

CREATION

God created the world and it was good, but sin distorted God's design. But God promised to send One to crush the enemy and restore His creation.



GOD'S STORY
THE TRANSFORMATION FOR ADULT LIFEGROUPS

Genesis 1-3

February 16, 2020

(Gen. 1:1-2) ¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

(Gen. 1:26-31) ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." ²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." ²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

(Gen. 2:18-25) ¹⁸ The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ¹⁹ Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." ²⁴ That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵ Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

(Gen. 3:1-7) ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" ² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" ⁴ "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

(Gen. 3:15; 20-21) ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." ... ²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. ²¹ The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

COMMUNITY – CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER

- What are some of your favorite stories? What is it about them that you like?
- Why do you think people are fascinated by stories?

From our earliest years, we're telling stories to our parents, to our friends and eventually to our own children. Why are we like this? Because our God is a storytelling God. And in the Bible, He is telling a story – a story filled with amazing characters, astounding events, terrible tragedy and unspeakable joy. It's the story of an earthly dilemma that's begging for a heavenly solution.

CONTENT – EXPLORING GOD'S STORY

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1-2

- Who is the first character, the hero, in the story?
- What does this story tell us about God?

Genesis chapter one makes it clear: the Bible is a story about God. The Christian faith begins and ends with God. Here in the very first verse, God is pulling back the curtain; He's revealing something about Himself, His glory, His majesty, His power, and authority. Our goal and purpose as Christians is to know and love our Creator God.

- **Why do you think the Bible tells us that God created but does not tell us exactly how He created?**
- **Why is it important for us to remember God's power and glory? What happens when we forget these aspects of His nature and character?**

Every great story builds to a climax—the most important, most exciting, or most intense moment that changes everything. The story of creation is no different—all throughout these verses, as God creates and says "it is good," the story is building to an important event. And the climax of the creation story is the creation of the first man and first woman.

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 1:26-27

- **In what ways were humans set apart from the rest of God's creation? What comes to mind when you hear the word image or likeness?**
- **What does it mean to be made in God's image or likeness?**

The term "image" refers to the aspects of reason, personality, the ability to make value judgments, and other qualities that cause a human being to resemble God. Just as family members take on the qualities and personality traits of one another, God created people in His own image to reflect some of His qualities.

- **How do these verses reflect the unique relationship between God and man?**
- **How should knowing that we are made in God's image affect your relationship with God and with other people?**

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 1:28-31; 2:18-25

- **What responsibilities did God give to men and women?**
- **What might the blessing and responsibilities God gave man and woman tell us about His view of them?**

Creating human beings in His image so they would enjoy a unique relationship with Him and a distinct role in the world, God determined to make them male and female. Once God created the man and woman, He blessed them. By blessing the man and the woman, God implied that He looked with special favor on them. By speaking directly to them, He showed once more the unique place they occupied in His heart.

- **What specific command did He give both men and women?**

When God made the man and woman, He gave them "dominion" over the earth. They were to live as His representatives in creation. They had the freedom to do whatever they wanted, go wherever they wanted, eat whatever they wanted—with one exception. He commanded them, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die" (Gen. 2:16-17). This was the only rule that existed in creation.

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 3:1-7

- Eve knew the command to not eat of the tree's fruit, so why do you think she was there?
- What are some of the ways sin continues to tempt us to go our own way?
- What do we tell ourselves when we face temptation?

Eve had the opportunity to make a choice—to obey the Lord's command or to believe the serpent. She chose to believe the serpent. She saw the fruit as good for food and delightful to look at, and so she ate. And then she gave some to her husband who was right there with her. The choices of both Adam and Eve were disastrous. God had created all things and called them good, but their sin caused everything to fall apart.

COMMISSION – ENGAGING IN GOD'S STORY

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 3:15 and Genesis 3:20-21

- What promises do these two passages point to?

From the very beginning of creation, we see God's story of redemption through Jesus. God promises to send One who would crush the enemy. In order to clothe Adam and Eve in garments of skins (animal skin), a sacrifice had to be made. In the same way, God would one day provide His own Son as the perfect sacrifice to take away the sins of the world. And He would do so in order to clothe us - not in the skins of animals, but in the righteousness of His own Son.

- Think about your own life. Where do you see Satan trying to convince you to taste the fruit of sin? How does this promise strengthen you to resist sin?
- How does this promise bring you joy?

PRAYER: End your time together with prayer. Praise God that before anything was made, He was present, and that because of this, because He is the Creator, we know we were not created by accident, but for a purpose. Thank God that He is writing a greater story than the one we see playing out before us. Pray that many would come to see the promise God gave Adam and Eve—the promise of salvation through Jesus Christ—as the only hope for the forgiveness of their sins.

CONTINUE TO JOURNEY THROUGH GOD'S STORY

Bible Reading Plan:

DAY 1 – Job 38-39
 DAY 2 – Job 40-42
 DAY 3 – Genesis 11-12
 DAY 4 – Genesis 15
 DAY 5 – Genesis 16-17

KEY VERSE: Genesis 15:6

H.E.A.R. Method:

Highlight a verse or two.
 Explain what the text means.
 Apply the verse to your life.
 Respond to God.

Our team has put together Bible study resources to encourage and inspire you as you engage in God's Story. Visit chetscreek.com/gods-story for videos, study guides, and more.

OUR VISION

To be a church
 for the unchurched,
 here and around the world.

ADULT LIFEGROUPS

Gospel-centered communities that aim to KNOW
 GOD together and BE CHANGED by Him in a
 way that will CHANGE THE WORLD.

GENESIS 1:1-2

1:1 The opening statement about creation in Genesis 1:1 is not only a heading or summary of everything that is unfolded in the subsequent verses but also a declaration of God's first actions by which He called the universe into existence. The when, who, and what of creation are identified in Genesis 1:1. God established for absolutely everything a beginning of its succeeding existence. This concept is reflective of the biblical writer's attempt to communicate the wealth of knowledge regarding the origin of the world that had been worked out and taught among God's people. The reference to God in Genesis 1:1 is an effort to make a general statement about God's creative work. The biblical writer provided the opportunity to integrate faith and natural science in such a way as to make it possible to talk about God and his activity in the known world. Regarding the universe, the heavens and the earth, there could have been only one beginning, with God being its Source. The actions identified in Genesis 1:1 have no comparison in man's experience. Only God can "create." Two ideas stem from God's creative ability. First, God created without effort. God simply spoke and the elements of the universe came into being. Second, God created the materials of the universe from nothing, creation ex nihilo.

GENESIS 1:26-27

1:26 God's use of plural pronouns (Us... Our... Our) to refer to Himself has raised many questions. At least five different suggestions have been put forward to explain them: they may be references to (1) the Trinity, (2) God and His angels, (3) God and creation, (4) God's majesty as expressed by a literary device known as the "plural of majesty," or (5) a polytheistic view of God. Since the Bible teaches elsewhere that there is only one God, the fifth option is not tenable. The two Hebrew words translated as image and likeness are often understood as having the same meaning. But some interpreters suggest that "image" refers to the ability to reason, with "likeness" referring to the spiritual dimension. What exactly is the "image" of God? Since the Bible teaches that God is Spirit (John 4:24), many commentators believe it refers to the non-material aspects of a person—our moral sensibilities, intellectual abilities, will, and emotions. Based on God's commands in Gen 1:28, others have suggested that it consists of the role humans are to play on earth—their rulership over the planet and its resources, and secondarily the physical, mental, and spiritual abilities that enable them to fulfill that role. The NT teaches that Christians will someday bear the image of Christ (1Cor. 15:49; 1 John 3:2). 1:27 The creation of humanity is the crowning event of chapter 1, as shown by the fact that created is repeated three times. The verb "created" is the same one used in 1:1, referring to a kind of creative activity that only God can do. The term "man" is used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to refer to humanity in general, not just males; all people, both male and female, are created in the image of God. People are the only beings that are created in the image of God. The Bible never lumps people into the category of animals. Instead, it separates the creation of people from all other beings and attributes the most privileged roles in creation to humans alone.

GENESIS 3:1-10

3:1-2. The account of the temptation and sin of the first man and woman does not attempt to explain the origin of evil. Bible students have debated where evil came from for untold years and still disagree. While we may not be able to definitively explain evil's origin, the Bible affirms God's goodness and love, our disobedience and sin, and our need to confess our sin to God. The serpent, clearly identified in the New Testament as Satan (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), constituted the most cunning wild animal created by God. Cunning translates a Hebrew word with positive and negative connotations. Sensible individuals possess cunning that enables them to act with wisdom, understanding what is best in each situation (Prov. 14:15; 22:3). By using the name God, the serpent pointed to God's remoteness as Creator rather than nearness as the Lord with whom the man and woman had a relationship. To her credit, the woman attempted to correct the serpent's misquotation of God. She responded that God had created a wonderful environment providing both beauty and abundant physical nourishment. Rather than being selfish or stingy, God had lavishly demonstrated His generosity and love.

3:3. The woman gave her understanding of God's command. While much she said agrees with God's original command (2:17), she made three significant changes. First, she referred to the tree by its location rather than by its name, thus minimizing the importance of the tree and the possible reason God told them not to eat from it. Second, she declared God had instructed the man and woman not only to avoid eating the tree's fruit but also to

avoid even touching the tree. Perhaps she believed not touching the fruit would better enable her to keep God's command, but her addition indicated she felt a need to modify God's command. Third, by not using the word for "certainly" in God's command, the woman tried to eliminate the certainty of the punishment of death. The woman already may have been wondering about the reason and need for obeying God's command. Through the serpent, Satan exploited a weakness in the woman's faith in God and her commitment to Him.

3:4. Hearing the woman's response, the serpent directly contradicted God in stating death would not result from eating the fruit. Having accused God of being selfish and spiteful, the serpent then charged Him with lying. According to the serpent, God did not want humans to have some things He had, including knowledge, so He ordered them not to eat from one tree's fruit and threatened them with death to scare them into obeying. The serpent slyly described God in a negative way that caused the woman to doubt and disobey Him

3:5. The serpent appeared to know God better than the woman, suggesting God was intentionally keeping her and her husband from becoming what they could. According to the serpent, eating the fruit would not lead to death but to a superior, divine knowledge and stature. Their eyes would be opened to a new awareness and knowledge, making them like God. The serpent partially spoke the truth. After the man and woman ate the fruit, they gained new knowledge and became like God but only in a limited sense. The serpent failed to mention that what the man and woman would lose would more than outweigh what they gained.

3:6. The serpent's words accomplished their purpose. The woman believed the serpent's statements that God was withholding something good and that the punishment of death for disobedience constituted an empty threat. Furthermore, the fruit seemed to offer only benefits with no consequences. The benefits included food to satisfy physical needs, natural beauty to enhance the enjoyment of life, and the promise of wisdom to make humans like God. The woman's coveting led to her disobeying God to satisfy her desires. She was not willing to accept and obey God's restrictions and to allow God to grant wisdom through a maturing relationship with Him. Instead, the woman attempted to seize what she wanted. The woman ate the fruit, gave some to the man, and he also ate. The man may have been with her throughout her conversation with the serpent. Verses 1-5 have the plural form of "you," implying either the man's presence or that God's command applied to both humans. If the man was not with the woman during the conversation, he certainly was with her when she ate. God had specifically commanded him concerning the tree, so he would have recognized the source of the fruit. The man, like the woman, willfully and consciously disobeyed God.

3:7-8. Immediately the man and woman possessed new knowledge. They knew they were naked. The man and woman acted by sewing fig leaves together to create loincloths to hide the parts of their bodies that differentiated them from each other. Fig leaves constituted the largest leaves known in Palestine, but they certainly would not create appropriate, long-lasting clothing. The pair's feeble attempt to cover their nakedness prefigured their feeble effort to escape condemnation by blaming others. Hearing God approach, they retreated among the trees of the garden hoping to escape His presence. The shame they felt before God mirrored the shame they felt before each other.

3:9-10. God called out asking the man where he was. God spoke as a loving father. He could see them and knew exactly where the man and woman were, but He invited them to reveal themselves and admit their sin. The use of the masculine singular you indicates God spoke specifically to the man. The man avoided answering God's question, but provided a reason for his hiding. The man stated he feared God seeing him naked and thus hid himself. While he did not answer God's question directly, the man's response indirectly acknowledged his sin. This sin had created a shame he had not previously known and had impaired his relationship with God (just as it had damaged his relationship with the woman).