



ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS -
GRAND THEMES 15 – ORDER &
CHAOS II

A thick black L-shaped frame surrounds the text. The top-left corner is a horizontal bar extending to the right, then a vertical bar extending downwards. The bottom-right corner is a horizontal bar extending to the left, then a vertical bar extending upwards.

WELCOME TO “GRAND THEMES”

Each week we will trace a major theme through the
whole Bible.









Order & Chaos

Acknowledgements to the Bible Project



Theme gallery



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|---|---|--|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| TEMPLE | COVENANT | EXODUS | L&D | KINGDOM | ORDER & CHAOS |

Imagery of chaos, the dragon and the sea [recap]



- Wikipedia: Chaos ([AncientGreek](#): χάος, [romanized](#): Kháos) is the mythological void state preceding the [creation of the universe](#) (the cosmos) in [ancient near eastern cosmology](#) and [early Greek cosmology](#). It can also refer to an early state of the cosmos constituted of nothing but undifferentiated and indistinguishable matter.
- In these tales, the dragon, and the sea it lives in, represent the chaos that threatens to drag creation back into nothingness. [Bible project – Chaos Dragon]
- The image of the dragon shows up multiple times in the Bible and contains this symbolism. The original audiences understood this image, but today we probably need to be introduced to it because it's not really part of our contemporary culture.
- Knowing about this actually helps understand a few passages which may have seemed a bit weird.

Wilderness



- Words translated as “wilderness” occur nearly 300 times in the Bible. A formative Hebrew memory is the years of “wandering in the wilderness,” mixing experiences of wild landscape, of searching for a promised land, and of encounters with God.
- What do you think of when you think of wilderness?
- The wilderness is a locale for intense experiences —of stark need for **food and water** (manna and quails), of **isolation** (Elijah and the still small voice), of danger and divine deliverance (Hagar and Ishmael), of **renewal**, of encounters with God (Moses, the burning bush, the revelation of the divine name, Mount Sinai). There is a psychology as well as a geography of wilderness, a **theology gained in the wilderness**.

[<https://www.environmentandsociety.org/exhibitions/wilderness-babel/midbar-arabah-and-eremos-biblical-wilderness>]



Wilderness



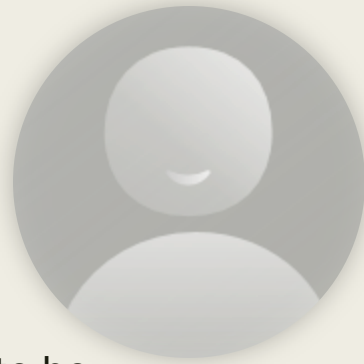
- Jesus performed much of his ministry in urban settings, yet many of his most transformative moments occurred in outdoor settings—bodies of water, mountaintops, and wilderness.
- The wilderness of the Bible is a liminal space—an in-between place where ordinary life is suspended, identity shifts, and new possibilities emerge.
- Through the experiences of the Israelites in exile, we learn that while the Biblical wilderness is a place of danger, temptation and chaos, it is also a place for solitude, nourishment, and revelation from God.
- These themes emerge again in Jesus' journey into the wilderness, tying his identity to that of his Hebrew ancestors.

<https://bibleresources.americanbible.org/resource/jesus-and-wilderness>





In the wilderness



- Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the **wilderness** to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The **tempter** came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become **bread**.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Again, the **devil** took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. (Mt 4:1-11)



In the wilderness



- Wilderness
- Tempter
- Temptation through **voice**
- Temptation #1 : food
- Temptation #2 : testing God
- Temptation #3 : power
- Jesus reinforces:
 - *Trusting God's word*
 - *Don't test God, making up games*
 - *Worship God alone.*



Calming the storm



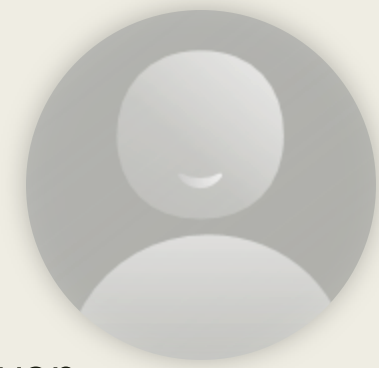
- Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, **walking on the lake**. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the **wind died down**. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened (Mk 6:45-52)
- What has Jesus overcome here?

Ps 89



- (Ps 89:6-13) For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings? In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him. Who is like you, LORD God Almighty? You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you. **You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.** You **crushed Rahab** like one of the slain; with your strong arm you scattered your enemies. The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it. You created the north and the south; Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name. Your arm is endowed with power; your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.
- **You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.** You **crushed Rahab** like one of the slain.
- So, in the gospels, what does the episode of Jesus walking on water and calming the storm evoke?





Preaching tour

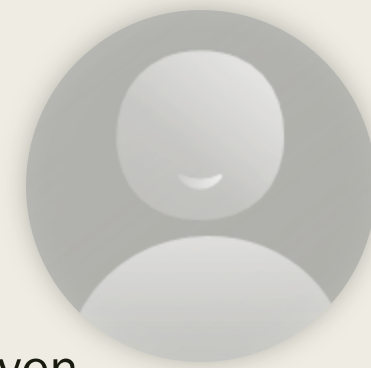
- The Seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name.” He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a lightning flash. Look, I have given you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; nothing will ever harm you. However, don’t rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Lk 10:10-12)
- What do you see being linked together in this report?
- Satan falling like lightning
- Trampling snakes and scorpions.
- Authority to trample.



Snakes & scorpions



- Look, I have given you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; nothing will ever harm you. (Lk 10:19)
- So, do you think you could trample on actual snakes and scorpions with impunity? Why or why not?
- Could be figurative... “Snakes! Brood of vipers! How can you escape being condemned to hell (Mt 23:33)
- Then locusts came out of the smoke on to the earth, and power was given to them like the power that scorpions have on the earth. (Rev 9:3)



Snakes & scorpions

- The Seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name.” He said to them, “I watched **Satan fall from heaven** like a lightning flash. (Lk 10:10)
- So the **great dragon** was thrown out—the **ancient serpent**, who is called the **Devil** and **Satan**, the one who **deceives** the whole world. He was thrown to earth, and his angels with him (Rev 12:9).
- Δράκων (Dragon) = dragon
- [Διάβολος](#) (Diabolos) = devil
- [Σατανᾶς](#) (Satanas) = Satan
- What images are being brought together here?



Jeremiah



My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good.”

I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens, and their light was gone. I looked at the mountains, and they were quaking; all the hills were swaying. I looked, and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away. I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert;

all its towns lay in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger. (Jer 4:22-26)

- What does this language sound like?
- What has happened to the people?
- How does God’s anger fit into this picture?



Jeremiah



- This is what the LORD says: “The whole land will be ruined, though I will not destroy it completely. (Jer 4:27)
- Go through her vineyards and ravage them, but do not destroy them completely. Strip off her branches, for these people do not belong to the LORD. (Jer 5:10)
- What do you see here?
- Ideas of **grace** and **remnant**.
- What has happened that these people no longer **belong to the Lord**?
- They have **listened to the voice of the “chaos monster”** which leads to **decreation**. **Voices that pull creation back into disorder.**



Sign of Jonah



- He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. (Jon 1:9)
- Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (Jon 1:17)
- I will say, “Salvation comes from the Lord” (Jon 2:9)
- Jonah preached to Nineveh and they repented (Jon 3).
- Jonah comes off as a bit flawed – initially disobeying God and then getting upset at God forgiving Nineveh.
- God preserving Jonah through the trials of the Sea monster/chaos creature. Jonah comes out the other side of the thing they feared the most.



Sign of Jonah



- As the crowds increased, Jesus said, “This is a wicked generation. It asks for a sign, but none will be given it except the **sign of Jonah**. For as Jonah was a **sign to the Ninevites**, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom; and now something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and now something greater than Jonah is here. (Lk 11:29-32)
- How was Jonah a sign to the Ninevites?
- Who was the Queen of the South and what did she do?
- 1 Kings 10... Queen came and saw for herself. Tested Solomon with hard questions.
- What’s Jesus’ point?
- Ninevites listened to Jonah, Queen **listened** to Solomon, will you **listen** to me?



Reflection



- Thinking about the voices of chaos or of God, what practical takeaway do you get?
- Does your understanding of “sin” take on any new perspectives?
- Temptation and transformation in the Wilderness?
- Anything else that has impacted you today from our discussion?



NEXT TIME...ORDER &
CHAOS III