

Exodus: The Serpent & The Seed

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[0 : 00] Lord, open our eyes to see your word in all of its depth and complexity, and also in its simplicity, its childlikeness, Lord, the storybook nature of the gospel.

Lord, open our eyes today. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

You may be seated. Thank you, Phineas. Phineas almost gets a shout out today. Almost.

If you're listening for the story and you know it, it's in there. Sorry if I'm a little rickety. I learned yesterday the meaning of the proverb, lift with your knees, not with your back.

He's like dropping Jamie like this, like doing a little free fall thing, and doing a lot of back lifting. But he enjoys that kind of thing now. He likes being tossed around and flopping on the bed and stuff.

[1 : 10] He's in a really cool stage of development, where he starts to recognize animals and planes and trucks and all sorts of things, even when they're not what he's seen before. It's in a different context, drawn by a different artist and a different style.

And he didn't learn these things by having me explain to him in painful detail how the biology of a horse works, or how the aerodynamics of a wing work, or the fascinating machinations of an internal combustion engine, but just by repetition.

I've got a picture here. Horse. Horse. Jamie. Horse. He's looking at me now.

Horse. What does a horse say? He's not thinking about it right now. It says nay, in case you're wondering. He's just caught on to the shape of a horse.

He's caught on to the shape of a truck. He's caught on to the shape of things. Even when they look new or a different color or a different style. Today, I want to tell you a handful of stories from the Bible.

[2 : 18] Ones you've probably heard before. And just point out as we go along. Snake. Snake. Seed. Baby.

Crush. Hopefully, this will immerse you in the symbolic imagery of the Bible, so that in your own reading and life, you can see that shape in the grass.

Say, snake. Even if it's not the same as what you've seen before. We'll hopefully start to recognize different kinds of suffering and childbearing, different kinds of heel striking, different kinds of head crushing.

I've decided not to put all of the scriptures on the slides, because that would take very, very many slides. But I'll have chapter references up as we go along.

Based on the stage of my life, I've decided to present you all with a picture book of sorts. So let's start at the very beginning. It's a very good place to start.

[3 : 21] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was formless and void, but God formed it and filled it. He made heaven and earth, sky and sea, garden and mountain.

He made the sun, moon, stars, birds, and the fish, the trees, and the beasts. Then God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. And God blessed them.

And God said to them, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.

[4 : 48] For the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. Here in the garden, God has richly blessed his children. He has given them all they need and the command to multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.

He has given them complete freedom with only one restriction, not to eat from one tree. But in their blessing, there was a jealous and cunning serpent waiting to strike out at them.

Quote, Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field the Lord God had made.

This jealous serpent was looking for a way to subvert God's blessings given to the man.

It could have been jealousy or it could have been out of fear that the man would actually obey God and would subdue the earth and him in it. So he deceived the woman and through her convinced the man to disobey the law of God.

Because of this, God exiled his children from the garden, sending them out with a three-part curse for the man to work with toil the earth to make food where once it was abundant and easy.

[6 : 08] For the woman, pain in bearing and raising children and desire contrary to her husband.

And the curse for the cunning serpent? The gospel.

God told him this, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

Here we find the heart of the story. A woman gives birth to a son who is wounded in the process of crushing his enemy. Some time later, Eve had a son with the help of the Lord.

She who had no children had a son with the help of the Lord. Give us a second to look at this. The man, the curse there, the man must work the soil, the woman will have pain and childbearing, the seed of the serpent will strike the seed of the woman but be crushed.

So Eve had a son with the help of the Lord, Cain, who was not the seed of the woman. He was more serpent than man and in jealousy he rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

[7 : 25] The ground opened its mouth to absorb the blood of Abel then opened its mouth to testify against Cain crying out for justice.

Can we go forward one slide? Maybe not. God arose to curse Cain and cast him out telling him that the earth would absorb all his strength with no return.

So Cain slew Abel the ground opened its mouth to absorb his blood and then opened its mouth to testify to God and then the ground would continue to open its mouth and absorb Cain's work without giving him anything in return.

Cain was certainly not the seed. If you'll turn in your Bibles to Exodus 1, we'll get to today's text which we will be in briefly.

And as you're following, I would like when I'm putting up a new reference, if you want to turn there or if you're taking notes or just listening for the words, I'm trying to emphasize words that are just going to keep coming back up and up and up.

[8 : 38] And if I tried to explain them all, we would have lunch on Seis de Mayo and that's no fun. So, we've had our setup. Joseph has gone to Egypt and brought his family there.

They've been fruitful and multiplied. And now the children of the twelve sons of Jacob have relocated to Egypt. Through the blessings of God, the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly.

They multiplied and grew exceedingly strong so that the land was filled with them. Surrounded by a wasteland in the garden land of Goshen, the people of God are flourishing.

Quote, But there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph. This king, whose head was crowned with a serpent, was determined to undermine the blessings of God through cunning. And I've got a picture for that. The pharaohs of Egypt wore a crown with a headdress and on that headdress was a serpent. I'm having a little difficulty.

[9 : 51] That's fine. They'd been wearing this headdress for centuries before the Israelites came into the land. They continued to wear it after. And it just helps us pinpoint the pharaoh as this serpent character, this seed of the serpent.

Oh, almost. You can imagine imagine a snake on his forehead. That's it. He said, and I quote, come, let us deal shrewdly with them lest they multiply.

And if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land. So at first, he sought to cause them great pain through labor and hard work.

But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied, and the more they spread abroad.

Fueled by fear and jealousy, he made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in

all kinds of work of the field.

The serpent king had cast down the children of the woman into the cursed dust of the earth in ruthless slavery. But his force was unable to defeat the people, so he resorted to trickery.

[11 : 15] The pharaoh called two of the midwives who worked among the Hebrew mothers and commanded them. When you serve as a midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him.

But if it is a daughter, she shall live. Because he could not destroy the men and women directly, he decided he would strike at their weakest point, the innocent sons.

All it would take would be a few seconds of pressure on the neck and make it all look like an accident, some tragedy. And the suffering of the woman in childbearing would all be in vain. Pharaoh's craft and cunning was to strike out and snuff out the reward that the mothers would have received for their anguish, and he would never have to get his hands dirty.

This was the threat that he was posing, that the men should die without hope of offspring, and that the name of the race of Abraham should soon be cut off, and thus all God's promises would come to naught.

[12 : 21] For if there were no sons of Jacob left, no seed could be born to them. But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.

These wise women could not betray their God-given conscience and slaughter children as innocent as lambs. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, Why have you done this and let the male children live?

The midwives said to Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them. So God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very strong.

And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. The king's servants had come back empty-handed, and there was no trickery left to be had.

Pharaoh's heart had turned to violent hatred, and he commanded all his people, Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.

[13 : 30] Pharaoh is thrashing about in his rage, indiscriminately killing the innocent children of his perceived enemies, even though it was the Hebrews who saved his nation. By the word of his mouth, he is sending forth a river of destruction to sweep away the children of Israel.

Little did he know that his rage, due to his rage, a son would be adopted into his own household, a son who would meet God in the wilderness and return to strike the serpent on the head with plague after plague, culminating in vengeance being taken for the sons of Israel, taking even the life of the firstborn of Pharaoh.

And then the sea would crash down on all his armies. The ground would open its mouth and consume him. But this Moses still was not the seed of the woman.

After they had left Egypt in their travels in the wilderness, the Israelites had victory over their enemies. At one point, they set up a camp in the sight of the country of Moab.

And Balak, the king of Moab, was in great dread of the people because they were many. Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel.

[14 : 52] And Moab said to the elders of Midian, this horde will now lick up all that is around us as the ox licks up the grass of the field. So Balak, son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, sent messengers to Balaam to call him, saying, Behold, a people has come out of Egypt.

They cover the face of the earth and they are dwelling opposite me. Come now, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me.

Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed and he whom you curse is cursed. Balak, the wicked king, has a problem.

The people of God are too many and too great. What can he do to face them? Will they not certainly defeat him? He must be cunning in how he undermines them.

So he summons a famous wise man from the east and charges him to do the dirty work for him. To destroy the sons of Israel with a curse, he wants to crush them once and for all.

[16 : 04] But God protects his people. And the serpent cannot kill God's firstborn Israel. Three times Balaam attempts to curse them and three times his words are turned into a blessing.

Quote, And Balak said to Balaam, What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies and behold you've done nothing but bless them. Balaam, who was called in to abort the infantile Israel,

has instead facilitated the birth of a country.

Then God shows him a vision of the true seed and he prophesies, I see him but not now. I behold him but not near.

A star shall come out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel. It shall crush the forehead of Moab. The all-out attack on Israel has failed but Balaam, who was greedy for wealth, doubled down on his deception and found a way to get the people to bring down a curse on themselves.

Balaam sent women from Moab to marry into the Israelite family and drag them away into idolatry. Behold, these women on Balaam's advice caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord at the incident of Peor.

[17 : 25] war. And so the plague came among the congregation of the Lord. The Moabites could not take down the Israelites in an all-out spiritual war, but they could send in agents of destruction and deception to strike at their weak points and lead them to disobey God.

And though they got in their shot, their fate was sealed, because a scepter will rise from Israel and it shall crush the forehead of Moab.

Once the people had begun to inherit the land God gave them, a land flowing with milk and honey, they still had the difficult task of filling the land and subduing its inhabitants.

Their regular arch enemy, the Philistines, were often a thorn in their side. And when the people had become as evil as their enemies, God gave them over to the Philistines for forty years.

But there was a man called Manoah whose wife could not have children. The angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, Behold, you are barren and have not born children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

[18 : 48] And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the young man grew and the Lord blessed him and the spirit of the Lord began to stir him.

Now, this Samson guy, weird. He was great in might and had many odd encounters. He tied foxes together with torches and was like, go get them, burnt fields.

He killed a lion, ate honey from its corpse, told a riddle about it so that his enemies would not understand him. He was betrayed by his own wife for 30 pieces of linen and 30 garments for which he killed 30 Philistines to recover.

He killed a thousand other Philistines at one time with only a bone, and then he led the Israelites for 20 years. Now, after a certain incident involving a prostitute, because it would appear that his weak point was women as well, he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah.

And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, seduce him, and see where his great strength lies, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to humble him, and we will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver.

[20 : 15] So Delilah said to Samson, please tell me where your great strength lies, and how you might be bound that one could subdue you. The lords of the Philistines sent this cunning woman to do by cunning what they could not do by force.

After having lied to Delilah three times, that he could be bound by bow strings, or ropes, or having his hair tied into a loom, he eventually gave in to her pestering and told her what she wanted to know.

If she cut his hair, his vow would be broken, and he would lose his blessing. He had undermined his own blessing willingly. She cut his hair, the Philistines captured him, gouged his eyes out, and set him to hard labor.

When the Philistines had a celebration for their god Dagon, who was the father of gods and the lord of the offspring, they decided to bring Samson out for their entertainment.

After they had mocked and ridiculed him, Samson asked that he be led to the pillars of the house so that he could rest for a moment. And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on one, and his left hand on the other.

[21 : 38] And Samson said, let me die with the Philistines. Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it.

So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life. Samson had his captors lead him to where he, with outstretched arms, could literally crush them, though he himself died in the process of saving his people.

But he was not the seed of the woman. No, the seed would be the firstborn like Cain, but without the envy, the leadership of Moses without the impatience, the blessing of God without temptation,

the strength of Samson without lust.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

[23 : 03] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, with the help of the Lord.

Mary had been given a son, seed only of woman and not of man. Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod, the king, behold, wise men came from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly, and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, Go, and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word that I too may come and worship him.

[24 : 21] But being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you.

For Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time he had ascertained from the wise men.

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. A voice was heard in Ramah weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children.

She refused to be comforted because they are no more. But Herod died, the first of many serpents to be crushed by this seed.

In his birth, he conquered kings on earth. But what of his death? What serpent struck him, and did they use all the usual tactics? We have the serpent named in the book of Matthew, but the identity of the enemies of the children of God may come to surprise you.

[25 : 49] When John the Baptist saw the many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, you brood of vipers who warned you to flee from the wrath to come.

John tried to warn them that Jesus was coming for them. He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand and he will clear the threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

Did Jesus affirm this identification? Can we be sure they were the serpent? In Matthew 23, 33, Jesus says the same, you serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

In John 8, Jesus doubles down even further, making it perfectly clear, you are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

[27 : 04] So we know the spiritual identity of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the scribes. But what of Jesus? Twice we have God's testimony to who Jesus is.

When Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened to him. And he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. And behold, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. And then on the Mount of Transfiguration, while he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud over shadowed him.

And a voice from the cloud said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.

Now Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised.

[28 : 13] Jesus was headed to the pit where Abel, Isaac, Joseph, Daniel, Zechariah, Isaiah, Hosea, all the prophets were sent unwillingly.

Jesus was determined to go, for he knew his prize was past the grave. But what could cause him to die? Well, when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, his riddles spoken so that his enemies would not understand him, they perceived that he was speaking about them.

And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds because they held him to be a prophet. They were afraid because the people were many. And Jesus gave the seven woes to the scribes and Pharisees, and he foretold the destruction of the temple.

And then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people. Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, what will you give me if I deliver him over to you?

[29 : 46] And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. The Pharisees have sent out their first agent of destruction, Judas, and after Jesus has been arrested and charges drummed up against him, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate, the governor. Judas tried to recant his betrayal, as the midwives and Balaam and the wise men had, but for him it was too late. The priests had already handed the seed over to their next agent, the Romans. Pilate, for his part, as an agent, also tried to dissuade the Jews from killing Jesus, but when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, I am innocent of this man's blood.

See to it yourselves. And so they set him to the hardest labor any man has faced, until the earth opened its mouth to absorb his blood, being cleansed by it, and turning all of their craftiness to nothing.

Yet the land would open its mouth again to cry out for justice. And just as they had used the Romans to strike at his heel, so he would use the Romans to crush them 40 years later, destroying the cities of Israel, Jerusalem, and ultimately the temple in 70 AD.

[31 : 42] But all this is only what was happening on earth. The seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman had clashed, and the Son of God was victorious. This last story tells us what was, is, and will be happening in the heavens.

This is the true story. If you would turn to Revelation 12, I'm going to read that whole chapter, and then hop over to Revelation 20, so it might be helpful to have that in front of you.

This is the true story. The barren woman, the faithful remnant of Israel, miraculously gives birth to the son who will crush the serpent.

The serpent fails to destroy the seed at his birth, and so flies into a rage to try to destroy the church. But the land opens its mouth to absorb his wrath and waste it.

The serpent is bound and later released, only to be finally and utterly destroyed. Hear these words. And a great sign appeared in heaven.

[32 : 49] A woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

And another sign appeared in heaven, behold, a great dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child, he might devour it.

She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was caught up to God and to his throne.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

[33 : 56] Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil, and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now the salvation and the power and kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come. For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God, and they have conquered him by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows his time is short.

And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished, for a time and times and half a time.

[35 : 22] The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with a flood.

But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Going to go to Revelation chapter 20 now. Then, I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.

And he seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years and threw him into the pit and shut it and sealed it over him so that he might not deceive the nations any longer until the thousand years were ended.

[36 : 37] After that, he must be released for a little while. And then later, and when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and he will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle.

Their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. But fire came down from heaven and consumed them.

And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

we look forward to the final crushing, not just of the seed of the serpent, but of the serpent himself. These words from Romans 16 20, the God of peace, the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

[37 : 53] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages, but has now been disclosed, and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ, amen.

Let us pray. God, you are a man of war. You have given us many stories, many more than I could tell today, and you have given us many experiences, more than we could possibly recount in our own lives, of deception, of salvation, of all-out spiritual war, and of serpent crushing.

Lord, may we find strength in your Son. Lord, may we find strength in him who you are pleased with.

Lord, give us that strength to crush the serpent wherever we find him in our hearts. Lord, thank you for your word, how beautiful and complex and rich and deep it is, and thank you for how simple and childlike and understandable it is.

Lord, may we go forward with encouragement in our hearts. Give us hope in all of our wildernesses, in all of our combat with the enemy.

[39 : 51] Give us hope that one day you will crush him. God, you are good and just and merciful. Amen.

Come, let us partake the bread of life, our nourishment in the wilderness. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took

bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he also took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

If you are in Christ, I would invite you to join us at the table.

Thank you.