

The Story of Hope #2

God's Masterpiece Begins

Genesis Chapter 1-2

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I loved going to the Long Beach symphony when I was at school at Biola. It was incredible to watch and hear the hundreds of different instruments play together as one, creating masterful music in the place where empty, silent air once occupied. One of my favorite parts of the performance is at the very beginning, when a single violin plays out a long, clear "A" note, then the other instruments begin to play softly, tuning themselves to that first violin. Once everyone is tuned and ready, the conductor will raise his hands, and silence will come over all the instruments, and the audience, who, with bated breath in anticipation, know that the performance is about to begin.

This is similar to the picture we get as we crack open the pages of our Bibles, and begin to study God's "Story of Hope". In this section we will see 3 of our 8 primary themes. **God, Man and Life.** The first lines of the story are "In the beginning God..." There He is, God almighty, eternally existing in perfection. He has created the angels sometime before Genesis 1:2. We read in scripture (Job 38:7) that these angels looked on as worship filled spectators as God began to speak, with the purest simplicity and unmatched power, bringing all of the universe into existence. (Genesis Chapters 1-2) Water, light, atmosphere, land, plants, space filled with stars and planets, fish, birds, land animals and finally, the crescendo of creation, mankind. Here God says in Gen. 1:26, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." No other creature carries the image and likeness of the divine in their being. Not only was mankind created in the image and likeness of God, but they were given authority over the rest of creation. This authority wasn't to be like the overbearing authority we experience often in our lives, but rather the authority to care for and use the creation for the purposes it had been created for, without even the slightest touch of evil or pride or selfishness. Creation, spoken into existence from nothing, existing in perfect order and beauty. Reflecting the very nature of the God who created it all.

Genesis 2 fills out the process by which man and woman were created. Gen. 2:7 "then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life". God created man (Adam) then planted a beautiful garden in a place called Eden. God filled it with every tree and plant that were beautiful to look at and delicious to eat, and in the middle of the garden He planted two very specific trees: The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Once the garden was finished, God put Adam into it and here we find the first command of God to Adam. (Gen. 1:16-17) "Do not eat of the tree of Knowledge, or you will die". God then put Adam to the task of naming all the animals. As God brought him set after set of all kinds of different creatures, Adam saw not a single living thing that would make a good partner for him. He wasn't like any of the other creatures. Closer to some than others, but none were "suitable" partners for him. This was no surprise to God, and after Adam had finished the naming, God went about putting Adam to sleep, taking a rib from him, and using it as the foundational material in forming a woman, the perfect partner for man, built from Adam's very flesh. Then, like God had done with the animals, God brought Adam this woman, and Adam recognized immediately that this was a special creation made perfectly to match with him, and he named her "woman". He now had a perfectly created partner and helper and he rejoiced! (Gen. 2:23).

Now creation was finished, existing in perfect balance, peace, love and harmony with the God who created it. Adam and Eve, living in this beautiful garden in perfect unity with their creator God. Walking and talking with him in joy filled relationship. No pain, tears, thorns, fears, uncertainty just full, perfect, peaceful life.

As we read the beginning of the Story of Hope, there are so many truths about God to find in the symphony of creation. Let's look at three of them briefly.

God's plan is ordered, not chaotic or random. We see so clearly that God created everything in a perfectly ordered and planned out way. He didn't just throw a bunch of organic material together and watch what happened! He created space, then filled it with galaxies; land then filled it with plants, then animals; water then filled it with fish; air then filled it with birds, the Earth and created man and woman to "be fruitful and multiply" on it. The order and plan are part of God's very character. They are also the target of much of our society, which have replaced God's plan with their own "plan" for how all things came exist. Their plan is defined by randomness, chaos, and pure biological chance. Let us be prepared to tell the story of God's creation to those in our lives who are willing to listen.

God wants to be with us. We see this truth so very clear in how the story deals with the creation of humankind. God is intimately involved in the process for both man and woman. He also creates a special garden in His vast creation that is extra beautiful. This is the place where He is going to be with His most precious creation. We see in Gen 3, that God walked through this garden with Adam and Eve. This is part of God's very nature towards us. He loves us and loves being with us! This has never and will never change. We are His precious and wonderful creation and He desires to be with us. This is no "divine watchmaker", who simply wound up creation and let it go, stepping back to see what would happen. This is a Creator God how was and is extremely active involved and present in His creation, more so than we can even know.

God is our creator. It is wonderful to consider our special place among creation, and the resulting unique relationship to our loving God. However, let us not forget the equally powerful truth that we are **HIS** creation, and that has some critical implications for our lives. It is easy and natural for us to become prideful and self-focus when we think of our special place in the universe. We think of the unique and incredible ways God has created us and gifted us and pretty soon, if we lose focus on the "created" part, we being to stray from the humility of being a created being, and begin to move into the place of the creator. If we lose sight of GOD, creating us in His image, we begin to see US, and then create god in our image. Taking over control of our lives, plans and desires without thought of our creator. To use a simple illustration, if I create a wooden bookshelf, I am the one who gets to determine its purpose, its size and shape and everything about it. I can sand it and paint it beautifully, I can also take it off the wall and use it for stool or bench, even use it for firewood. I am it's creator, I own it. Obviously we are more valuable than chunks of pine! However, we are His creation, and we should recognize our position as such, and look to God and His word where He reveals His desires and purpose for our lives. He didn't create us with a purpose then hide it from us! He reveals it to us so clearly through His word. As we continue to move through His story, we will see more and more of His character and desires for us.