

With Apologies...

This Is the Faith

Lesson 18: God's Continuing Rescue Campaign



The Video You Are Viewing As You Enter:
Christ in Gethsemane from *The Passion of the Christ*

<https://youtu.be/3iM-86vua4E?si=NPuFzjmZkelbjwCH>

Notice Jesus praying Hebrew, Satan sending the snake toward Him while He prays, and Jesus rising from prayer to crush the serpent's head.

Catechist Time: The Bible's Big Story

Last year we learned about God's war against the fallen angels from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), to the flooding of the earth when, under the influence of these dark angels who portrayed themselves as the pagan gods and goddesses, human beings had become too evil, through to the scattering of the nations at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11). God then starts over with Abraham to create a nation of people whose job is to show His true character to all the world. God rescues this nation from slavery in Egypt and eventually leads them to the Promised Land where Joshua fights against the *Nephilim*, the giant clans that served the fallen angels. Jesus continues Joshua's war in the New Testament through exorcism; casting out the evil spirits (or *Elohim*) that may be either dark angels or the spirits of dead *Nephilim*.

God's war is for the sake of rescuing us, who would be permanently captive to sin, death, and the devil. 20th century theologian Alexander Schmemmann said it this way:

"After the Fall, human history is a long shipwreck awaiting rescue: but the port of salvation is not the goal; it is the possibility for the shipwrecked to resume his journey whose sole goal is union with God."



Today's lesson is a little different. Today is basically a walk through highlights of the Bible so we can see that God's war against the dark spiritual forces that wish to destroy us, creatures made in His image, is the Big Story (or *metanarrative*) that connects all the smaller stories of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. God loves us so much that He goes to cosmic war for the sake of rescuing (saving) us.

- **Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (NIV)**
 - In this verse, just as humanity is plunging into spiritual bondage outside God's protected garden, God promises that He will _____ humanity by having a child of the woman _____ the serpent's head.
 - Would you rather be hit in the head or heel? Why?

 - This verse is a prophecy about _____ destroying the power of _____. The _____ is when the serpent strikes the descendant of the woman's heel, and the _____ is when her descendant crushes the ultimate power of death.
 - Because this is the first prophecy about Jesus in the Bible, Christians refer to this passage as the _____. *Proto* means _____, and *evangelion* means _____.

Catechist Time (cont.)

- **Genesis 12:1–3:** “Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
 - At a time when the whole earth had forgotten God (because they had fallen into worship of the dark angels who falsely portrayed themselves as gods), God reveals himself to Abram in order that Abram and his descendants may be a _____ to the whole world.
 - As we studied in Lesson 11, in Genesis 15, in order for Abram to be a blessing to whole world, God agrees to pay the penalty if Abram or his descendants _____ to keep the covenant.
- **Genesis 22:9–14:** “When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”

John 1:29–30: “The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’”

 - Abraham trusts God so much that he is willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac to God, but God prevents him, instead providing a _____ for Abraham to sacrifice. This led Abraham to rename the place, _____.
 - Centuries later, when John the Baptist saw Jesus walking, he called Jesus the _____. A lamb is a baby _____.
 - Later in Jesus’s life, He is killed outside the walls of Jerusalem, which is on _____. Jewish tradition is that this is the same mountain where God provided the substitute sacrifice for _____.
 - Human sacrifice was a common part of ancient worship all over the world, but in these stories we learn that God _____ humans to sacrifice each other in worship. Instead, God provides His own _____ as the sacrifice for all humanity for all time.
- **Exodus 6:6:** “Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.’”

Exodus 7:16: “And you shall say to him [Pharoah], ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.”’”

 - When God sees His people enslaved, He acts to _____ them.
 - God freeing Israel from slavery in Egypt in the book of Exodus is a _____ or pattern of how God acts ultimately through Jesus to free _____ who trusts in Jesus and wishes to serve Him.
- **Ezekiel 33:10–11:** ““And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’ Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?”
- Through the ministries of the prophets [Isaiah to Malachi], when the people’s “sins were upon

Catechist Time (cont.)

them,” God sent the prophets to preach to them so they could _____ away from their self-destructive activity, especially the worship of _____ gods and goddesses.

- God does this because He has “_____” in the death of the _____.
- As the last line of this quote shows, the end result of rejecting God is _____.

- **Luke 4:13:** “And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him [Jesus] until an opportune time.”

Luke 22:3–4: “Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.”

Luke 22:52–53: “Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

- In the betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus, Luke shows us clearly that it is _____, the ancient serpent at work, fulfilling the prophecy of _____.
- **Revelation 5:8–9:** “And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,”
 - The last book of the Bible, Revelation, is about the culmination of all history. Here we see the servants of God falling down before a _____, worshiping Him.
 - The Lamb is declared _____ to open (read) the scroll containing God’s Word because by His _____ He _____ people for God from the _____ world.
 - To ransom somebody is to *rescue* them from a captor by _____ the price for their release.
- **Revelation 12:7–11:** “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 the 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.”
 - As the Bible comes to a close, we see God’s people and His angels _____ “the ancient serpent.” This serpent is also called “the _____, and _____, the _____ of the whole world.”
 - This passage tells us that God’s angels and God’s people _____ their accuser by the “_____ of the Lamb and by the word of their _____.” A testimony is the _____ you tell about somebody.
 - The most important story Christians tell about Jesus is that He is their _____. As the last line of this text reminds us, this is even more important than their _____, because Jesus can raise them from the dead and give them _____ life.



The Big Idea:

God has been working since the very beginning to rescue people from sin, death, and the devil. He wants to rescue YOU.