

Creation and fall

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[0:00] So this evening, we're going to do a Bible overview together, or begin one. We've got five weeks in which we'll do it. So I think it's the next three Sundays, then we'll have a couple of weeks break, and then two more Sundays where we'll do it.

And we're going to get a big picture, an idea of the big picture of the Bible from creation to new creation, from Genesis to Revelation.

And as I was thinking about it this week, I was thinking it's a bit like a puzzle. You pick up a puzzle piece when you're doing a puzzle, and you think, where does that fit in to the big picture?

And then you find its place, and it's really satisfying. And so as we look at the Bible overview, it will help us to think about how the pieces of the Bible fit together as one whole story.

So hopefully it's going to be really helpful for us. I want to begin by setting you a bit of a challenge in groups. Some of you have already spotted the question up there.

[1:09] How would you sum up the story of the Bible in about a minute? So have a chat in groups. See what you think.

I'll write some of our ideas on the board. This is week one. We'll revisit this in week five and kind of see where we get to by the end of our five weeks together.

So go for it. A few minutes in groups. Just wonder where people got to.

I won't hear from everybody, but anyone want to tell us what they heard that they thought was good in their group? Go for it. Julia explained it in four seconds.

Four seconds. Great. You smashed it. And what did she say? You'd like to say it yourself. And birth, rebirth, and glory.

[2:09] Birth. Rebirth. Oh. And glory. Oh, I like that.

So birth, creation. Ah? No? No? Oh, someone's saying no. Sorry. We've been a little bit to say. Birth. Creation. Fall. Redemption. Redemption. God. Nice. Nice. And we also said God revealing himself and his plan for the world.

God revealing himself and his plan for the world. Cool. Thank you, this group. Any other groups want to feed back to us? Well, we have one here.

We did. Story of God's love for mankind. Story of God's love for mankind. There we go. Nice. Nice. It's love for mankind.

[3:14] Any more that people would like to share with us? One way of thinking of it is in terms of covenants. Covenants.

The broken covenant with Adam. Yeah. The covenant with Abraham. The broken covenant. Well, the covenant with Moses. And there's a broken covenant with Moses.

Yeah. The curse of Alakai. And then the coming of the promised king. The Davidic covenant. Davidic covenant, Jerome said as well.

Yeah, yeah, nice. I wasn't going to write that quick enough. Thank you. That's really good. We're going to look at covenants next week. One more, maybe?

Rosemary? Jesus. Great. Excellent.

[4:09] Thank you. That's week one. Let's see where we get to in week five. I think we're doing well. Well done. Cool. We're not going to read Genesis 1 and 2.

We'll read Genesis 3 in a bit later, but it would be helpful to have Genesis 1 and 2 open in front of you if you've got a Bible. If not, there's some at the back.

Oh, I forgot to tell you my one. Yeah.

I told a summary. What did I get? God made it. We broke it. Jesus fixes it. But then I have had a week to think about that. God made it.

We broke it. And Jesus... My handwriting is awful. Jesus fixes it.

[5:13] There we go. Excellent. So... Genesis 1. And we begin...

So we begin the story, as all good stories begin, right at the beginning. There's a blank canvas and there's an artist.

The artist has already existed. In fact, the artist has always existed. In the canvas, it's a vast, empty space. And the artwork is a 3D creation full of color, full of light, and full of life.

It's the story of the artist who's unlike any other artist. He does not paint or draw. He does not sculpt or model. No, he speaks.

He speaks and it comes to be. It's the story of the creation of the world. The story of the creator who speaks and life comes to be.

[6:20] The story of the creator and his creation dwelling in perfect harmony with one another. A world created good.

Not just good, but very good. Full of color, full of light, full of light. Full of animals, sea creatures, birds in the sky.

The most beautiful sight. The good world that the creator has created. And the creator, he is God. He is God, Father, Son, and Spirit. One loving union of three persons. One, a loving union of three persons in one.

Who never had a beginning, a middle, or end. And he shows forth his life-giving creativity as he creates a home for us.

[7:20] this world. This world that we call home today. And as for us human beings, we were created so special, set apart from all the other creatures with the pinnacle of this creation.

So much so that we read this in Genesis chapter 1, verse 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. So God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created male and female. He created them.

We're created with a special place, the pinnacle of the creation of the world. created to image God. God who dwells in that perfect union of three persons in one. Father, Son, and Spirit. And so likewise, for his creation of human beings, it's not good for the man that he created to be alone.

[9:02] And so in chapter 2, and verse 18, the Lord God said this, it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.

God the creator, he rules over his creation. He commands human beings to be ruling over his world by his authority.

We see that in chapter 1 and verse 28. So God blessed them and said, be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it.

Rule. He gives them the command to rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, over every living creature that moves on the ground.

And as they rule, they're commanded to do a couple of other things. It says in that verse that I just read, verse 28, it says he wants them to subdue the earth.

[10:12] This was a really exciting thing to cultivate the world, to beautify the world. The world wasn't a finished work. God made it for them to then grow plants, to find coffee, to work out how to make instruments, to work out how glass is produced using sand, to make chocolate, to find gold.

We're to be at work to beautify the very good world that God had made. And he says to them to fill the earth as well, to increase in number with more people who reflect the image of God.

And as I mentioned, we're created to rule. Humans are to rule the earth that God has made under his authority. I read this quote really helpful quote.

The world that God handed over to Adam was not a dusty museum that needed to be preserved exactly as it was for millennia to come. No, it was an art gallery full of beautiful white canvases waiting to be made even more beautiful by the hundreds of mini-artists created in the great artist's imagery.

I think it's significant for us to just pause for a moment and think about the significance of human beings. We see it right at the start of the Bible's story.

[11:56] God creates us to have great dignity and worth. We're created in his image. In the image of God, he creates us.

Created to fill the earth, created to take care of it. whether we're rich, poor, male, female, British, European, or from somewhere else in the world, God the Creator says we're valued as people made in his image.

And he defines who we are. Our world tries to define who they are by themselves, but God says male and female, he creates them.

in the image of God, he creates them. Right at the beginning, we see very clearly who we are, who we're made to be, and for what purpose we're here.

Human beings and God, they have the most wonderful relationship too. God dwelt with them in the garden that he planted for them.

[13:08] In chapter 2 and verse 8, we read this, now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, and there he put the man he had formed.

That's not the verse I was particularly looking for. There's a verse about God walking in the cool of the day. Maybe it's in chapter 3. It's chapter 3, verse 8.

The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. That seemed to be a normal thing. The relationship that humans and God had was perfect.

It was good. and he blessed them with an abundance of life, an abundance of food to eat.

Verse chapter 2 and verse 15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work and to take care of it.

[14:15] And the Lord commanded the man, you are free to eat of any tree in the garden. There was an abundance of food and he was free to eat of any of it except for you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for when you eat of it you will certainly die.

An abundance of food. Eat from all of it but not that one tree. Human beings and God, they have the most wonderful relationship with God in this garden in this garden of abundant life and God spoke to them and gave them the highest place in his creation.

But they weren't simply robots created to do whatever the creator wanted. He gave them choices.

You're free to eat of any of the trees that you like but not that one tree.

There was also the choice to not obey the creator. I really like asking people would you rather questions.

Would you rather I've got a book that I failed to bring full of would you rather questions. It's great fun. so I've got to think of some off the top of my head.

[15:43] Would you rather eat snails or slugs or would you rather live on a mountain or in a desert?

I don't know. I've just made those up but would you rather questions they force you to choose something in a hypothetical situation. What would you choose? I think it really helps to get to know people.

I love it. And God he gives his people would you rather would you rather obey me and live or not obey me disobey me and die.

He gives them the choice freedom to choose not just robots programmed to do whatever he wants. This is Vincent Van Gogh's famous painting of sunflowers. It's in the National Gallery in London but just recently two climate change activists were arrested for going up to it and throwing tomato soup at it.

[16:59] The artwork was spoiled or so it seems. Thankfully there's a glass layer over the top of it but it was still spoiled. It had to be cleaned up.

People couldn't enjoy seeing this great piece of art. But imagine being responsible for defacing the most famous piece of art ever.

The most beautiful piece of art. The world that God made. God the creator has made a beautiful piece of art.

A beautiful piece of 3D magnificent art. But tragically this world made very good has been spoiled.

The masterpiece of his creation has been spoiled. So we're going to turn to Genesis 3. We're going to read it. I wonder if there's one or two people who would like to read for us.

[18:02] It would be great to read the whole chapter. I might give you a microphone to read so we can all hear. Oh, won't it?

Okay. Oh, okay. I won't give a microphone. You'll have to speak loudly. Would anyone like to read Genesis chapter 3 for us?

Yeah? Thank you. If you're happy to. Thank you. We're going to turn in groups again to get you guys to do a bit of work.

Genesis 3, 1 to 7, three questions. What do you notice the serpent says to Eve? How does the serpent use God's word in that? And what is Adam and Eve's response?

Spend three or four minutes in groups and see how far we get. It's great to hear discussions going on.

[19:15] But let's draw back together. What did people notice? Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Oh, you can't hear. Putting doubt on God's word. Trying to repeat back what Julia said. Yeah.

Yeah. Taking God's word, but twisting it, putting doubt in their minds. Yes. Rosemary. He added to what God said.

Yeah. Yes. Yes. It does say that. You must not touch it.

[20:21] Yeah. Not just eat. Yeah. Yeah. It's a woman who said to the snake.

Yes. Yeah. After the serpent had put doubt into her mind. Any other things? Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. And yeah, I think hopefully we saw God God was very good. He gave them an abundance of food to eat. They could eat of any of the trees except the one.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Make God to be a liar saying you won't do, but he said they would.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Any last comments? Yes. The thing that struck me is that actually everything that the serpent says is in a sense true.

[21:24] And they didn't immediately die. They did come to know good and evil and yet all those half truths are constructed into a great lie.

Yeah. Yeah. As I was chatting with a group over there I was thinking it fits quite well this morning.

Sin enslaving us and promising so much and we think we're free but actually we're not unless we're in that right relationship with God as God created things to be.

Yeah. Because of the full yeah. letting her get on with it.

Letting her get on with it. Falling. Yeah. And then blames the woman and then. Yeah.

Yeah. they all blame each other and yes. Does that sound familiar?

[22:37] Yes. Yes. Excellent. One thing I noticed was the emphasis on God's word. Did God really say? Did God really say you must not eat?

Did God really say you will surely die? God. Yeah. We saw in Genesis or we would see in Genesis 1 and 2 when we read it God speaks and life comes.

The serpent speaks and is trying to undo all that. this shows also the importance of knowing God's word for us as individuals.

Yeah. Yeah. The importance of knowing God's word. Why would you say that? Why? Why would you say it's important? Protects us against temptation?

Because you can't rely on other people to tell us what God's word says. We've got to know it.

[23:44] We will wait ourselves as well. But we are willing to be taught as well. We need to weigh it up. We need to judge it as well.

Yeah. Absolutely. God's word. Yeah. Thank you, Osama. He does.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Twisting. God's word. Excellent. Great.

Appears to be, but he's not. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you, everyone. Got the did God really say bits on there.

There we go. So, listening to Satan's word means creation is spoil as Adam and Eve fall into the temptation.

[24:50] And it's like that spoil painting idea. Underneath the tomato soup is the good work of God's word, God's But it's overshadowed.

It's overshadowed by sin that comes into the world. The world is beautiful. It's been made very good. But sin is there too.

It's been spoiled. Spoiled to decay. Death entered the world. The world that God filled with life and light and color was now filled with darkness and death as his own creation turns his back on him in their dark rebellion.

Just as God commanded them not to eat from the tree, so rebellion of God's rule results in consequences for God's people.

And it would be helpful to just have a look at those consequences. The first is shame in verse 7. They felt shame. They realized they were naked and so they quickly scrambled around and found some fig leaves to cover them.

[26:07] It was all a bit quick and they were shamed. They realized their nakedness before God. And then we see cursing.

There's the cursed serpent. We'll come back to that briefly later. There's curse upon childbirth. in verse 16. It's now painful to do the work of filling the earth that God gave them to do.

And there's a curse upon relationships. There's the desire and rule that it mentions in verse 16.

It's negative connotations. Relationships in the order God created them. Yes, but there's this desire to turn that rule upside down.

It's not a happy thing. And only in the next chapter do we see brothers murdering. Cain murders his brother Abel.

[27:15] We see that strain on human relationships and the first murder happens one chapter later. And we see the curse upon the ground.

God gave work for Adam and Eve to do in the garden of subduing the earth, cultivating it, beautifying it. It was a good thing.

But now the ground was going to be cursed. The good gift of work was going to become painful and tiring and will sweat. It's going to become painful to get your food.

A curse upon the ground. And finally in verse 19, death enters the world. You will return to the dust of the earth.

From it you were taken and you will return to it. God's world is broken by humanity's rebellion. But humans still have the responsibilities to increase in number to beautify the earth.

[28:23] But the task is burdensome, painful, and tiring. Something good is spoiled by the disobedience. As they've rejected God as the ultimate ruler of his creation.

And no longer are human beings able to relate to God as they were. Because the image of God has been spoiled. They cover themselves.

They're ashamed. And being in the presence of God was no longer something that could happen. in verse 23, God banishes them from the garden of Eden, drives them out.

No longer could God be walking in the garden in the cool of the day with them. That relationship was spoiled. God's grace in the midst of this judgment, I think, in two ways.

First of all, in verse 15, we have promises of a serpent crusher. Verse 15, and I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers.

[29:48] He will crush your head and you will strike his heel. Someone who is going to come and crush evil. And that's a thread which goes through the story of the Bible.

And the other one that I was thinking of was in verse 21. They tried scrambling around for those fig leaves to cover their shame, but God makes clothes for them.

the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. It covers their shame through the skin of an animal.

It was the first sacrifice to cover over sin. They'd rebelled against him. They were being punished, but God was still merciful. But they were banished from God's presence, from the eternal life that the tree of life in the garden provided.

And so the rest of the Bible leaves us asking this question. How can humanity dwell with God forever again?

[31:03] How can humanity dwell with God forever again? We'll keep asking that question each week. How can this relationship be restored?

As we read through the Bible, we see a number of people who could be the serpent crusher, who has the potential. We read about them, Moses, Abraham, David, good people, but they sin. We see that they're not perfect. They're not able to deal with the evil in the world. We won't really get there, but there's Noah in chapters to come.

God used him and saved him and his family in the ark. It could be a good candidate for the serpent crusher, but we see an account of him lying naked and drunk on the floor.

But we arrive into the New Testament. We're going to get to Jesus each week. And we read these words. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

[32:18] For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. We've seen in chapter 3 of Genesis Adam and Eve and their rebellion against God.

Humans were the pinnacle of his creation. what was God going to do? He was going to send his only son. I was thinking of a few years ago, my laptop is quite a precious item for me.

It's an important item too. The screen broke. I couldn't use it. I couldn't do what I wanted on it. I couldn't play games. I couldn't do coursework. This was a special possession.

How far would I go to fix it? How much money was I going to pay? What length would I go to? God, for the pinnacle of his creation, sends his one and only son so that in Christ all can be made alive. Naturally, each one of us is born into sin, into Adam. But we can be made alive in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[33:37] And the big story of the Bible, it leads us to him. How can humanity dwell with God forever again?

It's through the Lord Jesus. And we're going to see more and more of how that works through the Bible together. I think we're going to stop there. I've got a slide saying questions.

We won't have questions now, but if you do have questions, please contact me, ask me after, email me, and I'd be happy to answer your questions.

But it'd be good to pray together. I was thinking, looking at the time, let's stay as one group. What are things, situations, people that we can be praying for at the moment?