

The Story of the Bible Week 11: Jesus

Questions

1. Has looking at the Bible as a narrative, in its own context, helped you understand the Bible better? What parts of the Bible, if any, that we haven't covered yet are made clearer to you understanding the origin story?
2. Think about and discuss:
 - Jesus reversing the curse that was brought upon us due to our rebellion.
 - Jesus reversing Chaos and "re-creating" the heavens and the earth.
 - Jesus reversing Genesis 6, giving us the authority over demons and giving us His Spirit that we can rid ourselves of sin and live holy lives.
 - Jesus reversing Genesis 11 and re-inheriting the nations.
3. How often do you think about and participate in the Great Commission? In what ways do you participate?

Recap:

- Yahweh created the Heavens and the Earth.
- Mankind was deceived by the origin angelic rebel (portrayed as a serpent).
- Mans sin brought Chaos into the world, including the curse of pain, hardship, sickness, and death.
- Angelic rebels took human wives and produced the Nephilim as offspring.
- Yahweh flooded the earth to start over.
- These Nephilim were born also after the flood and were the Giants Israel fought.
- These Nephilim when killed/dead become unclean spirits or demons.
- Mankind rebelled against Yahweh by building a tower to "make a name for themselves." This was more than a building project, it was a direct message to Yahweh that they wanted to be greater than Him. As a result Yahweh disinherited the nations and started a new nation for His possession through Abraham and Sarah.
- Abraham and Sarah's children would become a great nation, Israel.
- Jesus would be born from the descendants of Abraham and Sarah.

Jesus the Dragon-Slayer

At the beginning of the book we talked about the Chaos elements of creation.

Genesis 1:1–2 (ESV)

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

These words "without form, void, darkness, and deep" are Hebrew words that give imagery of Chaos. The Chaos along with the water element are prominent themes in the Bible and Hebrew thought. The sea was a place that humans didn't belong. Humans can't live in the sea and it's full of all sorts of mysterious creatures. As such the sea itself becomes a metaphor for Chaos and evil.

We talked about how the writer of Genesis one speaks about how God created the "great sea creatures" or literally "great sea dragons":

Genesis 1:20–21 (ESV)

20 And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." 21 So God created the great sea creatures (Hebrew: tannin - sea-monster or sea-dragon) and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

In Psalm 74 the Psalmist records Yahweh splitting the sea and breaking the heads of Leviathan at creation.

Psalm 74:12–17 (ESV)

12 Yet God my King is from of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. 13 You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as

food for the creatures of the wilderness. 15 You split open springs and brooks; you dried up ever-flowing streams. 16 Yours is the day, yours also the night; you have established the heavenly lights and the sun. 17 You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth; you have made summer and winter.

The Psalmist in Psalm 89 records something very similar in his psalm about who can compare to Yahweh:

Psalm 89:title-16 (LEB)

A maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite. 1 I will sing forever of Yahweh's acts of loyal love. From generation to generation I will make known your faithfulness with my mouth. 2 For I say, "Forever your loyal love is built up. The heavens you have established with your faithfulness in them." 3 "I made a covenant with my chosen one; I swore an oath to David my servant: 4 'I will establish your descendants forever, and I will build up your throne from generation to generation.' " Selah 5 And so the heavens will praise your wonderful deed, O Yahweh, even your faithfulness, in the assembly of the holy ones. 6 For who in the sky is equal to Yahweh? Who is like Yahweh among the sons of God, 7 a God feared greatly in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all surrounding him? 8 O Yahweh God of hosts, who is mighty like you, O Yah, with your faithfulness surrounding you? 9 You are ruling the surging of the sea. When its waves rise, you yourself still them. 10 You yourself crushed Rahab like one who is slain; you scattered your enemies with your strong arm. 11 The heavens are yours, the earth yours as well, the world with its fullness, because you founded them. 12 North and south, you created them; Tabor and Hermon shout joyfully over your name. 13 You have a mighty arm; Your hand is strong; your right hand reaches high. 14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne. Loyal love and faithfulness come before your face. 15 Blessed are the people who know the joyful shout; O Yahweh, they walk about in the light of your countenance. 16 In your name they rejoice all the day, and in your righteousness they rise up.

"Rahab is another Hebrew name for the "Chaos-monster." Rahab is one of the names in the OT of the chaos monster(s) (cf. also →Leviathan, →Tannin, Tehom [→Tiamat], and Yam)." - K. Spronk, "Rahab," ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 684.

Leviathan Example:



Now this doesn't mean that Yahweh created a Chaotic world, but rather created a world of order out of nothing. He created this world with the potential for Chaos. This Chaos was introduced into the world when Adam and Eve sinned. When they ate of the forbidden fruit they brought Chaos into the world, with it death and sickness.

This Chaos is a curse upon us and the earth:

Genesis 3:16–19 (ESV)

16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

As we discussed in our section on "What Does God Want? Why Build A Temple?" Yahweh has given us free will. We can make choices. What Genesis 1, Psalm 74, and Psalm 89 tell us is He is over Chaos, He slays Chaos, He brings order to Chaos.

It's no accident that when Jesus came as a man many of His miracles take place at Sea.

In Mark 4 Jesus and the disciples are on a boat. Jesus falls asleep:

Mark 4:37–41 (ESV)

37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

I love this account of Jesus being so calm while the disciples are freaking out. I picture Jesus just nonchalantly waking up and rebuking the storm. What we can often miss in the narrative is the last verse where, the disciples are filled with great fear and ask "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" The disciples have already been with Jesus for some time now, they have seen Him cast out demons, heal many with sicknesses, diseases, and disabilities. Why then does Jesus rebuking a storm on the sea freak them out so much and start them asking "who is this?" Because, as we read in the earlier passages, it is Yahweh who calms the sea, who defeats the sea-dragon, who crushes the head of Leviathan. While it is supernatural everything Jesus did in casting out demons and healing the sick, its on this boat that Jesus, in the minds of Jews who are familiar with their theology, takes it up to the next level. Not only is this guy Jesus a prophet, His words calm the sea, His words defeat Chaos.

The message is clear this is Yahweh in the flesh. It's no accident that in Revelation, the final book of the Bible that Jesus defeats Satan and the Anti-Christ who are portrayed as a Sea Dragon (Revelation 12, 13):

Revelation 12:9 (ESV)

9 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.

Revelation 13:1 (ESV)

1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads (Leviathan is a sea dragon with seven heads), with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.

When it's all said and done, Jesus has come back, defeated His enemies, and remade the heavens and the earth. John writes:

Revelation 21:1 (ESV)

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Why is the sea no more? Because Chaos will once and for all be defeated when Jesus slays it once and for all.

On that cross Jesus seals the fate of Satan, the ancient serpent who deceived mankind into rebellion and the fate of Chaos. Jesus, the dragon-slayer, reverses curse of Genesis 3, deals a death blow to the enemy, and saves us from our sin.

Jesus the Demon-Slayer

In Genesis 6 we discussed how the sons of God (angels) took daughters of men and had offspring with them. These were the Nephilim. Initially God sent the flood to wipe out these Nephilim and wicked mankind to start over with Noah and his family.

These Nephilim are also called Rephaim. These Rephaim are found as two groups. 1) as giants in the land of Canaan. 2) Spirits whose dwelling place is Sheol. In other words when these Nephilim died their disembodied spirits became what we call demons. This is why the New Testament often calls them "unclean spirits." According to Scripture things are made unclean when they become decontaminated by an improper mixture. In this case the improper mixture is angels mixing with human women.

As mentioned these Rephaim are spirits who dwell in Sheol, the underworld. Being not fully angel and not fully human they are in a sort of limbo. Yahweh had partnered with Israel, specifically Joshua and David to defeat these Rephaim. Joshua happens to be Jesus' name in Hebrew: Yeshua. While David is whom Yahweh made a covenant with that ultimately led to Jesus being born. That Joshua and David were the giant slayers is not an accident. Jesus is the ultimate giant/demon-slayer. He is the one whom demons cower and ultimately the one who will judge them.

Immediately upon leaving the boat after calming the storm in Mark 4, Jesus arrives in the land of the Gadarenes, an area of Judea under control of Gentiles. In Mark 5, Mark records a man who had an unclean spirit that lived among the tombs and cut himself with rocks.

Mark 5:6–13 (ESV)

6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. 7 And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." 10 And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, 12 and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." 13 So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.

There is a lot of imagery in this that can escape us as those living outside of the culture. First of what is not immediately apparent to most modern readers is the demons attempt to put a curse on Jesus.

Craig Keener writes: "I adjure you by God." This language invokes a curse on Jesus if he does not comply. (Phrases like "I adjure you" and "I know you"—Mk 1:24—appear in ancient magical exorcism texts as self-protective invocations to bind the spiritual opponent.) The attempt at magical self-protection proves powerless against Jesus - Craig S. Keener, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, Second Edition. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014), 140.

R.T. France writes: we find this time an attempt to bind Jesus by oath to leave the demons alone. The use of ὀρκίζω (ESV: adjure) by the demon is surprising, since the term is more normally associated with the exorcist, who binds

the demon by oath to come out, as in Acts 19:13. Is this a deliberate attempt by the demons to reverse the normal encounter, and to pre-empt Jesus' expected use of such an oath formula? It is certainly an attempt to establish control over Jesus, and in this connection it may be significant that it is preceded by a mention of Jesus' name and title (as in 1:24). - R. T. France, The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 228.

Obviously that isn't going to work on Jesus, who is Yahweh. So the unclean spirit asks to be cast into a herd of pigs. Jesus allows the unclean spirits to enter the pigs in a moment that the demons probably thought was a small victory, however upon entering the pigs they ran down the bank and drowned in the sea. You might wonder why Jesus let them go into the pigs, but the pigs immediately drown in the sea. It's not that Jesus have the unclean spirits what they want, it's actually the opposite. The demons wanted to stay in the region, they are after all territorial as we discussed in our chapter on Spiritual Warfare. Instead the demons end up in the sea. The sea being a symbol for the underworld. In other words Jesus defeated the demons and sent them to the world of the dead. They are sent into the pigs for our benefit, so the disciples could visually see the demons defeat as they died in the sea.

Fast forward to the final weeks of Jesus life and Jesus takes a trip to the Gates of Hell, Caesarea Philippi. Caesarea Philippi is the area in the Old Testament called Bashan and is at the base of Mount Hermon. To a modern reader those are all just names, to a Jew those names all say one thing to them: demons. More specifically the origin of demons, the Nephilim.

First Bashan is the region was where Moses led Israel to fight two Nephilim kings. Second Bashan is the area that Dan moved to after they couldn't inherit the land they were supposed to. Dan/Bashan was a cult center for worship in Northern Israel during the Civil War (1 Kings 12:28-29). Dan was so associated with anti-Yahweh that the early church fathers believed that the Anti-Christ would come from the tribe of Dan (see writings of Iranaeus and Hippolytus).

In Bashan at the base of Mount Hermon was a grotto that was literally called "the gates of hell." Here pagan priests would sacrifice children to the Greek god Pan. Pan was the god of shepherds and had goat-like features. Pan is the reason Satanic imagery contains a lot of goat imagery. At this grotto there was a pool of water. They would throw children into this water, if they sank Pan "accepted" the sacrifice and if they floated the sacrifice was not accepted and the child was killed anyway. It would be at this very spot that Jesus would ask Peter who he says Jesus is, to which Peter relies:

Matthew 16:16 (ESV)

16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

After Jesus says to Peter:

Matthew 16:18 (ESV)

18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The rock Jesus will build the church on is the acknowledgment that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ) and the Son of God. When Jesus says "the gates of hell shall not prevail against [the church]" Jesus and His disciples are standing in the place that was called the "gates of hell." In other words Jesus and the disciples were behind enemy lines. This is even more apparent with what happens next: the transfiguration.

After this Jesus takes Peter, James and John up on a "high mountain." Most scholars agree that given Jesus' previously know location (at the base of the mountain) and the theological messaging the mountain that Jesus and his three closest disciples went up is Mount Hermon. Mount Hermon is spoken of in the Psalms as "opposing Yahweh's mountain":

Psalm 68:15–16 (ESV)

15 O mountain of God, mountain of Bashan; O many-peaked mountain, mountain of Bashan! 16 Why do you look with hatred, O many-peaked mountain, at the mount that God desired for his abode, yes, where the Lord will dwell forever?

The reason this is so significant is because Mount Hermon, the mountain in Bashan is the mountain that the sons of God descended upon in Genesis 6 according to Jewish tradition. On this mountain the angels made an agreement to rebel against Yahweh and proceeded to do the things we read about in Genesis 6 creating the Nephilim, who as we stated before are the unclean spirits Jesus casts out of people. Jesus goes up on this mountain and “transfigures.”

Matthew 17:1–2 (ESV)

1 And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

The Greek word for transfigured is “metamorphoo”, which is close to our word metamorphosis and means: “to change form, to transform.” Jesus put on His glory for a moment, the glory that Jesus set aside to live as a man He temporarily took back. When He did this you better believe it put the Spirit Realm on notice. Yahweh is up to something. It’s no coincidence that a short time later Jesus is sentenced to death on the cross. Peter tells us of the rebellious angels participation in 1 Peter 3:19-20. The “spirits in prison” are the angels who rebelled in Genesis 6. Paul tells us:

1 Corinthians 2:8 (ESV)

8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

In other words Jesus honey-potted them into thinking they could win if they kill Him. Unfortunately for them that was His plan all along, to die in our place to remove our sin and restore our relationship with Him. Psalm 22, a Psalm that prophesies the suffering messiah has this interesting detail in it:

Psalm 22:12–18 (ESV)

12 Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; 13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; 15 my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— 17 I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; 18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

The powers of darkness, the demons and the rebellious angels were much involved in crucifying Jesus. In doing so they actually sealed their fate. It is Jesus’ death and resurrection that Jesus reclaimed the authority we had given up in the Garden of Eden. Jesus shares this authority with us:

Matthew 16:19 (ESV)

19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

And is why we now can cast out demons, heal the sick, and raise the dead in Jesus name.

More than that Jesus’ death and resurrection sealed their ultimate judgment where we along with Jesus will “judge the angels” (1 Corinthians 6:3). They will be cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity when the Great Commission is fulfilled and the Gospel is preached to the ends of the earth.

Jesus is the demon-slayer. He is the one who reverses Mount Hermon, the one who undoes the depravity found in Genesis 6.

Jesus the Inheritor.

In Genesis 11 we have the story of Babel. How mankind rebelled against Yahweh and Yahweh disinherited the nations (Deuteronomy 32). In Genesis 10 we get a bunch of names of nations. This is why Chapter 10 is labeled “The Table of Nation” or “Nations from Noah” in your Bible. If you go through and count them all there are 70 nations, in the Greek Translation there are 72.



It’s no accident that Jesus sent out 70 disciples (or 72 depending on which translation) in Luke 10. It’s also no accident that in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit fills Jesus’ disciples praying in the upper room and Peter preaches to a multitude of Jews that you get a long list of nations. If you put them all up on a map you get this:



There are only a few places missing. The far south, the far east, and Tarshish (Spain). The far south happens to be Ethiopia. One day a Jesus follower named Philip was walking on the road and who should pass him by but an Ethiopian Jew who is reading Isaiah 53 (go read it, its about Jesus). This Ethiopian believes in Jesus and gets baptized. He then goes home and is going to share what he learned with his fellow Ethiopian Jews. The far East is Gether, we are told in Christian Tradition that the Apostle Thomas would go to India (further east than Gether) and die a martyr there. Which leaves us with Tarshish in the far west. Which happens to be the Apostle Paul's mission after he is released from Prison in Rome (Romans 15:24-28).

When Jesus told His disciples He was leaving He told them He would come and make us His home, He wouldn't leave us as orphans but would send the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came it reversed Genesis 11, the disinheritance at the Tower of Babel. All the nations are His again, He is drawing all men and women to Himself and He uses you and I to do it. We are His hands and feet; we are His voice. We are to live lead by the Spirit, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ who came, died, and rose from the dead to bring us back to Him.