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The Seed of the Woman & The End of the Ride

Genesis 3:14-15

April 12, 2009 – Easter Sunday

Peter Hiett

Parenthood Movie Clip:

Gil: But there's three of them, and you want to have four. And the fourth one could be Larry. They're gonna do a lot of things... baseball's the least of it. And in all those things, sometimes they're gonna miss.

Karen: Sometimes they won't.

Gil: Sometimes they will.

Karen: Sometimes they won't.

Gil: Sometimes they will.

Karen: What do you want me to give you? Guarantees? These are kids, not appliances. Life is messy.

Gil: I hate messy. It's so... messy!

Grandma: You know, when I was 19, Grandpa took me on a roller coaster. Up, down, up, down. Oh, what a ride.

Gil: What a great story.

Grandma: I always wanted to go again. It was just interesting to me that a ride could make me so frightened, so scared, so sick, so excited, and so thrilled... all together. Some didn't like it. They went on the merry-go-round. That just goes around. Nothing. I like the roller coaster. You get more out of it.

Well, I'll be seeing you in the car.

That's Steve Martin in the movie *Parenthood*, contemplating a 4th child... one more person in his own image and likeness. And you know it really *does* make a difference whether you like merry-go-rounds or roller coasters.

This world is kind of like a merry-go-round, spinning on its axis, spinning round the sun. So lots of folks argue that time is like this: circular. Until recently, most scientists said basically the same thing. But not

anymore, now they say time is like this: timeline. It has a beginning, a Big Bang. So the earth isn't just spinning, it's spinning out into space; but we're not sure where it's going. Kind of like a runaway train. Scripture teaches that time (*chronos*) not only has a beginning, it also has an end. And you see, if that end is good, it's not a runaway train, but more like a roller coaster. Someone is in control, it's just not us. But we like control, so we all do our best to turn the roller coaster into a merry-go-round. Merry-go-rounds are predictable, so they feel safe. But they don't get you anywhere and tend to make you sick.

Ten years ago, Susan and I drove our four kids to Disney World. The first day, we split up: Susan took the two little ones to ride the merry-go-round while I took Jon and Elizabeth to ride the roller coasters. We had a great time on Space Mountain, so when we saw the sign for Alien Encounter, we decided to give it a try. Alien Encounter wasn't a physical roller coaster so much as an emotional roller coaster. And they definitely took you for a ride. There were warning signs all over, so Jon (who was 9) kept asking me, "Daddy, will I be ok?" And Elizabeth (who was 8) kept lecturing him on courage saying, "Look Jon, I'm not afraid. I'm not worried. I'm ok!" Jon wanted my judgment. Elizabeth trusted her own judgment.

Alien Encounter was one of those animatronic rides where they feed you a story and lock you in a chair. After some demonstrations of XS Industries amazing new teleportation technology, we were ushered into a large room where we were strapped into harnesses surrounding a large glass and metal tube. Some strange looking people appeared on a screen and welcomed us to the main demonstration. One of them explained that he was the Chairman of XS Industries, and that currently he was on another planet on the other side of the galaxy. But now through this amazing new XS teleportation technology, he himself would be beamed through space, and materialize in the giant tube in the center of the room. Pretty cool! And Jon and Elizabeth were doing just fine... when all at once, one of the technicians acted as if something has gone wrong – not according to plan. She yelled, "I've locked onto another planet in our transmission path!" Then, "What if it's not him? It's an alien! It's carnivorous!" Then, "The teleportation tube is starting to break!" By now, our chairs are rocking. Through the smoke and flashing lights, you suddenly see a huge dragon-like creature in the XS Industries teleportation module.

I look at Jon – he looks at me. I smile – he's ok.

I look at Elizabeth – she's not looking at me. She's looking at the alien, and then I realize: "Oh no! She's bought the lie."

The technician yells "People of earth: Do not worry as long as the force field beams are on, the alien cannot fly out." Just then, the power fails, and the guy yells, "It's out! Get the alien back in the tube before it eats somebody!" All at once, you feel alien breath on the back of your neck. You hear the sound of an alien eating someone just above you. You feel liquid drip on your arms and head. The chair shakes, and you can't get out. And then Elizabeth started screaming, "We have to get out of here... Right now!" I look over and I've never seen such a look before. It was a look of absolute and sheer terror. I remember thinking, "She actually believes she's going to be eaten by this alien." My heart just broke for her. I was locked into my chair, so I looked at Elizabeth and started screaming: "Elizabeth! Elizabeth! Look at me! Look at me! Look at me! It's not real! It's not real! It's not real!"

In that moment, I couldn't explain how the breath she felt came from air tubes in the back of her chair. I couldn't explain that the liquid dripping on her head was tap water, not blood. I couldn't explain the gears and levers that shook the chair while the sound track played. I couldn't explain that at that moment, she was far safer than she'd been the previous four days riding in the mini-van. I couldn't explain it. All I could do was try to get her to trust my judgment more than her own judgment, screaming "Listen to me, look at me! It's not real! It's not real!"

Now: the air was real, the liquid was real, and the shaking was real, but the lie was not real. Lies are absence, not substance. Lies are the absence of truth. So I screamed "Listen to me! Look at me!" But she couldn't, and she didn't, for she was trapped in her own little merry-go-round of fear. It started as a rather attractive lie: "See Jon, I know what I'm doing. I'm in control." An attractive lie that turned into Hell. Even after the ride was over, it wasn't over for Elizabeth. She sat on my lap, shaking and sobbing, for half an hour. "Stuck in a moment." "Imprisoned by a lie."

Well, we've been studying the first few chapters of Genesis for about two years now. In the first chapter, we found out that time is a trip. It has a beginning and an end – numbered time **INSERT PIC**. It begins on Day 1, and ends on Day 7, when everything – everything – is good. Day 7 is the New Jerusalem, Heaven, God's rest – Eternity. You see, according to Scripture, we live in the 6th day of creation, for God is still making us in His image... the 6th day. Because of Einstein's Theory of Relativity and time dilation related to the expansion of the Universe even Physicists now argue that from the standpoint of the Big Bang, this really could be the 6th day. Well, no matter what, the first chapter of Genesis teaches us that's we're on a ride from chaos to the kingdom, where everything – everything – is good.

In chapter 2, we're back in Day 6, being made in God's image. But in Chapter 3, something goes terribly wrong. It's an alien encounter – we believe a lie, get "stuck in a moment," and think the ride ends in disaster... ends in death.

In chapter 3, verse 1, Eve encounters an alien – a talking serpent. But it's not just any serpent; a serpent is a creature that God has made. But this serpent is infected with evil that God has not made. Evil is the presence of an absence – the presence of the void: "I am" not.

The Bible names this serpent Satan, the Devil, the dragon, Leviathan, the chaos monster. He feeds Eve a story and she buys the lie. He tempts her to doubt God's judgment, trust her own judgment, and so create herself with herself and the knowledge of good and evil. See the deep lie is that God is not good, and that God does not love her, that his heart cannot be trusted. The obvious lie is that she won't die. She does die. Adam and Eve become the walking dead, dead in their trespasses and sins. They seize control; they hide in fear. Stuck in a moment, a merry-go-round of shame and fear. They think it's over, that the ride is over, and they are done.

Has that ever happened to you? Life was moving along, and then you get "stuck in a moment."

-Perhaps you were betrayed or abused.

-Perhaps you were divorced.

-Perhaps you lost a child... or killed a child.

-Perhaps you were raped or committed something like rape and think you can't be forgiven.

Whatever the case, you're no longer moving forward. Your mind goes in circles, like a merry-go-round, but you're not merry. Like this: (see the merry-go-round?) **Circle in time insert slide**. You think it's over. You're "stuck in a moment."

Well, all of humanity is "stuck in a moment" – on the 6th day – a lie. Adam and Eve are stuck, hiding in the trees, believing a lie – dead and terrified to die.

In Genesis 3, God shows up, and among other things, He curses the ancient serpent.

Genesis 3:14-15 "So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field: On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.""

Eat dust: that's interesting because Adam is dust. I hope you realize that there is an entity that wants to eat you for supper.

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise (or 'crush') your head, and you shall bruise (or 'crush') His heel."

It's interesting that the seed of Satan is like part of Satan... the seed of the woman is not simply a part of the woman. Satan really can't produce life, but the woman can: she's the mother of all life. Her seed is life. He said, "I AM the life."

Well, what's the seed of Satan? Jesus Himself told us that Satan was the Father of something. In John 8 He tells us that Satan is the Father of Lies. He also tells some religious leaders that their father is the devil. In Matthew, he calls them snakes. They're people that believe the lie that the snake told Eve, and so they try to make themselves in God's image with laws and good deeds. The Apostle Paul was one of them; I think we were all one of them. I think they're called sinners – people who trust their own judgment over God's judgment.

Listen to I John 3:8:

"He who sins is of the devil for the devil has sinned from the beginning."

That ought to scare you a wee bit, for who has not sinned? You see, we all have an Old Adam that believes the lie. This is the me that I create – the dark, empty, sinful self. This is me stuck in my moment. **Insert picture of old man** [Peter points to picture of the Old Man.

"For the purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (destroy the false self). Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."

I have a new self born of eternal seed. [Peter points to picture of the New Man.]

An old self and a new self... an Old Adam and a New Adam. The seed is Jesus, and He has been born in me – His body.

Jesus is the *eschatos* Adam – Ultimate Adam – Super Man – Super Dust. You'll remember that the Serpent is a man-eater, and on Good Friday 2000 years ago, he ate the wrong dust, like this:

Men in Black movie clip:

Agent J: Kay! Kay, where are you going?

Agent K: I'm getting my gun back.

Hey, bug! You know how many of your kind I've swatted with a newspaper? You're nothing but a smear on the sports page to me...you slimy, gut-sucking, intestinal parasite! Eat me! Eat me!

Huge bug-monster gets angry and swallows Agent K.

Agent J: You need to ease up out my face before something bad happen to you. Too late.

Agent K finds his gun and shoots the bug from inside. The bug explodes and disintegrates into slime, covering both of the agents.

That's my favorite Easter video.

For at the cross:

- The Father of Lies swallowed Truth Himself.
- The Prince of Darkness swallowed the Light of the World.
- The murderer swallowed the Life.
- The accuser swallowed the Judge.
- The prosecuting attorney swallowed Mercy Himself.
- The adversary swallowed the Advocate.
- The land of the lost swallowed the Way.
- The prince of this world and this time swallowed eternity.
- Hell swallowed Heaven.
- The chaos monster, Leviathan, swallowed the Word, through whom all is created.
- "I am not" swallowed "I AM."

God wrapped Himself in dust, bore our sin and sorrow, and Satan took the bait. Satan swallowed God, and Hell could not contain Him.

Hebrews 2:14 *"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."*

Colossians 2:13 *"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities (principalities and powers) and put them to open shame, but triumphing over them in him."*

At the cross, God took my sin and shame... all the “accusations against me” ... my sinful self... the seed of the sacrament, and He nailed it to the cross in Christ (Peter nails Old Man to the cross). He forgave me and forgave all. That’s His judgment. His judgment is mercy.

Well, if God’s judgment is mercy, and all is forgiven, and Satan is disarmed, and Jesus broke the gates of Hell from inside out... WHY do people stay there? Why do we stay there? ... Try to live there? Why do we live in such shame, anxiety and fear? Why do we get “stuck in a moment?”

You know, at the Alien Encounter ride, they had these signs all over, warning people with heart problems and mental disorders not to ride the ride. You see, they were very concerned that folks might have a heart attack or a mental breakdown: even though the ride itself was safer than our mini-van; even though the alien threat wasn’t real, and only lies, they knew that believing a lie (believing something unreal) can have very real consequences. You see, your only real danger is your own lack of faith. Your lack of faith is Hell, and gives Satan His power. Our problem is we don’t have the Heart of God, mind of Christ, and Spirit of Love... that is we lack faith. But even there, God has us covered (literally covered). Christ defeated the serpent, and now goes on the ride with you. It’s not only Easter in the past, but Easter right now.

I Corinthians 15:20-45 “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in its own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.”

Your Old Man is a “rule authority and power.” You can’t hang on to the “sin, death and Hades” forever.

“For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet (with that snake). The last enemy that will be destroyed is death... And so it is written, the first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

You see, He’s with you on the ride, and in your heart, by His Spirit, saying, “Look at me! Look at me! See my hands? See my feet? I’ve conquered death. Do not fear. All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me.” So throw your hands in the air and enjoy the ride. His presence in you is faith, hope and love in you. His presence in you is His Spirit. He gives you Himself saying, “Eat me. Drink me.” That destroys the Old Man and is the New. [Peter places the New Man at the front of the table.]

I Corinthians 15:49 “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”

I Corinthians 15:54-56 “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory”? (Where is it? I

guess only in time, where we get stuck in a moment.) *The sting of death is sin* (sin is unbelief – it's believing the lie that God can't be trusted), *and the strength of sin is the law* (the Law is the knowledge of good and evil). *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

He is the grace of God: fruit hanging on the tree of law, that turned to life – the cross. He is the image of God, our destination. He is the end where “it is finished.” He is the end of this ride and the beginning of the new creation. He is the narrow road, the narrow gate. He is The Way to the 7th day, the promised rest. He is the victory of God, the Word through whom all things are created. And He does not fail, even when He's crucified, especially when He's crucified.

And now I hope you see it: It looks like a set-up, I mean:

- God destined us to look like Jesus, and Jesus is crucified.
- He destined us to see the Light, but the Light shines in the darkness on a cross.
- He destined us to be filled with mercy, but the mercy fills our disobedience.
- He destined us for grace, but “*where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.*”
- He gives us “beauty for ashes and joy for our sorrow” (Isaiah 61). So the more ashes and sorrow in time, the more beauty and joy in eternity. He turns our sorrow into dancing.

So it looks like a set-up, I mean:

- He put two half-baked, naked people, with no knowledge of good or bad in a garden with an evil talking snake, and a tree of death in the middle, on which He would be crucified and give His broken heart to this fallen world.

It looks like a set-up... but a good set-up. And I hope you see it: Something did go wrong. We did fall, but the ride isn't over. We did chose sin, and we did choose Hell, but God was never out of control, so... this life is one Hell of a ride, but it's still a ride. It's not a merry-go-round, it's going somewhere. It might have ups and downs, even some loops, but it's going somewhere. It's not a run-away train; it's a roller coaster. It has a beginning, and it has an ending. And both are love...

And now you may be thinking: “But why would God ever take us on such a crazy ride in the first place?”

Some of you may be thinking: “Why would a good father take his 8 year old daughter on Alien Encounter?”

Well, I'm sure that God's reasons are better than mine, and I'm not recommending Alien Encounter for 8-year olds...but I do know this: On that ride, my daughter saw my heart broken for her, and she loved my heart, and trusted my heart broken for her. And on that ride, she was made a little more in my image.

You realize that God gave everything to make you in His image? He gave His heart. His battle with chaos and evil was real. His encounter with the alien no gimmick, and perhaps He wants you to see it: His heart broken for you.

One of my kid's favorite rides (at Universal Studios) was *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. They knew the danger wasn't really real. But Indiana's danger had been real, so going on the ride, they felt like him.

Maybe this life is the "Jesus Christ and Him Crucified" ride. You know He actually dies and rises with you and in you. He's waiting to rise in every moment of your life. He is the ride. Perhaps He wants you to share His victory, to feel what He feels, that you might know Him, becoming like Him in His death, and sharing in His resurrection... Made in His image.

About a year after Alien Encounter, Elizabeth wrote me a poem. I've kept it in a stack of papers on my desk for 9 years. I read it every few weeks. She wrote:

Dads

Dads that are always there for you.

Dads that will kiss you before bed.

Dads that teach you how to be brave.

Dads that will be there to go on the big rides.

Dads that are there when you come home from school saying, "Daddy, the bully beat me up." He says, "I love you, Elizabeth."

Dads... if they were not here, the world would be blank. – Dads

Now if you're thinking: "Fine, but what difference does Easter make?" Well, if there were no Easter, there would be no ride, and the world would be blank. Jesus is the Father's Word, and through that word and Him crucified, God creates all things and reconciles all things to Himself.

And if you're thinking: "Fine, but what difference does it make to me?" Well, it's the difference between Heaven and Hell, for when we don't believe the End, which is Easter, we get "stuck in the moment." We get stuck in time, and it turns into Hell.

In the summer of 1998, at Disney World, my daughter was stuck for about three minutes in the fear of death, and I could not reach her, for she believed a lie, would not receive my word, or look in my face. It was a taste of Hell.

Your Father's word is Jesus. When you see Him, you see the Father. When you believe Him, you are saved. Faith is the difference between Heaven and Hell, and laughter and despair. You see, faith in the end... faith in the resurrection of Jesus changes every moment of your ride.

I found an old video of the Alien Encounter ride on YouTube. I edited it for length and language. I want you to watch, but mostly I want you to listen to the people:

Alien Encounter video:

[Peter shows actual footage someone took on the Alien Encounter ride. You can hear the actor's dialogue and see the teleportation tube and the Alien. Over it all, you hear the sound of terror: people screaming, whimpering and crying. And you hear the sound of joy: people laughing uncontrollably.]

Did you hear it? All those people were fed the very same story. They all felt the very same sensations. They were all on exactly the same ride:

- Some wept and screamed in despair.
- And some laughed uncontrollably in joy.
- And some did both.

The difference between the laughter and the despair is faith.

Well, we're not all on the same ride. Some are far scarier than others, and I don't want to make light of your tribulation and pain. I've been to Auschwitz... walked through the killing fields. I've watched people die. I've cast out numerous demons, and Satan himself. I've witnessed unbearable sorrow, and the most wretched of sins, and believe me, I've been stuck in more than one moment. I'm just saying: Maybe Jesus meant it when He said, *"In this world, you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, for I have conquered. I have overcome the world."*

You do understand: He is the Word through whom all things are created. He is more real than anything you see.

You do understand: He is the beginning and the end, I am that I am. He's not trapped by any moment – He made time.

You do understand: He is life and light, and all of death and Hell can't begin to contain Him.

And you do understand: He loves you with all the He has, and all that He is.

So He wants to show you His victory in every moment of your life, especially the moment that you die... and live.

And so on the night that he was delivered up, He took bread, and he broke it, saying, "This is my body, given to you. Take and eat." And in the same manner, after supper, he took the cup, and he said, "This is My blood of the covenant, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you. And do it in remembrance of me."

And so we invite you to come to this table, tear off a piece of the bread and dip it in the cup. The white cups are juice, the dark cups are wine. Would you pray with me?

Pray this, only if you mean it, silently in your heart after me: "In the name of Jesus, Father, I give you all my moments: my old sinful self. Jesus, fill me with yourself, my new self. Be the way in every moment. Be the truth wherever I've believed a lie. Be the life rising in me. Be Easter in me."

Communion

Benediction:

Before you go, did you see the advertisement that Justin pulled together in the paper? It was in the Denver Post, and because we were having this “Easter Sunset” service it said, “Jesus is risen... so you can sleep in.” At first I thought, “Well, that’s cute, but that’s wrong.” And the more I thought about it, I thought “No, that’s cute, and that’s exactly right!” Because if you believe in Easter... if you really believe in Easter, you can listen to your Father and walk through the depths of the sea like the Israelites... you can look at your Lord Jesus and walk through storms on top of the waves like Peter. If you believe in Easter, you can even stare the serpent in the face and laugh at his lies. If you believe in Easter, you can fall asleep on a boat on top of the sea, like Jesus. You see, Easter is the rest of the story. Easter is the rest of your story. Easter is the rest in every moment of your story. It’s the presence of the End, and the End is good.