

Through the Bible at 30,000 Feet
Genesis | *The Gospel Begins*
September 5, 2021 @ North Center
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“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (**Genesis 1:1**).

Illustration: Joseph and the Amazing Techno-colored Dream Coat

- I learned that there is a lot of work that goes into producing a musical:
 - *Writing the script*
 - *Creating the set*
 - *Casting the characters*
 - *Setting the stage*

In one sense, this is what is happening in the book of Genesis: God is setting the stage for the *musical* of the universe.

- He is building **the set**: *earth, sky, creatures, humans...*
- He is casting **the characters**: *Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob...*
- He is setting up **the storyline**: *which is the story of God’s relationship with His chosen people.*

This book that we’re about to see is where God sets the stage for the rest of the Bible.

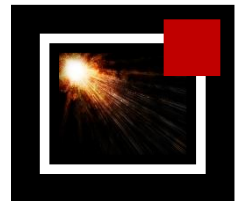
So, lets climb into our exegetical airplane and fly over the story of Genesis together this morning! From 30,000 feet up, here’s what the story of Genesis looks like:

PRAY

A. Creation | The very first thing we see (in chapters 1–2) is God creating a universe!

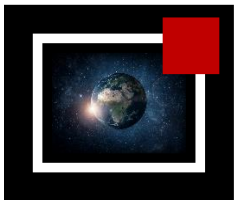
- At one moment, the world is dark, formless, empty...
 - and then suddenly God speaks, and **light pierces** the darkness →

Then God said, “Let there be light”;
And there was light.
~ **Genesis 1:3**



- ← ○ **Then** He creates bodies of water (6–7) & fills them with sea creatures (20–22)
- He creates the sky (7–8) & fills it with flying creatures (20–22)
- He creates dry land full of plants (9–12) & then fills it with land animals (24–25)
- And then He creates human beings...

26. Then God said,
“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;
Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air,



And over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27. So God created man in His own image;

In the image of God He created him;

Male and female he created them.

~ Genesis 1:26–27

Sometimes I try to image what it would be like for this first man & woman...

- To look out across the stars in the night sky for the first time...
- To see the sunrise for the first time.....
- To hear the sound of birds singing for the first time...
- To smell flowers for the first time...
- To look into the eyes of another human and know that you were made for each other...

And then God gives these first two humans a mission...

28. The God blessed them, and God said to them,

“Be fruitful and multiply;

Fill the earth and subdue it...”

~ Genesis 1:28

This is really important...

Q. Why does God tell Adam & Eve to fill the earth with people?

A. Because people bear the image of God.

In other words, Adam & Eve are given a mission to cover the earth with the image of God.

Do you remember that verse in Isaiah where God says that we were made “*for His glory*” (*Isaiah 43:7*)? That’s the same idea: *to be made in His image means to be made for His glory*. God wants His image and His glory to cover the entire world. **THAT** is the mission that God gives to the first two human.

And as we continue to read through the story of the Bible, we’ll see that that mission never changes.

B. Fall | However, something catastrophic happens in *ch 3*: God’s people rebel against Him.

Satan enters the story (*3:1*) and convinces Adam & Eve to turn their back on God by doing the only possible thing they could to disobey Him (*3:1–6*).

- Through their disobedience, sin enters the storyline, and nothing will ever be the same again. Their sin becomes a curse that covers the entire earth. Everything on this earth was corrupted as a result of sin...

Have you ever wondered why the earth is such a messed-up place?

- *War. Disease. Natural disasters.*
- *Broken relationships.*
- *Abuse. Abandonment.*

- *So many tears...* **It's because sin ruined everything.**
Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin,
And thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...
~ **Romans 5:12**

In a single moment, this world full of life and light becomes a world full of darkness. And the Apostle Paul describes this scene as the moment when death began to reign.

- And this darkness didn't just settle across the landscape of creation, but it settled deep in the human heart.

Romans 3:10 says,

There is none righteous, no, not one.
~ **Romans 3:10**

Why? Because of Genesis chapter 3.

- **C. Grace** | But one of the first things we see after Adam & Eve's fall is that God doesn't abandon His people or His mission because of our sin.

Instead of destroying Adam & Eve, God meets them where they are (3:8–9), He covers their shame (3:21), and then He makes them a promise. God speaks to Satan and says,

"I will put enmity between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."
~ **Genesis 3:15**

Was there **consequences** for their sin? *Absolutely. Massive consequences.*

But God also makes them a **promise**: one day the Seed of the woman will conquer sin and death forever! One day a hero will come and rescue God's people from this curse of sin.

So now for the rest of the book (*and the rest of the Bible*) we are looking for that hero.

D. Looking for the Hero

- Adam & Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden, and it's eventually destroyed.
- But then Eve has two sons, Cain & Abel, (4:1–2), and we're thinking, "*Yes! One of them must be the seed that God promised.*"
- Nope. Just a couple verses later, Cain ends up murdering his brother Abel (4:8) and then he walks away from God (4:16).
- So now Cain is gone and Abel is dead...which makes us go, "*Huh, what about the promised Seed?*"

- Well, Adam & Eve have another son named Seth, and he revives their hopes that God is going to make good on His promise after all.

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth,
 “For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.”
 ~ Genesis 4:25

- By the time we get to the end of *chapter 4*, we’re thinking that maybe Seth is the promised Seed.
- But then by the time we get to *chapter 6*, Seth is dead (5:8), and the entire world is more wicked than ever.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth,
 And that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
 ~ Genesis 6:5

- Eventually, the world gets so wicked (6:11–12) that God decides to wash it clean with a world-wide flood and then start over with Noah and his family (6:8–7:24).
- After the flood, God gives Noah the same mission that He gave to Adam and Eve:

So God blessed Noah and his son, and said to them,
 “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”
 ~ Genesis 9:1

- And then God makes an “everlasting covenant” with Noah (9:16), signs the covenant with a rainbow (9:13), and we’re thinking, “Alright! *NOAH* must be the promised seed!”
- But then, in the very next scene, Noah plants a vineyard, consumes too much wine, gets totally drunk (9:21), has a sketchy incident in his tent (9:21–24), and then he dies (9:29).
- So Noah’s not the hero we’ve been looking for. *Maybe one of his sons is?*
- Nope. By the time we get to *chapter 11*, Noah’s family has repopulated the earth (10:1–32), but instead of filling the world with worshippers, we see the world building a massive tower (which they were hoping to stretch all the way to heaven), and their motive was to make “a name for themselves” (11:3–4).
 - Noah’s family has populated the earth with a whole bunch of people who don’t care anything about the image of God or the glory of God.

So the Bible says that...

...the Lord confused the language of all the earth;
 And from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.
 ~ Genesis 11:9

By the time we get to *the end of chapter 11*, we have flown through approximately 2,000 years of human history, and from our perspective, God’s promise still hasn’t come true.

- Sin still covers the land like a plague, and death still reigns.
- And we begin to lose hope that that promise is ever going to come true.

This brings us to one of the most important chapters in the book of Genesis (*one of the most important chapters in the whole bible*). For the first time in the story, God calls one man (the son of a pagan) to be His chosen people.

Now the Lord had said to Abram
 “Get out of your country, from you family and from your father’s house,
 to a land that I will show you.
 I will make *you* a great nation. I will bless *you* and make *your* name great;
 And *you* shall be a blessing.
 I will bless those who bless you,
 And I will curse him who curses you;
 And in you *all the families* of the earth shall be blessed.”
 ~ *Genesis 12:1–3*

- Now this is exciting for all sorts of reasons:
 - Not only has Abraham been given the same trajectory as Adam & Noah: *a global mission...*
 - But God also makes a *promise* (a **covenant**) with Abraham that He would use him to bless all the families of the earth.
 - And then God keeps repeating His promise to Abraham...
 - He says things like...

“...I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven
 and as the sand which is on the seashore...”
 ~ *Genesis 22:17*

And then God even uses the language of “seed”. He tells Abraham,

In your **seed** all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...
 ~ *Genesis 22:18*

- So we’re thinking, “*Yes! It’s Abraham. He’s the hero of the story.*”
- But then as we look at his story (from **chapters 12–25**), our heart begins to sink because he turns out to be a sinner like everybody else. This guy makes one mistake after another, and then eventually his story ends the same way every other story ends: he dies (**25:8**).
- And the rest of Genesis follows the story of Abraham’s family...
- Abraham has a son named **Isaac**, but Isaac is making all the same mistakes his daddy did.

- Isaac has a son named **Jacob**, and Jacob's story is awesome to read¹ (**25:19–49:33**), but he turns out to be a messed-up sinner just like his father and his grandfather, and then he dies (**49:33**).
- Finally, the last 14 chapters of the book focus in on the story of Jacob's son, **Joseph** (**37–50**).
- If you don't know the story of **Joseph**:
 - He is Jacob's favorite son, which turns him into a bit of a brat,
 - and his brothers hate him.
 - Eventually, when Joseph was 17 years old, his brothers sell him as a slave to Egypt.
- While Joseph is in Egypt, he goes through a rollercoaster of experiences, but eventually (after spending two full years in prison) he winds up as the ruler of all of Egypt (second only to Pharaoh).
- And his first project is to help Egypt prepare for a massive famine that is about to devastate the land.
- Eventually, the famine gets so bad, that Joseph's brothers come to Egypt looking for food, and low and behold, Joseph is the ruler of Egypt. He hasn't seen his family for over 20 years, and this is what he says to them in the last chapter of Genesis:

But as for you, you meant evil against me;
 But God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day,
 To save many people alive.
 ~ **Genesis 50:20**

Joseph's story is awesome, but guess what happens in the very last verse of the book (**50:26**)? Joseph dies.

So as we close the cover on Genesis, and we are still left looking for the hero promised in **3:15**.

- All the candidates are dead, and the world is still covered in sin.

That's the story of Genesis. And we learn some really important truths about God and about people from this book of beginnings.

4. **What does this book teach us about people?**

Answer: *We're all sinners and desperately in need of a Savior.*

What are the people in Genesis in like?

- Well...they're rebellious. Blame-casters. Cold-blooded murders. Arrogant. Drunkards.
- We see husbands abandoning their family. Homosexuality. Incest. Rape. Prostitution. Hypocrisy.

¹ He dresses up like a hairy animal in order to trick his father; he's in love with a girl named Rachel, but accidentally marries her sister; he has a wrestling match with the Angel of the Lord and gets his name changed to Israel.

- We see lies, deceit, stealing, slavery, wrongful imprisonment, and a world full of wickedness.

The Apostle Paul sums up the human condition well when he says,

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
~ **Romans 3:23**

We were made for His glory: to display His glory; to spread His glory.
But how often we fall short of this...because of our union with Adam & Eve in their sin.

But...this book doesn't just teach us about people; it also teaches us about God!

5. What does this book teach us about God?

Answer: *He is sovereign, and He is good.*

If you feel like this world is out of control (or your life is out of control); it's not!
And if you feel like your life is just a mess of sin and suffering, Genesis teaches us that God is always working all things together for **good** for His people (**Romans 8:28**).

- At the beginning of the book, we see that God is sovereign over the world that He has made, and that it is “*very good*” (**1:31**).

Then God saw everything that He had made,
And indeed it was very *good*...
~ **Genesis 1:31**

- At the end of the book, we see that He is sovereign over sin & suffering in the world, and that He has been orchestrating all of it for something good.

But as for you, you meant evil against me,
God meant it for *good*...
~ **Genesis 50:20**

6. How does this book point to Jesus?

This whole book is pointing to Jesus

- The story begins with light piercing the darkness (**Gen. 1:3**)
 - i. And Jesus describes Himself as the light that has come into the darkness (**John 3:19**)
- The book ends with a son being betrayed by his brothers and sold for the price of a slave in order to save the world from certain death (**Gen. 45:7**)
 - i. Just as Jesus was betrayed by his own and sold for the price of a slave in order to save the world from everlasting death (**John 3:16**)

This whole book is pointing to Jesus, but there is one place in particular that is especially meaningful in preparing our hearts for communion together. It's the scene in *Genesis 22* when God calls Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac.

In the middle of the story, a father is called to sacrifice his only son. →

Take now your son, your only son Isaac whom you love,
And go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering
on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.
~ *Genesis 22:2*



By this time in his life, Abraham has learned to trust in the sovereign goodness of God, and so he sets out to do the hardest thing imaginable: sacrifice his only son.

- God leads him to a mountain in the land of Moriah (*22:1*)
- The wood for the altar is laid on Isaac's back (*22:6*)
- Then Isaac asks his dad where the sacrificial lamb is (*22:7*)

And Abraham said,
“My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb...”
~ *Genesis 22:8*

- Isaac is laid down upon the wood that he had carried up the hill (*22:9*)
- But then just as Abraham lifts his hand to kill his only son, God stops him (*22:11–12*)
- And then He provides a ram instead (*22:13*). A substitute
- And all of this happened “on the third day” (*22:4*)

Abraham told his son that God would provide the lamb, but that's not what happens that day. God provides a ram. This begs the question, “What about the lamb? Where is the Lamb?”

Answer: *the Lamb is coming.*

Approximately 2,000 years later... →

- Another Man would walk up a hill in the land of Moriah
- He would carry the wood for the sacrifice on His back
- Men would lay Him down on the wood as they prepared to put Him to death
- But this time there would be no substitute...because Jesus Himself was the substitute.
- And there, on that hill in the land of Moriah, the Lamb of God would take away the sin of the world...destroying the curse of sin & death forever.



Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
~ *John 1:29*

Behold! The one we have been waiting for since Genesis chapter 3.² **PRAY**

² Isaiah 25:9; Matt. 11:3; John 1:45.