

The Story of Salvation

Chapter 1 - God Creates



Genesis 1 & 2

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...”
 These are the first words in the Bible. They tell us that God is wise enough to plan, not only the universe as a whole, but every detail, even the smallest. The words also tell us that God had the power necessary to create the universe. He is almighty. Finally they tell us that God existed before any part of the universe came into existence. God is from eternity.



GOD’S PLAN

The first page of the Bible reveals the plan God followed. Having created the raw material, His next step was to create light. Then followed the atmosphere (the “expanse” or “firmament” in the Bible); the dry land rose out of the water that covered the earth; then came grass, herbs, and trees.

God’s next step was to make the sun, moon, and stars to govern night and day and spring and summer and fall and winter. Then He made fishes and birds and creeping things and beasts and cattle.

And God saw that it was good. Everything fit perfectly into His Plan.

MAN CREATED IN GOD’S IMAGE

Now the earth was ready for man. God had provided everything man needed. And 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 cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created the first man of the dust of the earth. And God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. He was called Adam which means man. God placed man in a garden called Eden. Within the boundaries of this sheltered place Adam was to gather his first knowledge of the world that God had prepared for him.

MAN’S FIRST EXPERIENCES

In the garden Adam learned to know the different plants, trees and animals. After a while he must have noticed a very interesting fact. Each plant and tree and animal reproduced only its own kind. From kernels of wheat would come wheat, not barley or oats. The lamb of a sheep was a sheep, not a dog. Adam learned the first lesson of God’s law of heredity. The creation story mentions this law ten times, using the words “after its kind.” It was God’s way of telling man that if he seeded wheat he would get wheat, if he raised cattle he would get cattle. Man has learned that he may improve his cattle, but they will always be cattle, and he may improve his apples but the most improved ones are still apples.

The law has never changed. It is rooted in God’s plan. It is good science, according to God’s design. He created the many species of plants and animals. They are not the result of a natural development from a single form, as claimed by the evolutionary theory. God gave to man an orderly world that operates according to fixed, unchangeable laws implanted in nature by God Himself.

GOD CREATES A COMPANION

Man was given dominion (“lordship”) over the creation. That is, man was to take good care of the creation, so that it would retain its beauty. Even in the state of sinlessness God wanted man to work and not to be idle. Work did not, however, weary man, much less exhaust him. As long as he was in the state of innocence, it gave him genuine pleasure to care for the animals, till the soil, and to develop the beauties of that park.

However, Adam soon came to realize that he was not one of the animals. His keen mind could not help but notice the difference between himself and the beasts. Adam has the unique gifts of intellect and reason. He could start a fire and make tools. No animal could build a fire or shape a tool. Adam also found that through the gift of speech he could share his thoughts and ideas with others.

Adam further realized that God was his best company. He knew God as the wise, almighty creator, the eternal God who loved him. God’s friendship made him happy. He was glad when he heard God’s voice. He found no animal that could follow him into this friendship with God. He studied the animals and gave them names, but found no one that could be a helpmeet for him.

Adam began to long for a companion like himself. So God created a woman from one of Adam’s ribs and brought her to him. And happiness shone in Adam’s eyes. “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” he said.

By giving man a “helpmeet for him,” God instituted holy matrimony; and this was in paradise. Matrimony therefore is not a human ordinance, but a divine institution. We furthermore learn from the story of Creation that “*the husband is the head of the wife; for Adam was formed, then Eve*” (1 Timothy 2:13). However, the fact that woman was taken from one of the ribs of man goes to show that she is his helpmeet and not to be her husband’s slave—as was and is the case among some heathen nations (particularly savages). Furthermore, it tells us that the union of man and wife is to be lifelong and hence indissoluble; “*Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate*” (Matthew 19:6). Thus God blessed marriage and made it special in His Creation and God told Adam and Eve to have a family and to care for everything that had been created (stewards of the creation).

GOD PREPARES ADAM AND EVE FOR WORSHIP

Adam and Eve were without sin. They had found God to be a good Father who loved them and took care of them and so they trusted and loved Him.

However, there already existed an enemy, the devil, who had rebelled in heaven and who would some day try to lead Adam and Eve astray from God and into rebellion also. For this reason they had to learn obedience and submission to their Creator. That is they had to learn how to worship God.

In the garden God had planted the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God told Adam and Eve that they could freely eat of every tree in the garden, only from the tree of knowledge they must not eat. This prohibition was given not because God meant to keep something from man that would have heightened his enjoyment of Paradise and his earthly bliss, but because he could not but be expected to show by refraining from eating of this tree that the Creator—the Giver of such innumerable good and perfect gifts—was all in all to him and that his will fully and absolutely coincided with that of his Maker. Thus every time Adam and Eve walked by the tree of knowledge of good and evil they worshipped God, with fear, love, and trust, because they believed and obeyed God’s Word.

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

The First Article **Creation**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.

All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

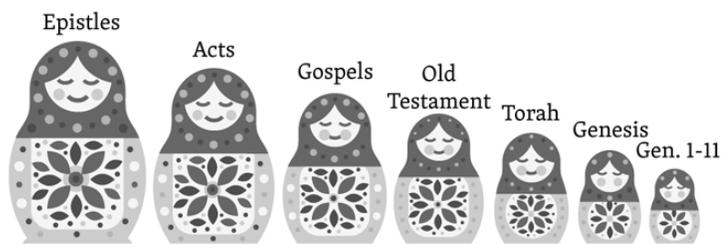
Luther. (2017). [Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation](#) (p. 16). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

Prayer: We thank You, our God and Father in heaven, for our bodies, minds, and souls. For all that is beautiful in nature, for all that is good and helpful we praise You, the Giver of all good gifts. Grant us Lord to live as Your children, and to use Your gifts according to Your will in Christ, just as you have taught us to pray: **Our Father, who art in heaven...**

Reading for the Next Bible Class 28 April 2021:

- ➔ Genesis 3-4:15
- ➔ Second Article of the Creed in the Small Catechism

Genesis 1–11 as Foundational to Scripture



If we think about Scripture as a Russian nesting doll—those wooden egg-shaped figures that stack inside each other in increasingly shrinking sizes—what would be at the core? Or maybe we could ask: What is the outermost doll that we see most often presented to the world? The easy answer would be the person of Jesus, the gospels, or

maybe the early church. What if we asked a slightly different question, “What biblical text is foundational to understanding the person of Jesus, the gospels, or even the early church?”

Let’s start with the outermost doll: the epistles. Why the epistles, in which I am including Revelation? Speaking generally, the epistles explain the good news of Jesus and its contextual meaning to the early churches and leaders. The apostles presume that the Torah of Moses still guides Christian faith. And so the epistles, like Jesus’ teaching, reach deep into the Torah, the history of Israel, the prophets and more in order to make sense of the Good News of Jesus. To understand what Paul, James, Peter, and John are charged up about, we must understand the historical events to which they constantly refer. Hence, to understand their commission as apostles of Jesus, we must understand the life of the earliest part of the church. The book of Acts depicts the founding of the church beginning at Pentecost and moving out into the Mediterranean Basin. In order to grasp the significant figures and events in the book of Acts and the epistles, we need to know the content of Luke’s Gospel *at the very least*. Why Luke? Luke purportedly wrote the book of Acts and his gospel provides the literary and historical setting for the events he describes in Acts.

What else? In order to make sense of the person of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, we ought to know what Matthew, Mark, and John have said. So the next smallest doll is called "the Gospels." In order to make any sense of the gospel accounts, we must be literate in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is, after all, what Jesus and the apostles referred to as "Scripture." Which parts are foundational for understanding the complex group of writings that Christians call the "Old Testament"? The prophets and the history of the kingdom of Israel all presume the Torah (also called the Pentateuch or Books of Moses), to which they all reference back. And within the Torah, Genesis establishes the cosmos, humanity, the people of Israel, and how they ended up enslaved in Egypt. And within Exodus, the book of Israel's national origins, we find the core narrative upon which all the others rest: the early history of humanity from creation to Babel.

As we will see, Genesis 1–11 is more basic and presumed throughout Scripture than we might at first suppose. For instance, in matters of human sexuality, the creation account appears to be so foundational as to not receive mention again until Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees in the New Testament. Because the creation account portrays sexuality as it was intended, the biblical authors seem to presume it as the cornerstone to future instruction on sexual ethics, marriage and family. Many readers are then surprised to find out the Old Testament does not contain a simple instruction on the matter of who can marry whom and how. Even worse, they are confused by the "saints of the Old Testament" who take on multiple wives and sexual partners without moral judgment from God or the narrator of those stories.

However, Scripture not only argues for a particular view of marriage, but does so *in the strongest terms available*: through the creation story (more on this in chapter 3). I do not need to tell the reader that our theology of sexuality and ability to articulate it is a current and pressing issue, sloppily flung around in popular media outlets today. This means that we cannot actually understand the sexual and marital teaching of Leviticus or Matthew or Paul apart from a firm grasp on what Genesis 1–11 is doing with sexuality *as Scripture*.

Today, we easily fall into the trap of asking "Where does Scripture forbid us from doing this or that?" We become perplexed when we cannot quickly and clearly find where Scripture constrains behaviors and attitudes in the ways we have been taught or presumed. For instance, where does Scripture consistently constrain single people to virginity—an ever-shifting concept today? What about limiting couples to heterosexual monogamous marriage for life—something the patriarchs of Israel did not seem to highly value? Rather, if we understand the foundational role of Genesis 1–11 to tell the story of God's plan through Israel, we might shift our question to one Scripture *is* ready to answer: "What is the wise way to prepare for and enter marriage?"

Understanding creation as a profound argument for *the world as it is supposed to be* wisely guides us to become the people into whom God is forming us. Genesis 1–11 offers us a vision of our preparation for the age to come. At the fore of God's instruction in the Torah, we find these stories, making the most powerful case possible for what the universe once was and will eventually be again (Rev 22:2). Understanding Genesis 1–11 as the infrastructure to the Scripture's thinking will pay us back royally. Neglecting this infrastructure in our thinking and practice, like neglecting the foundations of a house, will also have its deleterious effects.

Johnson, D. (2018). [*The Universal Story: Genesis 1–11*](#). (C. G. Bartholomew, D. Beldman, D. Mangum, J. Wilcox, & D. Thevenaz, Eds.) (pp. 11–14). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; St. George's Centre.

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

LSB 790 (TLH 39)



1 Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre -
2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is won - drous - ly
3 Praise to the Lord, who has fear - ful - ly, won - drous - ly,
4 Praise to the Lord, who will pros - per your work and de -
5 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me a -



a - tion! O my soul, praise Him, for He is your
reign - ing And, as on wings of an ea - gle, up -
made you, Health has be - stowed and, when heed - less - ly
fend you; Sure - ly His good - ness and mer - cy shall
dore Him! All that has life and breath, come now with



health and sal - va - tion! Let all who hear Now to His
lift - ing, sus - tain - ing. Have you not seen All that is
fall - ing, has stayed you. What need or grief Ev - er has
dai - ly at - tend you. Pon - der a - new What the Al -
prais - es be - fore Him! Let the A - men Sound from His



tem - ple draw near, Join - ing in glad ad - o - ra - tion!
need - ful has been Sent by His gra - cious or - dain - ing?
failed of re - lief? Wings of His mer - cy did shade you.
might - y can do As with His love He be - friends you.
peo - ple a - gain; Glad - ly for - ev - er a - dore Him!

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