: [excited] Ooh. That's great. That's great.

Jon: You know?

Tim: This is all about desire.

Jon: Yeah, it's all about desire.

Tim: Yeah, totally.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] It's like Nebuchadnezzar turning into an animal, or it's like Pharaoh turning into this violent—it's just kind of like, "*What has happened?*" It's just like no longer truly what God intended or what humans are supposed to be.

Tim: [Jon agreeing throughout] Yeah, man, this is like—this is the anatomy of human formation in the Hebrew Bible. It's like—it's all about desire. That's the word introduced in the garden. It's something we perceive as good, and we begin to take it, and it satisfies us to a degree. And so then we form these habits. But the problem with these habits over time is that the satisfaction gets less and less, right? And this is the classic pattern of addiction to things, is it gives you less what you need, and you have to have

more of it. And then it's not very long before a human's set in like a cast of mind where now you just see the world in light of that desire.

Jon: And then it feels like you're stuck—

Tim: Yeah, because your decisions—

Jon: —and you can't change.

Tim: Yeah. We *can* make logical decisions over against our desires.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But also—

Jon: Can we though? [laughs] There's some arguments about that too.

Tim: Well, exactly. And—

Jon: Is that an illusion? [laughs]

Tim: Totally. No, that's a really good point that what we—

Jon: We tell ourselves a story—

Tim: —are really doing—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —is confirmation bias.

Jon: [chuckles] Yeah.

Tim: And we are justifying our preferred ways of thinking and behaving that are really about what we want.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And once a human's set in their ways, as it were, it becomes very hard to change. It's pouring water on a rock.

Jon: Mhm. Right.

Tim: So that's the heart—a fleshy heart, instead of a stony heart. And now it's about “my *ruakh* in you.” So it doesn't say: “I'm going to take out your *ruakh* and replace it with my *ruakh*,” but he does say I'm going to put “my *ruakh* in you and make it so that you follow my *torah*, you walk in my statutes.” So let's ponder that.

Jon: Yeah, so a new *ruakh*.

Tim: Hmm.

Jon: So the new *ruakh* is God's *ruakh*.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Okay, and this is where *ruakh* is a pretty flexible idea, which is, all *ruakh* is God's *ruakh*.

Tim: Right.

Jon: But then at some point, it becomes mine. I have a sense of my own *ruakh*.

Tim: Ooh, yes. Yes. And I can—

Jon: Right?

Tim: Yep, and I start to do things with it.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] And I do things with it. And I form my identity, and I form my thoughts, and my desires, and all of that is my *ruakh*. Now, can I exist without God? No. So in some ways, it's like mine with an asterisk.

[Tim chuckles]

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] But it's my *ruakh*. And so here it's saying, "*Yeah, you've got that. That's the problem.*" And you've even said before, earlier, it's pretty synonymous with heart.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Once you get to that kind of *ruakh*, you're just talking about your heart, right?

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. Yes.

Jon: [Tim backchanneling throughout] And so now you see how these are two things together. And so you get to that point where you've taken what—the life that God's given you, and you've made it your own in such a way that it's just a problem.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah. [exhales] Yeah. So this is Ezekiel's way of saying what the Isaiah prophet was saying—was God says, "my Torah in your hearts." "You know the mark of the Spirit-filled crew"—

Jon: Right.

Tim: —"who are associated with my anointed servant if my *torah* is in their heart." And this is another way of saying the same thing.

Jon: But what kind of heart do you need for the *torah* to reside in there?

Tim: You need a vulnerable, pliable, porous heart—

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: —right?—that can be influenced from the outside. And you need a human *ruakh* that is porous enough to truly merge and become one with God's *ruakh*. And it already is God's *ruakh*—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: —but there's some way that it can be more or less.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And it's that more that's the focus here. Yeah.

Jon: And you were drawing attention to the—in 27, the “my *ruakh* will cause you. . .”

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: There will be this sense of, like: You're still you—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: —but now you're animated in a way that's like you can be you in a way that you couldn't really do.

Tim: Yeah. You could read this in terms of, like: Oh, so God's just going to make me his robot.

Jon: Su—yeah, yeah, yeah. [chuckles]

Tim: And that's not the point. I—maybe the point is that because of my stony heart and my *ruakh* that I don't steward very well, I actually don't know what's good for me, and what I think is good for me—

Jon: [chuckles] Right.

Tim: —actually turns out not to be or for other people. And in a way, I kind of need God to come do the thing for me—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —that I seem to not be able to do for myself. So we're highlighting: If God doesn't do this, we're screwed.

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

[Tim laughs]

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: [laughs] That's my—

Jon: But that doesn't leave you on the sideline where you then aren't participating in it, like a robot.

Tim: Exactly. I have to participate.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yes. And that's why it's this merging of divine and human agency that I've been trying to name all—

Jon: Yeah, you keep talking about that.

Tim: —through our conversations. Like, more of my *ruakh* doesn't mean less of Yahweh, and more of Yahweh doesn't mean less of me. But the—

Jon: If they merge.

Tim: If they merge. But that merging is going to fundamentally change the me that I'm bringing to the equ—

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Jon: Into the equation?

Tim: Yeah.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: Yeah. [laughs] I guess, yeah. So here's the next poem, and I'll just flag it. It's actually probably a well-known passage in Ezekiel to most everybody listening. It's the valley of dry bones.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: [Jon backchanneling throughout] So if we're puzzled by: "*Well, what's the me plus God as one? How do I want to talk about that or describe that?*" And so [laughs] Ezekiel gives us Ezekiel 37. Ezekiel wakes up in a dream, and he's in the middle of a dry, desolate valley.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Okay? And there's all these human bones around, all dry and scattered everywhere. Just like: That's a nightmare.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And he's a priest. So like—

Jon: Oh, yeah.

Tim: —touching dead body stuff—

Jon: Mmm.

Tim: —it's like—this is truly his nightmare—

Jon: Okay.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: [laughs] —as a priest. And so he hears God say, “Hey, son of Adam, can these bones live?” And Ezekiel's like, “I don't—you know. I don't.” “Prophesy to the bones,” God says—

[Jon and Tim chuckle]

Tim: —“and say to them, ‘Dry bones, listen to the word of Yahweh.’ This is what Yahweh says to the bones: ‘I will cause my *ruakh* to enter you so that you can come to life. I'm going to put sinew and flesh and skin on you. I'm going to put *ruakh* in you so that you come alive, and you'll know that I am Yahweh.” “So I did that. I prophesied to the bones,” Ezekiel says. And there's this crazy noise—imagine the noise—a rattling, and the bones start coming together, bone to bone, sinew growing on them, flesh covering them. But there was no *ruakh*.

Jon: Hmm. It's like a Frankenstein.

Tim: Yeah. It's like a false start. It's sort of like these humans are coming into existence in a two-step process.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: First is just the form, the material.

Jon: Well, this is what happened in Genesis 2. [chuckles]

Tim: That's exactly right.

Jon: [chuckles] Yeah.

Tim: [Jon agreeing throughout] So it's as if Ezekiel's vision is matching the two-step creation of the human in Eden, where it started with the clay, but just clay itself can't actually have life. Dust. If it's just dust, there's no *ruakh*. So “Prophesy to the *ruakh*,” God says. “Call for the *ruakh*.” “And so I did. And *ruakh* came into them, and then they came to life. They stood on their feet—huge army. And he says to me, ‘Son of Adam, these bones are the house of Israel, who are saying, sitting in Babylon, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is gone. We are cut off totally. We're done for. We're dust.’” And

God says, “I’m going to open your graves—cause you to rise up out of your graves, my people, and I’ll bring you to the land of Israel, and you’ll know that I’m Yahweh when I open your graves and cause you to rise up, and I’ll put my *ruakh* in you, and you’ll have life in the land.” It’s the valley of dry bones.

Jon: Yeah. [chuckles]

Tim: Then in the next poem—I’ll just signal it. It’s about Yahweh raising up a new figure—this is a homework assignment for those listening to the podcast: Read the second half of Ezekiel 37. Ezekiel is supposed to take two trees, sticks, but it’s *ets*—

Jon: Oh.

Tim: Take two that represent the fractured tribes of Israel—

Jon: Okay.

Tim: —and make the two into one.

Jon: Hmm. [laughs]

Tim: Then over that unified one family, God is going to raise up David to be their king and shepherd. Then it wraps up in Ezekiel 39 with: “. . . I will”—again—“pour out my *ruakh* on the unified house of Israel being shepherded by the new David.” And you’re like: “*It all comes together*”—

[Jon chuckles]

Tim: —“*symbolically and metaphorically.*”

Jon: Mhm. Yeah.

Tim: Uhm—hmm. How you doing?

Jon: Great. Yeah. Prophets never made more sense.

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: As they talk about stony hearts and nightmare valleys of dry bones.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The merging of God’s *ruakh* with my *ruakh* and the soft heart that has to be a part of that equation—that’s the hope.

Jon: [Tim backchanneling throughout] Yeah. And what I was appreciating in our last conversation that’s kind of come over into this conversation is: Okay, well, is it more Spirit? If it’s not more Spirit, then it’s what? Is it more *torah*? Well, no. Is it a new heart?

Yes, but then how? That doesn't seem to be the thing either. What is it? What's the new thing? It's the new human.

Tim: Mmm. Yeah, it's as if you need a whole new human—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —made from the ground up with the same two-step process.

Jon: [Tim agreeing throughout] Yeah. A new human, and then the one that we're reading about that can do this— that's the thing that's still missing that can then give us the new heart so that we could have the Spirit in a way that truly brings life, that we can hear God's *torah*, we can align our desires with God's instruction, and then Eden, good, life.

Tim: Yeah, yes.

Jon: Not just for us, but for everyone, the whole world.

Tim: That's it, man. So seven hours into this conversation—

[Jon laughs]

Tim: —we have completed an outline. We've sketched it, hopping around, but we've got the picture—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —of what the Hebrew Bible is saying is both human nature, the problem, and then the solution.

Jon: Hmm, you're saying in seven we've completed?

[Jon and Tim laugh]

Tim: [excited] Whoa. Whoa. I—yeah—it's going to be hard for you to believe I didn't mean that.

Jon: Yeah, [laughs] you didn't. I know you didn't.

Tim: I didn't.

Jon: [chuckles] I know you didn't because we've been reworking it.

Tim: Yeah. So I—what I want to do with the rest of the series then is turn to well-known passages to most Christian Bible readers in the New Testament—

Jon: We'll go to the eighth.

Tim: Yeah. And what I've found is when you take everything we've done and then plug all of that as the hyperlinked kind of foundation of the story of Jesus in the Gospels and

the language of the Spirit in the writings of the Apostles, just new insights abound for me. And personal discovery has abounded too as a result of this. So let's pause and then turn to the Gospel of Luke and think about the portrait of the Messianic—

[BibleProject theme fades in]

Tim: — Spirit-filled Messiah that is Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

[Musical break (59:49-59:53)]

Jon: Thanks for listening to this episode of BibleProject podcast. Next week, before we move into the New Testament, we're going to stop and recap everything we've discussed so far because this has been a lot. I mean, we're talking about the nature of God, the nature of being alive, and we're really being invited into the whole grand story of the Bible.

Tim: [Audio clips from Spirit of God E8: Let's Take a Breath and Review] At baseline, every human you're going to meet in the story has the *ruakh* of God for a short duration of time. But God's not satisfied with that. That's not the ultimate dream. So God's going to pick a family out of humanity and give his presence, give his word, his wisdom, his commands to them so that the *ruakh* can be restored to the humans permanently.

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

[Phone beep]

Jonathan: Hi, my name is Jonathan, and I'm from Gainesville, Florida.

Stephen: Hey, my name is Stephen, and I'm from Littleton, Colorado. I first heard about BibleProject from my parents and the church.

Jonathan: I first heard about the BibleProject in 2015 when I just really needed to learn who God was. I use the BibleProject for learning about God.

Stephen: I use BibleProject for learning about the Gospel. My favorite thing about the BibleProject is the videos and how they teach you about the Bible.

Jonathan: My favorite thing about the BibleProject is how easy it is to explain and be able to share with others. We believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus.

Stephen: BibleProject is a nonprofit funded by people like me.

Jonathan: Find free videos, articles, podcasts, classes, and more on the BibleProject app—

Stephen: —and bibleproject.com.

[Phone beep]

Bradley: Hi, I'm Bradley. I am from Dallas, Texas, and I, right now, oversee the security of our tech systems. We do annual security training. I have been a fan of BibleProject before working here, so obviously I love good videos. I thought it would be a great tragedy to make BibleProject employees sit through a horrible video. And so I made it my mission to make as entertaining as I could a security training video. And so every October, everyone indulges me to learn something about how to be more secure online. There's a whole team of us that make the podcast come to life every week. For a full list of everyone involved in this episode, check out the show notes wherever you stream the podcast and on our app. See you later!

[BibleProject theme fades out]

[BibleProject jingle]