

# Creation: We are part of God's Story

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're starting with this week at the beginning. If we open the Bible to the very first page of Genesis 1, I don't think this is ready to come up on the screen, that's fine.

The first words that it says, in the beginning, God. We don't even come in to the story until right near the end of the first chapter.

It is all about God and about what God does. And that is the same throughout the Bible. It's all about what God is doing.

And we are invited to be part of that. So starting at the beginning, we have creation. We're going to do a little bit of a quiz.

Because we like to do that here. So, if you are able, I'm going to ask everyone to stand to your feet. We're going to do a heads and tails quiz.

[ 1 : 03 ] So, I've got ten questions.

This is a true or false... Sorry, it's not a true or false quiz. There will be two options. I will read out two statements. One of them will be a statement from the creation story.

One of them will be a slightly altered statement from the creation story. Hopefully, we will all make it to the end. If you think it's the first option, put your hands on your head. If you think it's the second option, put your hands on your tailbone.

If you get it wrong, I'm going to ask you to sit down. But I'm confident. I'm sure that's not going to happen. So, in the beginning, the earth was formless and empty.

Heads, if you think that's from the Bible. Or if you think it's tails, in the beginning, the earth was filled with dragons. Heads or tails. And no picking both options.

[ 2 : 09 ] That is, of course, heads. Well done. Hopefully, we all got that one. Second question.

On the first day, God said, let there be light. Heads. Or on the first day, God said, let there be darkness. Tails. Heads or tails.

If you said heads, stay standing. It is, of course, God said, let there be light. Heads or tails.

Heads, God created the sun on the first day to dispel the darkness. Or tails, God separated the light and the darkness, but did not create the sun yet.

Heads or tails. They are going to get a little bit more difficult. I'm not sure if there's a lot of people choosing tails or a lot of people who haven't chosen.

[ 3 : 14 ] You can't go somewhere in the middle. It's heads or tails. So, heads, God created the sun on the first day to dispel the darkness. Or tails, God separated the light and the darkness, but did not yet create the sun.

I'm going to have three seconds. Two, one. It is tails. The sun has not yet been created.

Heads. God created dry ground on the second day. Or tails, God created the sky on the second day. Heads or tails.

Tails. Three, two, one. You should all have chosen an answer. It is tails.

God created the sky to separate the waters above from the waters below. So, if you said heads, you should be sitting down. Or if you didn't select an answer, you should be sitting down. Question five.

[ 4 : 23 ] Heads. God created every plant on earth by hand on the third day. Or tails. God created some of the plants by hand and instructed them to create more.

Heads or tails. Tails. Three, two, one.

I think I've caught a few of you out here. God, it says that God, God instructed plants to grow from the ground and they did. But then he said to the plants to create more like equivalent of their kind.

Now that we've got halfway through, I'll let you know that this is something that I created to do with year six at St. Jude's when I do the Old Testament with them.

At this point, I think there was only about three of them sitting down. Everyone else was still in. Sorry? Well, unfortunately, they don't have to do our ESATs.

[ 5 : 29 ] Okay, number six. Heads. After each day of creation, God said it was good. Or tails. After each day of creation, God said it's not finished yet.

Heads or tails. If you're sitting down, you can still join in. That is, of course, heads. God said it was good.

Heads or tails. Got heads. God gave the earth to humans to look after it and to take care of his creation. Or tails. God gave the earth to humans to rule over it and be in charge.

Heads or tails. This is a slightly more difficult question because God did place humans responsible for the earth in order to take care and look after his creation.

So that is heads. He said tails. You need to sit down. There's three left. Heads. God created humans for no particularly special reason.

[ 6 : 46 ] Just another part of creation. Or tails. God created humans in his own image to reflect his nature and character. I hope we are all saying tails for this one.

Heads. God gave Adam a list of names for every animal. Or tails. God told Adam to name every animal as he wanted.

It is tails. God gave Adam the responsibility of naming all of the animals. Last question. Heads. After God finished his creation, he said it was very good.

Good. Or tails. After God finished his creation, he sat back and said, eh, could be better. That is, of course, heads.

I believe we have two people left standing. Well done. Thank you. Thank you. So, we have, we've all got a good understanding of the creation story.

[ 8 : 03 ] We all know it. I thought this morning, rather than reading it from the Bible, because it is quite a long story to just watch somebody reading, I thought we'd have a video from Saddleback Kids where they give us a bit of animation to go with it.

At the start of the Bible, it's all about what God does. He makes Adam and Eve, he makes humans part of the creation story.

He gives them a role, gives them a job, but it's all about what he does. And then God let humans loose in that creation.

And this is what happened. I'm going to read out, again, something that was written for the year sixes, but I think it's good for all of us.

The questions, as we go, I'm going to slightly adapt. And I want you to think about these questions, and I'll pause with each one.

[ 9 : 02 ] First question, who do you look like? I don't mean in terms of celebrity lookalikes. Who do you think you look most like?

Perhaps a parent, or a child, or a sibling. So, the last thing God created was us.

And the Bible says that we were created in his image. We're created to look like him, and importantly, to be like him. The Bible says God created us because he wanted somebody to love, and who could love him in return.

But, you can't love someone if you're forced to do it. How many of you, if you can remember back to your childhood, or even in adulthood as well, how many of you remember being told off for upsetting a brother or a sister?

Or if you were an only child, perhaps a cousin or a friend. And then when you were told to apologize, you just go up to them and say, sorry, but you don't actually mean it.

[ 10 : 24 ] So, God gave Adam and Eve a choice. They could do things his way, or they could decide they don't want to do that. They could live in his amazing creation, in his amazing garden.

And he would be with them every single day. He walked with them. He talked to them. Maybe he played games with them, or he did all sorts of different things.

But he asked them not to do just one thing. There was one particular tree, and God said, please, please don't eat the fruit from that tree.

I've placed it there because I have to give you the choice. Don't eat from that tree. Because if you do, surely you will die.

What rules do you remember being given that you thought didn't really make any sense? Perhaps, again, it was when you were a child, or perhaps it is rules in the workplace, or laws that we have that don't really make any sense, or the reason we're given doesn't really seem to satisfy.

[ 11 : 43 ] So Adam and Eve followed that rule they were given. They followed it for a while. They walked, and they talked, and they played games, and they ate fruit from all of the trees, except from the one tree they were told not to.

But one day, the Bible says, a snake came along, and the snake talked to them. And what did that snake say?

The snake said something along the lines of, why shouldn't you eat from the fruit on this tree? It's tasty and sweet, and it's so, so good for you.

But God said, no. If they eat that fruit, they would die. So the snake said to them, no, that's not true.

You shall not die if you just from tasting this juicy, succulent fruit. Instead, you'll learn all of the secrets that God is keeping from you, and you will be better than him.

[ 12 : 49 ] So the Bible says Adam and Eve chose to trust a snake instead of trusting God. They believed that they could be better than God if they ate from that fruit.

Immediately, they realized that they were naked, and they thought they had to cover up the body God had created from them. They learned about all of the things God didn't want them to do, because they were cruel, they were selfish, they were hurtful.

But worst of all, they tried to be better than God. They tried to say to God, yeah, you might have created this world.

You might have started this story, but this isn't your story anymore. This is ours. So what happened? Did they die as God had promised?

Well, no, they didn't drop dead. But their life was different from that day onwards. Because God said, because they couldn't trust him, they chose to do the wrong thing.

[ 14 : 02 ] They chose to do the wrong thing, to put themselves first in the center of the picture. They had to leave. They couldn't be with God all the time, to walk with him, talk to him, play games with him.

And we know that one day they did die. So God was right. God wasn't just saying that. Their lives were completely different.

Because instead of being part of God's story, keeping God at the center of their lives, they chose to try to put it the other way around.

The Bible says that everyone has that same punishment because of the cruel and the selfish and the hurtful things that we do. But God's story does not end there.

God did not say, well, I tried and it didn't work. So never mind. God said, my creation was perfect.

[ 15 : 07 ] And one day I want it to be perfect again. And I want all of these people to be back part of my story again.

So he made a promise to Adam and Eve. One day he would make it so that everyone can live with him again. The Bible starts with God at the beginning of the story.

It puts him right there in the middle. He created everything. And then we decided, no, this is our story.

God can be part of that, maybe if he's lucky. Where is God in our lives? Is God at the center of our lives?

Or are we squeezing him into a box just off to the side where we've got just about enough space for him? So God created the world.

[ 16 : 08 ] We decided it should be about us instead of about him. Over the next few chapters, people give up on God so much that actually God says, is there anyone left who still cares about me?

He still wants to walk and talk and play games with me. So we have Noah. And even after that, even after God says, there's a chance to start again.

But I want you, I'm going to remind you, your first instruction, go out and fill the earth. And instead of doing that, the people decide, let's all come together.

Let's build a huge tower that we can all live inside. And you know what? Maybe we'll even reach the height of God that way. So people still decided to do things their way, to make it their story.

So we skip ahead to chapter 12. And a new player has entered the story. The story of Abraham.

[ 17 : 19 ] So he traveled the long journey with his brother Lot and his family. And they arrive in Canaan. That's all of this land, both Judah and Israel. And God gives them a promise.

God started off trying with everyone. And it didn't work because everyone wanted to do things their own way. Everyone wanted the story to be about themselves.

So he picked one family. Abraham and Sarah. And said, okay, what we've done before hasn't worked.

So you can be the center, at the center of my story right now. But it doesn't end with you. In fact, you're going to have thousands upon thousands upon thousands of generations of descendants.

But your job and your descendants' job is to make everyone part of my story.

[ 18 : 25 ] Because my story isn't about you. I'm using you as a character to get everyone back where they belong.

Because this story is about me and my relationship with you and your neighbors. And those in the neighboring country.

And everyone else. God's story starts with creation. Starts with him at the middle. And then we decided, nah, let's make it about us.

So the rest of the Bible is about God trying to bring everyone else back into his story. Not the other way around.