BIBLE STUDY

WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES (2017)

ONE AFFECTING ALL

Facilitator Note: *We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.*

PRESS START

***War for the Planet of the Apes* (2017)** is the conclusion of the Caesar Saga that began with ***Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011)** and continued in ***Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* (2014)**. Each film tells Caesar's story at a different phase of his life, as well as the human world's history unfolding alongside him. **Which of the three films is your personal favorite?** Much has justifiably been said by critics about the trilogy's incredible special effects. **How do you think the special effects in this film compare to their predecessors?**

EQUIP

Few film series allow an actor to play a character throughout the entirety of the character's lifetime, but motion-capture animation has opened up new doors. Caesar, played by Andy Serkis, begins as a baby chimpanzee, eventually growing into the new roles of a revolutionary, a father, a leader, a husband, and, ultimately, a king. It is Caesar's role as leader that provides the most drama in this film, and just as none of the apes are quite as developed as he is, none of them can truly know the full cost of leadership and the toll it takes on him. By the time we meet Caesar in this film, his fur is beginning to gray after being forced to deal with the aftermath of Koba's insurrection in ***Dawn***. In fact, visions of Koba plague him throughout, causing him to consider the broader repercussions of his own actions in pursuit of the Colonel, even if those considerations come after the fact. Caesar, who loses many important things in this film, becomes wrapped up in a personal vendetta of vengeance against the Colonel, but he can't see that he puts his entire clan at risk by pursuing this vengeance. **If you are comfortable doing so, please share a time when a personal choice affected others you know in a negative way. Did you give consideration to the repercussions before acting, or did they come unexpectedly? Are the effects of your actions still felt today?**

LEVEL UP

If we wish to see the effects one can have on many, we need only look to the very beginning of Scripture to the Garden of Eden in Genesis. The forefather of all, Adam, was given the parameters of obedience from God Himself, but when temptation asked him to disobey, he did so. Of course, excuses can be offered that Eve prompted Adam to sin, after being tempted herself. Still, the prohibition was delivered to Adam as leader. He made a choice, and it held repercussions for his marriage, his family, and for all of us today. His act of sin is fundamental to understanding humanity in a sinful world, and in **Romans 5**, we read of how Adam affects us today:

> **Romans 5:12-21 (NKJV)** [12] *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—* [13] *(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.* [14] *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.* [15] *But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.* [16] *And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.* [17] *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)* [18] *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.* [19] *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.* [20] *Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,* [21] *so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In watching the movie, I thought to myself, "The Colonel hated the apes, and he was going to go after them, regardless of Caesar." With ape defection all too common, as made evident by the gorilla, Winter, and the many other "donkeys" (apes who side with humans) in the film, there are multitudes of possibilities that could have led to the clan being incarcerated by the Colonel. It can even be said that Caesar's choices led to Winter's own defection. Still, Caesar goes against his better judgment and leaves his son and clan behind to pursue vengeance. He makes a deliberate choice. In the end, he can only blame himself. Many apes die as a result of his choice, including his close friend, Luca. Much of the film's last act is about Caesar and others undoing damage and freeing the apes from bondage. In his own way, Caesar reflects Adam, as well as Christ. Ultimately, he provides a way for the apes to escape their imprisonment and find rest in a new home, yet that is only possible because of the sacrifice of a "donkey" choosing to help in a moment of need. While the film evokes the importance of sacrifice and deliverance, Caesar can only provide these things in a temporary sense. Who knows what other troubles could come to the clan down the line? For us, though, Christ provides deliverance and provision to His people in an eternal sense. While Adam's sin established a fallen world, Christ's sacrifice provides redemption to all believers. Adam affects all, but so does Christ. Christ provides a way for all to be saved. Imprisonment to sin is a state of reality, but a place of peace to call home lies waiting for Christ's people. We must follow Christ; He provides the way! Before moving on, it's important to note that Caesar refrains from taking the life of the object of his vengeance, the Colonel. Maurice shows mercy in taking Nova along, and the "donkey" could have taken Caesar's life, but he doesn't. Mercy is shown during the film's most important moments, and no one is a better giver of mercy than Christ.

MOD

> **Ask:** Caesar had to "fix" things in the end, or else the entire clan was going to be mowed down by soldiers. His act is only possible because a "donkey" saves him in a moment of need. **Have you ever had to make a sacrificial choice to help someone else? Were the effects of your choice immediately visible to those you helped, or did you help them without their knowing?**

While legends will ring on of what Caesar did, only he will know of the "donkey" who saved his life. The "donkey's" sacrifice was made in secret, but was just as vital to victory. The Bible shows us in **Matthew 6** that doing good without others knowing about our actions is a noble thing. Christ paid the ultimate price for us all, a fact that the world must hear and know. Still, what we do in service to Christ for others need not be broadcast to the world. Acts done, words said, and sacrifices made are to be done solely because they are the right thing to do.

> **Ask:** We've all been hurt by others. These same people who hurt us may find themselves at our mercy in some situation later. **If this has ever been the case for you, how did you treat those who wronged you? Have you ever been shown mercy by someone you wronged?**

Adam's sin changed everything, but we contribute to our own separation from God by disobeying Him ourselves. God could have left humanity lost in its own sins, but instead He desires a connection with us. Christ came to bridge the gap. He is mercy to us all. Even after facing hatred and injustice on the cross, Christ cried out for mercy for his persecutors: "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.*" (**Luke 23:34**) Mercy can prove more beneficial than vengeance, and it can draw us closer to Christ and show Him to a world that needs to see Him.

PRAY

Coming into this study, you may have had hatred in your heart for another. You may have wished them ill and never thought that mercy was even possible for them. Today, may our prayers be two-fold. First, let's pray that God impress upon those who have unjustly wronged us a need for repentance--to see the error of their ways before it is too late. Secondly, let's pray for ourselves, that we can show mercy, however impossible it might seem. We didn't deserve the grace shown to us by Christ on the cross, but He showed it anyway. Christ's salvation can change our lives and the lives of others. Today, we will pray for peace in our lives that only Christ can bring, as well as any other prayer needs for the coming days. Let's pray.

THE NEXT LEVEL

> **1 Peter 3:18 (NKJV)** [18] *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,*

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