

**GENESIS 1-2**  
**THE CREATION NARRATIVE**  
**Message Notes**  
**January 15, 2023**

Let's walk through Scripture. Before you continue, please read Genesis 1-2. Go ahead, I'll wait right here.

Ready? Let's go!

*"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature---have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)*

Okay, so what we're talking about today is God creating the heavens, earth, and everything within it. "General Revelation" basically means those things we can learn about God from observing the things that He has created. It only takes us so far. To really know God, we also need "Special Revelation", which is the Word of God (the Bible) and the works of God.

There's a lot we can learn from the Creation narrative, but before we dive into that, I want to point out something: Genesis 1 and 2 and Revelation 21 and 22 are the only four chapters of the Bible where we can see creation EXACTLY as God meant it to be: Uncorrupted by sin, everything functioning in harmony, peace and perfection. The good news is that, when Christ returns and brings the New Jerusalem, we'll get to enjoy that perfection again.

However, we can't appreciate where we're going until we examine where we've been. That's one of the reason it's important to study biblical history. Let me hit the pause button just for a minute: Some of you are probably thinking: "Okay, well if there were no humans around when God created the earth, nobody was documenting anything, nobody was livestreaming the creation on Instagram, then how do we know all these things that the Bible says happened?"

The general thought of theologians is that Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible (which is called the Pentateuch) and that God supplied Moses with all of these historical details. Why? Because at that point, God had brought His chosen people of Israel out of bondage in Egypt (we'll get into that when we study the book of Exodus). Learning their history was meant to help them learn about

God and all that He'd done for them, all the promises that He had made to their ancestors and give them a cultural identity as a new nation.

Getting back to the concept of the Holy Trinity: God is one entity with three distinct persons. There is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, we're primarily going to read about God the Father. The New Testament focuses heavily on God the Son and the empowerment of the believers by God the Holy Spirit. There is no ranking system within the Holy Trinity. People hear "Father" and they tend to think the Father is top of the pyramid. I'm just going to say this, and you'll need to keep this in mind as we walk through Scripture: We can't try to understand God according to human terms, with the limitations of human understanding (especially when that understanding is tainted by our sinful tendencies). We can't force God to fit into our neat little parameters according to human logic and reasoning.

Think about it: By human reasoning, people burn up if you dump them in a superheated furnace (see the Book of Daniel), the sun doesn't pause in the middle of the sky to give an army a chance to win a battle (see the Book of Joshua), and for that matter hailstones don't fall on one army in a battle and leave the other combatants untouched, and men who have been dead for three days don't get up and walk out

of a tomb. But all of those things happened, and it's all right here in Scripture.

For those of you just starting your walk with God, one of the most difficult concepts to wrap our heads around is the idea that God is a triune entity. You see in *Genesis 1:26* that God refers to Himself as "us". He says that mankind is made in "our" image (we're God's image. That's kind of awesome, isn't it?).

So, there we are: God is three-in-one. It's important to understand the relationship between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit because that is the relationship that God means to share with us as His creation, and it's the relationship He wants us to have with one another. Within the Holy Trinity is a continuous exchange of flow of life and power, shared purpose, mutual love, mutual submission, and cooperation. By mutual submission, I mean that when one of the personalities takes the lead, the other two entities by unspoken agreement step back. We'll see God the Father quite often when we're talking about discipline and judgement. God the Son sometimes appears in the form of an angelic being in the Old Testament before He arrives in the flesh in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit appeared as wind and fire at Pentecost when He empowered the apostles for their missionary work. What's really cool is that all three personalities are

present at the baptism of Jesus. Not only do we have God the Son there in the flesh, but we have God the Father speaking from heaven and God the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove. Goosebumps, people, I have goosebumps.

The keyword is LOVE. That describes the relationship God wants to share with us just as love is at the core of the Holy Trinity.

Moving on, what else can we learn about God from reading the creation narrative in *Genesis* 1 and 2? Lots, really, a whole lot. If you'll look at the message notes for this lesson, I listed quite a few attributes of God that are revealed in these chapters. First, God is revealed to be omnipotent and omnipresent. That means God is all-powerful and He is in all places at any given time. In fact, in *Genesis* 1 (when we're looking at the original language) God is referred to as "Elohim", which denotes His power. God SPOKE creation into being. His Word alone can give life or take it away, it can generate stars and oceans, it can stop the sun in the sky, it can raise the dead. Our God is awesome indeed.

What else? We see God's glory on display. I'm going to point out one of the coolest details of the six days of creation. On Day 1, God says "let there be light", and there is light. BUT, if you look closely, you'll notice that God doesn't create the sun and moon until day 4.

So...what's that light that's shining for the first three days? That's God's glory people. That glorious, powerful light is the same light that blinds Saul in Acts 9 (just to be clear, we're talking about Saul who became the Apostle Paul. Some people get him mixed up with Saul the first king of Israel. Two very different people.). It's that same light that will illuminate the holy city of New Jerusalem according to Revelation 21:10-11. Yes, God's glory alone is going to light up the biggest city ever created. Goosebumps, people, goosebumps.

We see on Day 1 that God separates the light from the dark, calling them "day" and "night". You're going to notice in Scripture that light symbolized goodness, holiness, and righteousness--the kingdom of God while darkness is always indicative of evil, sin, and wickedness--the kingdom of Satan. But, we'll talk about the warfare between these kingdoms in just a minute.

What else can we learn about God in the creation narrative? We learn that God is creative and omniscient---meaning that God is supernaturally wise. Think about how God created everything in existence atom-by-atom, molecule-by-molecule, and fitted it all together so that life was self-sustaining. This also tells us that God is meticulous and extremely patient.

The Bible likes to call God "long-suffering", which He is, without question. Parents can relate to God the Father as He puts up with the wickedness and sinfulness of His people. God is loving; we're His children. He loves us and the Jesus tells us that it's not God's will for any of His "sheep" to be lost (sheep means us, people). However, God isn't pronouncing His creation as "good" or "very good" just for something to say. That is telling us that God is righteous, and He absolutely knows good from bad and right from wrong. God is a God of justice because He is holy and righteous, and that means He cannot allow sinfulness and disobedience to continue indefinitely. At a certain point, God's got to bring down the discipline (Scripture often calls it God wrath, but that's kind of gives us the wrong idea about God. Anger is part of God's nature, too, yes, but not in the human understanding of the Word. God's anger comes from a place of discipline of His creation to bring us back into right relationship with Him so that He's free to bless us. It's not the anger that humans experience with wounded pride, outrage, or that kind of volatility). He delays judgement to give men all opportunities to repent, confess, and be forgiven so that we can come back into relationship with Him. For this reason, we know that God is also merciful and gracious.

I want to hit the pause button again and talk for a minute about the concept of holiness because you are going to see certain people and

places and objects in the Bible being referred to as "holy". This is not the same holiness as God's holiness. Describing God as holy is referring to His state of perfection, righteousness, justice, His complete and eternal lack of corruption or wickedness. When a person or object is called "holy" (like Israel being called God's holy people), it means set apart to serve God's purposes or to reflect God's glory. Hope that takes some pressure off when you read that the Bible commands us as believers to be perfect and holy. Jesus makes us perfect through His sacrifice, even though God knows that we aren't anywhere near perfect. Being holy, living in holiness, means living in obedience to God's way and submitting to Him out of love.

We see God's righteousness in the creation narrative when He declares His work to be good—and on Day Six when he creates the wild animals, livestock, creatures, and mankind, God calls it "very good". Aww, that's nice. God is holy and wise; He knows good from evil. In fact, He's the final authority in discerning what is good from what is evil. We're going to touch on that quite a lot as we walk through Scripture.

Days five and six were big days. On day 5, God starts to create the living creatures of the seas and the birds of the sky AND HE BLESSES THEM. This is the first time in the Bible that God blesses

anything. Another goosebumps moment. God has love and concern and compassion for all of His living creatures, from the tiny sparrow to human beings. If it were not so, if all life including the animals was not precious to God, then the whole concept of sacrificing innocent animals to atone for our sins would have little meaning.

You'll also notice that, up until this point, everything that God has created has been created through the illimitable power of His spoken Word. We talked about the power of His Word. Birds and land animals begin to breathe because God tells them to breathe. But, look what happens when God creates mankind: God created Adam with His own hands. He breathed His own breath into Adam to bring man to life. This is a very intimate connection. God imparted His own life and spirit into the man that he'd created.

In Genesis 2, God is called YHWH (Yahweh), a term that refers to intimacy, immanence, and nearness. God's relationship with humans is very personal. We're made in His image and infused with His Spirit and breathe His breath. He came near to have relationship so that we could know Him better. God didn't create us because He was lonely. He didn't need anything from us. We can never do anything for Him that He cannot do for Himself. But He wants us. He desires to have that

relationship with us. He wants to share His creation with us. That's humbling, isn't it?

Adam is placed into the garden along with his wife to be its guardian and caretaker, to have dominion over nature and animal as one vested with God's authority. He is told to subdue the earth and have dominion over it, to multiply and fill the earth with more people, more images of God. Adam is allowed to name the animals; naming something is symbolic of putting it under your authority.

NOW, I need to bring up Eve at this point, because I see lots of people who interpret this whole Garden of Eden narrative as meaning husbands have total authority over their wives. They point to the fact that Eve is made from Adam, and that Adam gets to name Eve (ergo, she's under His authority). Now, it's true that God puts wives under husband's authority later, but let's circle back to that in a few minutes. When we take one verse, like Adam naming Eve, out of context and build a theology around it while ignoring twenty or thirty or two hundred other verses in the Bible that supplements and expounds on that verse, that is called "proof-texting". That leads us to false theologies.

The apostle Paul talks about the relationship between husbands and wives. The home is a microcosm of the relationship within the Holy

Trinity. Man is in authority, yes, but he is commanded to love his wife as himself, and that spouses are to conduct themselves as would God (which means love, grace, mutual submission, mutual cooperation, concern for one another). Remember, God made Eve because she was the only one suitable to help Adam and to keep Adam from being alone. The garden was too much for him without a helper. "Helper" is what God calls her. Not "servant". Not "slave". Bondage and enslavement are human concepts, sinful concepts. If we believe God commands wives to be servants of the husband, then we should also follow the Hebraic law that commands servants to be set free in the Sabbatical year. That's now what God intended.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit glorify one another. When man and wife live in this way, they are truly reflecting God's image to the world and therefore glorifying God.

Second, yes, Adam names Eve, but pay attention to WHEN Adam names Eve. That doesn't happen until AFTER the fall of mankind. That's significant. Up to that point, the Bible refers to her as "wife". Adam and Eve sinned and were expelled from the Garden of Eden, but God had promised that Eve's descendants would include a Redeemer for mankind. "Eve" means mother of all the living. Giving her that name was

an act of hope on Adam's behalf, hope in God's promise. We'll circle back to this also.

This brings us to Day Seven, which God declares to be a holy day of rest. Now, God didn't rest because He was tired. The book of Isaiah reminds us that God does not grow weak or weary. He was resting because His work was complete, and God was satisfied with His creation. It was perfect. It was harmonious. It was functioning in harmony and peace. It hadn't yet been corrupted by sin. This was the state that God desired for creation for eternity. Unfortunately, we see in chapter 3 that, well, things went wrong.

Jesus tells us that the seventh day, which came to be known as the Sabbath (day of rest) was made for mankind and not mankind for the Sabbath. By the time Jesus comes onto the scene, the religious leaders of Israel had taken God's gift of the Sabbath and built such a system of religious regulations around it (with harsh penalties for violating any of these laws), that the Sabbath had actually become a form of religious bondage for the people.

That's why Jesus deliberately defied these man-made traditions, because they weren't in line with God's will or God's intentions. He healed people on the Sabbath; He picked grain and ate it on the Sabbath. He was proving a point. God knew that men needed rest from

their labors so they could replenish themselves. More than that, the land needed rest from cultivation so it could replenish itself. Farmers know this, that's why they rotate which fields get planted from year to year.

So, here we are: God has created the heavens and earth and the Garden of Eden. He's placed Adam and Eve into the garden as caretakers; Adam's functioning as God's viceroy, His governor over creation. God has given all the plants of the garden for man and animals to eat (men don't start eating meat until after the Great Flood). Adam is subduing the earth and exercising dominion; at a certain point, man and wife will get around to reproducing.

This brings us to chapter three, where things start to go wrong.