

The Story 2026

Creation

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

January 25, 2026

How well do you know the Bible? Now, I'm sure that many of you would have fared a lot better than Cindy, Jeremy, and Ron, but the funny but maybe sad thing is I have actually watched numerous episodes of Jeopardy! where they have a category about the Bible and the skit isn't far off. For most of those individuals that know a whole host of things, they know almost nothing about the Bible.

In America, I have made the observation that over the last hundred years, our understanding of Scripture has taken a huge hit. I would even say that farmers from 100 years ago would have a better understanding of the Bible than most pastors today because they spent more time reading it. This is not meant to judge anybody. It's not meant to make anybody feel bad.

It's just the point that as a culture, we have decided that there are many things that are more important than learning or studying the Word of God. There's many more things that take our attention, that take our time and take our energy. Now, in my experience in talking with individuals, most Americans, not all, still know of or have heard of the major stories.

Think about Adam and Eve, Noah and the Ark, Moses in Egypt, David and Goliath, the story of the manger at Christmas time, Jesus' death and resurrection, and maybe even some stories about Peter, James, and John in the New Testament. But even if most Americans know these general stories, they don't know how they fit together, or even the timeline of what took place.

Most people you talk with about the Bible would not be able to produce even one meta narrative that flows throughout Scripture. And what is a meta narrative? It's a theme that flows through all of Scripture that God uses to reveal Himself to us. Again, not judging anybody, just making an observation. So what this really means is most people who are rejecting or accepting the truth of God's Word don't even know what they are accepting or rejecting.

They just are not sure. They don't have the full story. And there is this false belief that we as humans are much smarter today than our ancestors. This is certainly not true when it comes to our knowledge of Scripture. C.S. Lewis called this chronological snobbery. This idea that we look back in time and think, oh, those people were really foolish. They believed certain things that just weren't true.

But as we think about our understanding of the Bible, this definitely would not have been the case. In ancient Israel, the Jewish people would have had a thorough understanding of the biblical narrative as information was passed down orally from generation to generation. Their entire calendars revolved around the story and nation of Israel so that when they looked back, every time they would celebrate a feast or a special day, the stories would be shared again of how God chose this nation to reveal Himself to the world.

Those who were literate, those who could actually read would memorize vast amounts of the Bible. And today, most individuals don't even spend 10 minutes a day reading the Bible. It is for this reason that we thought it

would be a good idea for us as a church to put together a sermon series for Sunday mornings that would take us on a quick journey, a very quick journey through Scripture.

It's only going to be seven weeks long, but our goal is to give you at least a 10,000-foot view of the story of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. And so we're only going to cover the main topics, one main narrative through Scripture. And so I am asking you, those of you that are here, as well as those of you that are joining us online, to lock in for the next seven weeks.

Try to be here every week, and if you can't be here, at least join us online or catch up online. Watch the messages on your own. The goal of this series is that it would be helpful for those who have never opened the Bible before, as well as for those who have been reading the Bible and studying it for decades. Now, you need to know from somebody that is upfront teaching, it is very difficult to do that for both groups of people.

People that have never experienced it before, and people that have been studying it for a long time, but that is our goal. Our ultimate goal moving forward as a church is to create multiple classes that will take individuals that want to on a deeper dive through Scripture. This would be for those that are looking to kind of go to that next level to say, "I really want to understand what the Bible says." So for the next following, for the following seven weeks, we are going to be on this journey through Scripture, and these are going to be the seven topics we're going to look at.

Today, we're going to focus on creation, then we're going to talk about rebellion and the fall. Then we're going to talk about Israel, God's chosen people. Then we're going to talk about Israel and the land that they have. Then we're going to talk about, of course, Jesus, followed by the early church, and then His return. So those are going to be our seven topics that we are going to talk about with the Bible.

So if you have your Bibles, I encourage you to open up to Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, and remember Genesis is the first book of the Bible, all right? Just open it up, Genesis chapter 1, starting in verse 1, and let me pray as we talk about the creation account that we read in Scripture. Heavenly Father, we come before You, and just thank You for the opportunity to open Your Word and to read the truths that it reveals to us.

I pray that as we study Your Word, it would give us a better understanding of who You are, as well as a better understanding of who we are in Your greater story that is taking place. Father, my desire is that You would draw us closer to You, that You would help us to have a better grasp of Your Word, not just for ourselves, but so that we can share it with others as well. And so we ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, even most people that have not been raised in the church, most people that maybe have never even opened their Bible probably know Genesis chapter 1 verse 1, where we read, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." And so in verse 1, you and I are introduced to the main character of the story of Scripture, and that is God.

And if God is the main character throughout this entire book, the entire story, one of the questions that you and I should always ask when we are reading the Bible, after we finish a section of Scripture, should be, what does this section of Scripture teach me about God? That should be one of our first questions that we ask. No matter what we're reading in the Bible, whether it's Genesis, Revelation, Leviticus, it doesn't matter.

We should be asking the question, what does this section of Scripture teach me about God? Now I'm going to spend just a little moment reading through most of chapter 1, verses 2 to 25, so follow along with me. The words on the screen might be slightly different than what I'm going to read because I'm reading from NIV 1984, and these are from NIV later, all right? So it might be just a little different, so I just want to warn you about that. All right? Genesis chapter 1, starting in verse 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. And God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' God saw that the light was

good, and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness He called night, and there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it, and it was so. God called the expanse sky, and there was evening and there was morning the second day. Verse 9, "And God said, 'Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear, and it was so.'

God called the dry ground land, and he gathered waters, he called seas, and God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation, seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it according to their various kinds, and it was so. The land produced vegetation, plants bearing seed according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.'

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day, verse 14, "And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on earth, and it was so.'

God made two great lights, the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. I just love that end of verse 16, one sentence, and he also made the stars. There's billions of stars, and we get one sentence about that. Verse 17, "God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light to the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness, and God saw that it was good."

And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day." Verse 20, "And God said, 'Let the water teem with living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.' So God created the great creatures of the sea, and every living and moving thing with which the water teems according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind, and God saw that it was good.

God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day, verse 24, "And God said, 'Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds, livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals each according to its kind, and it was so.'

God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock, according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds, and God saw that it was good. We'll stop there. Here is the Bible's account, a biblical view of creation. And here is where we begin to see these crucial questions that humanity has asked for all of time and the answers that the Bible gives.

The first thing you need to understand about Scripture, the Bible is not primarily a science book, though it does teach us about science. You also need to know the Bible is not primarily a history book, though it does tell us a lot about history. Statement number one, as we read through Scripture, the Bible's primary purpose is to teach us about God.

That is the number one goal of Scripture is to teach us about God. Genesis specifically has been regarded as a book of the law. It is part of the Pentateuch, the first five books of Scripture, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and this is how Jesus referred to Genesis as well as a part of a book of the law. Statement number two about Scripture.

The Bible is 100% true, but isn't always 100% literal. Let me just give you an example. When Jesus says in the New Testament that if you struggle with the sin of lust, you should gouge out your right eye and throw it away. Can I just tell you, if you didn't already know, he's not being literal there.

He's not telling you to literally gouge out your right eye and throw it away, but he is saying, "Go to extreme measures to overcome sin." So, you probably want to know when is it literal and when is it allegorical or

metaphorical or using poetry? So statement number three, it is important to hold our scientific conclusions about this book with an open mind.

Now we're talking about Genesis chapter 1. Remember, this book isn't necessarily here to reveal those answers to us about science. Refer to statement number one. What is the primary purpose of Scripture? It is to reveal God to us. That's the number one goal of Scripture. And so here in chapter 1, amongst believers, please hear me say that, I want to say it multiple times.

Amongst believers, we have a difference of opinion in how to interpret Genesis chapter 1. Amongst people even in our own church, we have individuals that would call themselves Old Earth creationists. They believe that God created everything as they read Genesis chapter 1, but it wasn't in a literal 24-hour day cycle. They don't take that day literal.

They believe in what is known as the day-age theory, that God created everything in the order that it was created as we read, but that it was not a normal timeframe. They believe that the earth is millions, if not billions of years old, and each day that is mentioned in Scripture in Genesis 1 could have been tens of thousands or millions of years. That is one interpretation that people have because Genesis is not a science textbook.

Then there are those that are on the other side that would call themselves young earth creationists. And they interpret Genesis as a literal day, 24-hour day. Therefore, based on the genealogical records that show up later in Scripture, they would believe that the Earth is no more than 15,000 years old, and many much younger than that, all right? So we have two very big extremes, right?

15,000 versus billions, there's a big difference there. And so there's debate that takes place. Now, before a fight breaks out, can I just tell you? I know believers on both sides of the issue. People that I respect, people that I love, people that I consider followers of Jesus. So you need to know I am talking about believers. I do not believe that your interpretation of Genesis 1 is a salvation issue. Do you guys all hear that?

I don't believe it's a salvation issue. Now it causes a lot of fights in the church, it causes a lot of arguments, but I don't necessarily believe it is a salvation issue. At the same time, I want to be completely clear with all of you that I have loved science growing up. It was one of my favorite subjects in school. I love reading about this. I love researching about this. And I have gone on way too many rabbit holes on YouTube concerning this, all right? Both sides of the argument.

I have spent probably way too much time of my life studying this, getting in debates with people about this, because I just enjoy it. And to be completely transparent, after many years of studying, I will tell you that both sides have questions that are difficult to answer. This continues to be a debate for that reason. No side has a slam dunk case, and I will tell you, when you study science, there is a difference between historical science and observable science.

You may not have heard these phrases before, it ends up being kind of one of the main debates when I talk with people about this. Observable science are those things that can be tested and repeated and we can see what is happening. Historical science is trying to make conclusions about the past based on the present. Does this make sense? This is not meant to be a science lesson. And so none of us were there, right? We were not there at creation, we were not there, and so we're making our best guesses based on what we see presently.

Unfortunately, in order to make a guess about the past, based on what you see in the present, there's a huge assumption that what happens in the present is what has happened in the past. Does that all make sense to you guys? And so this is where a lot of the debate comes, even amongst believers, when it comes to the age of the earth and how God chose to create all of this. And again, in the heart of transparency, I will let you know that I certainly lean toward the young earth creationists based on my study of Scripture, based on all the rabbit holes I have gone down, and you need to know I've been called all sorts of things because of that stance.

Most people that are young earth creationists were considered crazy and out of our minds and we don't like science and that's just not true, but I will just tell you that's where I stand. But here is what is clear from a biblical worldview. Statement number four, no matter what side of the argument you're on with the age of the earth, those that have a biblical worldview, I do believe, need to have this as their foundation, that God is the creator of everything and nothing was an accident.

All right, that's the truth. And believers that I've talked with that are old earth, young earth, whatever, we can come to this conclusion. God is the creator of everything and nothing was an accident. We believe that creation is not an impersonal accident, but the result of a creative and purposeful God. All right, that's the truth of Genesis 1. The creation story, just so you know, literally, according to literature, is presented both poetically and artistically.

Days one, two, and three, if you've never noticed this before, are the places or spaces that were created by God. Day one is light and dark. Day two is sky and water. Day three is dry land. And then days four, five, and six, God creates the things that fill these spaces. Day four, God creates the sun and the moon and the stars to fill the sky. He creates, on day five, the birds and the sea creatures to fill the sky in the water, and on day six, he creates animals and human beings to fill the dry land.

So speaking of humans, let's just finish Genesis 1:26 through 31. Then God said, we're still in day six, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him.

Male and female, He created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Verse 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.' "And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it, I also give you every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that He had made, and it was very good, and there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The first thing I want you to notice about that last section of Genesis chapter 1, I want you to notice the plural pronoun in verse 26. Did you pick up on that? Then God said, "Let us," not me, plural, "let us make mankind in our, not my image." The first thing we have to notice, right away in Genesis chapter 1, we see these signs or ideas of the Trinity. Now, is the word Trinity ever used in the Bible?

No, it's not. So, we are inferring that based on what we read, based on what Scripture says. Remember, what is the first question we are supposed to ask when we're reading through Scripture? What does this teach me about God? So we have to ask that question. So we see some plurality there in God's own nature, in His own character, when He says, "Let us make man in our image," a sign of the Trinity.

The second thing that you will see as you're reading through this, one of the main questions and theological issues that will arise with those that I'm going to have a third category here, those that would call themselves theistic evolutionists. All right, you may run into people that would call themselves a theistic evolutionist. These are people who believe that God created everything, but he used evolution to do so, and they would fall in the Old Earth creationists, but they would be another subcategory there.

Let me just tell you, I have two problems or questions that arrive in my mind for theistic evolutionists. As I shared with you, nobody has a slam dunk case, but these are some very difficult questions that I have never heard a good answer to or a convincing answer to for those that are theistic evolutionists. The first, it would

seem from the text that all animals and humans were vegetarians at creation. Did you guys pick up on that? At least from reading the text.

It says that he gave them all green, you know, seed-bearing plants and trees that they were to eat. That was their food. He didn't talk about eating, unfortunately, cheeseburgers or whatever else, right? It was just seed-bearing plants. So it would seem that way, I'm just saying, based on a literal reading there. And then, of course, if I have studied evolution, and I'm not talking about microevolution, where you have differentiation in species that stay within that species, does that make sense?

For those of you that have studied this, Darwin's finches, they grow beaks at different sizes, depending on the food that's available, all right? But they're still finches. I'm not arguing that there's adaptation that takes place. That can be proven in observable science. When I talk about evolution, I'm talking about trans species, going from one species to another. Everybody makes sense the difference there, okay? So one of the problems with evolution, as Darwin would explain it, involves the death and the survival of the fittest.

So if humans evolved through evolution, then death and suffering existed well before the fall and sin entered the world, and God said at the end of day six, "When there was mankind on earth, it was very good." So that's just a struggle that I would have. How can God call it very good if it's survival of the fittest, and there's death, and there's suffering, and there's animals eating each other, and there's all of the stuff that would have to exist in the theory of Darwin's theory of evolution.

So those would be some questions that I would have. You guys all follow those questions at least. Have not gotten great answers for those that would fall in a theistic evolutionist category, all right? But most importantly, here's what I want you to get from this. Most importantly, we see in the creation account that human beings, you and me, are the crown of God's creation. You are the point of the story. We see that in Scripture.

You are the peak of God's core passion. That God made human beings different from every other animal that exists, every other thing that's on the planet. Why? Because we are created in His image. Imago day, in the image of God. Everything else in creation is secondary to you. Have you ever thought about that before? Everything else from a biblical worldview, everything else in creation is secondary to you.

God's passion, God's desire, God's purpose for creation was you, and to be with you at all costs. You are the point of the story. God created the world with a grand vision of dwelling together with us in this world. Therefore, you have value, you have purpose, you have worth. Why? Not because of anything you've done, but because of God who created you and who He created you to be.

Therefore, as a believer and somebody who has a biblical worldview, all human beings have internal value because they are created in the image of God. I can't overstate that. Why do I value other human beings regardless of who they are, what their skin color is, what their job is, what they even do in this world. Why? Because they're created in the image of God. They have internal value. You can see from Genesis chapter one that God wants a relationship with you, but He doesn't force it upon you.

If we had time for chapter 2, which we don't, we see that in the garden, God places Adam and Eve. In Genesis chapter 2, you have a retelling of the creation account. You get some more details. You see in the garden that He places the tree of life along with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And in so doing, God gave us freedom as human beings. Why would God give us freedom? Because true love and true relationship is a choice. It cannot be forced.

God wanted a relationship with us, and if He made us robots and we didn't have the choice to not choose Him, that's not real love and that's not a real relationship. So God put those trees there so that we would have a choice. So as we conclude, and of course, there's much more. Remember, this is a 10,000 foot view. I encourage you to go back this week and read Genesis chapter 1 and Genesis chapter 2. So what do we learn about God in the creation story? First, we learn from a biblical worldview that God is the creator of everything.

We see that God is outside of time and space. We see that God always was and always will be. He is the thing that has always existed. So when you get in debates with people that believe in young earth, old earth, and those that are not believers, and those that are believers, we all have to answer the question, what always was? And we would say God, and they would say stuff. Stuff always existed. Biblical view, God always existed.

He is triune in nature. We don't necessarily get the triune part, but there's a multifaceted nature in God in Genesis 1. We certainly see that He is powerful if in one sentence it says, oh, by the way, He created all the stars, right? He has power beyond our comprehension or understanding. We know that reading Genesis chapter 1, that He intentionally doesn't give us all the answers to our questions. He doesn't give us all the answers to our questions. We see that He wants a relationship with us and He goes through great trouble to do so.

This is just the beginning. As you continue in Scripture, these attributes and truths will continue to be fleshed out. And the beautiful thing as you continue to read through Scripture, you will learn new attributes and truths about God, and then you can come back to Genesis, and you will attribute those attributes and things about God, and you see those in the creation story. And so it goes back and forth. Last question for this morning. What do we learn about ourselves in the creation story?

We learn that we are the point of the story. We are the crown of creation. We are special, set apart from all creation, and we were created for a purpose. God told us to subdue the earth and everything in it. We are loved, we have a choice, we have freedom. We see not from Genesis 1, but in Genesis 2, that you and I were made from the dust of the earth by our Creator who breathed life into us.

He breathes His life into us. And this is a worldview. If you believe what the Bible says about creation, God and you and the whole story, it changes everything, or at least it should. Of course, you are going to view the world differently if you believe this creation account as opposed to the Big Bang and evolution and we're all here by chance. That worldview is going to totally change what you do with your life.

And so you have two possibilities. The biblical account is true, or the other possibility is we are all here by random chance, we live our lives and then we die. Where does the evidence lead you? Those are the choices that you have.

I encourage you to know the story of Scripture, to read through it, to understand it, so that you know what you are accepting or rejecting, not just in a part, but in a whole, because it truly is a beautiful story of a God who loves you, cares about you, created you with purpose, and then placed you here with a job and a responsibility. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word.

Thank You for what it teaches us about You, about Your character, about who You are. I thank You that You did give us the freedom of choice, that a relationship with You is something that You desire. It was the purpose for all of creation. Everything we see was created so that we could have a relationship with You, and yet You don't force that upon us. You allow us to make the choice.

And Father, for those of us that have made that decision to have a relationship with You, may You continue to take us on the greatest journey ever. It's going to have ups and downs, twists and turns. We still live in a fallen world. We'll talk about that next week. There are still consequences for our decisions, but we thank You for Your grace and Your mercy and Your love. Lord, for those that have not made that decision and instead have chosen a different worldview that maybe we're here by chance, we're here by accident, that the Bible is made up, it's not true.

Lord, I pray that they would wrestle with the difficult questions for which there are no good answers outside of Your Word, and they would come to know You in a personal way. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.