

The Creation (and the Fall)

THE STORY: How the Bible Explains Everything #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - Friday, January 30, 2026 - Genesis 1-3

INTRO: Good evening church! We're beginning a new series tonight called THE STORY: How the Bible Explains Everything. Over the next 12 weeks, we're beginning a journey through the meta-narrative of Scripture, the grand, sweeping story that runs from the first spark of creation to the final glory of consummation. We'll see that the Bible is one unified story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration, and that story explains everything: our world, our pain, our purpose, and our hope.

Have you heard of what scientists call the T.O.E.? It stands for the Theory On Everything. For decades, physicists have been searching for what they call one single, unified equation that explains how the universe works. How matter, energy, space, and time all fit together.

But here's the problem: Even if they found the perfect equation... it still couldn't tell you:

- Why you exist
- Why the beauty of creation sometimes moves you to tears
- Why love and loss cut so deeply
- Why the world feels so glorious one moment and so terribly broken the next
- Or where history is actually headed

Science can describe mechanisms. But only a story can give meaning. And the Bible doesn't just give us inspirational verses or moral lessons. It gives us not "A Story," but **The Story**.

Today, we begin where every good story begins: Not with "Once upon a time..." But "In the beginning..."

- Not with humanity.
- Not with problems.
- But with God.

Need: Because if we don't understand the beginning of the story, we will misunderstand everything that comes after it. We won't understand:

- who we really are
- why the world is so broken
- or why Jesus had to come

Genesis 1-3 is not just the start of the Bible, it's the foundation of reality. If we get the beginning wrong, the rest of the story won't make sense. But if we get this right, suddenly the beauty we long for and the brokenness we live with both have an explanation. And so does our hope.

Trans: From creation to consummation, the Bible tells one great story of a good and holy God rescuing His broken world through Jesus. THE STORY begins...

BODY: In the book of Genesis, Moses recorded the story of how God created the heavens and the earth, creating humanity in His own image and calling it very good, yet after humanity's rebellion, He promised a coming offspring who would defeat the serpent who tempted them to fall. We can understand how the story of God's good creation and our fall explains both the beauty we long for and the brokenness we live with, and where our only hope for redemption is found. How does the story of creation and fall explain both the beauty we long for and the brokenness we live with, and where our only hope for redemption is found? The text gives three foundational realities that explain our story and God's saving plan.

Read text: Genesis 1:1, 26-31; 2:1-3 (ESV) ^{1:1} In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ... ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. ... ^{2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

THREE REALITIES THAT EXPLAIN OUR STORY AND GOD'S SAVING PLAN:

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1. We can recognize the beauty we long for from the creation.

EXP: God is the uncaused Cause, the Creator of all things (1). Humanity is the crown of creation, uniquely made in His image (27) to rule and rest with Him. God declared that everything was "very good" (31). This explains why we have a desire for beauty and a hunger for purpose and meaning. We weren't made for chaos; we were made for the glory of God.

"God" (1:1) (אֱלֹהִים, 'ēlōhîm) - gods, (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God

"Created" (1) (בָּרָא, bārā') - to create, shape, form; of something new; of miracles

"God said" (26) (אָמַר, 'āmar) - to say, speak, utter; predominantly indicates a spoken word. When John writes *logos* in John 1:1 he is using the standard Septuagint translation of 'āmar:

John 1:1-3 (ESV) ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

"Let us make" (26) (עָשָׂה, 'āsâ) - to fashion, accomplish, make. Note the "Let us" plural = Trinity?

"Image" (26) (צֶלֶם, *selem*) - image, likeness (of resemblance). Latin: *imago Dei*. Denotes representation (Our Role) Like God's ambassadors in the world. Kings put statues (images) of themselves in their cities.

"Likeness" (26) (דְּמוּת, *d'mût*) - likeness, similitude. This is about resemblance (Our Nature) ie. "A child who looks and acts like their Father." In the Fall, the Image was defaced, but not erased.

"Dominion" (26) (רָדָה, *rādâ*) - to have dominion, rule, subjugate

"Male and female" (27) (זָכָר, *zākār*) - male, man. (נְקֵבָה, *nēqēbâ*) - female; woman.

"Blessed" (28) (בָּרַךְ, *bārak*) - to bless, to praise, salute

"Very good" (31) (מְאֹד, *m'ōd*) - exceedingly; great (טוֹב, *tōb*) - good,.

"Finished" (2:1) (כָּלָה, *kālâ*) - to accomplish, cease, consume, determine, end, finish, be complete

"Seventh day ... holy" (3) (קִדְּשׁ, *qāḏaš*) - to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy.

"Rested" (3) (שָׁבַת, *šābat*) - to rest, desist (from labour); to cease.

ARG: God has placed a longing for beauty and eternity in our hearts, yet we cannot obtain it.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV) He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

We seem small in our own eyes, yet God has made us the crown of His creation.

Psalms 8:3-5 (ESV) ³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? ⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

ILL: Have you ever stood somewhere beautiful, at the ocean, the mountains, or under a sky full of stars, and felt both a sense of awe and a sense of ache. Awe because it's so beautiful. Ache because you can't hold onto it. The moment fades. The trip ends. Real life comes rushing back. That ache is not an accident. It's an echo of Eden. As CS Lewis said, "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." (from *Mere Christianity*)

APP: Your identity and purpose are not determined by you, nor by those around you. Your identity and purpose was settled at creation when the Creator of the Universe said, "Let us make man in our image." So in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them.

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Read text: Genesis 3:1-13 (ESV) ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

2. We can understand the brokenness we live with in the Fall.

EXP: Note the anatomy of the first sin. It didn't start with a "deed," but a "doubt," distrusting God's Word ("Did God actually say?") and God's heart ("He knows you'll be like Him"). The result was a three-fold fracture: Isolation from God (hiding), Shame within themselves (fig leaves), and Conflict with each other (blaming).

"Serpent" (3:1) (נָחָשׁ, *nāḥāš*) - serpent "either only a serpent in appearance, and in reality a fallen angel, or the prince of fallen angels, Satan; or a real serpent possessed and actuated by him." (*Benson Commentary*)

Revelation 20:2 (ESV) And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan.

"Did God actually say" (1) - the evil one comes questioning the Word of God, tempting us to rebel

"You will not surely die" (4) (מָוֶת, *mûṭ*) - literally, "you will not die die." They died spiritually immediately.

"Be like God" (5) (הָיָא, *hāyâ*) - become like God. Satan promised what they already had, but he tempted them to be equal to God as was his sinful rebellion.

"Good for food" (6) - the temptation activated her stomach's appetite.

"Delight to the eyes" (6) (תַּאֲוָה, *ta'āvâ*) - desire, wish, longings of one's heart; lust. It was attractive.

"Desired to make one wise" (6) (שָׂכַל, *śākal*) - to be prudent, be circumspect, wisely understand, prosper

These three have been called the Trilogy of Temptation and appear in Jesus' temptation (Matt.4) and in...

1 John 2:16 (ESV) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

"Hid themselves" (8) - to hide. **"Afraid...naked" (10)** - nude. Sin hides from God in shame and fear.

ARG: Sin and death are in our DNA. Through Adam we are all born in sin and destined for death.

Romans 5:12 (ESV) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

Adam's sin brought the curse of sin and death on all creation. But one day...

Romans 8:20-22 (NLT) ²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹ the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²² For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

ILL: In 1956, a man threw a rock at the Mona Lisa, chipping the paint off the left elbow. He couldn't take away the fact that Leonardo da Vinci painted it, but he could mar the beauty of it. That is what happened in Genesis 3. Sin didn't stop us from being made in the image of God, but it 'chipped the pigment.' We are masterpieces that have been vandalized by our sin and rebellion.

APP: Why do you hide parts of yourself? Why do you fear being fully known? Genesis 3 explains your life better than any therapist, or self-help book ever could. We don't just do sinful things, we are bent inward. We doubt God's goodness. We want His gifts, but not His rule. And the result is exactly what we see in Eden: We hide from God. We cover ourselves in shame. We blame everyone else. The brokenness in the world out there is real. But the brokenness in here... in us ... is the deeper problem.

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Read text: Genesis 3:14-15, 21 (ESV) ¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." ... ²¹ And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

3. We can trust in the certainty of redemption in the Savior.

EXP: In the middle of the wreckage, God speaks the *Protoevangelium*. He promises an "offspring" (15) (Lit. Seed = Jesus) who will be bitten by the serpent but will ultimately crush the serpent's head. Then, look at v.21: God replaces their flimsy "fig leaves" with "garments of skins." For Adam and Eve to be covered, an innocent animal had to die. This is the first sacrifice in history. God provided a covering for their shame.

"Enmity" (15) (אִי־בָהּ, 'ēḇā) - hostility; enmity, hatred

"Offspring" (15) (זֶרַע, zera) - Lit., "seed." Offspring. "Her seed." Women don't have seed. Virgin birth? Paul says this Seed is Christ: Galatians 3:16 (ESV) ... "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

"Bruise your head" (15) (שֹׁרֵץ, šûṣ) - snap at; bruise. (רֹשׁ, rōš) - head, top, upper part.

"Bruise his heel" (15) (עֲקֵב, 'āqēḇ) - heel, rear, footprint, hinder part

"Clothed them" (21) (לְבָשׁ, lāḇaš) - to clothe, dress. With "garments of skins." Blood was shed by God.

ARG: From the beginning, the Word has taught us that...

Hebrews 9:22 ...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Need a verse on how Jesus has redeemed us by His blood?

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NLT) ¹⁸ For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. ¹⁹ It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

ILL: Adam and Eve witnessed the first death. For the first time, they saw blood. They saw an innocent creature die because of their sin. As God clothed them in skins, they learned a painful truth: sin brings death, and covering requires sacrifice. Every Old Testament sacrifice after that pointed back to this moment, and forward to the cross, where the Lamb of God would die, not to temporarily cover sin, but to take it away.

APP: You cannot sew enough fig leaves to cover your guilt. Success won't cover it. Religion won't cover it. Being "a good person" won't cover it. But what God required, God provided. Just as He clothed Adam and Eve, He now clothes all who trust in Christ, not with animal skins, but with the righteousness of His Son, purchased by His blood. Redemption isn't human achievement. It's divine provision.

CONCLUSION: The Bible is the only story that explains everything. It tells us we are more flawed than we ever dared believe, but more loved than we ever dared hope. It's not a Theory On Everything, but a true story and God is its Author. It's not a theory, but an explanation that answers all of life's most important questions.

It tells us:

- Why we long for beauty and meaning: Because we were made for another world
- Why we experience brokenness and suffering: Because we rebelled and fell into sin
- Why we can still have hope: Because God promised and provided a Savior for us.

You are not an accident. Your pain is not meaningless. And your sin is not beyond redemption. If you find yourself today hiding in the bushes of shame like Adam and Eve, hear the voice of God walking in the garden, calling, "Where are you?"

Not because He doesn't know. But because He's come to seek, to find, and to save.

And that rescue begins with the promised Offspring, the promised Seed: Jesus Christ. Let's pray.