

Genesis 3:15, 21; 12:1-9
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Session Summary and Goal:

This lesson opens the Creation Era of the Bible in the book of Genesis. The opening passages and stories of Genesis teach us about the good world that God has made, and it sets the stage for the story of God and man that unfolds in Scripture. The simple truths revealed in these opening stories show us that 1) God created the world good 2) God created humans in His image 3) God's rules and prohibitions are given for the good of man 4) disobedience leads to separation between man and God and 5) faith and trust is required for men and women to walk with God in obedience. In this lesson, we will establish that God has always desired and required faith and trust from the humans, His image bearers in the world.

Main Passages: Genesis 3:15, 21; 12:1-9

Session Outline:

1. By faith, we believe that God's created world is good (Genesis 1-2)
2. By faith, we are called to believe God's promises of redemption from sin and death (Genesis 3:15, 21)
3. By faith, we are called to obey God's commands wherever He leads (Genesis 12:1-9)

Session in a Sentence:

God created men and women to bear His image in the world, and He promises redemption from sin and death for all those who walk with him by faith.

Kingdom Connection:

God always had a kingdom on His mind. At creation, the entire universe was the Kingdom of God. Sin and disobedience brought rebellion against God's Kingdom into His creation. But God's kingdom is any place where His image bearers do His will. After being chosen by God, Abraham became the patriarch of God's Kingdom people as he obeyed the will of God by faith.

Missional Application:

God's requirement for His people is faith and trust in Him. God rescues humans from the sting of sin and death by grace through faith, which manifests itself in obedience to God's will. If we truly believe this, then we must make it a priority to lead others to faith in Christ. Obedience to the will of God means pointing others to faith in Christ. In Matthew 28, Jesus clearly tells us to 'go and make disciples of all nations.' If we are not making a priority of leading others to faith in Christ, then we are not walking in obedience to the will of the Father.

Introduction:

God creates the world God creates man and woman in His image→God gives man and woman a job and tells them about the forbidden tree→Woman tempted by serpent and Adam and Eve eat the fruit→Adam and Eve realize their nakedness and are removed from the garden→God promises to provide a solution for sin→God chooses Abram to be the father of His people

The beginning of any story is extremely important in setting the place, the time, and the tone that will take shape in the remainder of the narrative. The book of Genesis gives us a glimpse into the miraculous beginning of the story of God and man. In the beginning of this story, we learn about the main characters (God and humans), their relationship (humans made in God's image to know and love Him), their conflict (humans separated from God because of sin), and the opening of the quest (God's promise to redeem humans). Understanding the dynamics of the first few chapters of the Bible sets the table for understanding the rest of the story. And what are the primary precedents set in the opening sequence of the Bible? We learn that God is the Creator of the world, that humans are the pinnacle of his creation, that God expects obedience and relationship from humans, that the disobedience of humans separates them from God, and that God sets forth a plan to restore His creation and the humans who broke it. In this lesson, we will focus on three key points in the Bible narrative:

- 1) God's good creation
- 2) 2) The fall of man and
- 3) 3) God's promises to fix the broken creation.

1) By Faith, We Believe that God's Created World is Good (Genesis 1-2)

1 ¹ *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

²⁶ *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over ^[g]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 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

²⁹ *And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. ³⁰ Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. ³¹ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.*

2 ¹⁵ *Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to ^[e]tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

What Does it Say?

The Bible begins by clearly defining the world and the one who made it. The heavens and the earth came into existence out of the creative power of God through His spoken word. God speaks, and things come into existence. The days of creation show God ordering His creation in complementary pairs: light and darkness, heavens and earth, water and dry land, day and night, animals and vegetation, and humans male and female. After each day of creation, God says that it is good, and upon the creation of man God says that it is very good. God placed man in a Garden, gave him a job and a purpose to steward the good world that He had created, and gave him a partner from his own flesh. God also establishes that He expects the obedience, trust, and faith of man ~~to obey~~ concerning His statutes. He tells the man that he may eat the fruit from any tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told the man Adam, that the consequence of eating the fruit of that forbidden tree is that he would surely die.

What Does it Mean?

The opening chapters of the Bible clearly tell us that God's created world is good. There are times where goodness of creation seems obvious: when we come to a beautiful place in nature, when we feel a transcendent experience hearing beautiful music, or when we marvel at the intricacies of the stars. But there are also times that it is difficult to believe that the world is good. We can see intense suffering, disease, brokenness, wickedness, and death all over the world every day if we look for it. There is clearly something broken with the world.

The explanation for that brokenness comes in Genesis 3, but it does not negate the underlying truth that world that God created is good and beautiful. The stars, the dirt, the water, the light, the matter, the energy, and living creatures that occupy the universe are complex, beautiful, and good. Not only is the physical reality of the universe good, but also God's moral law that undergirds the creation. At this point in the story, the moral law is not fully developed, but God establishes immediately that He expects humans to trust and obey Him in faith. The basic moral cornerstone of the creation is that God is the Creator, and that His commands are given for the good of His creation.

Application:

These first two chapters lay out a basic theme that each Christian needs to grasp: God has generously provided for us and His commands are for our good. When we think about the chaos, pain, and unfairness that we experience in life, it can be easy to doubt God's goodness. It can also lead us to question whether His Word and His laws are good. In fact, God's laws often go directly against what we desire, but His expectation for us to trust Him in faith remains. Obedience to God will allow you to enjoy the goodness of God's creation, and rebellion against God will lead to your destruction, both in the short-term consequences of sin, and in long-term alienation from the God who created and loves you.

2)By Faith, We Are Called to Believe God’s Promises of Redemption From Sin And Death (Genesis 3:14-15, 21)

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent:

*“Because you have done this,
You are cursed more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.*

*¹⁵ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel.”*

²¹ Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin and clothed them.

What does it say?

Genesis 3 gives us the narrative of the Fall. God gave Adam and his wife (Eve) the job of tending to His creation, and He told them that they could eat the fruit of any tree of the garden except for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The woman is approached by a serpent who tells her a half truth, saying “*You will not surely die*” from eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. The serpent then tells the woman that eating the fruit of the forbidden tree would make her knowledgeable and wise like God. Eve sees that the fruit is good for food, that it looks pleasant to the eye, and that it would make her wise, and she decides to eat the fruit and give it to her husband. Upon eating the fruit, Adam and Eve realize their nakedness and try to hide from God.

When God finds them, he makes it clear that they can no longer live in the garden, and that their relationship is fundamentally broken. He also lists the consequences of the disobedience of the man and woman. The key point of the passage comes in God’s promises regarding the serpent, to whom He promises enmity between his seed and the seed of the woman, the one who would ultimately crush the head of the serpent. Before removing the man and woman from the garden, God allows an animal to be killed to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve.

What does it mean?

Understanding Genesis 3 is vital if we want to understand the Biblical narrative, and if we want to understand the world around us. God created the world good, and He created humans so that we might enjoy the good creation with him. God also placed the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden and forbade Adam and Eve to eat it for a key reason: because they were made in His image. God is a truly loving, wise, good, and free being, and in order for humans to truly be made in His image, then they must also have the freedom to choose whether to obey and love Him or not. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God’s command, and as a result their relationship with Him was broken, and all of creation was broken as well. In this chapter we also see the nature of temptation as Eve experiences it, alluring her because the fruit 1) appealed to her appetite and pleasure 2) looked good and 3) appealed to her pride by making her think she

could be like God. Many temptations to rebel against God fall into one of these three categories for us as well.

Another extremely important aspect to this story is that God's immediate promises to do something about the broken creation and the sins of humans. In verses 14 and 15, God tells the serpent that He is going to do something to destroy the power of sin and death, and that He will do it through the seed of the woman. Christians reading this story can clearly see that God is already making the promise to send His own Son, Jesus, to have His heel bruised on the cross as He crushes the head of Satan and the powers of Sin and Death. God told Adam and Eve that death would be the consequence of rebellion against Him, and we see the first sign of death in the Bible when God allows the animals to be killed so that their skins would cover the nakedness of the man and woman. The death of the innocent animal covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve, and we will see this precedent continued in the sacrificial system later in the Bible, and finally with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

3) **By Faith, We Are Called to Obey God's Commands Wherever He Leads (Genesis 12:1-9)**

12 Now the LORD had said to Abram:

"Get out of your country,

From your family

And from your father's house,

To a land that I will show you.

² *I will make you a great nation;*

I will bless you

And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

³ *I will bless those who bless you,*

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

⁴ *So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And*

Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Then Abram took Sarai his

wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people

whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came

to the land of Canaan. ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the

terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And

there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ And he moved from there to the

mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there

he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹ So Abram journeyed, going

on still toward the South.

What does it say?

God comes to an idol worshiper named Abram living in Ur of the Chaldeans and speaks to him. God tells Abram to leave his father's house and go to a new land that God would reveal to him. God promises to make Abram's family into a great nation, through whom He would bless the

entire world. After these bold promises from God, Abram leaves just as God had told him, and went to the land of Canaan. God appeared again to Abram and told him that his descendants would be given this land, and Abram built an altar to worship the Lord.

What does it mean?

Remember God's promise in Genesis chapter 3 to crush the head of the serpent through the seed of the woman? The fulfilment of that promise begins with this man, Abram. Through Abram (later Abraham), God decided to set apart a nation of his people to bless all the nations of the world. Eventually God would send a Messiah, His own son Jesus, the true seed of the woman, through Abram's family. In the meantime, Abram was already old and had no children, but when God called him and told him to go, Abram went! Abram's response to God in each key moment of his life was a response of faith, belief, and obedience.

Application:

What were Abram's characteristics that made him the right person to be the father of God's people? It was his faith, his belief, and his obedience. In these opening stories of the Bible, God is making it clear that His expectation for humans is faith—belief to the point of action. We learn later in the story that Abram was far from a perfect man, but when God called Abram to do something, he would believe God and obey in faith.

In Genesis 15 it tells us that Abraham believed God's promises, and that God credited that belief and faith to Abraham as righteousness. What does God expect of each one of us? He **is** expecting belief and faith. These key stories of God, Adam and Eve, and Abram undergird the remainder of the Biblical narrative. God has created the world good, the world is broken because of sin, God has made promises to fix His broken creation, and the appropriate response for us is faith and belief.