



Stepping into God's Story – Episode One

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BIG IDEA – God's Big Story.

scripture focus - **Genesis 1:1-5 NLT** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day."

The Bible is one book consisting of 66 books written by 40 authors, over a span of over 1500 years. **The Bible is not primarily an instruction manual**, although there are plenty of instructions to be learned, and the Bible is a great source of wisdom on how to live, but it's still not written just to improve the human condition. **The Bible is not just filled with people's lives as examples to emulate**, but of course we see lots of people's stories, both positive and negative, and we can learn from them. **So why was the Bible written? Why is it still the top selling book, according to Guinness World Records as of 1995, the Bible is the best selling book of all time with an estimated 5 billion copies sold and distributed! In fact, [Bible sales are up 27 percent in North America!](#)**

Because it is the Story of God!

Because God created us for himself. God also created in every human a natural attraction to story.

Let's look at episode one of God's Story and look at three things:

- **Introducing God . . . we learn five truths.**
- **Introducing Us . . . we learn three facts.**
- **The Disaster We created . . . we understand two disappointments.**

God – Genesis 1:1-5, 2:4

Five truths about God

- **God is. God exists.**
- **He is the Creator,** He is, no one introducing themselves has to prove that they exist.
- **He is self-sufficient,** the LORD God made, two different words in Genesis 2:4 - 'ē lō hîm and Yhvh – God and LORD. He did not create us out of need for companionship.
- **He is gracious and loving.**
- **He is powerful and wise.**

Three facts about us.

- **We were created to reflect His image.** Image bearer of God, imago dei. He is the creator; your story begins with you being created.
- **We were created to rule over creation.** God put us to work. We should be the best environmentalists. God gave us rule to keep this a nice place to live.
- Instead of us ruling over creation, creation ruled over us.
- **We were created to relate to others.** In the beginning there was NO SHAME.

The mess we created

- **Instead of reflecting His image, we rebelled.**
- **Instead of us ruling over creation, creation ruled over us.**
- **Protoevangelion: the first announcement of the gospel is in Genesis 3:15,** “And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” <https://bible.com/bible/116/gen.3.15.NLT>
- **Genesis 3:15 presents the gospel from the very beginning of our existence. Jesus is foretold in the first episode of God's story!**
- **God pursued and covered them.** The first innocent animal sacrifice would be performed by God himself.

Stepping into God's story is understanding these three critical points of what followers of Jesus believe. And, knowing God's story makes it a little easier to explain it to others who may ask, “so what do you believe?”

- Who is God?
- Who are we as human beings?
- And why is everything such a mess in this world?

As a result of our rebellion...

PEACE WITH GOD WAS BROKEN.

PEACE WITH EACH OTHER WAS BROKEN.

PEACE WITHIN OURSELVES WAS BROKEN.

PEACE WITH OUR WORLD WAS BROKEN.

This is just the basics of being a disciple. One who knows these three things:

**Who is God,
Who we are, and
Why is everything a mess.**

You and I have answers for those who ask about our faith.

Next week we'll get to see how God began repairing our brokenness through a contract He made with a specific family and with us.

A couple things to help you personally grow in your faith and walk with Jesus.

- 1. There is a personal reading plan in DIG Deeper notes, the priority is our personal time with God, spending time reading or listening to His word and talking with Him DAILY.**
- 2. Just as importantly, is doing life together. I have found that I can't nor shouldn't do life alone. The healthy and helpful way is also to "Do life together," listening and learning in a small group environment. This is how we can be a disciple and make a disciple – so stay tuned because we are starting up new Life Groups soon.**

NOTES

Scriptures

Genesis 1:1-5 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/gen.1.1-4.NLT>

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day."

Genesis 2:4 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/gen.2.4.NLT>

"This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth. When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,"

Genesis 3:1-7 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/gen.3.1-7.NLT>

"The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or

even touch it; if you do, you will die.'” “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.” The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.”

Psalm 96

Psalm 139

Isaiah 55:6–11 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/isa.55.6-11.NLT>

“Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near. Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously. “My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. “The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.”

Personal Study

(Day 1) Read Genesis 1:1–2:3.

Q: Why is it important for your understanding of God and His story to start “in the beginning” with creation?

Q: What verse, phrase, or truth stood out in Genesis 1:1–2:3?

(Day 2) Read Psalm 96.

Q: How does this psalm describe God in relation to the world?

Q: What verse, phrase, or truth stood out in Psalm 96?

(Day 3) Read Psalm 139.

Q: How does this psalm deepen your understanding of a personal relationship with the Creator?

Q: What verse, phrase, or truth stood out in Psalm 139?

(Day 4) Read Isaiah 55:6–11.

Q: What does God reveal about Himself in this prophetic text? Do you see it as a warning, invitation, or promise? Explain your answer.

Q: What verse, phrase, or truth stood out in Isaiah 55:6–11?

Group Questions

Groups will have varying amounts of time for discussion. Use any of the following questions that fit naturally into your conversation, adding comments or questions of your own. Allow plenty of time for processing the “takeaway” each week.

1. What are some of your favorite stories? Why are those meaningful to you? How would you describe an epic story?
2. How does viewing Scripture as one epic story shape the way you read the smaller stories throughout the Bible? Did the timeline help you see the overarching story? If so, what was helpful?
3. What happens if we only view the Bible as anything other than the story of God? (For example: individual stories, rules, history, poetry, prophecy, etc.)

Read the following scripture aloud.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

4. Genesis means beginning. Why is it important for us to understand the beginning of the Bible?
5. Which of the five statements about God is most difficult to understand? Which is the most encouraging? How does the way God is introduced in Genesis shape the way we should relate to Him?

Read the following scripture aloud.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

So God created man in his own image;
he created him in the image of God;
he created them male and female.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth."

Genesis 1:26–28

6. Why is it so important for us to understand we are made in God's image?
7. How does Satan tempt us in a similar way that he did Adam and Eve?
8. How do we still allow creation to rule over us?
9. Explain the glimmer of hope found at the end of Genesis 3. How did God show grace to Adam and Eve? In what ways has God shown grace to you?
10. How did the suggested scriptures orient you for our study of the story of God? Which scripture was especially meaningful? Why?

The creation narrative in Genesis 1:1–2:3

Every nation praising the Creator in Psalm 96

The personal nature of a relationship with God in Psalm 139

God's declaration of His ways and words in Isaiah 55:6–11

Questions, hopes, or prayers noted in your personal reflection

11. How does today's takeaway affect your view of God, Scripture, and yourself—even when you make a mess of your life?
From the beginning of Scripture, we see glimmers of hope pointing us to Jesus.

8-week overview

CREATION AND FALL

The self-sufficient and eternal God lovingly creates a perfect creation with humanity as His crowning work. Falling for Satan's temptation, humanity rebels and sin enters the world bringing death, pain, and strife. Instead of giving up on

humanity, God promises that from the womb of a woman will come the One who will crush Satan's head.

PROMISE AND A PEOPLE

God pursues Abraham, a man from an idol-worshiping family who has no children with his wife and promises that he will be the father of many nations. God promises land to Abraham and assures him that all nations will be blessed through his offspring. God continues to be faithful to this family. He restates the promise to Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob (who is renamed Israel). A famine strikes the promised land, so Jacob and the family move to Egypt where one of Jacob's sons, Joseph, is already there to provide for the family.

RESCUE AND LAW

The family becomes a nation while living in Egypt, but also becomes enslaved to the Egyptians. God raises up Moses to lead His people to freedom. During a tenth plague, God strikes dead the firstborn son of everyone living in Egypt, but "passes over" Israel as they put the blood of lambs on their doorposts. After miraculously rescuing His people, God gives His people the law. He also instructs them to build a tabernacle and offer sacrifices so He may dwell among them.

LAND AND KINGDOM

God brings His people, through their leader Joshua, into the promised land. When God's people worship the gods of the nation's surrounding them, God disciplines them through the attacks of surrounding nations. God raises up judges (or rulers) to rescue His people and call them to repentance. They beg for a king to be like other nations, and God gives them Saul. God raises up a new king, David, and promises that his kingdom will never end. The family that turned into a nation is now a kingdom. David's son, Solomon, builds a temple to replace the tabernacle.

EXILE AND RETURN

Solomon takes foreign wives and allows their foreign gods to clutter the land. His son continues the line of rulers, and the kingdom is divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). Prophets confront the people, but they persist in their idolatry. The Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria and the Southern Kingdom is carried away into Babylonian captivity. When they are freed, they return to a nation and kingdom far less glorious than before and are still unable to keep their promises.

JESUS

A descendant of Adam, Abraham, and David, Jesus is the One who crushes the head of Satan, will bless all nations, and reigns forever. Jesus, the God-Man, enters humanity through the womb of a virgin, perfectly obeys the law that we could never obey, dies as the once-and-for-all sacrifice for our sins, and rises

from the dead, conquering Satan, sin, and death. He inaugurates His eternal kingdom and secures salvation for His people.

A NEW PEOPLE

After His ascension to heaven, Jesus sends the promised Holy Spirit, and His disciples turn the world upside down preaching the good news of Jesus. In the midst of intense persecution, the gospel spreads, and Gentiles and Jews form a new people. Churches are planted in cities, and apostles write letters encouraging and instructing the people in the grace of Christ and their response to His grace.

A BETTER BEGINNING

A time is coming where God's people—people from every tribe, tongue, and nation who have been rescued by Christ—will enjoy Him and His rule forever in perfect harmony. Satan will be crushed, the effects of sin will be reversed, and all things will be made new.