Pastor and Professor Andrew David Naselli Explains What Dragon-Slaying Stories and Snakes Have to Do with the Bible

WHEATON, Ill.—People are drawn to epic stories that feature the struggle between good and evil. Many times, the antagonist in these stories is a snake-like creature or dragon who appears to prevail only to be destroyed in the final moments by the hero. These stories aren’t new, but they continue to be a favorite of many in books, TV shows, and movies. What is it about these types of stories that make them so timeless and compelling?

In the most recent addition to the Short Studies in Biblical Theology series, *The Serpent and the Serpent Slayer* (Crossway, November 2020), Andrew David Naselli proposes a rationale for the popularity of these stories: “We love good dragon-slaying stories because they echo the greatest story—the grand story of the Bible,” he writes. “Stories that parallel the greatest story make our hearts soar with delight. Those stories are often fiction such as Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. Epic stories resonate deeply with us because they echo the greatest story. And the greatest story is true.”

*The Serpent and the Serpent Slayer* traces the theme of snakes and dragons throughout the biblical narrative, beginning with the story of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. In the following chapters, Naselli surveys the ensuing struggle between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman—culminating with the ultimate victory of Jesus, the serpent slayer, over the devouring dragon in Revelation.

Naselli writes, “Jesus is the ultimate Serpent Crusher, and he decisively crushed the Dragon by being ‘crushed for our iniquities’ (Isa. 53:5). Jesus was crushed according to God’s master plan: ‘it was the will of the Lord to crush him’ (Isa. 53:10; cf. Acts 2:23-24; 4:27-28). God’s people participate in crushing the Dragon based on Jesus the Messiah being crushed for their sins.”

Through this biblical theology of snakes and dragons in the Bible, Christians will experience the captivating, unifying narrative that influences all stories as they journey through the Bible.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew David Naselli (PhD, Bob Jones University; PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) is associate professor of systematic theology and New Testament at Bethlehem College & Seminary in Minneapolis and one of the pastors of Bethlehem Baptist Church.
andynaselli.com
@AndyNaselli

Founded in 1938, Crossway is a not-for-profit global Christian publishing ministry that publishes gospel-centered, Bible-based content to honor our Savior and serve his church. Crossway seeks to help people understand the all-encompassing implications of the gospel and the truth of God’s word—for all of life, for all eternity, and for the glory of God alone. Crossway is the global publisher of the ESV® (English Standard Version®) Bible, more than 1,000 Christian books, and an extensive list of gospel literature. For additional information, visit crossway.org.

# # #