

## Seeing Jesus in Every Story

**“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life;  
and these are they which testify of Me.”**

John 5:39

What is the Old Testament all about? Is it a collection of stories intended mostly for children, with exciting heroes to imitate and rules we should follow? Is it an outdated history book filled with dusty old patriarchs, fiery prophets and difficult typologies? What do ancient stories have to do with life as we know it and our future hope of heaven? These are questions for every believer to consider, whether you're a new babe in Christ or have been walking by faith for decades.

Long ago, two dejected and heartbroken disciples were making their way home from Jerusalem after Passover. As they walked, Jesus joined them and asked what they were talking about. Cleopas and his companion had no idea it was Jesus they were telling their sorrows to, and how their hopes had died with His crucifixion. Then Jesus spoke, and that weary Emmaus road became a first-class journey through Scripture with the ultimate tour guide!

*“Oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into His glory?”* Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in *all* the Scriptures (Luke 24:25-27, emphasis added).

That evening Jesus blessed the bread, and suddenly they recognized Him! Even as He vanished from their sight, His words were still burning in their hearts. Jesus had shown them how every story fits into the Greatest Story and points directly to . . . Him!

### **History is HIS story.**

The Bible in its entirety is the unfolding drama of Redemption—beginning in Genesis all the way through to Revelation. While each book and every story has its own treasures to explore, this crimson thread of Redemption weaving through *all* the Scriptures is what we will follow in this study.

As we look through these Old Testament stories, we will meet real people and learn from their lives, but we won't stop there. We will read their story with an eye to see Jesus who has been—from eternity past and forever will be—present and active in God's unfolding plan. It truly is all about Him!

Act 1  
Creation and the Fall  
Genesis 1-3

## Prologue

“In the beginning, there was nothing. Nothing to hear. Nothing to feel. Nothing to see. Only emptiness. And darkness. And . . . nothing but nothing. But God was there. And God had a wonderful Plan.”<sup>1</sup>

What wonderful plan did God have in mind? We might suppose it started with creation and the perfect existence God fashioned Adam and Eve to enjoy. After all, that’s where the Bible begins. For two chapters we glimpse a world that captures our imagination. God speaks, and out of nothing He creates...everything! Like poetry in motion, the world comes together with precision and pattern; and God expresses delight in every detail. Life is beautiful, just as God intended. Then the serpent shows up, sin enters the world and it appears that God’s wonderful plan has been spoiled.

But God’s plan wasn’t spoiled and sending His Son into our broken world was not a back-up plan. Before creation, there was a plan of redemption. The redeeming work of Jesus has always been the very heart of God’s wonderful plan since *before* time began! The Bible tells us why:

“He did this, not because we deserved it, but because it was His plan  
from before the beginning of time *to show us His grace* through Christ Jesus.”  
(2 Timothy 1:9, emphasis added)

As you read these opening chapters in Genesis, keep in mind that when God created the world He was setting the stage for the glorious telling of His grace. And Jesus has the leading role!

## ✿ Cast ✿

Adam and Eve  
The Serpent

**Read through Genesis 1-3.** Briefly note what stands out to you at first reading. Be prepared to share one of your impressions with your discussion group.

1. What was Adam’s assigned purpose, given to him by God? What was Eve’s?
  
2. What was the serpent’s intention for Adam and Eve? What strategy did he use?

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<sup>1</sup> Sally Lloyd-Jones, *The Jesus Storybook Bible*, ©2007 Zondervan. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

## Scene 1: Creation – Genesis 1

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As you read this ancient story, remember that our aim is to understand this opening scene of history—and the God it reveals—with an eye to seeing His story. The beginning point is nothingness except the pre-existent Triune God: Father—Son—Holy Spirit. Into this void of nothingness God does something extraordinary . . . He creates!

1. Who was God speaking to in vs. 26 and what does this reveal about God's nature? In what way did the pre-incarnate Jesus participate in creation?

Compare the following passages for additional insight.

‣ Genesis 1:2

‣ John 1:1-3

‣ Colossians 1:15-16

‣ Hebrews 1:1-3

2. We see from the beginning that God is a god of order; everything in its time and place. What do you notice about His order in creation?

3. What does it mean that man was created *in the image of God*? For more insight, read Psalm 8:3-6.

## Explore key words and phrases

‣ **“Then God said...”**

Would you like a glimpse of our magnificent Creator? This simple phrase contains truth hidden in plain sight. Each place you read this phrase in chapter 1, note what happened next. What tools and material did God need in order to create? What does this reveal about God's consummate skill and masterful design?

- “God saw that it was **good...**” “...**very good...**” This simple adjective says so much. It can mean: *beautiful; excellent; pleasing; beneficial; correct; favorable; joyful*. What does this say about God's desire and His thoughts for creation? And for you?

## Additional thoughts and observations

Can you recall your earliest childhood impressions of creation? What were they? How has your understanding of creation changed or developed since then? Briefly share your thoughts.

## Scene 2: The Perfect Life – Genesis 2

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This scene opens with the statement that, after completing the creation, God rested. Then we are taken back to the creation story and given more specific details on how Adam and Eve were created.

1. Did God rest on the seventh day because He was tired? Consider why God blessed a day of rest as His finishing touch on creation. Share your thoughts.
2. God spoke all creation into existence out of nothing with one exception. When God formed Adam, what did He use and how did man become a living creature?
  - God used simple matter and infused it with something of Himself. What does this say about God's design and purpose for humanity?

3. In light of Genesis 2:7, how should we properly view ourselves? Compare the following passages for additional insight.
  - Job 33:4 & 34:14-15
  - Psalm 100:3
  - Psalm 103:14
  - Psalm 139:14-16
4. What was good about life in Eden? Briefly describe the garden and what life was like for Adam.
  - What did the Lord say was *not* good? Briefly describe how and why God fashioned Eve for Adam.

### **Additional Thoughts and Observations**

- What aspects of living in this perfect environment do you find most compelling? Share one or two thoughts.

## **Scene 3: Paradise Lost – Genesis 3**

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Adam and Eve had a perfect life surrounded with beauty and abundance. They freely enjoyed intimacy with each other, and with their Creator. But Satan, in the form of a serpent, slithered into the garden to plant a lie.

1. Every tree God planted was pleasant to the sight and good for food (Genesis 2:9). What made two trees in the center of the garden unique?
  - Tree of life:
  - Tree of the knowledge of good and evil:

What was the Lord's instruction to Adam about these trees? What promises and warnings did God give them?

2. By questioning and twisting what God said, what thoughts did the Serpent plant in Eve's mind about ...
  - God's authority:
  - God's trustworthiness:
  - God's intention for her and Adam:
3. According to the conversation between God and Adam (vs.9-12), what was no longer good about life in Eden? How would that forever change the relationship that humans originally had with God?
4. What was the consequence of sin entering the world? Briefly state what God said to:
  - The serpent:
  - The woman:
  - Adam:
5. According to v. 22-24, why did God drive Adam and Eve out of the garden? Was God angry with them or showing mercy? Share your thoughts.

### **Additional Thoughts and Observations**

Satan planted a lie in Eve's thoughts, essentially saying that God's commands were meant to prohibit rather than protect. The lie Satan planted in the garden is still in circulation today, tempting people to ignore or rationalize disobeying God's Word. List some that come to mind.

## Intermission: Pause – Ponder – Pray

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**“In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
He was in the beginning with God.  
All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made.  
John 1:1-3**

As you memorize this passage, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea...satisfying as it is savored. So give yourself time to savor God's Word. Write the scripture in the space provided and meditate on what it says.

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Ask the Lord to open your eyes and increase your understanding. Jot down what He points out to you; keep returning here and adding your thoughts throughout the week.

Ponder what this says about God. Consider His character, attributes, work, promises...

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Think about what God had in mind when He created you...

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Write your response to Him in worship and praise...

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## Epilogue: Seeing Jesus in the Story

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### Search to See . . .

The Apostle Paul stated that the first man, Adam, was a *type* (pattern or representation) of One who was to come—that is, Christ. Read the following passage from Romans and note the contrasts between the first Adam and that of the second—Christ.

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did.

Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and His gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and His gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

Romans 5:12-19, NLT

1. What entered the world through one man's sinful act? Please explain.
2. What gift entered the world through One Man's righteous act? Please explain.

### Consider the Big Picture . . .

How does *Creation and the Fall* play into the glorious telling of God's grace? Ultimately it's about redemption and our Redeemer! A few thoughts to consider:

- Jesus was there in the beginning as the agent of God's creative work.
- Jesus came into the world as the One True Light leading the way to salvation.
- Jesus is present now in the heart of every believer, making us a new creation from the inside out (2 Cor. 5:17).
- Jesus will return, even as He promised (John 14:1-3) and He will usher in His redeemed and restored creation (Revelation 21:5).



Would you like to look for more “big picture” items? Finish the following statements to draw some more connections between creation and salvation.

| Creation                                       | Salvation                                  |
|--|--|
| Came from: (Gen. 1:2) <i>The Spirit of God</i> | Comes from: (John 6:63)                    |
| Life began with: (Gen. 1:3) <i>Light</i>       | Salvation begins with: (2 Corinthians 4:6) |
| God separated: (Gen. 1:4)                      | Salvation separates: (1 Thessalonians 5:5) |
| Creation produced: (Genesis 1:11)              | Salvation produces: (Galatians 5:22-23)    |
| Created man: (Gen1:27)                         | Saved man: (Rom. 8:29 & Col. 3:10)         |

### Make it personal . . .

God was not caught off-guard by Adam and Eve’s sin; His plan all along was to reveal His gift of grace through Jesus Christ. From eternity past, God intended for the first Adam—who *brought sin*—to point to Jesus Christ—who *bore sin* in His body on the cross. In this way, God’s multi-faceted grace is on display, inviting all who will come to Him to receive His free gift of righteousness.

- Have you received His gift by inviting Jesus into your heart as Savior and Lord? Why, or why not?
  
- Based on 1 Corinthians 15:45–49, how would you say that you “*bear the image of the heavenly Man?*”
  
- For you personally, what is the most significant insight you’ve gained from the story of creation and the fall? How will you apply this insight in your life?

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