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STAR WARS: THE RISE OF SKYWALKER (2019) | *Forging A New Destiny* | BIBLE STUDY

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

For 40+ years, people the world over have been captivated by Star Wars, that saga based a long, long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. Its reflections of classic storytelling have proved a favorite for people young and old, and some follow the stories beyond the films into animation, gaming, comics, and literature. This film sought to provide closure to the Skywalker Saga, but the stories go far beyond that particular family. **Do you consider yourself a fan of Star Wars, and what are your favorite experiences with the franchise?**

EQUIP

The culmination of this film hinges upon the decisions of Rey, the heroine of the "Sequel Trilogy". In the preceding two films, we don't know much about her, and honestly, she doesn't know very much about herself. Led to believe she was a nobody devoid of all significance by Kylo Ren, it is revealed in this film that she is actually related to the most prominent and infamous figure in the galaxy: Emperor Sheev Palpatine, who was long thought dead. Her childhood on the remote planet of Jakku following her parents leaving her there was actually done for the sole purpose of keeping her safe from the plans of her grandfather, who wanted her and her strength in the Force to supplant him as the heir to the lineage of the Sith.

Knowing that the Emperor killed her parents and his own kin, Rey has every reason to travel to Exegol and strike down her grandfather. Yet, succumbing to this baser instinct is exactly what would transfer his dark essence and that heritage of the Sith from him and into her. The perpetual cycle of greed, lust for power, and malicious hatred will carry forward into Rey as the new Empress. In a lowly, weakened state, the power of many Jedi of the past comes behind Rey, and while she doesn't strike back in anger, she holds her ground defensively against her grandfather's attack, reflecting his dark power back at himself and ending his plans to bring her down, once and for all.

With all power drained in defense, Rey's life has ended, but Ben Solo, no longer Kylo Ren and follower of the Dark Side, transfers his life essence into Rey and dissipates into the Force as a result. Following that sacrifice and a new beginning, Rey, without a name beyond the tainted one that is Palpatine, later takes on the proud name of Ben's lineage, Skywalker, and we end with an unspoken hope for better times to come, free of a dark ruler.

LEVEL UP

While many may have theorized any number of ways for this film and saga to end, the way this all plays out can highlight some key spiritual truths. Like Rey, each of us have a lineage that precedes us, and we may not be aware of what path it has orchestrated that will lead to our demise and the denigration of others. Each of us is born into a fallen state, with our sin setting us on a dark path away from God.

Romans 5:12-19 (NKJV) - *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 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. 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. 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. 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.) 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. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.*

Inevitable in outcome, this dark path is encouraged by influences and circumstances throughout, but it is orchestrated by a great deceiver, Satan, who is already fallen and set for destruction. However, Satan will do everything in his power to keep us away from God and drag us down with him and cause others to stumble into descent, as well.

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV) - *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*

Master Yoda said long before the events of this film: "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering." There is a multitude of sins that God's Word warns us against, but each does one common thing: they assure our destruction. Satan and the world at large may promise pleasure, power, and prominence if we give in to such things, but we must stand in defense. Our convictions are to be bolstered by the examples of others believing the same and holding firm against the attacks of Satan.

1 Peter 2:9-10 (NKJV) - *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NKJV) - *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

As Christians, our new life and new name are supplied by Christ and His sacrifice. We have a new future allowed to us, only because He gave His life for us. He took that inevitable destination and granted us a new Eternal destiny. One Day, the struggle will be over, and those with destinies changed by Christ in this life will be with Him in Eternity.

MOD

Palpatine emerged from behind the scenes to show he was at work the entire time, even when we were unaware that was even possible. Similarly, Satan is always at work and appearing out of nowhere with his attacks. **What are some of the ways you have experienced spiritual attack, and how did Satan try to keep you from growing?**

Palpatine had even defluenced Ben for years and spoke to him through a variety of voices over the years, even inside his head. **Do you think Satan does much of his work in our own minds? Do you think some people struggle more with Satan's influencing their minds or through their circumstances?**

We may feel like we can never change our lives because of past mistakes or because of what others have done or done to us. This film shows us that we don't have to be defined by the past or by others. We are responsible to make a change. Our family can't determine our spiritual destiny for us. **Have you ever felt like you lived in the shadow of your family's reputation and accomplishments, either good or bad? How do you endeavor to make an identity for yourself?**

Reviewing these ideas and passages as a believer may seem rather elementary to some, but one reason Star Wars is so resonant to so many is that it illustrates core truths through a story that feels timeless. We connect because it shares things we all need to know. Likewise, this illustration from the film may be meant specifically for us or to embolden us to share with those in need of the transformation we've already experienced.

PRAY

Do you know anyone personally who is in need of that changed destiny? There are people all around us that don't know Christ, and it is the responsibility of Christians to see to it that they are given the opportunity to come to Christ. As the classic hymn, Amazing Grace, says, "I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind, but now, I see." What an incredible privilege Christians have of sharing in that transformative work of Christ! We can see friends, family, and even our enemies changed Eternally by providing the opportunity to hear God's Word and allow Jesus to change them from the inside-out. **If you know anyone that needs to experience salvation and change, let's pray for them now and continue praying beyond this meeting that they will come to know Christ.**

THE NEXT LEVEL

***James 4:7-10 (NKJV)** - Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

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