

Are Adam and Eve Real?

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Date: 12 March 2017

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- [0 : 0 0] Father, you know how often we censor ourselves, that we just don't speak because we are afraid of being laughed at.
- We're afraid of being thought not smart. We're afraid, Father, of just being lower in people's opinion. And Father, you see into our hearts, and you know how powerful that is.
- Some of us very powerful, some of us maybe not very powerful, but you see us. Father, do a work in our lives. Help us, Father, to have a confidence and a security that is based on the gospel, on what Jesus did for us on the cross. Help us to have an unashamedness about your word.
- And this we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen. Please be seated. So there's an elephant in the room. Ken read very well that famous story of God creating Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.
- And the elephant in the room is whether or not the story is true, or at least in what sense the story is true. A fair number of people are relatively comfortable with the idea that the story is, well, just a story.
- [1 : 2 2] It's like a myth. It's like a story that gives us some insight about how things work. But the really big problem with a story that just gives us insight is that we all know that in life often we have to choose between stories whenever it fits.
- I mean, you know, there's two sayings. It's not a story, but you could make a story to illustrate either of them. You know, we all are familiar with the story, too many cooks, or the saying, too many cooks spoil the broth.
- On the other hand, we say, many hands make light work. You know, so when is it that you have too many people, and when is it that you need more people, right? And we sort of just choose. And so, you know, if the Adam and Eve story is just a story, but, you know, we know it's not true.
- It's not, like, real. It's not true like it's true that Sir John A. Macdonald was the first prime minister of Canada. Then, you know, it's just very comfortable and very easy in our culture when we have different things come our ways that we can just say, well, okay, for this instance, we'll use this story, and in this instance, we'll do, you know, another story.
- And it's also very, very easy, especially in our day and age, to say, you know, this story probably came from people. I mean, I had one. I know somebody who thinks it comes from the Stone Age, but it comes from the Bronze Age.
- [2 : 3 5] It probably has roots way, way, way earlier than the Bronze Age. And so it's very easy just to dismiss it. So there's a bit of an elephant in the room. Here I am up front on my hind legs, and I'm going to talk about this story.
- And I am very, very conscious of what people are taught. I was taught in high school and what's taught in university. And so is the story of Adam and Eve true?
- Are they real? I'm going to tell you that they're real. And by that, I mean they're just as real as I am real or any one of you are real.

That I think that's what the story teaches. Now, some of you are having a yikes moment. Some of you are having a hallelujah moment that there's actually somebody willing to stand up in Ottawa in 2017 in the best educated city in the country and say something like that.

And a lot of you are having an oh no, oh my moment when I say that I believe that the story of Adam and Eve is true. That it's obviously written with some artistic and other symbolic types of aspects being highlighted in the story.

[3 : 49] But I believe that Adam and Eve are real and true, just as real and true as you and I are. So some of you, as I said, are going, yikes. And so first we need to try to unpack this big claim, which I think is just what the Bible's teaching here.

So a couple of weeks ago, or a month or two ago, I had a conversation in a coffee shop. And in it, there's a fellow who came to me.

And he's a guy who's talked to me quite a few times. And he gave me this one piece of paper to read. And he said, George, you've got to read this. This will make you lose your faith.

It'll blow your mind. It'll keep you awake at night. But it's all for your good. So it was a copy of a review in the New York Times review of books.

And it was by some scientist type. The review was also written by a scientist of some scientific book. And the book claims to have shown or proved how religious belief and religious thought can all be explained by the process of evolution.

[4 : 54] That's basically how I'd summarize the whole page. In fact, when I said this to my friend, he said, yeah, no, you've summarized it exactly right. This scientist has shown how evolution proves that religious thought and religious beliefs are just a product of the evolutionary process.

And so I gave the paper back to him. And I said to him, my friend, that I have an easy way of dealing with this question. But this should keep you awake at night.

And this completely and utterly rocks your worldview and destroys your thinking. And he looked at me and said, no, it doesn't. And I said, here's the thing. You can't have it two ways.

You can't have an evolutionary theory that only accounts for religious thoughts. If you have an evolutionary theory that forms and creates how we think, it does it for all thinking.

Now, I have a very, very simple and powerful explanation as to why that's completely wrong. But you, you're an atheist. You believe in evolution. This article is telling you that your thoughts, you have no freedom in them.

[6 : 09] You haven't really thought them. They're completely and utterly controlled. And he looked at me and changed the topic. Which is, by the way, often what he does when he thinks he's got me.

And I, by God's grace, have some type of a reply. So, you see, here's the thing. It's a very, very important thing when we think. And it's very easy because, you know, in our culture, people like me are in an unbelievable minority.

And there's a huge cultural consensus. And when there's a huge cultural consensus, it means that often in a huge cultural consensus, people don't have to think about what they're saying.

Because, well, I mean, why do I have to think about what I'm saying? Is my high school science teachers think this? The university professors think this? The CBC thinks it? The Supreme Court of Canada thinks it? You know, people who run museums and all they think it.

So, you know, I don't really have to think about what's being said. But the fact of the matter is, is that ideas always, and scientific knowledge, always has to be dealt with, like, by everybody. It's not just that these claims have to only be dealt with by Christians.

[7 : 17] You see, in effect, what happens is that there's a little bit of a sleight of hand or a distraction where a scientific, this idea that's taught in a high school and university about evolution, that it's just sort of stated.

But there's never any type of discussion as to whether there's, in fact, very, very, very profound problems or very, very troubling and counterintuitive and maybe foolish ideas at the heart of it.

It's just sort of maintained in the culture. But everything has to be dealt with by... It's not just that Christians have to deal with something. Everybody has to deal with particular things that arise in terms of knowledge.

So here's the thing. I've said this to you before, but if you could put up... Actually, the first one I didn't put up. Could you put up the first one, Andrew? This is the shocking thing that's proved that I am an ignorant hick and don't know anything.

Adam and Eve were real people, and their story told in Genesis is important to believe. Trust and think upon. That's sort of my big claim. I think that's what the Bible's teaching, that Adam and Eve were real people, and their story told in Genesis is important to believe, trust, and think upon.

[8 : 27] If you could put up the next thing, Andrew. So here's the thing. And, you know, I've said this a couple of times. In fact, you're probably getting a bit bored of it, but it's a really, really, really, really big thing to get our minds around.

And once we start to get our minds around this, it takes a whole pressure off of us. It allows us to have very different conversations and to start to read the Bible with greater confidence.

You see, there's a basic choice that is before us. And the choice is that matter, pure chance, and cause and effect accounts for life and the intricate, fine-tuned universe.

Or God designed and created life and the intricate, fine-tuned universe. That's the basic choice.

And, in fact, as I've tried to talk about over the last few, you know, the origin of the species was written 159 years ago. So what we call of is the theory of evolution. Now they call it neo-Darwinian because there's been some changes to it.

[9 : 30] But this is the fundamental insight that we just know so much more about the world and about the universe and about the chemical basis of life than was known 159 years ago.

And the more you know about the chemical basis of life, the things which have to be there, it's not as if life can be created and then the earth has to be spinning at the right speed, on the right axis, at the right distance from the sun, which has to be the right size for the distance.

If that isn't all right, then life can't happen. If the chemical basis that life has to emerge from, if that doesn't happen, then life can't emerge.

And that intricacy has to happen purely and utterly by chance. Natural selection can't touch it. It has to happen purely and utterly by chance. And it even gets harder.

And this is the thing which touched on my friend. I almost said his name by accident. But my friend who gave me this thing to rock his world. If you could put up the next version of this same choice, Andrew. Matter, pure chance and cause and effect.

[10 : 33] That, and that's what you're, behind whatever you're taught, they rarely come out and articulate it so clearly in high school and university. Sometimes they do. But then they'll articulate that and then they'll just move on without just pausing for a second about the momentous claim.

But matter, pure chance and cause and effect accounts for the existence of right and wrong. It has to account for human dignity, human worth, human freedom, meaning in life.

It has to account for the existence of love. It has to account for how our minds know. Or, God designing and creating all things accounts for right and wrong, for human dignity and human freedom and human worth, for love, for meaning, for beauty, for creativity, and how our minds know.

Like, you just look at that thing here for a second. Look at that first choice, which is what you are, in effect, taught and how it's basically taught. And see, people are so much better than their thinking. And people often will talk about evolution and then they'll just sort of, you know, like there's a place I pass, and I think it's called evolutionary physiotherapy.

And I think, oh, so it's a physiotherapy that encourages the strong to eat the weak. No, that's not their intent. They believe that it somehow makes, like it's progress, that it's some type of always getting better.

[12 : 02] Evolution doesn't mean that. It just means given a certain set of circumstances, something survives and something doesn't. Different circumstances later on might mean the other thing happens. It doesn't mean they're better.

It just means one happens to survive the circumstances. It has nothing to do with better. You add better, that's contradictory to the thought. But you just look at that first choice, that matter, pure chance and cause and effect.

If that causes everything and accounts for everything, how on earth can I actually love? And how can I trust that my mind actually knows something? That if everything that's going on in my mind is just purely a result of cause and effect and of chemicals and of processes of stimuli that affect the chemicals, like why should I even think that thinking is true?

Like there has to be something outside of cause and effect that's both in it but sort of outside of it that transcends it in some way for me to have freedom.

And if in fact there just is this cause and effect, you know, there really is fundamentally no difference in worth than my poop or me. And that's the big claim that's made.

[13 : 09] And it's hidden that there's this fundamental choice. And as I've said over and over and over again, nobody really believes the first choice, not when it comes to things that matter.

I'll tell a different version. This is the third week I've told a version of this. Just imagine for a second that there's a young man and he's decided he wants to ask Alice to marry him.

And he knows that Alice loves to go for a walk in the woods. Just, you know, a little bit, you know, short drive from where she lives. There's this beautiful walk she likes to go on.

And he knows that she loves this walk and she loves creativity and she loves nature and she loves crafts. So he thinks, you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to need some help, but I know there's this one spot and there's this nice sort of a bit of a slope.

And I think what I'm going to do is I'm going to get up really early one morning. I'm going to get Buddy to help me. And we're going to go and we're going to collect ground wood from the ground. And we're going to use the wood from the ground to spell Alice, will you marry me?

[14 : 19] And we'll even plant it, make it so that, you know, there's this beautiful little cluster of flowers in a couple of places. And I think we can just place it in such a way that the little group of flowers are like the periods on the eye.

Aww. And so I'm just going to go for, I'll get it all set up early in the morning. I'll go get Alice and then I'll say, you know, we'll arrange before that we're going to go for a walk and we'll walk hand in hand along the path and we'll come around the corner and she'll see Alice, will you marry me?

But, you know, he knows he needs a buddy to help him put it together and then stand to make sure that, you know, I don't know, a whole bunch of 12-year-olds don't come and scatter it or reword it to say something rude, you know? So he gets the buddy and the two of them get there and they sit it all up.

And then he said, the buddy agrees he's going to stay there to protect it while the young man goes to get Alice. And the young man, you know, his buddy's standing there and occasionally a group of women walk by and several of them say, my name's Alice, the answer's yes.

A couple of guys walk by and one of them says, my name's Alice, I say yes. And, you know, they all just laugh, have some fun. Anyway, he gets the text from his friend who's going to ask Alice to marry him that they're just, you know, they're only about a minute away, so they're two minutes away, so the friend, he goes, you know, off to, out of sight and the young man and Alice and they come walking along and Alice sees it and she says to her, to the young man, isn't that so weird?

[15 : 48] The branches must have fallen off the tree in that arrangement. Isn't that cool? Now, no young woman would say that. Nobody would say that.

Absolutely nobody believes that. And let me tell you, having wood put in the form of, that says, Alice, will you marry me? Just ask, there's people here who do biochemistry and ask them about DNA sequencing and the chemical basis of life and what would have to happen for the chemical basis of DNA to happen before there's life is unbelievably more complicated than having branches fall and say, Alice, will you marry me?

Like, of an incommensurable order of magnitude and that's just one of an incommensurable magnitude of things that this first thing, this first choice says has to happen purely as a result of chance and the way that after chance happens, cause and effect happens.

Like, nobody believes it. Sorry. We just don't, nobody believes that Alice, will you marry me? would happen by chance. Nobody. So, you know, when I say that Adam and Eve were real people and their story in Genesis is important to know, believe, trust, and think upon, gosh, I know that there's problems.

Some of you are going, yikes, George, you know how old the Atlantic Ocean is? You know what about fossils? You know about all the, you know, you know about all the fossil record and, I mean, George, gosh, good grief.

[17 : 31] Do you know how many problems are with your idea? You know, over the last couple of weeks I've tried to hammer one simple idea that what's happened is that Christians have gotten mistaken and dealing with all of these questions they've tried to go first and foremost to Genesis 1 and 2 and what they really should have done, what we really should have done is gone to John chapter 1 verses 1 to 4 and Hebrews 1 and Colossians and other texts in the New Testament that teach that God creates all things out of nothing and meditate upon the doctrine of creation.

That's where we should have gone. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men.

That's John verses chapter 1 verses 1 to 4 and as I've tried to say that and I've, you know, here's the thing it's so funny I was watching the newest Star Trek movie last night which just frankly was too much of a yawn for me but, you know, I sat all the way through it but, you know, in the three different, I've shared before, the three different Star Trek series which have Q in it, that's the moment that I understood at an imaginative level.

It's very ironic that a series which is committed to a basic agnosticism and a basic belief in human goodness would actually give an image of the doctrine of creation that helps us to start to realize what's at stake in the doctrine of creation because in this character of Q and he could make something like a forest as if they're, you know, Robin Hood or just out of nothing and the viewer knows that he's just made it like that out of nothing in an instant and yet when we look at it we know that the trees aren't just an instant old.

We know that when data tries to figure out he would go they could cut the trees. They know that it was just created like that that instant. They know that the bridge of the Star Trek Enterprise was created just like that but they can look at it and they can know that this is metal that had to have been made so many years ago and it had to be made come from this type of planet and it had to have been formed over eons and eons of geological processes and yet you look at it imaginatively and everyone who watches it imaginatively they understand that it was just created by Q that instant.

[20 : 05] That that's what the doctrine of creation implies. And as I, if you could put up these points I'll say them very quick that the God did not make a stage set he made creation with real heights and depths and a vast backstory as I've said every week if you went back in time an instant after God creates everything and you're standing there with Adam and Eve and you cut down a tree the tree has rings.

You look at the tree you'd say that's a hundred year old tree. If you go to that part near Jerusalem you know and you know that fig trees can be thousands of years old you might say that's a two thousand year old fig tree.

You might say that's a young river that's an old river. You might fly and you go to Atlantic Ocean and you look and you see how old the Atlantic Ocean is and you look in the stars and you see things that had been black holes and supernovas and things which are hundreds of light years away and it all was just created like that just an instant before.

That's what the doctrine of creation out of nothing means. And we've lost thinking about that and realizing that that carries the heavy lifting and then Genesis 1 and 2 they're true but they're also communicating other types of things that God wants us to know.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men.

[21 : 28] To put up the next point the biblical doctrine of creation means that we cannot know scientifically when God created. We can only begin to map creation's heights and depths and widths and explore its backstory.

Next thing. And so that means that the choice is not between science and faith the choice is between two faiths two beliefs. That's the choice.

And the choice is between two beliefs two faiths. And why do you say well George is it just two?

And I don't mean to insult you if you're here but listen nobody has ever heard if you tell me later on if I've missed this nobody goes to say we're going to contrast the Mohawk creation myths with evolution to prove that the Mohawk creation myths are true.

Or the Iroquois creation myths or the Navajo creation myths or the creation myths from Greek mythology. Nobody says there's a choice there's actually a third way George you have the Mohawk creation myths you have the Bible you have science nobody does that.

[22 : 47] Nobody has conferences about the Hindu creation myths but fundamentally there's two choices. And by the way there could be people who don't accept the Bible who just would accept the idea that there must be some type of God to have created things but you know this is just so and there's a whole other type of thing but if you begin to go that and you begin to look at the wisdom of the New Testament the way it's articulated it's connection to Jesus and the resurrection and the narrative and the fall and it's just there's no other effective effective option than between what we're taught in high school and university and by the media and what the Bible teaches there's only a choice of two.

There really is. So you know believe it or not I actually shared this week with somebody somebody in a Starbucks asked me what I was going to be talking about this week and I said I was going to talk about Adam and Eve and and there was a bit of a pause and you know she said to me you know it's really hard for me to know what to believe.

It was a bit of an interesting take on it. I was expecting I was sort of bracing myself I wasn't bracing myself I'd been thinking about this affair but I was prepared to have a conversation about it and and she said to me you know George I really don't know what to believe and I said to her you know here's here's how thinking really works.

The fact of the matter is I mean I said I told her David Hume this is true he's a famous philosopher David Hume famously pointed out that we can have rational doubts as to whether the sun will rise tomorrow.

you can have rational doubts and I said to her you know we've had a few conversations about the Christian faith and you always have doubts and problems so if you're searching for something that will never have any doubts and never have any problems you're searching for something that will never exist because you're like David Hume and you will even doubt if pushed whether the sun will rise tomorrow.

[25 : 02] I said what you need to look at isn't something that has no problems with it no objections to it you need to look at what the different problems and objections are and which viewpoint has the most wisdom and the most coherence and the most truth and the fewest problems problems and you know she was thoughtful about that and then somebody came because she was a barista and then we didn't continue the conversation at that particular time but that's how real thinking really goes especially for us as fallen creatures we really can if necessary pull some final bit of doubt and skepticism out of our pocket and so we really do just need to sort of realize that that's what the choice is not problem free thinking but the fewest problems the thing which has the most truth and so you know are there problems with Adam and Eve being real people yeah I understand that there's problems if you could put that point up there please Andrew again

I understand that there's problems Adam and Eve were real people and their story told in Genesis is important to trust and to believe and trust and think upon and know I know that there's some problems with that I can't answer all of the different aspects of it what I can tell you is this is that at a very simple literary level if you read through the book of Genesis it seems as if Adam and Eve are described in the same way that they describe Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and if you look at other times in the Bible where they obviously have more mythological or visionary or archetype there's in fact a story in Ezekiel that sort of recounts the Garden of Eden in very figurative visionary type of language and if you just read that in Ezekiel and you read this the literary structure is vastly different like it's just so obviously different when you start to read it or you compare how some things are written in the book of Revelation to Genesis it's just so radically different and then if you look at the New Testament and other parts of the Old Testament it seems obvious that Jesus seems to believe that Adam and Eve were real people as does the different

New Testament writers and I'm not saying that it's obviously the book of Genesis 2 isn't written in a literalistic scientific way but that's fine who says things in the Bible always have to be written that way there's no rule for God that he has to write things those ways it's obviously a stylized type of story it's more artistic and more literary and it's very carefully crafted so that some of the details are something that artists can ponder and that poets can ponder and that musicians can create around and visual artists can paint and that we can just think upon the deeper meaning of the aspects it obviously has that artistic quality about it but at the end of the day I believe that if I have to choose between the two stories and I have no other fundamental choice than between matter, pure chance and creating everything or God creating everything and that this is just I believe

Adam and Eve were real and I've spent a lot of time on this point I haven't even read the Bible yet we're going to read the Bible in a moment and I spent a lot of time on it because I know at the very beginning of this service that if I was to have said to you how comfortable would you be to lead a discussion on Genesis 2 in your office tomorrow like just about every one of us would have squirmed because the fact of the matter is that we're afraid of reading the text many of us not all of us but many of us are just deeply afraid of reading the text and as I've shared before like if we don't understand Genesis 1 and 2 and 3 like just about everything in the Bible doesn't make sense like you see that's even what you see in John chapter 1 verses 1 to 4 which goes on to tell us these wonderful things about and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory the glory of the only begotten of the father that is all part of one thing which begins with in the beginning was the word and the word was with

God and the word was God he was with God in the beginning all things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made in him was life and the life was the light of men and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth I want to try to give you some confidence to not be afraid of the Bible and to read it to think upon it and to know upon it we're going to do now if you open your Bibles we're going to do a simple reading through the Bible or two and they'll have to be very brief just so you know next week we're going to flip back over the next few weeks we're going to talk about the transgender issues we're going to talk about same sex attraction issues we're going to talk about marriage we're going to talk about sex we're going to talk about the origin of religion nothing controversial over the next two or three weeks and it's because we're going to zero back and look at parts of Genesis 1 and parts of

[30 : 43] Genesis 2 that I won't touch on this this week because I want to get you this big picture of just having a confidence and then let's read the story so if you have your Bibles Genesis chapter 2 verses 4 and following these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens just notice here that the word created is used again the main thing I want to just point out to you is that the book of Genesis has a it's a very very well crafted and in the book there are ten sort of sub-books and each of these sub-books begin with these are the generations and it's a literary device that marks different units of the book so actually this these are the generations is marking a section that goes from here till the end of chapter 4 is one literary unit and then you'll see these are the generations and it's another literary unit that's it's how the book is crafted verse 5 when excuse me when no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land and there was no man to work the ground and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground here's the the big verse to jump out at you then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature

Andrew if you could put up the point here's the big point of Genesis 2 there's more than this but for today because what we're really doing is last week and this week I want to try to bring out what Genesis 1 and 2 tells us about God and then the next two weeks we're going to go back and look at Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 about what it tells us about being human and what it's saying is this man and woman image bearers of your creator know him the one imminent personal and covenant making God man and woman image bearers it's just talking about the man right now but it's very obvious as we read through the story that it's when Eve is made out of Adam that the implication is that this early forming and early sort of the big picture of this story equally applies to men and women men and man and woman image bearers of your creator know him the one imminent personal and covenant making God now here's the thing when I say the word imminent creator one imminent personal covenant making okay I don't know what the percentage is but there's a significant number of us as soon as I say that phrase what's on Netflix tonight where am I going to go to have lunch after the service that's how our minds work we hate abstract ideas true confession

I love phrases like this I can spend weeks on phrases like this I love abstract thought but a lot of people those abstract terms imminent one creator blah blah blah yada yada blah blah blah that's just we're just wired differently right but what for those of us who don't like those abstract ideas this story as it grips us communicates all of those truths to us in the form of a story and so you just look at verse 7 again this is a very very very powerful text and even if we don't get to read most of the rest of it just because of time it's a very powerful text look again at how it goes verse 7 then the Lord God in the original language of Hebrew this is a very very unique phrase that mainly occurs in chapter 2 and virtually nowhere else and what it is it's actually and Jewish people have forgotten how to say this word because it was so holy that they didn't want to say it it's the same word as is revealed to Moses in the burning bush it's the word I am or I am that I am or I will be that I will be in fact it's a name which is also a sentence it's a name that's a verb and it's the word it's the way that

God communicates to his people that he is to have a personal relationship with them he is in a sense like when we use the phrase our heavenly father which is really what when Abba I would refer to my dad as dad some of you might refer to your dad as daddy or papa or whatever it might be pops but it's that intimate personal relational word for God and the word God here is Elohim it's plural but because the other the verbs are singular it has to be translated as a singular and it's the abstract word for God it's the generic word for God it is the word for God that when you want to make the distinction between what the Babylonians say and the Greeks say and the Assyrians say and the Jewish people say and you want to have that one category it's the word God it's the most abstract distant word and so it's very interesting that in only here that the two words are put together to make one name for God it actually shows at a literary level how the two stories are supposed to be understood together because the first story uses the abstract word the second story is saying that that intimate personal relationship walk with you God spend your day with you God is the same God who is the abstract God who is transcendent and has created all things trying to communicate imminence and intimacy and you look at the verse again verse 7 then the

Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature the word formed is from the pottery studio and it's an image the book of Romans has a very powerful thing that comes right from this word in Genesis 2 of how we're formed like a potter forming clay and it's this image as if God is pushing the wheel with his foot while he's taking the clay and maneuvering it with his hands that God touches Adam with creativity and with love and affection as he forms him I mean now you see here's where to lose this story is to lose so much like just think about that for a second how important is human touch to us how important is it for so many people that they wish that God would touch them can't we see that in some ways long before the fall in our memories of this very very fundamental way that not only our ancestors but therefore all of us were formed involved this intimate wet creative loving intelligent touching of us to form us that's imminence isn't it and then look at the other word which is used here because in in in in

[38 : 43] Genesis 1 the two the word that describes human beings as a noun in the in the in Genesis 2 it's verbs it's very very it's very carefully written and look again at verse 7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature just notice this how intimate is that like for somebody to blow into my nostrils it's it's to get way more close and personal than anybody other than my wife should be okay unless I'm dying and you need to give me you know get me living again you know it's it's very very close it's very intimate and it's this picture of God being right face to face and not face to face in the sense that we say in my face in an aggressive way but face to face to create me and to give me life and it's breath it's personal it's moist it's coming into us it's this idea that God is closer to me he in a sense is my breath he's closer to me than my breath his first breath is why

I have breath it's this profound close face to face sense and isn't that at the end of the day all human longing to see the face of God don't we wonder why is God so distant and don't we wonder if God is so distant doesn't that imply that there's some basic sense within us that the way it should be is as close to us as our breath face to face with affection and creativity and intelligence and love and patience you see if we're afraid to read these chapters of Genesis because it'll make us look like Hicks we cut ourselves off from so much imaginative and so much that helps to correct basic misunderstandings we have about who God is the God who does exist who's made us in his image and who's made us male and female he is the one

God the creator God he is an imminent God he is a personal God he is a God who wants to be in covenant with us which is relationship with us and then you could just look at this text and all of the problem like you could almost summarize it so much of the mistakes in spirituality and religion and intellectual thing are we beasts or are we like God are we merely of the dirt and of nothing like that or is there something divine about us is there something in some way that we are like every other living creature that we are just made of chemicals and dust but there is something from God which is also connected to us which can explain why we're not just cause and effect why there's something separate from cause and effect whereby we can choose that there's some type of dignity to us and that dignity comes to as fast and athletic and powerful as Usain Bolt that there's some fundamental sameness this text is the most profound rejection of all racism as you go on to look at the story of

Adam and Eve and that Eve comes out of Adam that there's not as if there's men and they were created in one part of the universe and then there's women and they're created another part of the that rich people are better than poor people that healthy people are better than sick people it's a complete it's a profound statement of our common humanity facing a common God it is a perennial rebuke of caste systems and class systems as it grips us because

I'm running out of time to go through the rest of the text and read the rest of the text but it's such a powerful story we'll talk about it more in the coming weeks I just want to put one other thing about it because you have to connect this to the gospel you do what's one of the best known verses if you're an evangelical for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that all who believe in him will not perish but have everlasting life see one of the things that this story communicates to us it actually speaks into the gospel and it speaks into our mistaken attempts to use religion and ritual and spirituality and self help techniques and technologies to somehow bring real new life to us if you could put we see in this story that only

[44 : 27] God can breathe life into Adam and Eve so only God can breathe new life into the fallen dying Adam and Eve and their sons and daughters to make us born again like the story as it sets and stage something right because you see you know I want to think that by my choice is I can make new life by I can do something I can say enough Hail Mary's I can memorize enough of the Bible I can sing enough praise songs I can learn how to do all of these types of things and that somehow that will create this new life in me but nothing like that will create new life in us just as the creation story tells us that only God can breathe and so at a very basic fundamental level there's this rejection of religion this rejection of spirituality this rejection of technique this rejection of self help gurus and self help practice there is a fundamental level not that you can't do things to help yourself not that you should never use a ritual not but that if our trust is in that it's this fundamental thing that we are going to need

God to give us new life and that only he can do it I can't add 10% to it I can't add 50% to it I can't even add a half of 1% to it it has to be 100% God giving me new life and so that as the world view of this story comes to us then when we come to John chapter 3 16 for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son to the end that all that believe in him shall not perish but have eternal life we say yes only God can breathe that new life and all I can do is ask that in his mercy unworthy as I am that he would give it to me and we can have this confidence when we think about the cross that God will never say no to anybody who says I have sinned I am helpless to save myself

I have come to the point where I know that I need the life that only you can give me would you do it for me please in Jesus name and God will turn no one away please stand let's bow our heads in prayer father you know how hard it is to go against the grain in our culture and father we give you thanks and praise that there's so much in our culture that we don't have to go against the grain father there's so many really smart people learning about science and father you invite us to learn about science we might not be smart some of us are but to the best of our abilities father you invite us to learn about astronomy and physics and geology and you invite us to learn about music and art and business and you invite us to be creative in our home that we don't have to worry about that father but sometimes father you ask us to you teach us true truth that goes against our culture and you know how hard it is for us to do that father we ask that your holy spirit would move and work within us so that we would be a counter cultural people loving this city and loving our nation and seeking father the good of this city and the good of this nation as we bear witness to

Jesus father make us such a people make us disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel humbly living for your glory and for the good of people and of this city and this we ask in Jesus name Amen Amen